

Kashmir & Leh

Birds, Wildlife and Vistas of Indian Western Himalayas





KASHMIR LEH

BIRDS & MAMMALS TOUR

12 DAYS

Kashmir and Ladakh, India's least-explored regions, especially for international birders and nature lovers, have lately become a prominent wildlife-watching destination. The unique geographical position of the area attracts birds in winter and during the migration periods in copious numbers. Kashmir's **Dachigam National Park**, home to more than 150 species of birds, is a must-visit location for birders and bird photographers.

Our trip will also take you to the mystic **Leh**, now a union territory of India. We will scan valleys, ridges and grasslands in this Himalayan region for species such as Besra, Northern Goshawk, Himalayan Griffon, Lammergeier, Himalayan Monal, Back-billed Magpie, Solitary Snipe, Tawny owl, White-throated Dipper, Red-billed Chough and Fire-fronted Serin. During our expedition, we may also encounter mammals, such as Hangul, Jackal, Langur, Leopard, and Yellow-Throated Martens.

DAY 1: Srinagar

Our tour begins at the Srinagar airport, where you will meet our staff, who will transfer you to one of the legendary houseboats in Dal Lake. In the afternoon, we will visit the Botanical Garden. Species likely to be spotted here are the Blue Whistling Thrush, Asian Brown Flycatcher, Verditer Flycatcher, Yellow-Breasted Greenfinch, Rusty-Tailed Flycatcher, Ultramarine Flycatcher, Chestnut-Bellied Rock Thrush, Himalayan Bulbul, Brown-Fronted Woodpecker and so on.

DAY 2: Dachigam National Park

After our delicious early morning breakfast, we will drive to the Dachigam National Park, where we will, until noon, wander around on the lookout for the Himalayan Black Bear, Brown Bear, Kashmir Grey Langur, Hill Fox, Kashmir Stag, Jungle Cat, and the Long-tailed Marmot. Additionally, the park is home to several bird species. In the afternoon, we will visit Dal Lake or spend the afternoon at the DN Park should you wish to spend more time there.

DAY 3: Yousmarg

We will board our vehicle early in the morning and drive for about 2 hours to reach the Yusmarg Pine Forest. We will likely see a few endemic species, like Kashmir Nuthatch, Kashmir Nutcracker, and other regional species like Tibetan blackbirds.

DAY 4: Srinagar to Leh (By air)

After the morning hours of birding around the Dal Lake, we will drive to the Srinagar Airport to take a flight to Leh. We will try visiting a birding location in the afternoon before checking in to our hotel in Leh. Our target species for the Dal Lake are Little Bittern, Gray Heron, Mallard, Common Starling, Eurasian Jackdaw, Purple Swamphen, Little Grebe, and others.

DAY 5: Leh

On this day, we will bird in the marshes and the Sindhu Ghat on the banks of River Indus. We will be particularly looking for the Ibis Bill, Red-Throated Pipit, Buff-Bellied Pipit, Water Pipit, Reed Bunting, Kestrel, Eurasian Hobby, Crakes and Rails.

DAY 6: Leh to Diskit

On Day 6, we will set out from our hotel before the sun comes up with a packed breakfast meal and drive to Nubra Valley Cross, the high pass of Khardung la. The exciting birding expedition will start from South Pullu, as this is where the Snow Finches, Snowcocks, Ravens and Vultures reveal themselves. If you are lucky, we may even see Ibex and Bharal in this area. In recent years, occasional sightings of the rare Rosefinches have also been reported in South and North Pullu. By noon, we will start descending towards Diskit. Our evening birding will focus on the White-browed Tit Warbler in the scrub jungles around Diskit.

DAY 7: Diskit

For Day 7, we will do an all-day birding in the scrub jungles of Nubra, focussing on various duck species in the Shayok River. We are likely to see White-browed Tit Warbler, Rufous-Tailed Rock Thrush, Eurasian Roller, Red-Fronted and Pale Rosefinches and many more species common to this area. We could also have a chance to spot the elusive Eurasian Lynx in this area.

DAY 8: Lato

On Day 8, we will drive towards Wari La from Aghyam and spend the day exploring the villages of Khema and Digar. This area is an excellent place to spot the Tibetan Snowcock. In addition to this, the villages and nearby mountain passes are good spots to behold Eurasian Skylarks, Serins, Solitary snipes and Wallcreepers. Spotting the Golden Eagle is also a probable catch in this area. We will be looking out for Lammergeiers, Griffins, Golden Eagles and Wolves on our drive to the pass.

DAY 9: Lato to Tsokar.

We will have an early morning drive towards Taglang La and Tsokar on day 9, looking for Upland and Himalayan Buzzards, Tibetan Snowcocks, Mangolian finches and other Eastern-Ladakh species. Additionally, rarities, like Tibetan Argali and Tibetan Partridges, are occasionally spotted here.

By afternoon, we will reach Thukje, the village at the edge of the Tsokar Marsh, where we will hopefully enjoy productive birding. Our prime targets are Black-Necked Cranes, Saker Falcons, Humes Groundpecker, Little Owl, Carrion Crow, Upland Buzzard, Crested Grebe, Sand Plover, and Northern Lapwings. In addition, the rare Scrub Warbler and Tibetan Partridges are seen near the Star-TSA Phukso Lake, at the far end of the valley. In the afternoon, we will witness flocks of the Tibetan Sandgrouse flying down in great numbers to the open planes around Thukje.

DAY10: Tsokar to Hanley

After another morning birding session at Tsokar, we will drive towards Hanley, with birding stops at Pholong Gonka, Puga Hot springs, Loma, and Nyoma, before arriving at Hanley for a late lunch or an evening snack. We may even take a two-hour birding detour to the Tsomiriri Lake should we have the lease of time.

DAY11: Hanley

On day 11, we will bird the whole day in Hanley, targeting local specialities, such as Mongolian Finches, Tibetan Lark, Eurasian Eagle-Owl, Short-Eared Owl, Pallid Scops Owl, Northern Wheatear and other things of the Hanley Marshes. We also focus on finding the Tibetan Gazelle and the Pallas's cat, both rare but occasionally spotted in the marsh area. Red Foxes are also a possibility in this pursuit. Birding in the slopes and marshes of Hanley can be a memorable experience, and it also offers excellent opportunities for nature photographers.

DAY12: Hanley to Leh

On the last day of the tour, we will have a half-day birding in Hanley followed by a 6-hour drive to Leh. We will reach Leh late in the evening.

Tour ends.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Total Number of Nights: **11**

Difficulty level: **Moderate**

Weather expected: **Cold, Chilly**

Group Size: **TBA**

Photographic opportunities: **Excellent**

Please contact us for [prices and availability](#) at info@planetasiaexpeditions.com or WhatsApp us on **+917994333320**

***Disclaimer**

This is an indicative itinerary. The Ground Operators will have the right and freedom to make any changes in the itinerary if they feel that such changes are required to have a productive and safe tour. No parties involved in this offer /tour guarantee sighting of any birds named in this itinerary. Participants are solely responsible for their health, personal safety and belongings.