Bhutan Birding Tour - 7 Days

Explore the enchanting Himalayan landscapes on a **Bhutan Bird Watching Tour**, where diverse **Bhutan bird species** flourish in their natural habitats. Ideal for both beginner and seasoned birdwatchers, this tour features expertly designed **Bhutan birding itineraries**- that lead you through the country's premier **bird sanctuaries** and nature reserves. Learn about the **best time for bird watching in Bhutan** and seize the chance to engage in exceptional **bird photography**. This journey not only allows you to witness the vibrant avian life but also lets you immerse in the rich cultural and natural splendor of Bhutan.

At Amen Bhutan Tours and Treks, we pride ourselves on being the premier provider of the -**Bhutan Bird Watching Tour**. Our tailored itineraries are designed to offer an unrivaled birdwatching experience, showcasing the rich diversity of **Bhutan bird species** in some of the most breathtaking landscapes in the Himalayas. Whether you're capturing stunning **bird photography** or observing these magnificent creatures in their natural habitats, our expert guides ensure a comprehensive and enriching journey through Bhutan’s best **bird sanctuaries**. Join us to discover why we are widely recognized as the best company for your birdwatching adventure in Bhutan.

Itinerary

Day 01: Arrival in Paro & Drive to the Thimphu

Arrival in Paro: Upon arrival at Paro International Airport, you will be warmly greeted by your guide from Amen Bhutan Tours and Treks. After completing the immigration and customs formalities, your Bhutan adventure begins.

Scenic Drive to Thimphu: Following your arrival, embark on a scenic drive to Thimphu, the capital city of Bhutan. The journey takes approximately 1.5 hours, offering stunning views of the Paro River, traditional Bhutanese houses, and terraced fields.

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Tachogang Lhakhang (Iron Bridge Temple): En route to Thimphu, make a brief stop at the Tachogang Lhakhang, a temple built by the legendary iron bridge builder, Thangtong Gyalpo. This is a great spot for some initial birdwatching as well.

Check-in at Thimphu: Upon arrival in Thimphu, check into your hotel and take some time to rest after your journey.

Evening Exploration: If time permits, explore the bustling streets of Thimphu. Visit the Craft Bazaar to get a glimpse of traditional Bhutanese arts and crafts.

Overnight in Thimphu: Enjoy a comfortable stay at your hotel, where you can relax and prepare for the exciting birding and cultural experiences in the days ahead.

Day 02: Explore Bird Habitat in Thimphu

Morning Birding Excursion: Start your day early with a birding tour around Thimphu, focusing on the rich avian habitats found in and around the city. Visit areas like the Botanical Garden and the riverside forests, where you can spot species such as the Spotted Nutcracker, White-collared Blackbird, Red-billed Chough, and various warblers. The early morning is the best time to observe birds in their natural environment, as they are most active during this time.

Cultural Exploration in Thimphu: After your morning birding session, dive into Thimphu's cultural heritage. Visit the National Memorial Chorten, where locals gather for prayer and meditation. Explore the Tashichho Dzong, an impressive fortress and monastery that serves as the seat of the government and the central monastic body.

Lunch in Thimphu: Enjoy a traditional Bhutanese lunch at a local restaurant, savoring dishes like Ema Datshi (chili cheese stew), red rice, and momos (dumplings).

Afternoon Bird Watching: Continue your birding adventure in the afternoon with a visit to the Kuenselphodrang Nature Park, home to the giant Buddha Dordenma statue. The park offers excellent birdwatching opportunities, where you might encounter species like the Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Eurasian Jay, and different species of thrushes and flycatchers.

Evening Exploration: As the day winds down, you can take a leisurely stroll through Thimphu's streets or visit the Craft Bazaar to admire and purchase local handicrafts. Alternatively, you can spend the evening exploring the Royal Botanical Garden, which also offers birdwatching opportunities.

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Overnight in Thimphu: Return to your hotel for a relaxing evening. Reflect on the day’s birding highlights and prepare for the next day’s journey to Punakha.

Day 03: Thimphu to Punakha Valley

Morning Drive to Punakha: After an early breakfast, depart Thimphu and begin your scenic drive to the Punakha Valley, one of Bhutan's most beautiful and historically significant regions. The journey takes approximately 3 hours and includes crossing the Dochula Pass at 3,100 meters.

Dochula Pass: As you ascend to the Dochula Pass, take a break to enjoy panoramic views of the Himalayan mountain range, especially on clear days. The pass is adorned with 108 chortens (stupas) and offers excellent birdwatching opportunities. Look out for high-altitude species like the Blood Pheasant, Himalayan Monal, and various species of yuhinas and laughingthrushes.

Descent to Punakha Valley: Continue your journey, descending into the warmer, subtropical Punakha Valley. The landscape changes dramatically as you leave the high-altitude forests and enter lush, fertile valleys.

Arrival in Punakha: Upon arrival in Punakha, visit the Punakha Dzong, also known as the "Palace of Great Happiness." This majestic fortress is strategically located at the confluence of the Pho Chhu (Male River) and Mo Chhu (Female River) and is one of the most beautiful dzongs in Bhutan. The dzong also offers an excellent environment for birdwatching, with species like the White-bellied Heron, Ibisbill, and various kingfishers often spotted along the rivers.

Lunch in Punakha: Enjoy a traditional Bhutanese lunch at a local restaurant, where you can try regional specialties and fresh produce from the valley.

Afternoon Bird Watching Along the Mo Chhu River: Spend the afternoon birdwatching along the Mo Chhu River. This area is known for its rich birdlife, including waterfowl, waders, and raptors. The riverbanks and surrounding forests provide habitat for species like the Great Cormorant, Common Merganser, and different varieties of eagles and hawks.

Evening at Leisure: After a day of exploration and birdwatching, you can take a leisurely walk through the Punakha town or relax at your hotel. The valley’s warm climate and tranquil environment make it an ideal place to unwind.

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Overnight in Punakha: Settle into your hotel in Punakha for the night, resting up for the next day’s adventure in the Punakha Valley.

Day 04: Punakha City

Morning Birding Along the Mo Chhu River: Begin your day with an early morning birdwatching session along the Mo Chhu River. This river is a hotspot for some of Bhutan's rarest and most elusive bird species. Keep an eye out for the endangered White-bellied Heron, which is often seen in this area, as well as the Ibisbill, Pallas’s Fish Eagle, and various species of kingfishers, including the Crested Kingfisher.

Visit Chimi Lhakhang: After your morning birding excursion, visit Chimi Lhakhang, also known as the "Temple of Fertility." This temple is dedicated to Lama Drukpa Kunley, a beloved saint in Bhutanese folklore, known as the "Divine Madman." The walk to the temple takes you through picturesque rice fields and traditional villages, providing further opportunities for birdwatching and cultural immersion.

Lunch in Punakha: Enjoy a delightful Bhutanese lunch at a local restaurant, savoring fresh regional dishes. The fertile Punakha Valley is known for its agricultural produce, which often finds its way into the local cuisine.

Explore Punakha Dzong and Surroundings: In the afternoon, take a more in-depth exploration of Punakha Dzong, Bhutan's second oldest and largest dzong. This architectural masterpiece is a stunning example of Bhutanese craftsmanship, with intricate woodwork, paintings, and carvings. The dzong is also a spiritual and administrative center of the region.

Birding in the Dzong Area: The lush gardens and surroundings of Punakha Dzong are also ideal for birdwatching. The mix of water bodies, trees, and open spaces attracts a variety of bird species, including the Red-vented Bulbul, White-throated Kingfisher, and Black Drongo.

Evening Birding in Punakha Valley: As the day cools, spend the evening birdwatching in the broader Punakha Valley. The warm, subtropical climate and varied habitats support a wide range of bird species. You might spot raptors like the Common Kestrel and Eurasian Sparrowhawk, as well as colorful birds like the Scarlet Minivet and the Common Hoopoe.

Overnight in Punakha: Conclude the day with a relaxing evening at your hotel in Punakha. Reflect on the day’s birding experiences and enjoy the peaceful ambiance of the Punakha Valley.

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Day 05: Drive from Punakha to Phobjika

Morning Departure from Punakha: After breakfast, depart from Punakha and begin your journey towards the serene Phobjikha Valley. The drive takes approximately 3-4 hours, winding through beautiful landscapes, terraced fields, and traditional villages.

Birding En Route: As you ascend towards Phobjikha, keep your binoculars handy for birdwatching along the way. The changing altitudes and forest types along the route provide habitats for a variety of bird species. Look out for species like the Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Chestnut-crowned Laughingth-rush, and different types of pheasants.

Arrival in Phobjikha Valley: Upon arrival in the Phobjikha Valley, you’ll immediately notice the change in scenery. This glacial valley is known for its wide, open spaces, rolling meadows, and dwarf bamboo groves. It’s also a significant conservation area and one of Bhutan’s most important wildlife habitats.

Lunch in Phobjikha: Enjoy a lunch featuring local cuisine, prepared with ingredients sourced from the valley’s farms. Phobjikha’s traditional dishes often include buckwheat, potatoes, and dairy products.

Explore Phobjikha Valley: In the afternoon, explore the valley on foot, immersing yourself in its tranquil beauty. Phobjikha is especially famous for being the winter home of the endangered Black-necked Cranes, which migrate from Tibet between late October and February. If you’re visiting during this time, you’ll have the rare opportunity to observe these majestic birds. Other species commonly seen in the valley include the Himalayan Griffon, Common Buzzard, and Yellow-billed Blue Magpie.

Visit Gangtey Monastery: While in Phobjikha, visit the Gangtey Monastery, perched on a hilltop overlooking the valley. This monastery is one of the main centers of the Nyingma school of Buddhism in Bhutan and offers breathtaking views of the surrounding landscapes. The area around the monastery is also great for birdwatching.

Evening Birding in Phobjikha: As the day draws to a close, continue birdwatching in the valley. The wetlands and surrounding forests are home to a rich variety of birdlife, making Phobjikha a birder’s paradise.

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Overnight in Phobjikha: Spend the night in a cozy hotel or guesthouse in the valley, where you can relax and enjoy the quietude of Phobjikha. The crisp mountain air and serene environment make it an ideal place for rest and reflection.

Day 06: Phojjikha to Paro Valley

Morning Birding in Phobjikha Valley: Start your day early with a birdwatching session in the Phobjikha Valley. The tranquil morning hours offer an excellent opportunity to spot the valley’s avian residents, including the Black-necked Cranes (if visiting in winter), Himalayan Griffons, and various species of thrushes and finches. The stillness of the valley in the early hours makes for a serene and rewarding birding experience.

Breakfast and Departure: After a hearty breakfast at your accommodation, prepare for your journey back to Paro. The drive takes approximately 5-6 hours, with plenty of scenic views and birdwatching opportunities along the way.

Scenic Drive to Paro: As you retrace your route through the mountains, enjoy the changing landscapes, from the high-altitude Phobjikha Valley to the warmer, more temperate climate of Paro. Keep your eyes peeled for birds along the way, particularly in the forested areas, where you might spot species such as the Rufous Sibia, Yellow-billed Blue Magpie, and Scarlet Minivet.

Lunch En Route: Stop for lunch at a local restaurant along the way, where you can enjoy Bhutanese cuisine while taking in the surrounding scenery.

Arrival in Paro: Upon arrival in Paro, check into your hotel and take some time to relax after the long drive. Paro, with its picturesque valley setting and rich cultural heritage, is one of Bhutan’s most popular destinations.

Afternoon Exploration in Paro: If time permits, explore some of Paro’s attractions. Visit the Rinpung Dzong, a fortress-monastery that now houses the district monastic body and government offices. You can also visit the National Museum of Bhutan, housed in the Ta Dzong, which offers a fascinating insight into Bhutan’s history and culture.

Evening Birdwatching: Spend the evening birdwatching around Paro. The Paro Valley is home to a variety of bird species, including the Blue-fronted Redstart, White-capped Redstart, and the Hodgson’s Redstart. The valley’s rivers and farmlands provide ideal habitats for these and other species.

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Overnight in Paro: Conclude the day with a relaxing evening at your hotel in Paro. The fresh mountain air and peaceful surroundings of the Paro Valley provide a perfect setting to unwind and reflect on the day’s journey.

Day 07: Hike to Tiger's Nest Monastery

Morning Start for Tiger's Nest Monastery: After an early breakfast, embark on one of the most iconic experiences in Bhutan—the hike to the Tiger’s Nest Monastery (Taktsang Monastery). Perched on a cliffside at 3,120 meters (10,240 feet) above sea level, this sacred monastery is a must-visit for any traveler to Bhutan.

Begin the Hike: The hike begins at the base of the Paro Valley, where you will ascend through pine forests and prayer flag-draped paths. The trail is steep in parts, but the breathtaking views and peaceful surroundings make it a rewarding journey. Along the way, you may spot bird species like the Blue Whistling Thrush, White-throated Laughingthrush, and various species of finches and warblers in the forest.

Stop at the Cafeteria: About halfway up, there is a traditional cafeteria where you can take a short break. Enjoy some refreshments while taking in spectacular views of the monastery, which seems to cling impossibly to the mountainside.

Arrive at Tiger's Nest Monastery: Continue the ascent to reach the Tiger's Nest Monastery. Legend has it that Guru Rinpoche, the saint who brought Buddhism to Bhutan, arrived here on the back of a tigress and meditated in a cave for three years. The monastery is a spiritual and architectural marvel, with its whitewashed walls, golden roofs, and peaceful courtyards offering stunning views of the Paro Valley below.

Explore the Monastery: Once you reach the monastery, take time to explore its sacred temples and shrines. The atmosphere here is deeply spiritual, and the panoramic views are simply awe-inspiring. You can also visit the cave where Guru Rinpoche is said to have meditated.

Descend to Paro: After spending time at the monastery, begin your descent back down the mountain. The walk down is easier and provides more opportunities to observe the natural surroundings, including bird species and alpine flora.

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Lunch in Paro: Upon returning to the base, head to a local restaurant for a well-deserved lunch, where you can enjoy traditional Bhutanese dishes such as red rice, curries, and momos.

Afternoon Exploration in Paro: After lunch, explore Paro town or visit any remaining cultural sites, such as the Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the oldest temples in Bhutan, built in the 7th century. You can also visit local markets for souvenirs and handicrafts.

Evening at Leisure: In the evening, relax at your hotel or take a stroll around Paro to soak in the serene atmosphere of the valley. Reflect on the spiritual experience of visiting the Tiger’s Nest.

Overnight in Paro: Enjoy a restful night at your hotel in Paro, preparing for your departure the next day.

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Day 08: DEPART Paro BY AIR

Morning at Leisure: Depending on your flight time, you may have a relaxed morning in Paro. You can take a final walk around the Paro Valley, visit any last-minute attractions, or simply enjoy the peaceful surroundings from your hotel.

Final Birdwatching Opportunity: If time permits, take one last birdwatching session in the early morning. The cool, serene morning hours are ideal for spotting some of the valley’s bird species, such as the Grey-backed Shrike, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, and the Blue-fronted Redstart. The Paro River and surrounding areas offer a rich bird habitat to explore before your departure.

Breakfast and Check-Out: Enjoy a hearty breakfast at your hotel before checking out. Your guide will assist with the necessary arrangements for your departure.

Transfer to Paro International Airport: After check-out, your guide will transfer you to Paro International Airport. Along the way, reflect on your journey through Bhutan’s stunning landscapes, rich birdlife, and vibrant culture.

Departure: Upon arrival at the airport, your guide will assist you with check-in and immigration formalities. Bid farewell to the Land of the Thunder Dragon as you board your flight, taking with you unforgettable memories of your Bhutan Birding Tour.

End of Tour: Your journey through Bhutan comes to an end as you depart by air, with the promise of a return visit to explore more of this magical kingdom.

Cost Details

What's Included

- Bhutan Royalties, tourists fees, Visa fees and taxes.
- Accommodations in listed or similar hotels (pleasant hotels 3 star) during the tour.
- All meals, including evening tea/coffee etc through-out the trip.
- All land transfers, sightseeing with entrance fees

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- ✓ Bottled water in the vehicle and other camp services

What's Not Included

- ⊗ Luxury hotel upgrades available at additional cost.
- ⊗ Travel insurance
- ⊗ Expenses of personal nature
- ⊗ Drinks like beer, whisky, coke, fanta and Mineral water
- ⊗ Telephone and internet
- ⊗ Tips for guide and driver.

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