

## THE BIRDS OF LANTANG VALLEY TREK

Nepal, Himalaya, Lantang NP, June 20-26, 2017

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**Time-table:** This was our first exploration of Lantang NP area after my fifth visiting in June the Lower Mustang area (see the LIST OF BREEDING BIRDS OF LOWER MUSTANG - [http://russiannature.com/PDF/LIST\\_BIRDS\\_MUSTANG\\_HIMALAYA\\_KM2017.pdf](http://russiannature.com/PDF/LIST_BIRDS_MUSTANG_HIMALAYA_KM2017.pdf)). All observations have been made in Lantang River valley, along the trek from Syabrubesi (1450 m) to Kyanjin Gumba and Jatang (3830-3900 m), in total, 30-35 km to one side. Time-table of this reconnaissance birding was as follows (in total 7 days):

20th June - Syabrubesi (1450m) - Lama Hotel (2500m) (approx. 12 km).

21st June - Lama Hotel (2500m) - Mundu (3500m) (approx. 12 km).

22d June - Mundu (3500m) - Kyanjin Gumba (3830 m), with radial roots on Tsergo Ri Mt slopes (4 + 3 km)

23d June - root from Kyanjin Gumba up the river to Jatang map-site (3900) and return to Kyanjin (app.10km).

24th June - Kyanjin Gumba (3830 m) - Lama Hotel (2500m) (approx. 18 km).

25th June - Lama Hotel (2500m) - Bamboo Lodge (2970m) and the root by the upper trail from Rimche (2400m) to Sharpagaon village (2563m).

26th June - Bamboo Lodge (2970m) to Syabrubesi (1450m).

## Relief, landscape, habitats, floristics along the trek

The entire Lantang valley trek can be subdivided to three principal portions

(see Maps 1-2, below the Table) :

**(1)From Syabrubesi village (1450m) to Bamboo Lodge (1970m)** (app. 6 km): the trail follows along Lantang Canyon with secondary broadleaved subtropical forest, with Acacia trees and many "tropical" butterflies. Strictly W to E direction, total shift in elevation is about 500 m; 2-3 hours of direct walk.

**(2)From Bamboo Lodge (1970m) to Ghodatabela (Kyurpunesa) site (3010 m)**(app. 9-10 km): the trail follows roughly along the Lantang Gorge, going up and up across the moist broadleaved lower and then upper temperate forests with different oaks (brown oaks), laurels, maples etc., and tree-like rhododendrons in the upper part. At height 2800 m (half a way up from Lama Hotel) the Himalayan Tsuga trees appear in the riverine forest strip. The last groves of brown oaks can be seen on the southern slopes about the Ghodatabela site. W to E direction from Bamboo site to the hanging bridge across Lantang River change for NE direction from the bridge to Ghodatabela site. Total shift in elevation is about 1100 m; 5-6 hours of direct walk.

**(3)From Ghodatabela (Kyurpunesa) site (3010 m) up to the Kyanjin Gumba (3830 m) and Langshiza Kharka (about 4000 m)**, app.15 + 12 km), total shift in elevation is about 900 m. Mainly W to E direction of the trail. This portion is classical "hanging river valley", broad enough in the frame of the slopes of the rocky Lantang Canyon. It can be also subdivided into 3 smaller portions:

**3-1 - Between Ghodatabela (Kyurpunesa) site (3010 m) and tiny Thyangsyap Village (3140 m).**

This flat portion of the river valley (app. 3 km length), with very weak shift in elevation (about 100-150 m), is covered by dense tugai-like riverine bush, up to 7-9 m in height (barbares, wild-rose, rhododendrons). The slopes of canyon lack forest at all (Lantang Himal side) or the first Fir-Birch strips appear on the opposite side.

**3-2 - Between Thyangsyap village (3140 m) and Mundu village (3600 m).** This flat portion of the river valley (app. 6 km length), with total shift in elevation about 400 m, includes two other steps in the elevation of the hanging river valley. The broad valley from Thyangsyap village 3 km up is covered by still dense bush up to 4-5 m in height. The trees of Tsuga slowly disappear and are substituted by the trees of Fir (but no true fir forest, nowhere, on the slopes of canyon). Singular trees of the Larch appear along the main water course near Mundu village. The large portion of the river valley in the area of the Lantang village is covered by the stony fields which had sliced from the Lantang Himal side, as avellange, in 2015 (now this is most poor area on the trek. In the area of the tiny Mundu village is the

last good oases of dense bush of the Mustang-type (Caragana, Wild-Rose, Juniperus shrubbery about 2-3 m in height) in the river valley.

**3-3 - Between Mundu village (3600 m) and Kyanjin Gumba (3830 m) and mainly up the river from Kyanjin Gumba (east in direction of of Lankshiza Kharha (app. 4000 m); and around Kyanjin Gumba (10-20 km).** Flat upper Lantang valley with Tibetan landscape. Mainly steppe-like stony pastures with patches of dry shrubbery and willow bush (up to 4 m in height) along the water streams (the same on the southern slopes of Kyanjin Ri and Tsergo Ri). The dense strip of subalpine Birches (*Betula utilis*) stretches along the north-oriented slopes 5-6 km up along the river valley from Kyanjin Gumba area (on the opposite site of the river) and the patches of high willow bush can be traced 5-7 km more further. The river bed in the upper Lantang valley is with pebble-fields.

**(4) Upper trail leads from Syabrubesi up and then across the right side of the Lantang canyon** (the southern slopes of Pangsang Lekh) at elevation 2300 - 2500 m up to Rimche site near the Lama Hotel. In its portion between Sherpagaon village (2563m) and Rimche Lodge (2400 m, 3-4 km of walk) it follows along the upper tree line with some patches of tree-rododendrons and singular pines and crossing many open grassy patches at steep slope (in the area of Sherpagaon village there are patches of "wild gardens").

### Abbreviations and other marks in the table:

**Abundance** on the trek: **com** - common; **com to r** - sporadic or declining in density; **+** - species was registered on the trek (1-2 observations); **?** - question mark means that we strongly suspect the presence of the species in this part of trek; **br** - broods registered (netlings\hatchlings)

**Habitats:** **riv** - always close to river (river gorge, riverine forest ; **f** - forest species; **bs** -bush\shrubberi in open landscape; **gr**- grassland\pastures in open landscape; **v** - villages\lodges

\***asterisk marks** the species shared with Lower Mustang area.

-Species that mark each portion of the trek by its particular vocal or action activity (attract particular attention of trekker) are **selected by bold fond.**

### Table 1. LIST OF SPECIES \ DESTRIUTON ALONG THE TREK.

(overall: **87-88 species; passerine birds 75-76 species**

A few passerine species have not yet been identified by their voices.

| Species (виды)                    | Subtropical forest part<br>Syabrubesi-Bamboo (1)<br>1500-1800m | Temperate forest part (2).<br>Bamboo - Ghodatabela<br>1900-3000 | Upper trail (4) Rimche-Sherpagaon<br>2400-2500 | Bushy valley (3-1\2)<br>Ghodatabela - Mundu<br>3100-3600 | Grassy valley (3-3)<br>Kyanjin-Jatang<br>3700-4000 |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|
| <i>Lophophorus impejanus</i> *    |  |   |  | +  | ++   |
| <i>Accipiter nisus</i> *          |  |   |  |  | +(f)   |
| <i>Gypaetus barbatus</i> *        |  |   |  |  | ++   |
| <i>Ibidorhyncha struthersii</i> * |  |   |  |  | <b>com:br</b>                                      |
| <i>Streptopelia orientalis</i> *  |  | +   |  | ++   | <b>com</b> (gr-v)                                  |
| <i>Columba leuconota</i> *        |  |   |  | <b>com</b> (v-gr)  | <b>com</b> (gr-v)                                  |
| <i>Columba hodgsoni</i>           |  |   | +  |  |  |
| <i>Treron sphenura</i>            |  | +   |  |  |  |
| <i>Hierococcyx sparverioides</i>  |  |   | +  | (voice)  |  |
| <i>Megalaima virens</i>           |  |   | +  |  |  |

|   |                   |                                   |                   |                                |                   |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
|   |                   |                                   |                   |                                |                   |
| <i>Picumnus innuminatus</i>                                     |                   | + (f) fem.                        |                   |                                |                   |
| <i>Dendrocopos sp.</i>  |                   |                                   | + (voice)         |                                |                   |
| <i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>                                    | com (f, v)        |                                   |                   |                                |                   |
| <i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>                                     | <b>com</b> (f, v) |                                   |                   |                                |                   |
| <i>Pycnonotus leucogenys</i>                                    | <b>com</b> (f,v)  |                                   |                   |                                |                   |
| <i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus</i><br>(race <i>psaroides</i> )     | <b>com</b> (f,v)  |                                   |                   |                                |                   |
| <i>Pericrocotus ethologus*</i>                                  |                   | +<br>(upper zone)                 |                   | ++                             |                   |
| <i>Aethopyga nipalensis</i><br>(race <i>nipalensis</i> )        |                   | +                                 | +                 | <b>com</b> (bs)                |                   |
| <i>Heterophasia capistrata</i><br>(race <i>nigriceps</i> )      |                   | <b>com</b> (f)                    | com to r          | com to r                       |                   |
| <i>Garrulax striatus</i><br>(race <i>vibex</i> )                |                   | <b>com</b> (f)                    |                   |                                |                   |
| <i>Garrulax lineatus*</i>                                       |                   | com (f, trail, up<br>from Rimche) | com (trail)       | com to r                       |                   |
| <i>Garrulax variegatus*</i>                                     |                   |                                   | <b>com</b> (v-bs) | <b>com</b> (bs)                | <b>com to r</b>   |
| <i>Garrulax albogularis</i>                                     |                   | +                                 |                   |                                |                   |
| <i>Garrulax affinis*</i>  |                   |                                   |                   | +                              |                   |
| <i>Garrulax erythrocephalus</i>                                 |                   | +                                 |                   |                                |                   |
| <i>Yuhina occipitalis</i>                                       |                   | ++                                |                   | ++ :br                         |                   |
| <i>Yuhina flavicollis</i>                                       |                   | ++                                |                   | ++                             |                   |
| <i>Yuhina gularis</i>   |                   | +                                 | +                 | +?                             |                   |
| <i>Minla strigula</i>   |                   | +                                 |                   | +                              |                   |
| <i>Pnoepyga sp. (albiventer?)</i>                               |                   | <b>com</b> (f) songs              |                   |                                |                   |
| <i>Prinia criniger</i>  | <b>com</b> (gr)   |                                   | <b>com</b> (gr)   |                                |                   |
| <i>Cettia flavolivacea*</i>                                     |                   |                                   |                   | com (bs)                       |                   |
| <i>Phyll. magnirostris*</i>                                     |                   | com (riv) (up<br>from L.H.)       | +                 | <b>com</b> (riv)               | com to r(riv)     |
| <i>Phylloscop. trochiloides*</i><br>(race <i>trochiloides</i> ) |                   | ++ (up from<br>Lama Hotel)        | ++                | <b>com to r</b> (f-bs)         | <b>com</b> (f-bs) |
| <i>Phylloscopus reguloides*</i>                                 |                   | com to r (f)<br>(up from Lama H.) | +                 | <b>com</b> (f)<br>(lower part) |                   |

|  |                  |  |                |                          |                                |
|--|------------------|--|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Phylloscopus affinis</i> *<br>(race <i>affinis</i> )                |                  |  | com (bs)       | <b>com</b> (bs)          | <b>com</b> (bs)                |
| <i>Phylloscopus pulcher</i> *  |                  |  |                |                          | com (f):br                     |
| <i>Phylloscopus maculipennis</i>                                       |                  |  |                | + (f)                    |                                |
| <i>Seicercus xanthoschistos</i><br>(west. race <i>xanthoschistos</i> ) | +                |  |                |                          |                                |
| <i>Seicercus polyogenys</i>  |                  | + (br)                                   |                |                          |                                |
| <i>Seicercus castaniceps</i><br>(west. race <i>castaniceps</i> )       |                  | + (br)                                   |                |                          |                                |
| <i>Seicercus wistleri</i> *  |                  |  |                | ++ (bs) songs<br>(songs) |                                |
| <i>Abroscopus shisticeps</i>   | +                | ++                                       |                |                          |                                |
| <i>Eumyias thalassina</i>  | + (Syabru Besi)  | + (Rimche)                               |                |                          |                                |
| <i>Niltava sundara</i><br>(race <i>sundara</i> )                       |                  | + (br)                                   |                |                          |                                |
| <i>Ficedula strophciata</i> *  |                  |  |                | +                        |                                |
| <i>Ficedula superciliaris</i> *<br>(race ? <i>superc. aestigma</i> )   |                  |  | +(bs, Sharp.v) |                          |                                |
| ? <i>Rhipidura hypoxantha</i> *  |                  | +? (voice in tsuga<br>patch, up from LH) |                |                          |                                |
| <i>Myophonus caeruleus</i> *<br>(race <i>temminckii</i> )              | <b>com</b> (riv) | <b>com</b> (riv)                         | +              | <b>com</b> (riv,v)\br    | com to r                       |
| <i>Oreocincla dauma</i>  |                  |  | +              |                          |                                |
| <i>Tarsiger (cyan.) rufilatus</i>                                      |                  |  |                |                          | com (f):br                     |
| <i>Hodgsonius phoenicurus</i> *<br>(race <i>phoenicuroides</i> )       |                  |  |                | <b>com</b> (bs)          | <b>com</b> (bs)                |
| <i>Phoenicurus frontalis</i> *   |                  |  |                |                          | <b>com</b> (v-gr)              |
| <i>Rhyacornis fuliginosus</i> *  | <b>com:br</b>    | <b>com:br</b>                            |                | com to r                 |                                |
| <i>Chaimarrornis leucoc-s</i> *  | com              | <b>com:br</b>                            |                | com                      | ?                              |
| <i>Saxicola ferrea</i> *   |                  |  |                | +                        |                                |
| <i>Enicurus scouleri</i>   | +                |  |                |                          |                                |
| <i>Enicurus immaculatus</i>  |                  | +  |                |                          |                                |
| <i>Cinclus (sp) *</i>  |                  |  |                | + (br) up from<br>Mundu  | ?                              |
| <i>Troglodites troglodites</i> *<br>(paca <i>nipalensis</i> )          |                  |  |                |                          | <b>com</b> (v-bs)<br>(Kyanjin) |

|   |                            |             |              |                  |                |
|---|----------------------------|-------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|
| <i>Prunella storphiata</i> *<br>(race <i>strophata</i> ? <i>jordoni</i> ) |                            |             |              |                  | com to r (bs)  |
| <i>Lanius tephronotus</i><br>(race <i>tephronotus</i> )                   |                            |             |              | + (bs)           | + (bs)         |
| <i>Urocissa flavirostris</i><br>(race <i>flavirostris</i> )               |                            | ++          |              | +                |                |
| <i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i> *<br>(race <i>hemispila</i> )              |                            |             | + (pines)    |                  |                |
| <i>Pyrrhoc. pyrrhacorax</i> *   |                            |             | +            | com (gr)         | com (gr)       |
| <i>Pyrrhacorax graculus</i> *   |                            |             |              | com (gr)         | com (gr)       |
| <i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i> *<br>(race <i>intermedius</i> )               | ?                          | com(lodges) | +            | com (v, gr)      | +              |
| <i>Corvus corax</i> *   |                            |             |              |                  | +?             |
| <i>Aegialos concinnus</i><br>(race <i>iredalei</i> )                      |                            | +           |              |                  |                |
| <i>Aegialos sp. (concinnus)</i>   |                            |             | +            |                  |                |
| <i>Parus monticolus</i> *   |                            |             | +:br (lodge) | com to r:br      |                |
| <i>Parus dichrous</i> *   |                            |             |              | com to r:br      |                |
| <i>Parus rubidiventris</i> *<br>(race <i>rubidiventris</i> )              |                            |             |              | + br             |                |
| <i>Parus xanthogenys</i>  | +                          |             |              |                  |                |
| <i>Sitta ?himalaensis</i>   |                            | +           |              |                  |                |
| <i>Anthus hodgsoni</i> *<br>(race <i>hodgsoni</i> )                       |                            |             |              | com (gr)         | com (gr)       |
| <i>Motacilla cinerea</i> *  | ?                          | ?           |              | com to r:br      | ?              |
| <i>Motacilla (alba) alboides</i> *  |                            |             |              | +                | com:br         |
| <i>Delichon nipalensis</i> *  |                            |             |              | vil.Lantang area |                |
| <i>Passer montanus</i> *<br>(race <i>obscuratus</i> ?)                    | com<br>(only (Syabrubesi)) |             |              |                  |                |
| <i>Carduelis spinoides</i> *  |                            |             | + (Rimche)   | ++(Mundu)        |                |
| <i>Carpodacus rhodopeplus</i>   |                            |             | + (Rimche)   |                  |                |
| <i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i> *<br>(race <i>roseatus</i> )                 |                            |             |              | + (bs)           | + (bs) (voice) |
| <i>Carpodacus thura</i>   |                            |             |              |                  | +(bs)          |

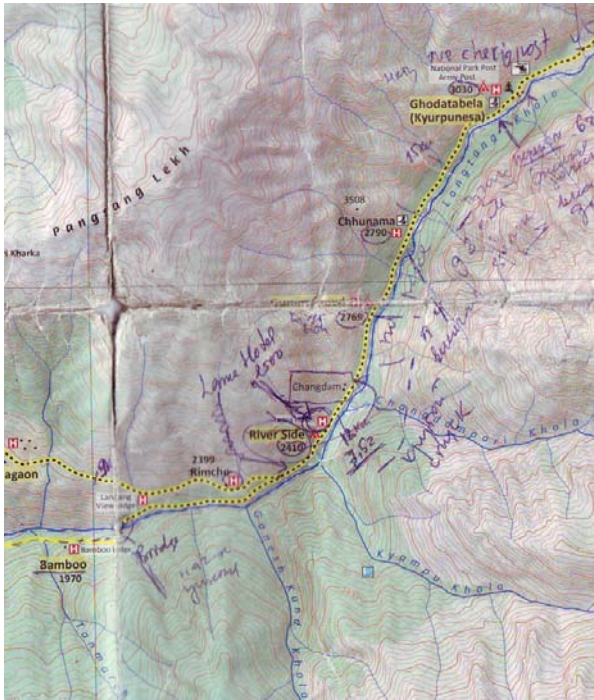
|                                  |  |  |  |          |               |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|----------|---------------|
| <i>Carpodacus rodochroa</i>      |  |  |  | + (bs)   |               |
| <i>Carpodacus puniceus</i>       |  |  |  | +        |               |
| <i>Pyrrhula erythrocephala</i> * |  |  |  | com (bs) | +             |
| <i>Propyrrhula subhimahala</i> * |  |  |  | ++ (bs)  |               |
| <i>Mycerobas carnipes</i> *      |  |  |  |          | + (f) (voice) |
|                                  |  |  |  |          |               |

Map 1. Lantang Valley's first portion, from Suyabrubesi Village to Bamboo Lodge.





Map 2. Lantang Valley's second portion, from Bamboo Lodge across Lama Hotel to Ghodatabela site (main elevation on the trek).



Map 3. Lantang Valley's third portion, from Ghodatabela site to Kyanjin Gumba.

