

Earthbound Expeditions

Bird Watching Tour In Bhutan

10 days, from US$3,987 per person

Duration	Group size	Country
10 days	**12 people**	**Bhutan**

Bird Watching Tour In Bhutan Overview

A birdwatching tour through the mountain kingdom of Bhutan.

A birdwatching tour through the mountain kingdom of Bhutan, one of the best places in the world to see Himalayan birds.

Bhutan, a Buddhist kingdom on the eastern edge of the Himalayas, is known for its monasteries, fortresses and varied landscapes, which range from subtropical plains to steep mountains and valleys. It is also well known for birdwatching.

Bhutan is an excellent destination for birdwatchers and ornithologists. It is home to more than 770 species of bird, and the globally endangered white-winged duck has recently been added to the list. It is an ideal place to see many of the Himalayas' rarest and most elusive species. Himalayan Monal, Satyr Tragopan, White-bellied Heron, Ibisbill, Ward's Trogon, Rufous-necked Hornbill, Beautiful Nuthatch, Sikkim Wedge-billed Babbler and Fire-tailed Myzornis are some of the rare species that are hard to find outside Bhutan.

As well as birdwatching, you learn about Bhutanese culture and traditions as you walk remote trails and visit Paro, Thimphu, Punakha, Phobjikha and Bumthang.

Bhutan is known for its focus on happiness and its well-preserved environment. We can also arrange your Bhutan tour package from Nepal, India or Tibet.

Earthbound Expeditions is recommended by Lonely Planet, TripAdvisor, The New York Times, The Guardian and many other national and international newspapers and magazines. The price of the "Bird Watching Tour in Bhutan" starts from $3,987. For more information on trekking, hiking and travel, please contact us.

Itinerary

Day 1

Fly to Paro

Fly from Kathmandu to Paro. On a clear day the flight gives panoramic views of the Himalayas, including Everest. The approach through the Bhutanese foothills is notable, with a few steep turns before landing at the small airstrip of Paro International Airport. After immigration formalities, you meet your guide at the exit gate. We begin the tour in Paro, in western Bhutan, and explore the valley and its many cultural and historical monuments. We are particularly keen to see the Ibisbill, which lives on river sandbanks, and the Black-tailed Crake. Other birds to look for include Brown Dipper, Plumbeous and White-capped Water Redstarts, Siberian Stonechat, Grey Bushchat, Blue Whistling Thrush, Himalayan Wagtail, River Lapwing, Oriental Turtle Dove, Eurasian Hoopoe, Himalayan Black Bulbul, Grey-backed Shrike, Red-billed Chough, Large-billed Crow, Green-backed Tit, Russet Sparrow, Green Sandpiper, Rosy Pipit, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Black-throated Thrush and Hodgson's Redstart.

Altitude: 2,200 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Paro Meals: Dinner

Day 2

Paro to Chelela and Thimphu

Today we start early for the Chelela mountain pass (3,780m). This is a very good place to see the Himalayan Monal, considered one of the world's 10 most beautiful birds. We also search the area for Blood Pheasant and Kalij Pheasant. Other species found here include Long-tailed Thrush, White-collared Blackbird, Mrs Gould's Sunbird, Olive-backed Pipit, the large Collared Grosbeak, White-winged Grosbeak, Himalayan White-browed and Dark-rumped Rosefinches, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Grey Nightjar, Yellow-billed Blue Magpie, Spotted (or Eurasian) Nutcracker, Long-tailed Minivet, Coal, Grey-crested and Rufous-fronted Tits, Black-faced Laughingthrush, White-browed Fulvetta, Rufous-vented Yuhina,

Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher, Buff-barred Warbler, Himalayan Red-flanked Bluetail (split from Northern) and Blue-fronted Redstart. In the evening, we drive to Bhutan's capital, Thimphu (2,350m).

Altitude: 2,320 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Thimphu Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 3

Thimphu to Dochula and Punakha

In the morning, drive towards Punakha. The road climbs a series of zigzags over the Dochula Pass (3,050m), which, weather permitting, has views of the snow-capped eastern Himalayas. Dochula is the most scenic mountain pass in Bhutan, surrounded by forests of hemlock, fir, rhododendron and evergreen oak. With the peaks of the eastern Himalayas as the backdrop, we look for White-throated, Striated and Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrushes, Darjeeling Woodpecker, Rufous Sibia, Hoary-throated Barwing, Stripe-throated Yuhina, Rufous-winged Fulvetta, Lemon-rumped and Ashy-throated Warblers, Whistler's Warbler, Yellow-browed Tit, Rusty-flanked Treecreeper, Green-tailed Sunbird, Common Crossbill, Dark-breasted Rosefinch and Red-headed Bullfinch. We may also see the Fire-tailed Myzornis here. Towards evening we descend to Punakha (1,350m).

Altitude: 1,200 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Punakha Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4

Birding in Punakha

The main landmark of this subtropical valley is Punakha Dzong, the ancient capital, which stands between the male and female rivers, the Pho Chhu and Mo Chhu. We hike up the Mo Chhu and through a wide stretch of forest along the riverbank and its tributaries, looking for Crested Kingfisher, Great Cormorant and Slaty-backed Forktail. Among many other species, we especially hope to see Yellow-vented Warbler, Spotted Wren-Babbler and, with luck, the extremely rare White-bellied Heron and Pallas's Fish Eagle. Other species found in this area include Grey-headed Woodpecker, Greater and Lesser Yellownapes, Maroon Oriole, Ashy and Hair-crested Drongos, Common Myna, Grey Treepie, Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike, Mountain Bulbul, Ultramarine, Verditer and Grey-headed Flycatchers, Small Niltava, Slaty-bellied Tesia, Blyth's Leaf, Green-crowned and Grey-hooded Warblers, Black-throated Tit, Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch, Fire-breasted Flowerpecker, Crested Serpent Eagle, Spotted Dove, Himalayan Cuckoo, Himalayan Swiftlet, House Swift, White-throated Kingfisher, Great and Golden-throated Barbets, and Black-throated Sunbird. We also look for babblers, including Rufous-capped Babbler, Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush, Red-tailed and Blue-winged Minlas, Whiskered Yuhina and Nepal Fulvetta.

Altitude: 1,200 m On foot: Easy walking, 3–4 hrs Night: Hotel, Punakha Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5

Punakha to Phobjikha

Today we head into the interior, from Wangdue to the Phobjikha valley, the winter home of the black-necked cranes. The route is thickly forested, and we bird along the way through changing vegetation, from subtropical to temperate to alpine. We look out for the elusive Yellow-rumped Honeyguide among the hives of rock bees. Other birds usually found on this stretch include Grey-sided Bush Warbler, Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon, Fork-tailed Swift, Chestnut-bellied and Blue-capped Rock Thrushes, Yellow-bellied Fantail, Fire-tailed Sunbird, Himalayan Griffon, Lammergeier, Indian Blue Robin and Hume's Bush Warbler.

Altitude: 2,900 m On foot: None, 3–4 hr drive Night: Hotel, Phobjikha Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6

Phobjikha to Bumthang

In the morning, drive to Bumthang along what is locally called the lateral highway, crossing two mountain passes, Pele La (3,300m) and Yotong La (3,400m). We look for Himalayan Wood Owl, the rare Wood Snipe, and high-altitude species such as Alpine Accentor, White-browed Bush Robin, Great and Brown Parrotbills, and Fulvous Parrotbill. Other new birds on this stretch may include Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Spotted

Forktail and Speckled Wood Pigeon. We then reach the wide, pine-forested Bumthang valley, considered one of the most beautiful in Bhutan.

Altitude: 2,600 m On foot: None, 5–6 hr drive Night: Hotel, Bumthang Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7

Day in Bumthang

A full day in Bumthang. You can either go birding in the Chumey Valley or do some cultural sightseeing, visiting the dzong, Jambay Lhakhang and Kurjey Lhakhang.

Altitude: 2,600 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Bumthang Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8

Drive from Bumthang to Punakha

Drive back over the Yotong La and Pele La passes. The drive takes about 7 to 8 hours.

Altitude: 1,200 m On foot: None, 7–8 hr drive Night: Hotel, Punakha Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9

Drive from Punakha to Paro

The drive to Paro over the Dochula Pass takes about 5 hours. After arriving in Paro, you can spend the rest of the afternoon exploring the town, or visit Paro Dzong and Ta Dzong (the National Museum).

Altitude: 2,200 m On foot: None, 5 hr drive Night: Hotel, Paro Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 10

Departure

Drive to Paro International Airport for your flight.

Altitude: 2,200 m On foot: None, departure day Night: No overnight Meals: Breakfast

What's included

- All accommodation in Bhutan.
- Full-board meals.
- Private transfers.
- Professional English-speaking tour guides.
- All airport pick-ups and transfers.
- Travel permits.
- Bhutan visa fees.
- Entrance fees for major monuments in Bhutan.

Not included

- Airfare.
- Personal travel insurance.
- All personal expenses.
- A few lunches and dinners.
- Tips for guides and drivers.
- Mountain and road rescue.
- Other emergency evacuations, which are charged if needed.

- Expenses arising from illness, landslides, political disturbances, re-routing, flight cancellations or any other unforeseen events outside our control.
- Drinks with meals, telephone bills, laundry, postage and similar costs.

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: earthbound.rajansimkhada.com/bird-watching-tour-in-bhutan