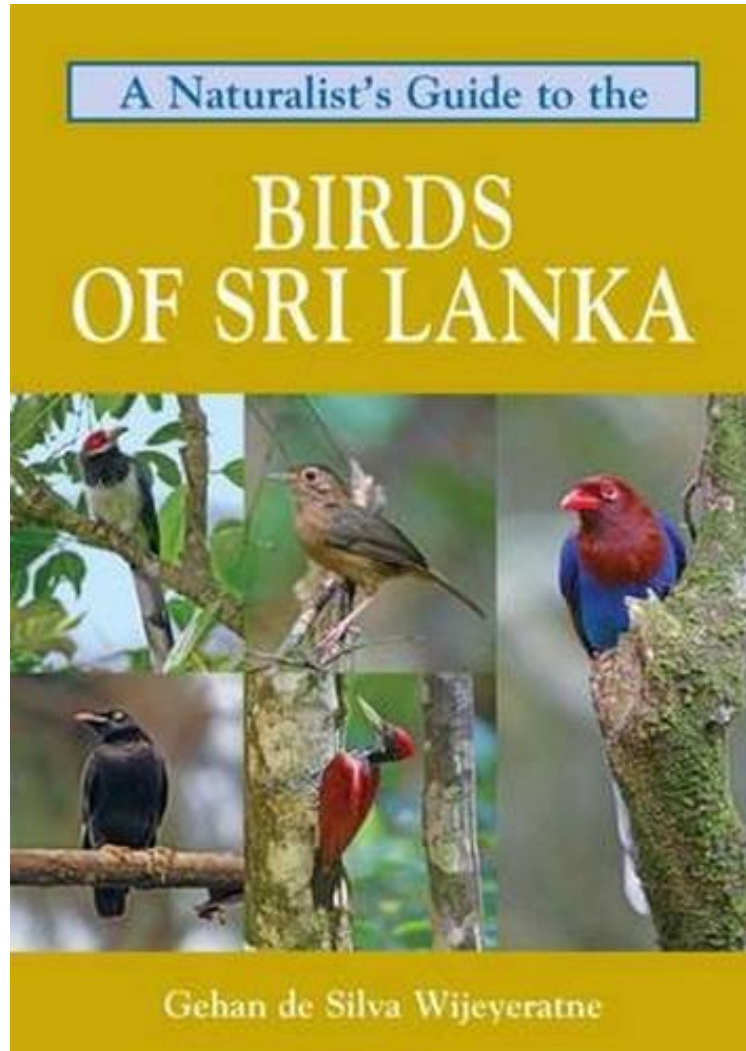


(Ebook pdf) A Naturalist's Guide to the Birds of Sri Lanka (Naturalists' Guides)

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Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne

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Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne : A Naturalist's Guide to the Birds of Sri Lanka (Naturalists' Guides) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Naturalist's Guide to the Birds of Sri Lanka (Naturalists' Guides):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A backpack staple for any bird or nature enthusiast, both local and tourist alike.By Georgie Gemmella backpack staple for any bird or nature enthusiast, both local and tourist alike, Gehans latest work is the perfect pocket-sized accompaniment to any visit to Sri Lanka. As one of the top birdwatching destinations in the world, the islands stunning and ever-present birdlife can be enjoyed no matter what your itinerary, so whether youll be strolling through the wetlands, on safari or even in the city, this easy to use guide

provides a handy starter point to identifying and understanding Sri Lanka's incredible array of avifauna. While compact for use in the field, the book spaciouly describes some 280 of the most commonly encountered species, and each are illustrated with beautiful, clear and generously-sized images taken in the natural habitat. For each species, field-specific information is provided including identifying features such as description, habitat, distribution, status and voice. These phonetic transcriptions of the birds calls (or voice) make not only for a charming read but also provide an additional and valuable tool for distinguishing species in the field. Where relevant, additional images have been included to illustrate species that differ in plumage according to sex, age class or breeding season. Sri Lanka's 34 sort-after endemic species are clearly marked with a small green e-symbol beside their scientific name, and a full photographic list is also provided in the introduction section. The introduction and back pages are laden with additional information from a basic introduction to birds, covering topics such as topography, plumage and songs, as well as Sri Lanka-specific information geared towards the visitor. Maps, tables and lists break down the key facts about Sri Lanka's birdlife, including a full checklist, habitats, status and more importantly the top sites for where and when to go birdwatching. I would thoroughly recommend this book to anyone spending any time in Sri Lanka. As a professional naturalist who has worked on the island, I am a great fan of Gehan's wildlife series, the authoritative and yet accessible tone of this book is true to his style, with just the right amount of scientific information to appeal to both the beginner and the field professional. I have given this book 5 stars because I believe in terms of the amount of information provided coupled with the portability, it is the best naturalist's field guide (available for Sri Lanka's birds) on the market. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Another great guide from Sri Lanka's leading naturalist By John Eliot Gimlette As someone who has spent much of the last three years researching Sri Lanka, I am endlessly grateful to GSW. He obviously knows the island extremely well, and he brings a fabulous breadth of knowledge to all his books. At the moment, there is no writer quite like him, and his field books and guidebooks are an indispensable resource. His latest work, 'A Naturalist's Guide to the Birds of Sri Lanka' is no exception. Whilst I have no specialist interest in birds, here is a book that is both easy to use and packed with all the essential information. Some 280 bird species are covered, and - for each - there is a description that includes identifying features, distribution, habits and habitats, voice and status. Each entry is also exquisitely illustrated with a photograph, and - this being a pocket-sized book - there are never more than two entries per page. Clear and well spaced-out, this attractive little book is also packed with other useful information; location maps; lists of endemic birds; species accounts and checklists. Although it modestly describes itself as a 'useful starter book', I suspect that it will be of great value to more experienced bird-watchers too. This is not least due to the fact that the text is replete with fascinating science. Who'd have known that crows have more brain mass than other birds? No wonder they are so canny. GSW is therefore to be congratulated on another fine addition to his series of wildlife books. It will make an extremely welcome addition to the libraries of both Sri Lanka's natives and her visitors. Indeed, sitting here, it's hard to thumb my way through the pictures without wishing that I was somehow there. A book well worth having: useful, authoritative and beautifully produced. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A handy companion for your next trip By Sarakani Gehan de Silva W. has decades worth of field and nature communication experience for Sri Lanka as evinced by the scale his output as one of the foremost communicators on the fauna of the island and her seas. He has authored several books formally and contributes copious articles to journals, magazines and the press as well as an on-going substantive online presence. He is also known as a face-to-face public speaker on the island's wild treasures, during for example the annual meetings of the Oriental Bird Club in the UK. De Silva W has consistently specialised in birds taking inspiration and advice from past masters in the subject such as W. W. A. Phillips and contemporary specialists like Deepal Warakagoda. He is generous in his acknowledgements at the front of this compact volume representing one of the latest, modern style field guides to the Birds of Ceylon. Readers would be somewhat spoiled for choice in this area though generally more selectivity may be rewarded if as a traveller, you are heading for Sri Lanka from the West and consider your purchases before getting there. This is not the first field guide that the author has produced though it may represent the most up-to-date one available today. Aficionados would certainly not be satisfied by one simple English field guide, though these may be all they encounter sadly, when considering certain exotic Oriental or Pacific destinations such as Hong Kong or Fiji respectively. By contrast there is a rich history of well-documented ornithology for Sri Lanka and it is fortunate that there seems to be a radiation in available field guides from the singular though dated G. M. Henry's Guide that served for decades to the current crop for which de Silva W. himself contributes. Considering these the buyer (or collector) is presented with about a handful of fairly comprehensive and authoritative works, some photographic and others with colour plates. This latest photographic field guide follows closely from de Silva W.'s recent Wild Sri Lanka. It is primarily aimed at travellers who may spend up to half a month on the island intent on sampling the often raucous birdlife that has delighted travellers from the 19th century. Above all, it pays particular attention to the endemic species, the number of which has been a topic of debate with an upward curve lately for an official endemic checklist. This actually follows historical patterns in taxonomy given that several species were regarded as peculiar to the island at one time before the count went down due to amalgamation with related forms and a possible overuse of the race or subspecies concept. Since the 1980s ornithological activity in a scientific sense has accelerated, especially with genetic and numerically based taxonomy that has pushed the numbers of

endemics to a number that now, according to this volume stands at 34. Of course the author has little space to discuss all this, but he does refer readers to his earlier and more substantive work on the subject as a source of veracity for this figure. Endemics are discussed towards the introduction and are all laid out in the avian series later. The endemics thus merit illustration in duplicate, quite an achievement for a small volume, highlighting their comparative rarity and twitcher value. Who knows how long some of these species may continue to survive in the wet-zone jungles where some are so threatened? The sourcing of fairly decent colour photographic evidence of all these species, including great photos of both sexes of the Sri Lanka spurfowl (an extremely shy and relatively invisible species) is a credit to the book. Most of the colour photos are by the author, others are acknowledged. Although the guide mainly deals with the commoner birds and all the endemics (some are very endangered) that a traveller may encounter it also focuses on significantly rare but somewhat spectacular non-endemic residents that the traveller may wish to target such as the extremely rare Black-necked stork and the Indian Courser. The species accounts are laid two per page with a pair of photographs for species with dissimilar sexes such as the Sri Lanka junglefowl and Orange minivet. The space allocation is substantial considering the size of the book with helpful annotation on distribution, identification, calls and abundance status with pertinent IUCN assessments. The series follows ornithological works starting with Grebes and ending with passerines represented by crows at the end indicating a somewhat British as opposed to American bias. In case readers are not satisfied with the 278 species presented (many of which they are unlikely to encounter in one go), a full and detailed checklist for all Sri Lankan birds is provided at the back. Herein, the author is very keen to highlight the range of diversity in Sri Lankan ornithology both in terms of taxonomy and geographically. All the possible vagrants that could be spotted for example are listed, as are measures of degrees of taxonomic richness in the island in terms of proportions in comparison to global avian biodiversity. Some of the species descriptions may be too technical for interested observers what for example is a nuchal crest? Such terms are provided for by illustrations and a short glossary at the front, but beginners may prefer simplification as an earlier field guide by John Harrison attempted. An idea of scale could have been provided with head-body lengths in cm or a symbolic device. Finally, CR that translates using the key at the front as Common Resident could be re-interpreted by some, all too familiar with IUCN status as Critically Endangered. Phew, quite the opposite! I strongly commend this volume as the latest and one of the most compact field guides produced that should afford easy identification and appreciation of the rich diversity of the island's bird life. Apart from being handy it is designed to meet the needs of a traveller with useful tips and advice on where best to locate target species for an ambitious twitcher and is extremely good value for money. It could easily represent a companion volume to more specialist treatments of birds or Sri Lankan wildlife in general, though few similar books could boast being so easily transported as this. Sri Lankan ornithology deserves all the right sorts of attention and conservation it can get and this guide has been pieced professionally and with care with more than just an essence of the ornithological possibilities Sri Lanka uniquely has to offer.

This easy-to-use identification guide to 280 bird species covering the most commonly seen in Sri Lanka is an ideal, portable guide for residents and visitors alike, written by an experienced birder with a track record for writing to a popular audience. The author's top quality photographs are accompanied by detailed species descriptions, which include nomenclature, plumage, distribution, habits and habitat. The species accounts cover 75 of the 82 families of birds recorded in Sri Lanka and distinguish between highly scarce migrants and vagrants to explain what a realistic and good country list and trip list would be for residents and visitors respectively. The user-friendly introduction covers bird topography, bird orders, a novel photographic summary in taxonomic order of all 34 endemic birds that are key target species, and the main sites for viewing the listed species. Also included is a checklist of all of the birds of Sri Lanka encompassing, for each species, its common and scientific names as well as its national status.

About the Author Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne is a high profile wildlife personality. In the words of British TV Naturalist Bill Oddie, no single individual has done so much to brand a country for its wildlife. A graduate from the Imperial College, London, he has been passionate about Sri Lanka's wildlife since the age of three when he went on his first leopard safari in Yala. He has authored and photographed over 300 articles for national and international newspapers and magazines on Sri Lankan biodiversity, travel and business topics. He thrust Sri Lanka's wildlife into local and international media with his articles, books, television interviews, talks and taking media and film crews into the field. His many books include *Wild Sri Lanka* also published by John Beaufoy Publishing and *Sri Lankan Wildlife* (Bradt Publishers). He is responsible for researching and branding some of the biggest international wildlife tourism stories. He branded the Elephant Gathering. He was the first to realise and publicise Sri Lanka's potential for Leopard Safaris and Dragonfly Safaris. He was the first to realise and publicise that Sri Lanka was Best for Blue Whale and his aggressive media blitz was responsible for the rapid growth of whale watching in the country. He was also the first to realise and publicise that Sri Lanka offers the best chance for seeing a super-pod of Sperm Whales on a whale watch and was also the first to investigate Kalpitiya for its whale watching potential and publicise it as a third whale-watching hot spot. Positioning Sri Lanka as a big game safari destination began with him. He was the scientific consultant for the three part *Wild Sri Lanka* blue chip natural history series by Mike Birkhead Associates which drew

heavily on his writings explaining why Sri Lanka is super-rich for wildlife.