

REPORT ON A TRIP TO THE TIRTHAN VALLEY, GREAT HIMALAYAN NATIONAL PARK, HIMACHAL PRADESH, NORTHWEST INDIA, WITH LATER TRIP TOWARDS ROTHANG PASS 13 April, 2003 to 25 April, 2003

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Sun 13/4 Flew Delhi-Kullu on Jagson Airlines. Met by Harkirat Sangha at Kullu Airport. Drove to Sai Ropa Tourist Centre.

Mon 14/4 early am birded around Sai Ropa; then drove to Gushaini. Walked from Gushaini to Rolla along Tirthan River; late pm walked up south-facing slope ca. 1km before Rolla, on path that leads up from opposite remaining farm.

Tues 15/4 walked from Rolla (1963m) to Shilt (2900m) up very steep track. Narrow zigzag up 40 degree slope made for very tough going. Porters said that a week earlier, two Americans had tried and given up half way. Late pm around Shilt.

Wed 16/4 overcast with showers; cleared late pm. started 5.45 am on track northeast to Chhoa Dar, back 9.30. 11.00-12.30 on track to south at rock marked T1/46 below Silth to rhododendron meadows. Afternoon up steep slope to ridge behind Silth, walked along ridge then down to join track at T1/46. Late pm walked part of track to Chhoa Dar again.

Thurs 17/4 am walked down to Ghanel at 2600m. Late pm walked trail to Chhoa Dar again.

Fri 18/4 early around Shilt. 10am walked down from Shilt to Rolla. Late pm. again up south-facing slope above remaining farm in search of Cheer Pheasants.

Sat 19/4 heavy rain until ca. 2.30 pm walked up to Khorli Poi at ca. 3000m. Very unpleasant walking. Bigger zigzags in track, but much of track dug up by brown bears in search of roots.

Sun 20/4 ca 6 cm of snow overnight, and few birds as a result. Walked below camp then picked up track back to camp.

Mon 21/4 walked up to Chanam Pass reached ca 3500m on rockfall. Pass deep in ice and snow. Evening walk near camp.

Tues 22/4 rose at 5 am in hopes of seeing Western Tragopan near camp. Left to walk down to Rolla at 9.15 am and arrived 12.15pm. Late pm walked up south-facing slope above farm.

Wed 23/4 left Rolla 9.15 am for walk back to Gushaini then back to Sai Ropa.

Thurs 24/4 early around Sai Ropa then drove to Manali and stayed at Johnson House. Ca. 3 pm drove towards Rothang Pass. Road blocked by police ca 2 km past Gulaba.

Thousands of people and many stalls. Walked up about 3.5 km.

Fri 25/4 started 5.45 am to beat police road block. Drove to ca 3500m where road blocked by river. Pass still with deep snow and ice.

4pm walked Manali Nature Trail.

Note: Subspecies information is given in square brackets [...]

Black Francolin

Francolinus francolinus

PHASIANIDAE (Grouse, Turkeys, Pheasants, Partridges, Quail)

H 24/4 calling in field

across river from Sai Ropa

Hill Partridge *Arborophila torqueola*
PHASIANIDAE(Grouse,Turkeys,Pheasants,Partridges,Quail) H 16/4 H calling below
Khorli Poi.

Western Tragopan *Tragopan melanocephalus*
PHASIANIDAE(Grouse,Turkeys,Pheasants,Partridges,Quail) S Wed 16/4 5 Wed 16/4
5 Shilt: calling around Shilt from 5.30 to 7 am with odd call around 9am. I bird flushed
along Chhoa Dar track. When flew did not call (unlike Koklass Pheasant and Himalayan
Monal) and wings made curious rattling sound. at 8 am 1 male flew down slope and
perched on track 5 m ahead of me. Startled. started to walk up slope then turned and flew
rapidly down slope. Good views for 4-5 sec. Second male flew down behind that one but
kept going down slope. late pm 1 female flushed along track. All brownish. Tragopans
most vocal in overcast weather.
17/4 Shilt: 1 tragopan called 5.15 pm for about 4 mins and another soon after. A third bird
called at 6.15pm.
21/4 Khorli Poi. 1 tragopan called near camp 15 times at 3.45 am. 2 birds calling shortly
after dawn. I bird possibly had territory uphill and left from meadow.
22/4 1 bird called sporadically during night.

Koklass Pheasant *Pucrasia macrolopha*
PHASIANIDAE(Grouse,Turkeys,Pheasants,Partridges,Quail) S Very common around
Silt and Khorli Poi but very hard to see well. The birds would flush immediately they
detected you, and I strongly suspect that they are still being shot or trapped. Birds around
Khorli Poi were a little less skittish. For example, I saw a female run away from me en
route to Chanam Pass on 21/4. Finally got an excellent look at a male at 5.30 am in the
opening at Khorli Poi.

Himalayan Monal *Lophophorus impejanus*
PHASIANIDAE(Grouse,Turkeys,Pheasants,Partridges,Quail) S Common at both Silth
and Khorli Poi. Every day, birds flushed or males seen performing display flight.

Cheer Pheasant *Catreus wallichii*
PHASIANIDAE(Grouse,Turkeys,Pheasants,Partridges,Quail) H 18/4 3-4 birds H only at
top of south facing slope above only remaining farm on way to Rolla. Called at 5.45 for a
minute or two. Two other visits to the slope produced nothing.

Himalayan Woodpecker *Dendrocopos himalayensis*
PICIDAE:Woodpeckers,Wrynecks S 14/4 1 S near Rolla.15/4 near
Shilt 2 S. 16/4 2 S near Shilt. [albescens]

Scaly-bellied Woodpecker *Picus squamatus*
PICIDAE:Woodpeckers,Wrynecks S 15/4 on way up to Silth 2 S.
female seen well. 21/4 Khorli Poi 1 male S well. [squamatus]

Great Barbet *Megalaima virens*
MEGALAIMIDAE:Asian Barbets S Common in mountains. often
dozens calling at once [marshallorum]

Slaty-headed Parakeet *Psittacula himalayana*
PSITTACIDAE:Parrots S Common along Tirthan Valley.

Himalayan Swiftlet *Aerodramus brevirostris*
APODIDAE(Chaeturinae):Spine-tailed Swifts,Swiftlets S 17/4 near Shilt 2 S. 21/4
near Khorli Poi 10 S.

House Swift *Apus nipalensis*
APODIDAE(Apodinae):Aeronautes,Tachornis,Panyptila,...Apus S near Sai Ropa 23/4
flock of 200 plus S.

Mountain Scops-Owl *Otus spilocephalus*
STRIGIDAE:Typical Owls H H on various occasions at both Schilt
and Khorli Poi.

Collared Owlet *Glaucidium brodiei* STRIGIDAE:Typical
Owls S 14/4 1 S on walk from walk from Gushaini to Rolla near
Park entrance. Same bird seen on walk back.

Indian Nightjar *Caprimulgus asiaticus*
CAPRIMULGIDAE(Caprimulginae):Nightjars H 15/4 Silth H calling below
camp. 19/4 heard calling below Khorli Poi.

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*
COLUMBIDAE:Pigeons,Doves S 23/4 5 S on walk from Rolla to
Gushaini. Probably wild birds.

Snow Pigeon *Columba leuconota*
COLUMBIDAE:Pigeons,Doves S 15/4 flock of 20 S on several
occasions. 18/4 flock of ca. 40 S from above, allowing us to view all the fieldmarks. 25/4
20 S in flight with 3 feeding on ground, photographed.

Speckled Wood-Pigeon *Columba hodgsonii*
COLUMBIDAE:Pigeons,Doves S 14/4 near Rolla 4 S. 22/2 near
Rolla 6 S.

Eurasian Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*
SCOLOPACIDAE(Scolopacinae):Woodcocks,Snipes S 15/4 1 flushed along
Chhoa Dar track.

Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbatus*
ACCIPITRIDAE(Accipitrinae):Hawks,Eagles S 13/4 1 S. 15/4 1 imm seen
from above along Chhoa Dar track. Beautiful.

Himalayan Griffon *Gyps himalayensis*
ACCIPITRIDAE(Accipitrinae):Hawks,Eagles S 23/4 on opposite slope during
walk from Rolla to Gushaini 4 S (2 adults and 2 juveniles) flying and perched, and being
harassed by crows. 24/4 on drive up to Rothang 3 S.

Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus*
ACCIPITRIDAE(Accipitrinae):Hawks,Eagles S 13/4 5 S high overhead on
migration. 24/4 4 S on road to Rotang.

Shikra ACCIPITRIDAE(Accipitrinae):Hawks,Eagles	Accipiter badius	S 25/5 1 s in Manali Nature Park
Eurasian Sparrowhawk ACCIPITRIDAE(Accipitrinae):Hawks,Eagles [melaschistos]	Accipiter nisus	S 22/4 near Rolla 1 male S
Common Buzzard ACCIPITRIDAE(Accipitrinae):Hawks,Eagles	Buteo buteo	S 18/4 1 S near Shilt. [refectus]
Black Eagle ACCIPITRIDAE(Accipitrinae):Hawks,Eagles [perniger]	Ictinaetus malayensis	S 15/4 Silth 2 S. 17/4 1 S.
Golden Eagle ACCIPITRIDAE(Accipitrinae):Hawks,Eagles	Aquila chrysaetos	S 15/4 Silth 2 S [daphanea]
Booted Eagle ACCIPITRIDAE(Accipitrinae):Hawks,Eagles	Hieraaetus pennatus	S 15/4 Silth 2 birds S. Male performed display flight and then copulated with female. 23/4 on walk from Rolla to Gushaini 1 S.
Common Kestrel FALCONIDAE(Falconinae,Falconini):True Falcons	Falco tinnunculus	S 23/4 1 S [?interstinctus]
Merlin FALCONIDAE(Falconinae,Falconini):True Falcons	Falco columbarius	S 17/4 1 S [?lymani]
Peregrine Falcon FALCONIDAE(Falconinae,Falconini):True Falcons	Falco peregrinus	S 22/4 near Rolla in evening 1 S. 24/4 on road to Rothang Pass 1 S. [peregrinator]
Black-headed Jay CORVIDAE(Corvinae,Corvini):Crows,Magpies,Jays	Garrulus lanceolatus	S 15/4 Silth 1 S.
Gold-billed Magpie CORVIDAE(Corvinae,Corvini):Crows,Magpies,Jays	Urocissa flavirostris	S 13/4 4 S near Sai Ropa. 15/4 on walk up to Silth 5 S. 23/4 3 S. [cucullata]
Grey Treepie CORVIDAE(Corvinae,Corvini):Crows,Magpies,Jays [occidentalis]	Dendrocitta formosae	S 13/4 1 S near Sai Ropa.
Spotted Nutcracker CORVIDAE(Corvinae,Corvini):Crows,Magpies,Jays	Nucifraga caryocatactes	S 15/4 Silth 2 S & 5 H. Common around Khorli Poi [hemispila]

Red-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*
CORVIDAE(Corvinae,Corvini):Crows,Magpies,Jays S 15/4 2 S near Shilt
[himalayanus]

Yellow-billed Chough *Pyrrhocorax graculus*
CORVIDAE(Corvinae,Corvini):Crows,Magpies,Jays S 24/4 on road to Rothang
Pass 3 S.

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*
CORVIDAE(Corvinae,Corvini):Crows,Magpies,Jays S Common. Fair number
seen every day. [intermedius] to 4000m

Common Raven *Corvus corax*
CORVIDAE(Corvinae,Corvini):Crows,Magpies,Jays S 24/4 on road to Rothang 4
S [tibetanus]

Long-tailed Minivet *Pericrocotus ethologus*
CORVIDAE(Corvinae,Oriolini):Orioles,Cuckooshrikes S 14/4 near Rolla 2 (m & f) S.
15/4 nera Silth 2 S with nest. 19/4 Khorli Poi 2 S. [favillaceus]

Yellow-bellied Fantail *Rhipidura hypoxantha*
CORVIDAE(Dicurinae,Rhipidurini):Fantails S 17/4 on walk to Ghranel 2 S.

Ashy Drongo *Dicurus leucophaeus*
Corvidae(Dicurinae,Dicurini):Drongos S 13/4 1 S Sai Ropa. 15/4 2 sS
walking up to Shilt [longicaudatus]

Brown Dipper *Cinclus pallasii* CINCLIDAE:Dippers
S always seen along Tirthan River. also pair seen in river near Manali. [tenuirostris]

Chestnut-bellied Rock-Thrush *Monticola rufiventris*
MUSCICAPIDAE(Turdinae):True Thrushes S 15/4 near Silth 2 S.

Blue Whistling-Thrush *Myiophonus caeruleus*
MUSCICAPIDAE(Turdinae):True Thrushes S Common almost everywhere.
[temminckii]

Plain-backed Thrush *Zoothera mollissima*
MUSCICAPIDAE(Turdinae):True Thrushes S 15/4 near Silth and every day
thereafter 1 S. This bird had a distinct buffy ear-covert. 16/4 2 S lacked buffy ear-covert.
20/4 Khorli Poi 1 S. [mollissima]

White-collared Blackbird *Turdus albocinctus*
MUSCICAPIDAE(Turdinae):True Thrushes S 15/4 Silth 2 S. 16/4 Silth 4 S.
17/4 6 S.

Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica*
MUSCICAPIDAE(Muscicapinae,Muscicapini):Old World Flycatchers S 22/4 on walk down
from Khorli Poi near Rolla 1 S.

Rusty-tailed Flycatcher *Muscicapa ruficauda*
MUSCICAPIDAE(Muscicapinae,Muscicapini):Old World Flycatchers S 13/4 1 S near Sai
Ropa. 16/4 near Silth 2 S.

Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher *Ficedula strophiate*
MUSCICAPIDAE(Muscicapinae,Muscicapini):Old World Flycatchers S 16/4 near Silth 3 S
[strophiate]

Little Pied Flycatcher *Ficedula westermanni*
MUSCICAPIDAE(Muscicapinae,Muscicapini):Old World Flycatchers S 14/4 1 S walk from
Gusaini to Rolla. 15/4 on way up to Silth 5 S. [collini]

Ultramarine Flycatcher *Ficedula superciliaris*
MUSCICAPIDAE(Muscicapinae,Muscicapini):Old World Flycatchers S 14/4 near Rolla 2
S. 15/4 on way up to Silth 4 S. 18/4 Khorli Poi 1 S. [superciliaris]

Rufous-bellied Niltava *Niltava sundara*
MUSCICAPIDAE(Muscicapinae,Muscicapini):Old World Flycatchers S 15/4 Silth 2 S. 16/4
track below Silth 10 S among rhododendrons. [whistleri]

Blue-throated Flycatcher *Cyornis rubeculoides*
MUSCICAPIDAE(Muscicapinae,Muscicapini):Old World Flycatchers S 14/4 1 S on walk
from Gushaini to Rolla [rubeculoides]

Grey-headed Canary-Flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis*
MUSCICAPIDAE(Muscicapinae,Muscicapini):Old World Flycatchers S 15/4 on way up to
Silth 6 S. [calochrysea]

Orange-flanked Bush-Robin *Tarsiger cyanurus*
MUSCICAPIDAE(Muscicapinae,Saxicolini):Chats S 16/4 1 female S near Silth.
18/4 1 male seen near Silth. [pallidior]

Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*
MUSCICAPIDAE(Muscicapinae,Saxicolini):Chats S 25/4 on road to Rothang
Pass at 3400m 4 S [rufiventris]

White-capped Water-Redstart *Chaimarrornis leucocephalus*
MUSCICAPIDAE(Muscicapinae,Saxicolini):Chats S 13/4 1 S Tirthan River. 14/4
1 S Tirthan River. 22/4 1 S Tirthan River. 23/4 3 S near Gushaini. 25/4 10 S on stream
below Rothang Pass.

Plumbeous Water-Redstart *Rhyacornis fuliginosus*
MUSCICAPIDAE(Muscicapinae,Saxicolini):Chats S Very common along Tirthan
River [fuliginosus]

Spotted Forktail *Enicurus maculatus*
MUSCICAPIDAE(Muscicapinae,Saxicolini):Chats S 13/4 1 S near Sai Ropa.
[maculatus]

Grey Bushchat *Saxicola ferrea*
MUSCICAPIDAE(Muscicapinae,Saxicolini):Chats S Common at lower altitudes.

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*
STURNIDAE (Sturnini): Starlings, Mynas S Common near human
settlements [tristis]

White-cheeked Nuthatch *Sitta leucopsis*
SITTIDAE (Sittinae): Nuthatches S 18/4 1 H near Shilt but would not
come into view. 19/4 Khorli Poi much more common here than at Shilt. Many calling and 1
S calling from dead snag atop a fir tree.

Bar-tailed Tree-creeper *Certhia himalayana*
CERTHIIDAE (Certhiinae, Certhiini): Northern Creepers S 17/4 1 S on walk down to
Ghranel. 19/4 Khorli Poi 1 S.

Dark-gray Tit *Periparus rufonuchalis*
PARIDAE (Parinae): Titmice, Chickadees S 14/4 2 S near Rolla. 15/4 near
Silth 2 S. 16/4 2 S.

Rufous-vented Tit *Periparus rubidiventris*
PARIDAE (Parinae): Titmice, Chickadees S 16/4 near Silth 2 S [rubidiventris]

Black-crested Tit *Periparus melanolophus*
PARIDAE (Parinae): Titmice, Chickadees S 17/4 4 S on walk down to
Ghranel. 19/4 Khorli Poi 5 S am and 5 more seen late afternoon.

Great Tit *Parus major*
PARIDAE (Parinae): Titmice, Chickadees S 14/4 2 S on walk from Gushaini
to Rolla [cashmirensis]

Green-backed Tit *Parus monticolus*
PARIDAE (Parinae): Titmice, Chickadees S 14/4 6 S on walk from Gushaini
to Rolla. 15/4 on walk up to Silth 6 S. 22/4 near Rolla 3 S [monticolus]

Black-throated Tit *Aegithalos concinnus*
AEGITHALIDAE: Long-tailed Tits, Bushtits S 15/4 at Silth 1 S. [iredalei]

Himalayan Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucogenys*
PYCNONOTIDAE: Bulbuls S 13/4 2 S; 14/3 3 S near Sai Ropa.
[leucogenys]

Black Bulbul *Hypsipetes leucocephalus*
PYCNONOTIDAE: Bulbuls S 13/4 1 S near Sai Ropa. 14/4 1 S
near Rolla. 15/4 1 S on way up to Silth. [psaroides]

Siberian Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus tristis*
SYLVIIDAE (Acrocephalinae): Leaf-Warblers S 13/4 1 S near Sai Ropa. 18/4
near Silth 1 S.

Tickell's Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus affinis*
SYLVIIDAE (Acrocephalinae): Leaf-Warblers S 16/4 near Silth 1 S. 18/4 1 S.

Hume's Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus humei*
SYLVIIDAE(Acrocephalinae):Leaf-Warblers S 14/4 1 S near Rolla. 16/4 4 D
near Shilt. 18/4 6 S near Shilt. [humei]

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*
SYLVIIDAE(Acrocephalinae):Leaf-Warblers S 14/4 1 S near Rolla. 25/4 1 S
on road below Rothang Pass. [ludlowi]

Western Crowned-Warbler *Phylloscopus occipitalis*
SYLVIIDAE(Acrocephalinae):Leaf-Warblers S 15/4 Silth 2 S. 16/4 3 S.

Blyth's Leaf-Warbler *Phylloscopus reguloides*
SYLVIIDAE(Acrocephalinae):Leaf-Warblers S 15/4 Silth 4 S. [kashmiriensis]

Grey-hooded Warbler *Seicercus xanthoschistos*
SYLVIIDAE(Acrocephalinae):Leaf-Warblers S 14/4 2 S on walk from Gushaini
to Rolla. 15/4 2 S near Silth. 16/4 3 S. [xanthoschistos]

Striated Laughingthrush *Garrulax striatus*
SYLVIIDAE(Garrulacinae):Laughingthrushes S 15/4 at Silth 2 S. [striatus]

Variiegated Laughingthrush *Garrulax variegatus*
SYLVIIDAE(Garrulacinae):Laughingthrushes S 16/4 in rhododendron grove
near Shilt 1 S. 18/4 1 S.

Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush *Garrulax erythrocephalus*
SYLVIIDAE(Garrulacinae):Laughingthrushes S 14/4 2 S near Sai Ropa.
[erythrocephalus]

Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler *Pnoepyga albiventer*
SYLVIIDAE(Sylviinae,Timaliini):Babblers,Rhabdornis S 19/4 1 S near Camp at
Khorli Poi [pallidior]

Chestnut-tailed Minla *Minla strigula*
SYLVIIDAE(Sylviinae,Timaliini):Babblers,Rhabdornis S 18/4 above only farm in
park, before Rolla. 10 S. [simlaensis]

Rufous Sibia *Heterophasia capistrata*
SYLVIIDAE(Sylviinae,Timaliini):Babblers,Rhabdornis S 15/4 Silth 1 S. 16/4 4 S in
rhododendron grove near Shilt. [capistrata]

Whiskered Yuhina *Yuhina flavicollis*
SYLVIIDAE(Sylviinae,Timaliini):Babblers,Rhabdornis S 13/4 5 S;14/4 5 S near Sai
Ropa. 23/4 4 S near Gushaini. [albicollis]

Gould's Sunbird *Aethopyga gouldiae*
NECTARINIIDAE(Nectariniinae,Nectariniini):Sunbirds S 23/4 near Gatehouse at
entrance to park. 1 S very clearly at ca 1900m.

Russet Sparrow *Passer rutilans*
 PASSERIDAE(Passerinae):Sparrows,Rock-Sparrows S 13/4 6 S Sai Ropa

Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni*
 PASSERIDAE(Motacillinae):Wagtails,Pipits S 16/4 7 S in vicinity of Shilt. Very
 common on slopes below Rothang Pass. [hodgsoni]

Black-throated Accentor *Prunella atrogularis*
 PASSERIDAE(Prunellinae):Accentors,Dunnock S 16/4 near Shilt 1 S. later
 same day 3 S near camp [huttoni]

Plain Mountain-Finch *Leucosticte nemoricola*
 FRINGILLIDAE(Fringillinae,Carduelini):Goldfinches,CrossbillsS 15/4 Silth flock of 20 S
 well. 16/4 6 S. 17/4 40 S. [nemoricola]

Pink-browed Rosefinch *Carpodacus rodochrous*
 FRINGILLIDAE(Fringillinae,Carduelini):Goldfinches,Crossbills S 14/4 12 S on walk from
 Gushaini to Rolla. 16/4 4 S near Shilt. 23/4 3 S near Gushaini.

Vinaceous Rosefinch *Carpodacus vinaceus*
 FRINGILLIDAE(Fringillinae,Carduelini):Goldfinches,Crossbills S 25/5 on ice and snow
 where a river cut the road to Rothang Pass at ca 3500m 2 (male and female) S.

Orange Bullfinch *Pyrrhula aurantiaca*
 FRINGILLIDAE(Fringillinae,Carduelini):Goldfinches,Crossbills S 17/4 1 S near Shilt.

Red-headed Bullfinch *Pyrrhula erythrocephala*
 FRINGILLIDAE(Fringillinae,Carduelini):Goldfinches,Crossbills S 16/4 1 female S near
 Shilt.

Black-and-yellow Grosbeak *Mycerobas icteroides*
 FRINGILLIDAE(Fringillinae,Carduelini):Goldfinches,Crossbills S 15/4 Silth 2 S. Most
 common bird at Khorli Poi. Males singing from almost every tree. Males also seen
 pursuing females. 19/4 40 S .

Collared Grosbeak *Mycerobas affinis*
 FRINGILLIDAE(Fringillinae,Carduelini):Goldfinches,Crossbills S 16/4 near Shilt 6 S.

Rock Bunting *Emberiza cia*
 FRINGILLIDAE(Emberizinae,Emberizini):Buntings,Longspurs S 13/4 1 S near Sai
 Ropa.15/4 Silth 1 S. 16/4 2 S. [par]

