

A HIMALAYAN ORNITHOLOGIST

The life and work of
BRIAN HOUGHTON HODGSON

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BRIAN HOUGHTON HODGSON

Hodgson's mammal papers

WHILE the thoroughness of his work on Himalayan birds and the comprehensive nature of his bird collections tend to overshadow all Hodgson's other natural historical achievements, he did not think of himself primarily as an ornithologist. Hodgson made an important contribution to the study of mammals. As well as giving meticulous accounts of their external and internal structure he also made detailed investigations of their behaviour, regarding these as clues to their taxonomy. Working at a time before Darwin, Hodgson did not enjoy the guidance provided by the former's theory of evolution. In Hodgson's day, relations between species were poorly understood and his ethological work was a novel approach to this problem.

Hodgson kept a number of mammals in the residency gardens in Kathmandu, such as Nepal's three species of monkey, and many of his behavioural observations were made on these captive animals which were probably retained solely for this purpose. However, from Hodgson's papers it is clear both that he also had firsthand experience of wild animals in their natural state and that he delighted in these encounters. Particularly colourful were his descriptions of the behaviour of the Lesser Panda *Ailurus fulgens*, Common Ghoral *Nemorhaedus goral*, and Pygmy Hog *Sus salvanius*, all of which he must have studied for some time. The following is a summary of his behavioural studies of Nepalese mammals as described in his papers.

Hodgson was particularly interested in carnivores, acquiring 40 species and providing first descriptions of the Yellow-bellied Weasel *Mustela kathiah*, Spotted Linsang *Prionodon pardicolor*, Small Indian Mongoose *Herpestes auropunctatus*, and Crab-eating Mongoose *H. urva*. His skin collection included all the Nepalese species, although he procured eleven of them from India and Tibet rather than Nepal.

In his paper on the Dhole *Cuon alpinus* he wrote: 'Of all the wild animals that I know of similar size and habits, the Buansu, which is large, gregarious and noisy in its hunting, is the most difficult to be met with. This prototype of the most familiar of all quadrupeds with man is, in the perfectly wild state, the most shy of his society. The Wild Dog preys . . . chiefly by day . . . six, eight or ten unite to hunt down their victim, maintaining the chase by their powers of smell rather than by the eye.'³²

Little has been added to our knowledge of the Spotted Linsang or Tiger-Civet since Hodgson's study of this beautiful animal. It was 'very numerous in Nepal and Sikkim. Equally at home in trees or on the ground, it dwells and breeds in the hollows of trees. It is not gregarious at all, and preys chiefly upon small birds which it is wont to pounce upon from the cover of grass.'¹⁰⁸ He also described the habits of the closely related Common Palm Civet *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus* and Masked Palm Civet *Paguma larvata*.⁴¹ The former is 'no more shy of inhabited and cultivated tracts than the Common Mongoose and its favourite resorts are the old and abandoned mango groves. In holes of the decayed trunks of the trees it seeks a place of refuge. However rapacious its ordinary habits—and those of few of the carnivora are more so—it feeds freely upon the ripe mango in season, as well as upon other ripe fruits; but its more usual food consists of live birds and of the lesser mammals, the former of which it seizes upon the tree as well as on ground with a more than feline dexterity.' The Masked Palm Civet frequents forests and was very common in the central region of Nepal. Its behaviour is similar to that of the last species. Hodgson kept one for a few years: 'the caged animal was fed on boiled rice and fruits which it preferred to animal food not of its own killing . . . when sparrows, as frequently happened, ventured into its cage to steal the boiled rice, it would feign sleep, retire into a corner, and dart on them with unerring aim.' Another member of the same family, the Large Indian Civet *Viverra zibetha*, was noted as dwelling 'in forests or detached woods and copses . . . a solitary and single wanderer . . . feeds promiscuously upon small mammals, birds, eggs, snakes, frogs, insects, besides some fruits and roots.'⁸⁴

Almost all of our present knowledge of the behaviour of the Lesser Panda was provided by Hodgson. They are, he related: 'quiet, inoffensive animals, their manners staid and tranquil; their movements slow and deliberate. As climbers no quadrupeds can surpass, and very few equal them, but on the ground they move awkwardly as well as slowly. They are monogamous, and live in pairs or small families . . . feed on fruits, tuberous roots, thick sprouts such as those of the Chinese bamboo, acorns, beech mast and eggs, the last they are very fond of. But they love milk and ghee, and constantly make their way furtively into remote cowherds' cottages to possess themselves of these luxuries. They sleep a deal in the day and dislike strong lights.'¹⁰⁷

Hodgson made valuable additions to our knowledge of the Bovidae, collecting almost all the Nepalese species and writing numerous papers on this family, which includes antelope, cattle, goats, and sheep. Of the Four-horned Antelope or Chouka *Tetracerus quadricornis* he wrote: 'Exclusively confined to primitive forests and to the parts where thick undergrowth abounds . . .

dwells in the forests at the base of the mountains. Found in pairs or solitarily. Monogamous. Very shy and when hunted bounds like the common antelope thence one of its names, from Chouk, a leap.¹⁰⁹ The Gaur *Bos gaurus*, a magnificent animal related to domestic cattle, was considered 'never to quit the deepest recesses of the Sal forest. It is gregarious in herds of from 10 to 30 . . . there are usually two or three grown males whose office it is to guide and guard the party . . . they manifest a degree of shyness unparalleled among the bovines.'¹⁰⁹

The three goat antelopes of the Himalayas described by Hodgson included the Common Ghoral: 'a stocky goat-like animal found all over the hills wherever there are precipices and crags, also in dells where rough and rocky . . . most wary and the least noise sends him over ground that makes your blood run cold.' The closely related Mainland Serow *Capricornis sumatrænsis* was: 'a large, coarse heavy animal with bristly thin set hair . . . the body is short and thick, the chest deep, the head coarse and spiritless. It is seldom found in herds; and the grown male usually lives entirely alone, except during the breeding season . . . it tenants the central region. It rushes with fearful precipitancy down the mountains it inhabits.'^{24,34} The third of this group, the Takin *Budorcas taxicolor* of which Hodgson was especially proud, was one of the last animals he discovered: 'A large, massive and remarkable animal, with Bovine proportions, very gregarious.'¹¹² It inhabits forests of the eastern Himalayas, in Bhutan and the Mishmi Hills of Assam where Hodgson's skins originated, and also China.

The closely related Himalayan Tahr or Wild Goat *Hemitragus jemlahicus* was 'found amongst the most inaccessible bare crags of the Hemachal close to the perpetual snows . . . a dauntless and skilful climber . . . a saucy, capricious animal whose freaks of humour and of agility are equally surprising, yet tractable and intelligent . . . soon after his capture (if he be taken young), he becomes content and cheerful; and within a year he may be safely let out, to graze and herd with tame sheep and goats.'³⁰

The Bharal or Blue Sheep *Pseudois nayaur* originally described by Hodgson, is a typically Tibetan animal, although it also occurs in the northern regions of Nepal, further north than the Himalayan Tahr. It is regarded as intermediate between a sheep and a goat, although Hodgson considered it a sheep as it was 'a staid, simple, helpless thing which never dreams of transgressing the sobriety of a sheep's nature'.³⁰ Hodgson was interested in the differences between sheep and goats, and described both physical and behavioural characters of both in his papers.^{30,35} However, he believed the only reliable way of separating the two was through a study of their behaviour.

The Argali *Ovis ammon* (Plate 45) is the size of a mule and the largest of all

wild sheep. It inhabits the Tibetan plateau, and is reported from trans-Himalayan Nepal. Hodgson wrote: 'They are far more hardy, active and independent than any tame breeds of their kind. They are gregarious . . . leap and run with deer-like power, though as climbers inferior to the Hemitrages (Himalayan Tahr), and as leapers to the Musks. They are often snowed up for days without perishing.'¹⁰¹

Perhaps their preference for lower altitudes made the majority of Nepalese deer easier to trap, since Hodgson acquired all six species recorded in Nepal. The Swamp Deer or Barasingha *Cervus duvauceli* which inhabits the edges of large forests and grassy or swampy glades, was actually discovered by Hodgson,⁹¹ although first described by Cuvier possibly from one of the former's specimens. The only high altitude deer in Nepal, the Himalayan Musk Deer *Moschus chrysogaster* (Plate 46) fascinated him. The male has an unusual musk gland which is thought to attract females and is highly valued commercially, causing its serious persecution.^{26, 81}

Equally as complete as Hodgson's deer collection was that of his lagomorphs (the rabbit family). He found that the Indian Hare *Lepus nigricollis* was 'exceedingly abundant in the Nepalese terai, but less so in the mountains. Hares love the lower and more level tracts within the mountains, where grassy spots are interspersed with copsewood under which they may safely rest and breed. In the plains, patches of grass interspersed with cultivation are the favourite resorts of this species.'⁷⁹ A 'fine living pair' of Hairy Hares *Caprolagus hispidus* (Plate 47) was brought to Hodgson from Sikkim. These rare and little known hares inhabit the grass jungles of the terai, and duars of the Himalayan foothills and were seldom seen even in Hodgson's time.¹⁰⁰ He acquired the Royle's Pika *Ochotona roylei*, a gregarious, small lagomorph occurring in the northern region of the Himalayas and Tibet. His specimens came from clefts in rocks on the margin of Gosainkund lake north of Kathmandu.⁸²

One of the most extraordinary animals which Hodgson discovered was the Pygmy Hog, the smallest of the pig family: 'about the size of a large Hare and resembling both in form and size a young pig of the ordinary wild kind of about a month old.' It is restricted to the grass jungles at the base of the Himalayas, and is hardly ever seen as it is nocturnal and shy. 'The herds are not large, consisting of 5 or 6, to 15 or 20, and the grown males . . . constantly remain with and defend the females and young. When the annual clearance of the undergrowth of the forest by fire occasionally reveals the Pygmy Hogs, and the herd is thus assailed at advantage, the males with the help of rough and unopen ground really do resist with wonderful energy and frequent success, charging and cutting the naked legs of their human attackers.'⁹⁸ He

obtained two young ones about six months old 'taken from the nest, a perforation in the bole of a lofty, decayed tree'.

In contrast to the above groups, the highly active and small insectivores must have posed a difficult problem for Hodgson's trappers. Nevertheless, they still collected four species in Nepal and two more in Tibet. Hodgson provided the first description of the Eastern Mole *Talpa micrura*, and noted it was 'very abundant in the Himalaya, the deep bed of black vegetable mould . . . affording a plentiful supply of earthworms which constitute its chief food'.¹¹⁸

Considering their fast flight and nocturnal behaviour the bats must have proved equally elusive. It is remarkable that Hodgson managed to obtain about half the number of bat species now known from Nepal. He found about 13 species in the country, mainly in the Kathmandu Valley, as well as another six from India. The Himalayan Leaf-nosed Bat *Hipposideros armiger* and Hodgson's Bat *Myotis formosus* were originally described by him. His papers include a portrayal of the beautiful Greater False Vampire *Megaderma lyra*, to which he gave the much more attractive name of the Slaty-blue Megaderme. He wrote: 'it is extremely gregarious and dwells in the dark parts of houses and outhouses . . . no other species dwells mixedly with this Megaderme . . . entirely nocturnal and insectivorous . . . does not hibernate'.¹⁰⁵

It is also surprising that Hodgson found 24 of the rodents, two-thirds of the total now recorded in Nepal. His first descriptions of no less than eight of them included the splendid Hodgson's Flying Squirrel *Petaurista magnificus*,⁹² (Plate 48) and two other squirrel species.⁵³ There were also four true rats and mice, as well as the inaptly named Lesser Bamboo Rat *Canomys badius*. He kept the latter species for several weeks and wrote: 'I never saw such another confident, saucy and yet entirely innocuous creature except it be for the marmot . . . the species lives in small groups in burrows which are usually constructed under the roots of trees . . . roots seemed to be searched for perpetually and they constitute . . . the chief sustenance of the genus'.⁸⁵ The Himalayan Crestless Porcupine *Hystrix hodgsoni* was observed as being 'very numerous and very mischievous in the sub-Himalayas where they depredate greatly among . . . edible rooted crops . . . breed in spring and usually produce two young about the time when the crops begin to ripen'.¹⁰³

In addition to his work on Nepalese mammals, Hodgson made an important contribution to the knowledge of Tibetan mammals, collecting 33 species and writing thirteen papers, the first published in 1842.^{21,27,80,86,89,95-97,102,106,110,111,113,114,117} Very little was known of the zoology of Tibet at that time, and he provided first descriptions of the Woolly

Hare *Lepus oiostolus*, the Tibetan Fox *Vulpes ferrilata*, the Bharal and the Tibetan Gazelle *Procapra picticauda*. He gave interesting accounts of several species. The first animal Hodgson discovered and wrote about was the Chiru or Tibetan Antelope *Pantholops hodgsoni* in 1826²¹ (Plate 49). It occurs mainly in the cold deserts of northern Tibet, but has also recently been reported from trans-Himalayan Nepal. He noted it 'is highly gregarious being usually found in herds of several scores and even hundreds. It is extremely wild and unapproachable by man, to avoid whom it relies chiefly on its wariness and speed. It is very pugnacious and jealous and in its contests often breaks off one of its very long horns. Hence the rumour of Unicorns in Tibet. The Chiru is extremely addicted to the use of salt in the summer months when vast herds are often seen at some of the rock salt beds which so much abound in Tibet.'¹⁰⁹ The Tibetan Gazelle, Hodgson observed was 'An exceedingly graceful little animal . . . found in the deep ravines or low bare hills throughout the plains of middle and eastern Tibet . . . the Goa dwells, either solitarily or in pairs, or at most small families . . . it browses rather than grazes preferring aromatic shrubs to grass.'⁹⁵ Other very common inhabitants of the Tibetan plain or plateau included the Kiang, a race of the Asiatic Wild Ass *Equus asinus kiang*, now also recently reported in Nepal, of which Hodgson wrote: 'This exceedingly wild, shy, fleet and handsome species (is found) in herds of moderate size, composed of females and juniors, with seldom above one mature male, and oftener none, except in the breeding season . . . the Tibetans are wholly unable to take it alive, though it is in high esteem amongst them for its beauty and fleetness.'⁹⁷ Similarly, the Bobak Marmot was *Marmota bobak* 'very common in the sandy plains of Tibet', although 'rare in the Kachar'. Hodgson kept a few in his garden and noted they were 'very somnolent by day, more active towards night . . . very tame and gentle for the most part . . . live in burrows . . . gregarious . . . each sleeps rolled into a ball and buried in straw . . . hibernates for four months.'^{80,89} Mouse-hares or Pikas were so abundant in parts of the country in Hodgson's time that their burrows rendered roads unsafe for horsemen. He collected both the Royle's Pika and also the Black-lipped Pika *Ochotona curzoniae* which he first described.¹¹⁷

Hodgson also found several Palearctic mammals in Tibet including the Shou, a race of Red Deer *Cervus elaphus wallichii*, which was 'said to be very generally spread over the wide extent of Tibet . . . it must be considered a Tibetan species only, and not a Himalayan also. Open plains it avoids, frequenting districts more or less mountainous and provided with cover of trees. It is shy and avoids the neighbourhood of villages or houses, but

depredates by night upon the outlying crops of barley and wheat.¹¹⁴ Other Palearctic species were the Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*, Eurasian Badger *Meles meles*, Polecat *Mustela putorius*, Stoat *M. erminea*, Lynx *Felis lynx*, and the Grey Wolf *Canis lupus* which he noted as 'common all over Tibet and a terrible depredator of flocks.'⁹⁷

A forgotten hero

ALTHOUGH Brian Hodgson was widely acknowledged during his own century as an authority on Buddhism, natural history, and anthropology, there is no doubt his name and achievements today have largely slipped into obscurity. Unless one were a student of nineteenth-century Nepalese history, or had researched into the early developments of those disciplines in which he had played a leading role, his name would be completely unfamiliar. Even when it appears regularly, as in the nomenclature of bird species like Hodgson's Redstart or Hodgson's Bushchat, ornithologists will probably use the name without ever stopping to reflect on the man behind the patronymic. This lack of reputation on Hodgson's part, while it might seem unjustified, can be traced to the influence of several factors.

The century and a half that separates contemporary students of ornithology, anthropology, and Buddhism from the period of Hodgson's own work have meant that much of it is no longer essential to an understanding of any of these disciplines. Rather ironically, in Mahayana Buddhism, of whose study he was acknowledged as the founding father, this is particularly the case. His early work has been buried under a mass of later, more accurate material, and the debt owed to his pioneering efforts has largely been forgotten. Important subsequent changes in the focus of anthropology, meanwhile, have rendered much of his work in this quarter out of date or unfashionable. It is only where other circumstances have conspired to arrest the further development of a subject that contemporary workers have recognized the full importance of Hodgson's achievements. Such a situation existed in the study of Nepalese natural history, where the government's tight restrictions, right up until 1953, on the number of visiting Europeans has allowed only relatively recent advances. It is probably in this field that Hodgson's presence is now most strongly felt.

Even within Hodgson's own life the lapse of time between the period of his greatest efforts and the date of his death had led his obituarists to forget exactly what he had done. One accused him of being 'the greatest authority on Himalayan flora! This was a subject about which he possibly knew something, but he never published any material on flora, and he was certainly never the greatest authority.² Then in *Ibis*, the journal of the British

Ornithologists Union, a short piece squeezed in amongst a host of other announcements, acknowledged only Hodgson's achievements as a collector. A single sentence was deemed sufficient to cover all his papers, and although the existence of the paintings was noted, no mention was made of the extent or excellence of the collection.¹

Perhaps equally important as the lapse of time as a reason for Hodgson's neglect by others, is the style of his writing. He was educated at a time when classical literature was still very much the measure of all literature, and his writings have the winding and parenthetical character which translations of these dead languages tend to have. A recent editor of Hodgson's political papers described his letters as some of the most turgid prose he had ever had the misfortune to struggle through.¹⁴⁴ Take for example, this single sentence on Himalayan geography:

It is consistent with all we know of the action of these hypogene forces which raise mountains, to suppose that the points of greatest intensity in the pristine action of such forces as marked by the loftiest peaks, should not be surrounded by a proportionate circumjacent intumescence of the general mass; and if there be such an intumescence of the general surface around each preeminent Himalayan peak, it will follow, as clearly in logical sequence as in plain fact it is apparent, that these grand peak-crowned ridges will determine the essential character of the aqueous distribution of the very extended mountain chain (1800 miles) along which they occur at certain palpable and tolerably regular intervals.¹²⁰

No doubt if the language could be broken down, a logical system of thought would be found. Yet its complexity of arrangement is a barrier to the contemporary reader, whose training is for a very different idiom. How much easier to go to a more recent and perhaps derivative source than battle through the original.

In his work on *The Sanskrit Buddhist Literature of Nepal*, Rajendra Lal Mitra said that man formed the centre of Hodgson's studies. The vast amount of work which he did on natural history, however, clearly demonstrates that Hodgson's interests extended beyond this definition. In a sense it is the sheer range of his abilities that has contributed to his obscurity. He divided his attention fairly evenly over a number of disciplines, and made important but not revolutionary contributions to each. Had he devoted himself exclusively to one subject there is no doubt he would have made a larger impact in that field. He was never of the stature of naturalists like Darwin or Huxley, nor of an Orientalist like Müller. His writings, largely in essay form, were regular, significant, and accurate building blocks which added to and modified what was previously known, but he produced no single definitive or radical publication such as Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*.

Implicit in so much of Hodgson's work was the belief that learning and knowledge were best gained by the action of many workers, for the benefit, not just of individuals, but for society as a whole. He clearly intended his essays on Buddhism, for example, to be seminal, and hoped that they would spark off in others a number of fruitful responses. It is in his collecting, however, that his assumption about the social nature of the search for knowledge is most apparent. The manuscripts and natural historical specimens, which he amassed at considerable expense and with indefatigable energy, once gathered together, were distributed widely and freely with no less enthusiasm for use by others. It is interesting to compare Hodgson's own open-handed donations of his skins with the calculating methods of John Gould. The latter, piqued by the British Museum's refusal to pay the £1000 he asked for his Australasian specimens, sold them to the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.¹⁴²

Hodgson was no less free with his discoveries than he was with his collections. When the same Gould offered such self-centred terms for his participation in a joint work on Nepalese zoology, although Hodgson refused to comply, he was still willing, if no other means of publication presented itself, to hand the materials over to the artist for his private use. Why should Hodgson offer the fruits of his research to one who had so clearly sought to make financial and personal gain from their partnership, unless he had hoped that the ends of science were somehow served by so doing?

In any discussion of reputation there is a tacit assumption that public acclaim is both a valuable personal reward and an important measurement of achievement and ability. However, there is no definite evidence that Hodgson ever agreed with these assumptions, or that he was ever eager to be famous. He showed a natural human anxiety where he thought credit should be given, and felt let down when others seemed unwilling to acknowledge what they owed to him. This is clearly displayed in Hodgson's Buddhist essays, and in his later natural history papers. Yet his reason for writing these papers never seems to have been solely for personal ends. In fact, there are examples where this is obviously not the case. In 1858 when he was forced by family considerations to return to England and abandon his old ambition to write and publish a work on Nepalese history, he did so without regret. Testimony to his generous acceptance of such a fate are the 90 volumes of manuscripts and personal writings which he gave to the India Office Library, and which are presently housed with the British Library in London. Any person whose concern was purely for fame would have worked up the substantial materials he already possessed; yet Hodgson preferred to leave them for the benefit of others, rather than prepare an incomplete or inaccurate work.

In spite of the number of reasons advanced here to explain why Hodgson was never widely recognized, and setting aside his own considerations on the matter, anyone who becomes acquainted with the qualities and achievements of a person like Brian Hodgson cannot escape the conviction that he was unjustly overlooked. The *Ibis* obituary said that 'every mark of distinction which the learned societies of Europe could confer was deservedly bestowed upon Hodgson but as might be expected he was never knighted nor asked to become a member of the House of Lords'.¹ When one considers all his services, not only to the British, but also to the Indian and Nepalese peoples, it is impossible to understand why he did not receive both honours. Men whose accomplishments were half those of Hodgson had received more. It was not only the British government who neglected him either. He had to reach his ninetieth year before Oxford University deigned to confer an honorary doctorate upon him. A bust, probably a copy of that prepared by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and presently sitting in a dusty cupboard in the British Museum, is an appropriate image of his neglect by workers in the natural sciences. It is almost as if Hodgson was destined to be forgotten. In a very recent publication on the history of the Gurkha troops, Hodgson's very early advocacy of their employment, and his crucial part in the events of 1857, when employment of the Nepalese army to help quell the mutiny first opened the doors to regular recruitment, are both completely ignored.¹²

However, it is inappropriate at the end of this book to close on a note of resentment or frustration on Hodgson's behalf, for that is not how he himself would have seen things. The most fitting image is that of an old man, in his nineties, in the shade of his Gloucestershire garden, patiently and carefully revising his essays: the picture of a man's search for truth, indifferent alike to the praise or blame of the outside world.

APPENDIX

Bird species discovered by Hodgson

Here * indicates bird species first described for science by Hodgson. Other bird species listed were discovered by Hodgson but their first descriptions are attributed to others.

- * Mountain Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus nipalensis*
- * Snow Partridge *Lerwa lerwa*
- * Tibetan Partridge *Perdix hodgsoniae*
- * White Eared Pheasant *Crossoptilon crossoptilon*
- Ibisbill *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*
- Long-billed Plover *Charadrius placidus*
- * Solitary Snipe *Gallinago solitaria*
- * Wood Snipe *Gallinago nemoricola*
- Speckled Wood pigeon *Columba hodgsonii*
- Oriental Cuckoo *Cuculus saturatus*
- * Oriental Scops Owl *Otus sunia*
- * Forest Eagle Owl *Bubo nipalensis*
- * Tawny Fish Owl *Ketupa flavipes*
- Hodgson's Frogmouth *Batrachostomus hodgsoni*
- Dark-rumped Swift *Apus acuticauda*
- * Rufous-necked Hornbill *Aceros nipalensis*
- * White-browed Piculet *Sasia ochracea*
- * Bay Woodpecker *Blythipicus pyrrhotis*
- Crimson-breasted Woodpecker
Dendrocopos cathpharius
- Silver-breasted Broadbill *Serilophus lunatus*
- * Blue-naped Pitta *Pitta nipalensis*
- Nepal House Martin *Delichon nipalensis*
- * Upland Pipit *Anthus sylvanus*
- Rosy Pipit *Anthus roseatus*
- * Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike *Coracina melaschistos*
- Ashy Bulbul *Hypsipetes flavalus*
- * Maroon-backed Accentor *Prunella immaculata*
- Rufous-breasted Accentor *Prunella strophiata*
- Robin Accentor *Prunella rubeculoides*
- * Indian Blue Robin *Luscinia brunnea*
- * Golden Bush Robin *Tarsiger chrysaeus*
- Hodgson's Redstart *Phoenicurus hodgsoni*
- White-throated Redstart *Phoenicurus schisticeps*
- White-bellied Redstart *Hodgsonius phoenicuroides*
- * White-tailed Robin *Cinclidium leucurum*
- * Grandala *Grandala coelicolor*
- * Purple Cochoa *Cochoa purpurea*
- * Green Cochoa *Cochoa viridis*
- Hodgson's Bushchat *Saxicola insignis*
- Grey Bushchat *Saxicola ferrea*
- Chestnut Thrush *Turdus rubrocanus*
- * Black-backed Forktail *Enicurus immaculatus*
- * Slaty-backed Forktail *Enicurus schistaceus*
- * Grey-bellied Tesia *Tesia cyaniventer*
- * Brown-flanked Bush Warbler *Cettia fortipes*
- Chestnut-crowned Bush Warbler *Cettia major*
- * Aberrant Bush Warbler *Cettia flavolivacea*
- * Grey-sided Bush Warbler *Cettia brunnifrons*
- Spotted Bush Warbler *Bradypterus thoracicus*
- * Brown Bush Warbler *Bradypterus luteoventris*
- * Striated Prinia *Prinia criniger*
- Grey-capped Prinia *Prinia cinereocapilla*

- White-spectacled Warbler *Seicercus affinis*
- * Chestnut-crowned Warbler *Seicercus castaniceps*
- Grey-hooded Warbler *Seicercus xanthoschistos*
- Broad-billed Warbler *Abroscopus hodgsoni*
- Rufous-faced Warbler *Abroscopus albogularis*
- Black-faced Warbler *Abroscopus schisticeps*
- Orange-barred Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus pulcher*
- Grey-faced Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus maculipennis*
- * Smoky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuligiventer*
- * Rufous-bellied Niltava *Niltava sundara*
- Pygmy Blue Flycatcher *Muscicapella hodgsoni*
- * Ferruginous Flycatcher *Muscicapa ferruginea*
- * Slaty-blue Flycatcher *Ficedula tricolor*
- * White-gorgetted Flycatcher *Ficedula monileger*
- * Orange-gorgetted Flycatcher *Ficedula strophiata*
- * White-browed Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus schisticeps*
- * Streak-breasted Scimitar-Babbler *Pomatorhinus ruficollis*
- * Greater Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler *Pnoepyga albiventer*
- * Lesser Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler *Pnoepyga pusilla*
- Black-chinned Babbler *Stachyris pyrrhops*
- Golden Babbler *Stachyris chrysaea*
- Grey-throated Babbler *Stachyris nigriceps*
- * Great Parrotbill *Conostoma aemodium*
- * Brown Parrotbill *Paradoxornis unicolor*
- Black-breasted Parrotbill *Paradoxornis flavirostris*
- * Fulvous Parrotbill *Paradoxornis fulvifrons*
- * Black-throated Parrotbill *Paradoxornis nipalensis*
- Spiny Babbler *Turdoides nipalensis*
- Slender-billed Babbler *Turdoides longirostris*
- * White-throated Laughing-thrush *Garrulax albogularis*
- * Lesser Necklaced Laughing-thrush *Garrulax monileger*
- * Greater Necklaced Laughing-thrush *Garrulax pectoralis*
- * Grey-sided Laughing-thrush *Garrulax caerulatus*
- Scaly Laughing-thrush *Garrulax subunicolor*
- Black-faced Laughing-thrush *Garrulax affinis*
- * Silver-eared Mesia *Leiothrix argentauris*
- Fire-tailed Myzornis *Myzornis pyrrhura*
- * Cutia *Cutia nipalensis*
- Green Shrike-Babbler *Pteruthius xanthochloris*
- * Black-eared Shrike-Babbler *Pteruthius melanotis*
- * Hoary Barwing *Actinodura nipalensis*
- * Blue-winged Minla *Minla cyanouroptera*
- * Chestnut-tailed Minla *Minla strigula*
- * Red-tailed Minla *Minla ignotincta*
- Golden-breasted Fulvetta *Alcippe chrysotis*
- * Rufous-winged Fulvetta *Alcippe castaneiceps*
- * White-browed Fulvetta *Alcippe vinipectus*
- * Nepal Fulvetta *Alcippe nipalensis*
- * Long-tailed Sibia *Heterophasia picaoides*
- * Whiskered Yuhina *Yuhina flavicollis*
- * Stripe-throated Yuhina *Yuhina gularis*
- * Rufous-vented Yuhina *Yuhina occipitalis*
- * Black-chinned Yuhina *Yuhina nigrimenta*
- * White-bellied Yuhina *Yuhina zantholeuca*
- Black-browed Tit *Aegithalos iouschistos*
- Grey-crested Tit *Parus dichrous*
- * Sultan Tit *Melanochlora sultanea*
- Rusty-flanked Treecreeper *Certhia nipalensis*
- * Green-tailed Sunbird *Aethopyga nipalensis*
- * Black-throated Sunbird *Aethopyga saturata*
- * Fire-tailed Sunbird *Aethopyga ignicauda*
- * Streaked Spiderhunter *Arachnothera magna*
- Yellow-bellied Flowerpecker *Dicaeum melanoxanthum*

Buff-bellied Flowerpecker <i>Dicaeum ignipectus</i>	* Crimson-browed Finch <i>Propyrrhula subhimachala</i>
* Crow-billed Drongo <i>Dicrurus annectans</i>	* Scarlet Finch <i>Haematospiza sipahi</i>
* Plain Mountain-Finch <i>Leucosticte nemoricola</i>	* Gold-naped Finch <i>Pyrrhoplectes epaulette</i>
* Dark-breasted Rosefinch <i>Carpodacus nipalensis</i>	* Brown Bullfinch <i>Pyrrhula nipalensis</i>
Beautiful Rosefinch <i>Carpodacus pulcherrimus</i>	* Spot-winged Grosbeak <i>Mycerobas melanozanthos</i>
Red-breasted Rosefinch <i>Carpodacus puniceus</i>	* White-winged Grosbeak <i>Mycerobas carnipes</i>