



Scheduled Tours

Point Calimere Birding Trip

When: 15th to 20th December 2008 (5 nights & 4 days)

Cost: INR 14250 (USD 320) all inclusive

19 Maharani Chinnamba Road
Alwarpet, Chennai 600 018. India
e-mail: contact@ficuswildlife.net
www.ficuswildlife.net

Introduction

A birding expedition to a globally recognized wetland (RAMSAR site) during the peak wintering season of birds in the wetlands of South Asia. This is an ideal tour for bird-watchers keen on recording several sub-continental wetland rarities among 250 plus species of birds recorded from the location. This is also among the less explored, but highly noteworthy, birding locations in India.

Located on the southeast coast of India, in the state of Tamil Nadu, Point Calimere is a globally significant wintering ground and stopover for migratory wetland waders and wildfowl on their southward journey to wintering sites in Sri Lanka. The delta of the Cauvery river, the south Indian 'Ganges' enriches Point Calimere's habitat diversity which includes, freshwater and salt marshes, brackish lagoons, mud-flats, salt-pans, coastal beaches, mangroves and terrestrial habitats including grasslands and dry evergreen vegetation unique to southeast India.

Notably, the critically endangered spoon-billed sandpiper and threatened Asian Dowitcher are regular winter visitors to Point Calimere. Winter records from the wetlands also include both flamingos among numerous waders, terns, gulls, ducks, herons and birds of prey. There are several sub-continental endemics among the land-birds of Point Calimere, including the Indian bushlark, white-browed bulbul and plaintive cuckoo. Intriguing records of the Kashmir flycatcher and broad-tailed grassbird also exist from the terrestrial habitats of Point Calimere.

Other wildlife that you are likely to encounter in the location includes a thriving population of the patchily distributed blackbuck - an antelope, Indian pangolin, giant flying foxes and several species smaller mammals. Notably, dolphins can sometimes be sighted near the fishing jetty of the Kodikarai village and the threatened dugongs, a large sea mammal, are known to occur in the shallow bays around Point Calimere.

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1: Chennai to Tiruchinapalli (Trichy) by overnight train. Departs Chennai 2230 arrives Trichy 0500 on day 2.

Day 2: Trichy to Calimere by road. Arrive in Calimere by early afternoon. Settle down and relax until evening birding. Explore the dry evergreen and grassland habitat of the Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary for birds and other wildlife. Notable sightings of land-birds can include the subcontinental endemics such as the white-browed bulbul and blue-faced malkoha. Close to 100 other species of land birds have been recorded from these habitats. Sightings of shore birds are not uncommon on the beach bordering the sanctuary.

Day 3: Morning birding within the Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary (locations and habitat similar to Day 2 evening). Evening birding in the salt-marshes, beaches, lagoons and swamps around the Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary. Look for waders, terns, gulls and other wildfowl. Especially interesting sightings can include rarities such as the Caspian plover, spoon-billed sandpiper and Asian dowitcher. Both lesser and larger flamingos are numerous winter visitors to the lagoons in these areas.

Day 4: Morning and evening birding similar to Day 3 evening.

Day 5: Morning birding similar to Day 4. Depart by road to Trichy in the afternoon. Night train to Chennai. Departs Trichy 2230, arrives Chennai 0500 on day 6

FYI and Guidelines

1. Point Calimere and its surrounding areas offer minimal tourist infrastructure. Accommodation will be basic and food will be local and largely vegetarian (rice, lentils, vegetables and fruits). We will, however, carry some 'convenience' food from Chennai.
2. Weather will be pleasant, and sunny, with temperatures rarely exceeding 30 Celsius and rarely dipping below 20 Celsius. However, cyclonic storms, associated with the winter monsoons are an infrequent occurrence at this time of the year. Please bring rain-gear just in case.
3. Please bring binoculars or a spotting scope. Many of the wetland birds do not allow close approach.
4. Most birding will be on foot and sometimes in marshy areas. We recommend that you wear comfortable walking shoes or river sandals while birding.
5. A hat and sunblock are highly recommended and sunglasses will be useful.
6. Please bring essential medication with you.

Do send us an email at contact@ficuswildlife.net if you require any clarifications. We can take care of all your travel needs through our associates, UCAL Travels Private Ltd www.ucaltravels.com



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Terms and Conditions

1. Tour costs are based on twin sharing basis ex-Chennai and is all inclusive (transport, accommodation, food, personnel and all taxes and fees)). Personnel includes an expert birding guide, a tour leader and resource persons from the local fishing community.
2. The last date to sign up for the tour is Nov 15th 2008. Bookings are confirmed only upon full payment of the tour cost by the last date.
3. We reserve the right to cancel the tour at anytime due to unforeseen circumstances. We will refund the entire booking amount under these circumstances.
4. In case you want to cancel your booking:
 - a. A 100% refund before 15th November 2008
 - b. 30% of the tour cost after 15th November 2008

Disclaimer

Participants should be aware of unlikely, but potential risks involved during wildlife tours and general travel. This may include, among other things, accidents during travel, snake bites, injuries associated with field activities and encounters with wildlife. We require that all tour participants sign this disclaimer that acknowledges the risks associated during our conducted tours and relieves us of any liabilities arising out of the same. This also acknowledges that you have read and abide by the terms and conditions mentioned in the document.

Name of participant:

Signature and Date: