

Birding Ecotours



INDIA: THE WEST – FOREST OWLET EXTENSION

22 - 25 FEBRUARY 2026



Forest Owlet is the main target of this special extension (photo G. Adhikari).

On this short (four-day) tour we will look for the enigmatic and highly sought **Forest Owlet** near Mumbai. Discovered in 1872, with six specimens collected until 1884, the species was then not seen again until 1997, a full 113 years later! Over the last 23 years the bird has since been discovered in three Indian states: Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra (where we will be looking for it). The population of this endemic bird is considered low and globally threatened with less than 999 birds; the species is considered ‘Endangered’ by BirdLife International and IUCN.

The lush deciduous forest in which we will be birding for the **Forest Owlet** is at the northern tip of the Western Ghats mountain range and is therefore also home to many other interesting and localized species. During our stay in the area we also hope to find some of the following species: **Malabar Trogon, Malabar Grey Hornbill, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Blue-winged (Malabar) Parakeet, Red Spurfowl, Indian Grey Hornbill, Jungle Bush Quail, Jerdon’s Leafbird, White-cheeked Barbet, White-spotted Fantail, Indian Paradise Flycatcher, Tickell’s Blue Flycatcher, Mottled Wood Owl, Jungle Owlet, Indian Scops Owl, White-bellied Drongo, and Vigor’s Sunbird**. However, with our limited time here and with our main focus being on the owlet one should not necessarily expect to see all of the above!

This short extension has been designed to run after our exciting **Birding Tour India: The Northwest – Lions and Desert Birding in Gujarat**. We have several other tours in India, which all combine to give you an incredible range of birding and wildlife-watching options in this wonderful country. See the full range of our Indian tours **here**.

We can also arrange this trip to fit before or after any of our other India tours, though the costs for this may vary from the costs provided for the dates given here.



Forest Owlet went 'missing' for over 100 years. Luckily, since its rediscovery you can now go and look for it with us (photo G. Adhikari).

Itinerary (4 days/3 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Mumbai and travel to the Tansa area

After your morning arrival at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai, either as an international arrival or if coming from our **Birding Tour India: The Northwest – Lions and Desert Birding in Gujarat**, we will meet for lunch near the airport. After lunch we will commence our journey to the Tansa area, a couple of hours to the northeast of Mumbai, where, time permitting, we will start our search for the main target bird of this tour, **Forest Owlet** (which is a diurnal species, in the *Athene* genus).

Overnight: Tansa area

Day 2. Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary

We will spend the full day birding within and around the Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary, where we will look, primarily, for **Forest Owlet**. The deciduous forest in which we will be birding also holds numerous birds that warrant looking for, such as several Western Ghats specialties at the northernmost tip of their ranges, namely **Red Spurfowl**, **Grey Junglefowl**, **Malabar Trogon**, **Malabar Pied Hornbill**, **Malabar Grey Hornbill**, **White-cheeked Barbet**, **Vigors's Sunbird**, and **Blue-winged (Malabar) Parakeet**.



Malabar Trogon occurs in Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary, and we will look for this stunning species while searching for Forest Owlet.

We will also likely see a number of more-widespread Indian species in the forest, such as **Jerdon's Leafbird**, **Tickell's Blue Flycatcher**, **Indian Paradise Flycatcher**, **Indian Grey Hornbill**, **Black-rumped Flameback**, **Yellow-crowned Woodpecker**, **Alexandrine Parakeet**, **Plum-headed Parakeet**, **Greater Racket-tailed Drongo**, **Rufous Treepie**, **Golden-fronted Leafbird**, **Indian Roller**, **Indian Golden Oriole**, **Yellow-footed Green Pigeon**, **Mottled Wood Owl**, **Indian Scops Owl**, **Jungle Owlet**, **Spotted Owlet**, **Indian Nightjar**, **Savanna Nightjar**, **Jungle Nightjar**, and **Crested Treeswift**. It is certain to be a great day.

Overnight: Tansa area



Blue-winged (formerly Malabar) Parakeet is a southern endemic at the northern limit of its range here.

Day 3. Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary to Mumbai

The morning will be spent birding within and around the Tansa Wildlife Sanctuary, hopefully getting further views of **Forest Owlet** or some of the other species listed above. After lunch we will transfer back to Mumbai, where we will have our final group evening meal of this short trip.

Overnight: Mumbai

Day 4. Departure from Mumbai

Departure from Mumbai, either international departure for home or to New Delhi in order to join our **Birding Tour India: The Northeast – Spectacular Birds and Mammals.**

Overnight: Not included

Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.

Duration: 4 days

Group Size: 4 - 8

Dates: 22 - 25 February 2026

Start: Mumbai

End: Mumbai

US\$1,769 per person sharing – based on 4 - 8 participants (2026)

Prices:

Single Supplements: US\$222 (2026)

Price includes:

All accommodation (as described above)

Meals (from lunch on day 1 until breakfast on day 4)

Drinking water – two bottles of mineral water per day per person from our tour vehicle, please bring a refillable water bottle (if taken from the hotel this will be at your own cost)

Expert tour leader

Local bird and wildlife guide fees

National park/birdwatching reserve entrance fees

All ground transport and tolls while on tour, including airport pick-up and drop-off

Price excludes:

Flights to/from Mumbai International Airport

Visa

Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts, laundry, internet access, phone calls, etc.

Optional tours (e.g. monument entrance fees and associated additional travel expenses)

Any pre- or post-tour accommodation, meals, or birding/sightseeing/monument excursions Soft/alcoholic drinks

Camera (still/video) permits

Personal travel insurance

Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))