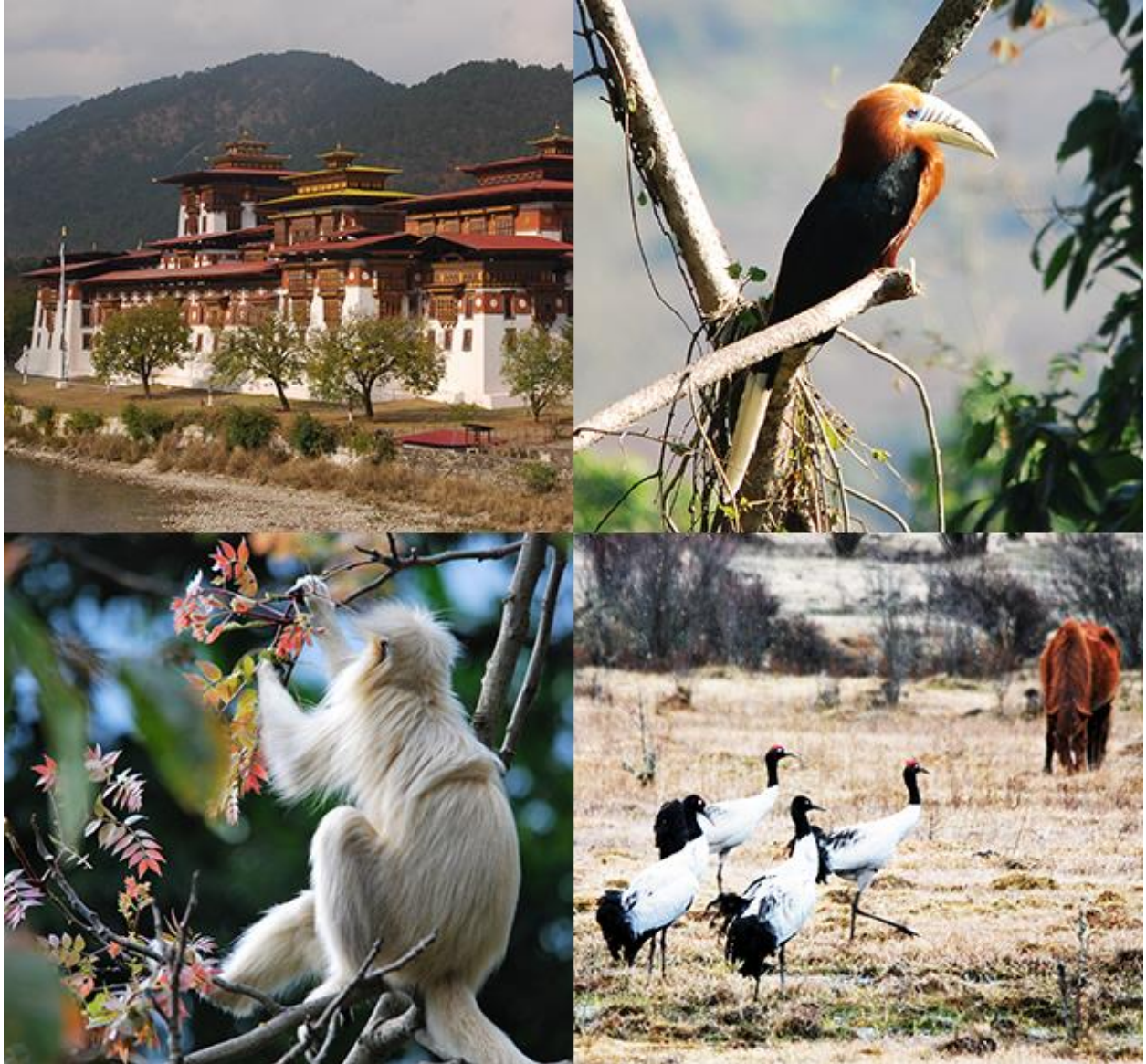


Birding and Wildlife Tour in The Land of the Thunder Dragon

Bhutan – 19th February to 7th March 2021



RED PANDA TRAVEL
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in partnership with



A fourteen day fully guided small group tour to discover the birds, butterflies, wildlife and culture of Bhutan plus a brief introduction to the Unesco World Heritage inscribed sites of the Kathmandu valley in Nepal

Tour leaders – Richard Baines and Norbu Bumthap



Richard is an experienced ornithologist/ecologist who has been studying and working as a Wildlife Guide and in Nature Conservation for over 30 years. From recording UK migrant birds as a volunteer for Flamborough Bird Observatory to surveying birds in the Boreal forest of Russia; he has become highly experienced in bird identification and ecology. His professional and volunteer work has often included sensitive species surveys requiring UK government approved licenses for a wide range of protected species.

Richard has travelled extensively especially in Asia. His love for the birds and wildlife of this region started in China. He then explored Thailand several times culminating in a longer trip of 3 months birding in northern Thailand. He has more recently designed and led a wide range of birding trips to Northern India and now Bhutan.

His greatest asset is his knowledge and enthusiasm, he loves passing on his experience of wildlife to a wide range of ages and abilities. Richard is a member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Monitoring.

A client review of our February 2020 Bhutan trip: “wonderful birds, amazing scenery and probably the best guides you could wish for”.

Norbu is one of the top bird guides and bird photographers in Bhutan and his local expertise and fieldcraft is unrivalled. His knowledge of the species and habitat of Bhutan is superb and he has a great sense of humour to go with it. If the bird is there, he will show it to you.

Itinerary

Fri 19th Feb	Early evening departure to Kathmandu via the Gulf.	
Sat 20 th	Met on arrival in Kathmandu and transfer to your hotel followed by dinner and introductions.	<i>Tibet International</i>
Sun 21 st	Leave the hotel at 06.00 and transfer to the airport for your flight to Paro. Met on arrival at Paro and drive to Thimphu (2hrs) stopping at Tachhogagang temple enroute. After lunch birding along the river looking for Ibisbill etc. Evening talk from a representative of The Bhutan Royal Society for the Protection of Nature. Red Panda Travel and Yorkshire Coast Nature are supporting the RSPN White-bellied Heron and Black-necked Crane conservation projects and you will be informed as to the progress being made to protect these critically endangered species.	<i>Tara Phendeyling</i>
Mon 22 nd	Early Breakfast followed by drive to the Dochula Pass (3150 mtrs) then on to birding in the peaceful Lamperi Botanical Gardens. Drive to Punakha with an alfresco lunch enroute and a visit to the Dzong in the late afternoon.	<i>Zingkhram Resort</i>
Tue 23 rd	A full days birding along the beautiful river Mo Chhu around Punakha and in the Jigme Dorchi National Park.	<i>Zingkhram Resort</i>
Wed 24 th	Drive to the Phobjekha Valley birding along the way. Late afternoon search for Black-necked Cranes.	<i>Dewachen Hotel</i>
Thu 25 th	To Bhumtang Tharpaling Monastery – early evening visit to see the Himalayan Monal and other pheasants.	<i>Phuntsho Guest House</i>
Fri 26 th	To Trongsa birding enroute and a visit to Trongsa Dzong.	<i>Yangkill Resort</i>
Sat 27 th	To Yongkala birding enroute - try for Blood Pheasant and other high-altitude species around Phrumshingla pass.	<i>Trogon Villa</i>
Sun 28 th	Yongkala birding – reckoned by many to be the best birding area in Asia	<i>Trogon Villa</i>
Mon 1 st Mar	More Yongkala birding	<i>Trogon Villa</i>
Tue 2 nd	Return to Bumthang going over the Phrumshingla pass with several stops along the way. Evening birding around Bumthang or free time to explore Bumthang town.	<i>Phuntsho Guest House</i>
Wed 3 rd	Early Bhumtang to Paro flight then after breakfast the Tiger's Nest hike. One of the top cultural sites in the world Tigers Nest is not just an impressive monastery, built high up on a cliff, but the area is also good for birding.	<i>Hotel Olathang</i>

Thu 4 th	An early start with a packed breakfast to the Chelela Pass for a morning's high-altitude birding. <i>Hotel Olathang</i>
Fri 5 th	Early departure to catch the flight to Kathmandu, on a clear day there will be spectacular views of Everest and the high Himalayas. Met on arrival and transfer to Boudhanath Stupa for sightseeing and brunch. Afternoon trip to Swoyambunath temple Final dinner at "Of Silk and Salt" restaurant. <i>Hotel Timila</i>
Sat 6 th	After breakfast a short walking tour of Patan Durbar square then lunch. Around 14.00hrs transfer to the airport to connect with your flight to UK.
Sun 7 th	Arrive UK airport.

A fully detailed itinerary including each days potential birding list is available.

Accommodation

Dates	Nts	Hotel	Meal plan
20th Feb	1	Tibet International - Kathmandu	HB
21st Feb	1	Tara Phendeyling - Thimpu	HB
22nd & 23 rd Feb	2	Zingkhams Resort - Punakha	HB
24 th Feb	1	Dewachen Hotel - Phobjekha	HB
25 th Feb	1	Yankhill Resort - Trongsa	HB
26 th Feb	1	Phuntsho Guest House - Bhumtang	HB
27 th & 28 th Feb 1 st March	3	Trogon Villa - Yongkala	HB
2 nd March	1	Phuntsho Guest House	HB
3 rd /4 th Mar	2	Hotel Olathang - Paro	HB
5 th Mar	1	Hotel Timila – Patan, Kathmandu	HB

HB: Room, breakfast and dinner, lunches and snacks will be provided enroute

Tour cost* (excluding flights) - group size 10 people

Per person sharing a double/twin room £ 3450

Single supplement in Nepal only £66

***Please read the notes concerning possible variations in the tour cost**

Flights

Return economy flights from UK to Kathmandu via the Gulf £680

Return economy flights with Druk Air from Kathmandu to Paro £350

Internal flight Bumthang to Paro £170

Total £1200

Total tour cost £ 4650

Included:

Accommodation in decent hotels/guest houses with private en-suite facilities

Meals as per the table above, and as mentioned in the itinerary, plus tea, snacks and mineral water throughout the day

Fully guided travel with a Yorkshire Coast Nature expert guide from the UK plus a licenced Bhutanese tour guide and expert naturalist

All surface transfers by private vehicle with experienced local driver

All entry fees to monuments, museums and National Parks

All internal taxes and charges (including royalties)

Bhutan visa fees

Excluded:

Nepal visa fees – you will need \$US in cash to pay on arrival at Kathmandu airport

Optional tours/excursions,

Personal and incidental expenses - Tips, laundry, phone calls, and bar bills.

Insurance – you will need a comprehensive travel insurance policy with full medical cover

Any other services not mentioned as included

Notes:

UK and EC citizens require a visa to visit Nepal and Bhutan and you will need at least 6 months validity on your passports after your scheduled return date in order to obtain a visa. Nepal operates a visa on arrival system. We will also obtain the necessary visa allocation for Bhutan and the visa will be stamped in your passport on arrival at Paro airport.

Baggage allowance – your flights have a checked in baggage allowance of 23kg plus up to 7kg as a carry-on bag. In addition, you are allowed a small handbag/laptop bag of reasonable size.

Journey times are approximate and may vary considerably due to adverse traffic or road conditions and the number and duration of stops along the way.

Prices especially airfares are subject to revision at time of booking. The ground price quoted is for a full group of 10 - a smaller group size may result in a slight increase in cost as economies of scale diminish.

We are required to pay for your tour arrangements in \$US – the £ prices quoted are calculated at £1=\$US1.25 To be fair to all parties the final cost of your trip will be calculated on the day you pay for your trip in full. This may result in a small increase or reduction in the total cost.

In case of any amendments to Government taxes, or any fuel surcharges, we reserve the right to adjust the tour price accordingly.

For Flight bookings we will require your full names as shown in your passport. A good quality colour scan of the photo page of your passport is required for visa application purposes plus a copy of your passport photo.

The Essentials

Currency

In Nepal this is the Nepalese Rupee currently around £1/150NPR. There is an ATM at Kathmandu airport and many dotted around the Kathmandu Valley. Your hotels accept credit cards as do many shops/restaurants/bars.

In Bhutan this is the Ngultrum (Nu) currently around £1/90 Nu. Just about all your expenses are covered in the tour price but you will need some local currency for souvenirs, bar bills etc. Although you will see many ATM's as you travel around only those operated by the Bank of Bhutan (BOB) will accept foreign debit/credit cards. The safest bet is to take some £/\$ and change them at the bank in Thimpu on the arrival afternoon. Most hotels will accept a mixture of £/\$US/NRP and Nu and most will also take payment by card but connections can be indifferent so do not rely on that.

Tipping

We suggest that you bring \$40 with you to give to your tour leader who will then distribute appropriate tips to your guides, drivers, hotels etc.

Power/plugs

Generally 220v - most hotels have at least one socket that will accommodate a standard British 3 pin plug or an adapter that will accommodate several. But please take at least one round pin (2 or 3 pin) adaptor to be on the safe side and ensure that your batteries etc. are fully charged each day. A power bank can be a very worthwhile investment but do ensure that you put it in your carry-on bag and not in your hold luggage.

Mobile Phones/ Internet

Wi-fi will be available at all your hotels but speeds can be a little slow.

