



Birds of the Langtang Valley Grade 3/4 maximum altitude 4380m

The Langtang Valley trek takes us to an area of Nepal where the influence of trekkers has not been so great. The valley became Nepal's second largest national park in 1976. The park has healthy forests of rhododendron, fir, blue and chir pine and birch. Wildlife in the park includes leopard, musk deer, Himalayan black bear, rhesus and langur monkeys and the endangered red panda. The Bhoite Kosi - Trisuli is an important migratory route for birds travelling between India and Tibet. The Langtang valley Gosainkund route may be trekked in either direction. Note also that the route and campsites are always at the discretion of the Group Leader or Sirdar.

Walking hours are only a guide and can vary greatly. It depends entirely on your fitness and ability to walk

and of course, on how often you decide to stop and take photographs.

This trek is of special interest to Birders featuring some unusual altitudinal migrants such as Ibisbill and Gould's Shortwing, uncommon summer visitors include Pied Ground Thrush and high altitude birds such as Snow Partridge, Tibetan Snowcock and Grandala. Specialities, which can be easily found throughout the year, include Fire-tailed Myzornis and Black-browed Tit. Pheasants, bush-robins, tesias, bush and leaf warblers, wren-babblers and rosefinches can also be readily seen. In April and May birdwatching time in the mountains above 2750m is often reduced by low cloud in the afternoons.

Day 1 Arrive in Kathmandu 1330m

Day 2 Birding at Phulchowki

Day 3 By road to Dhunche 1950m

Day 4 Birding to Sing Gompa, superb forest.
Day 5 Birding around Sing Gompa and Syabru, forest.
Day 6 Birding to Chongong Lama Lodge.
Day 7 Birding to Ghore Tabela.
Day 8 Kyanjin Gompa 3800m 6 hrs
Day 9 & 10 Kyanjin birding.
Day 11 Return to Lama Lodge.
Day 12 Return to Syabru.
Day 13 Birding towards Gosainkund.
Day 14 Past Gosainkund lakes and over Laurebina Pass 4602m to Phedi.
Day 15 Birding to Gapte.
Day 16/17 Birding around Gapte.
Day 18 Birding to Tharepati.
Day 19 Birding towards Kutumsang.
Day 20 Birding towards Chisa Pani.
Day 21 Return to Kathmandu 1330m
Day 22 Kathmandu
Day 23 Depart Kathmandu

THE TREK

Leaving the hotel at around 0730 we board the bus which will take us up and out of the Kathmandu valley and over to Dhunche, a journey of 8 to 9 hrs. depending on the road conditions. We drive on a paved highway that twists and climbs over ridges to the Trisuli valley. After Trisuli we drive to Dhunche road, a Nepal Army road project. The Dhunche road is unpaved which continues to the foot of Ganesh Himal. The army will check your permit at the check post of Ramche, which is the entrance to the Langtang NP. Arriving in Dhunche by late afternoon, the Sirdar will begin to collect his porters and distribute the loads. This may take a little while but gives you the opportunity of walking around and taking photographs. Don't go too far afield though, else the Sirdar may not know where you are when the time comes to leave. If you contemplate taking a long walk, please ensure your group leader or Sirdar know where you are going.

For the first couple of days you will be walking along the Trisuli River, whose headwaters begin high in Tibet. The scenery will be predominantly scattered villages and cropped fields. The trail follows the side of a ridge and turns east at the Langtang Khola (River) which is named after the 7246m Langtang Peak. Here we are at an altitude of approximately 2000m and at the head of the valley you will be able to see various peaks, all of which are between 7000 and 6000m.

The forest above Syabru are good for birds and you will spend a full day here.

Heading now along the Langtang Khola, the scenery becomes more precipitous and the trail meanders

between steep gorges and high wooded slopes. The people here are believed to be descendants of Tibetans who intermingled with Tamangs from Helambu and their religion is Buddhism. Note also their distinctively different dwellings which are made of stone as opposed to the lower altitude mud dwellings. Here you will also see prayer flags flying from stone cairns and village houses which are covered in the sacred Buddhist chant of 'Oh Mani Padme Om' written in Tibetan script. As the wind passes the prayers are taken to heaven and the owner gains religious merit.

On Day 8 we reach the village of Langtang which is at an altitude of 3500m. Here you can climb the rocky trails above camp to get better views. Leaving Langtang we continue on to Kyanjin Gompa (3800m). Kyanjin valley is wide and there is little vegetation. Between April and October look out for Ibisbills which breed on the broad, gravelly river bed. Excursions to above Kyanjin provide opportunities to see high altitude species such as Tibetan Snowcock and Grandala, as well as spectacular views.

We return to Syabru (2130m) and from here the ascent begins to the Gosain Kund Pass and lakes. These lakes lie between 4100 and 4400m and are the destination of hundreds of Hindu pilgrims each year. Legend tells that God Shiva created this lake by piercing the Glacier with his trident when he was very thirsty after consuming poison that came out of a serpent during a great tug of war between the demons and gods for holy water 'Amrit'.

While climbing up be sure to keep a slow and steady pace to avoid altitude sickness. The view from the top of the ridge is one of the best in Nepal but remember that inclement weather may sometimes spoil it. So always be up early to make the best of the day and get the first sun, as often the clouds come in only around ten or so. From the ridge it is generally downhill all the way to Kathmandu. Though, of course, there will always be those irritating little valleys which sap your energy and starts everyone cursing. The trail down is very steep and you will get a lot of pressure on the knees, so go slowly and take frequent rests. Going down can actually be a lot harder than going up. From Tharepati the surrounding country becomes quite forested and in the spring you will see many Rhododendron flowers in bloom.

The people of this last, long, undulating ridge are all Tamang, an ethnic group with their own distinct customs and language. The Tamangs are a Mongoloid race who probably migrated across from Tibet and China thousands of years ago (in Tibetan, Tamang means 'horse trader'). They are Buddhist by

religion and you will see white prayer flags flying from most villages.

KATHMANDU VALLEY

The valley is situated at 1350 meters and surrounded by hills of around 2400 meters. There are three important cities in the valley, the most significant being Kathmandu itself. Patan is the most Buddhist of the three and is across the Bagmati River to the south of Kathmandu, but so close as to be almost an extension of the capital. Bhaktapur, also known as Bhadgaon, is the most "mediaeval" and is situated in the eastern part of the valley. While Kathmandu and Patan have undergone great changes in the two decades since Nepal ended its long isolation, Bhaktapur has changed very little and is still much as it was three decades ago.

Kathmandu, Machendra Nath Temple, a pagoda of high artistic beauty. Hanuman Dhoka, historic seat of Royalty with old temples and palaces. Temple of the Living Goddess (Kumari) with profusely carved wooden balconies and window screens. Kasthamandap, an edifice constructed from wood of a single tree. The National Museum houses a splendid collection of ancient artefacts. Singh Durbar, an imposing stucco palace built in neo classical style as residence of the erstwhile Rana Prime ministers now acts as State secretariat.

Patan, 5 kilometres southwest of Kathmandu, Patan is full of Buddhist monuments and Hindu temples. It is also known as the city of artists. Visit Durbar Square, residential palace of Malla Kings. See Krishna Mandir with stone carvings from Hindu epics Ramayana and Mahabharata, statue of bird God Garuda, Big Bell Royal baths, Ashoke Stupa, Taleju Temple, Temples of Maha Buddha and Jagat Narian. Visit the Tibetan refugee centre to watch the spinning, dyeing and weaving of hand made carpets of intricate designs.

Bhadgoan, 13 kilometres west of Kathmandu, Bhadgoan was built in 889 A.D. and is home of medieval art and architecture. See Durbar square with the Lion gate, Palace of 55 windows, Bell of barking dogs, Nayatapola, Bhairava and Dattaraya Temples and monastery with carved Peacock windows.

Swayambu Nath, 6.5 kilometres west of Kathmandu, situated on a hillock, this 2000 years old stupa is the world's most glorious Buddhist shrine and is surrounded by several small pagodas. The main temple is capped by a pinnacle of copper gilt and is painted on the four sides with all seeing eyes of Lord Buddha.

Boudhnath, 8 kilometres east of Kathmandu, this colossal Buddhist stupa is built on an octagonal base, inset with prayer wheels and is surrounded by houses of Buddhist priests and Lama monks. It is 1500 years old and is the largest Lamaist shrine in the world.

Pashupati Nath, dedicated to Lord Shiva, is the holiest and most famous Nepalese temple. Situated 5 kilometres northeast of Kathmandu on the bank of the sacred Bagmati River, it is an impressive pagoda style structure with gilt roof and richly carved silver doors. It has bathing and cremation ghats, which are of absorbing interest to the tourist, particularly in the mornings and on festival days.

Important: Before you travel please check your **Tour Voucher** and **Arrival Information** for the latest joining instructions. This will be sent to you upon receipt of final payment.

All itineraries are subject to change without prior notice.

