



**BIRDING TOURS BHUTAN AND ASSAM:
GENERAL INFORMATION**



Birding Ecotours
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Preparing for Bhutan and Assam: what to expect

(in autumn/fall/early winter, i.e. November and in early spring, i.e. March/April)

We can arrange your Bhutan visa, but you will need an Indian visa for the March/April tour, which ends in Guwahati, India, even if you are not joining our Assam tour (e-visas are easy to arrange). The Bhutanese government requires clear, color copies of the main page of your passport, so please send us a photo or scan of it after booking a Bhutan tour with us – THANKS!

Bhutan, known as the Land of the Thunder Dragon, is an idyllic Himalayan kingdom. Our November tour means traveling in early winter in the Himalayas, so it can be rather cold. On our March/April tour you can actually expect similar temperatures, especially near the start of the trip, as this is effectively late winter/early spring weather. Expect night time temperatures in some of the higher-altitude locations to be freezing or possibly sub-zero. So make sure you bring enough warm clothes, including lots of layers and thermal underwear for some nights/days, fleeces, and windbreakers. Warm layers for sleeping at night might also be necessary, as the accommodations may not be heated. We also ascend to around 4000 meters (over 12000 feet) above sea level on at least one day to search for Himalayan Monal, Snow Pigeon, and other specials. The scenery up there is mind-boggling. But yes, it can be cold. However, layers are important, as you may also experience warm to hot weather at times, so you may need t-shirts etc.

Being more specific about the temperatures to be expected on these tours, in November and March temperatures during much of the itineraries can certainly reach freezing or below (sometimes with a major wind-chill factor), but they are arguably more often around 7 °Celsius (44.6 °Fahrenheit) at night and around 16 °C (61 °F) maximum in the middle of the day – and about 6 °C (43 °F) more than this in the “subtropical” parts, e.g. Punakha, Zhemgang and Mongar.

Once we enter India at the end of many of these trips it gets hot, hence the need for layers (so that some of them can be removed!).

On our Bhutan tours we have some nights of camping, but all sleeping bags etc. will be provided.

Please note that Bhutan is a tiny country with only one main road from east to west. Road works have plagued this road for some time, so expect delays; one has to approach it philosophically and not get impatient if the going is slow at times. The road is windy, so if you have problems with motion sickness precautions are recommended. Some areas (e.g. Trongsa) have also been affected by construction of hydropower plants etc. Camping helps us to get away from the roadworks and other construction. But often we do a lot of our birding from the roadside. Sometimes we opt to hike along trails as well.

Accommodation in Bhutan and India can be rather basic, so please do not expect luxury. Bhutan is one of the last countries to open its doors to Western tourists. This is good overall, but it also means you can't always expect it to have western facilities.

For health information see <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/bhutan> and <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/india/>. So-called Delhi-belly can be a

problem. Probiotics can reduce the risk. Anti-bacterial handwash is also very useful. Imodium, Valoid, and an antibiotic such as Cipro (or a newer one as some strains of bacteria are becoming resistant to this old classic) for bad cases should be carried (but please consult your doctor or a travel clinic which specializes in foreign travel for proper advice before the trip).

Electricity and charging equipment – for Bhutan, see <https://www.power-plugs-sockets.com/bhutan/>, and for India, please see <http://www.indiaquickfacts.com/content/india-electricity-electrical-plugs-converters-electric-sockets-electric-adapters>

Field guides for India and Bhutan – please see <https://www.birdingecotours.com/field-guides-to-asia-what-to-take-into-the-field/>