

Birding Paradise Circuit: Phulchowki, Shivapuri, and Koshi Tappu



Trip Overview

Experience Nepal's extraordinary avian diversity on this 10-day Birding Paradise Circuit, which connects three of the country's most rewarding birdwatching destinations; Phulchowki Hill, Shivapuri National Park, and Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve.

This carefully designed itinerary follows an altitudinal bird gradient from the mid-hill forests of the Kathmandu Valley to the wetlands of the eastern Terai, revealing the rich tapestry of endemic, migratory, and resident species that thrive in Nepal's varied ecosystems. From the vibrant mixed flocks of Phulchowki's rhododendron forests to the tranquil wetlands of Koshi Tappu teeming with storks, ducks, and raptors, each day offers new encounters and photographic opportunities.

Led by expert naturalist guides, you'll learn to identify species by sight and sound, explore key birding trails, and understand the ecological dynamics that sustain these habitats. This journey blends field-based exploration with relaxation and reflection, making it ideal for dedicated birders, naturalists, and

photographers seeking authentic immersion in Nepal's wild landscapes.

Total Trip Days: 10 Days / 9 Nights

Trip Highlights

- Explore Nepal's premier birding circuit spanning hills, forests, and wetlands
- Observe a remarkable altitudinal bird gradient from 1,400 m to the Terai plains
- Spot endemic species like the spiny babbler and Nepal Cutia in Phulchowki
- Join guided forest walks amid rhododendron, oak, and pine habitats
- Discover the rich avifauna of Shivapuri National Park near Kathmandu
- Study mixed-flock foraging and vocalizations under expert naturalist guidance
- Fly to the eastern lowlands for immersive wetland birding at Koshi Tappu
- Observe rare species such as Bengal florican, swamp francolin, and greater adjutant stork
- Enjoy boat rides and embankment walks ideal for photography and observation
- Experience both dawn and dusk birding sessions for maximum sightings
- Stay in comfortable nature lodges surrounded by tranquil birding environments
- Depart with a detailed species checklist and an enriched understanding of Nepal's birdlife

Itinerary

Day 1:

Upon arrival in Kathmandu, you are transferred to a heritage-style hotel. Your naturalist guide welcomes you in the evening for a briefing on Nepal's diverse avian ecosystems, from mid-hill forests to lowland wetlands. You also receive guidance on ethical birding practices, use of optics, and checklist preparation for the journey ahead.

Day 2:

In the early morning, you drive to the foothills of Phulchowki, a biodiversity hotspot with a remarkable variety of forest birds. The day is spent walking along forest trails, observing mixed-species flocks and endemic species such as the spiny babbler and cutia. Afternoon tea breaks amidst the moss-covered forests provide moments to scan for raptors soaring above the ridges.

Day 3:

Today, you trek to the summit of Phulchowki, where the altitude and panoramic views create ideal conditions for birdwatching. The trail passes through oak, rhododendron, and pine forests, home to laughingthrushes, trogons, and sunbirds. Dawn and late afternoon are particularly productive, with flocks moving between feeding sites. The evening is spent reviewing species observed and updating your checklist.

Day 4:

You descend to the Godavari botanical garden area, exploring lower slopes and cultivated lands. The focus is on observing forest edge species, resident passerines, and seasonal migrants. Afternoon walks provide opportunities to watch butterflies and small mammals, while enjoying the lush scenery of subtropical valleys.

Day 5:

A morning drive brings you to Shivapuri National Park, situated north of Kathmandu. The day is dedicated to trekking along forest trails, searching for the endemic spiny babbler, parakeets, and Himalayan thrushes. Quiet observation points along streams allow glimpses of foraging birds and occasional raptors. Overnight is in a lodge close to the park entrance.

Day 6:

You continue exploring Shivapuri's dense forests and ridges. Early morning hikes are timed for peak bird activity, with your guide pointing out vocalizations and feeding behaviors. You may also spot muntjac, Himalayan squirrels, and other small mammals that inhabit the forest understory. Afternoon sessions are spent along streams and viewpoints, documenting

resident and migratory species.

Day 7:

A morning flight takes you east to Biratnagar, followed by a scenic drive to Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve. The landscape shifts from mid-hills to the flat, expansive wetlands of the Terai. Upon arrival at your riverside lodge, the evening is spent scanning the barrage and surrounding marshes for storks, pelicans, and herons gathering for roosting.

Day 8:

Koshi Tappu offers unparalleled wetland birding. A full-day exploration includes boat rides, embankment walks, and hides to observe endangered species such as swamp francolin, Bengal florican, and the greater adjutant stork. River channels provide sightings of wild water buffalo and smooth-coated otters, while herons, egrets, and wintering ducks are abundant.

Day 9:

You spend the day focused on both dawn and dusk birding sessions, capturing the diversity of waterbirds, grassland species, and raptors. Early morning sees flocks moving along reed beds, while the evening light illuminates storks and pelicans returning to roost. Afternoon is for photography, observation, and reflection on the region's extraordinary biodiversity.

Day 10:

After a final morning walk along the Koshi embankments, you transfer to Biratnagar for a flight back to Kathmandu. The journey concludes with memories of hundreds of bird species, immersive mid-hill forests, and the sweeping wetlands of eastern Nepal. You depart with a detailed checklist, photographs, and the lasting impression of Nepal as a premier birding destination.