



1ST ISLAND Bird Festival

14TH TO 17TH FEBRUARY 2026

Tentative Schedule



DAY 1
SATURDAY
14 | 02 | 2026

Reporting at Chidiyatapu camp site.

14:00 HRS



16:00 HRS

Inaugural Function

18:00 HRS

Networking Evening

19:30 HRS

Dinner

Birding in South Andaman Island

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands offer one of India's most distinctive birding experiences, shaped by their isolation in the eastern Indian Ocean and their close ecological ties with Southeast Asia. Lying between the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea, the archipelago forms a biological crossroads where Indian, Indo-Malayan, and endemic species coexist. For visitors from mainland, birding here feels less like a continuation of familiar Indian avifauna and more like an introduction to a different biogeographic world.

A defining feature of birdlife in the islands is the high level of endemism. Many species found here occur nowhere else on Earth, having evolved in isolation within the islands' evergreen forests, mangroves, and coastal habitats. Forest birding is particularly rewarding, with mixed-species flocks moving through the canopy and undergrowth. Species such as Andaman Wood Pigeon, Andaman Treepie, Andaman Drongo, and Andaman Bulbul are commonly encountered, while patient observers may be rewarded with sightings of the elusive Andaman Crake or Andaman Coucal in denser forest tracts.

The coastal belt and intertidal zones add another rich dimension to birding in the islands. Sandy shores, rocky headlands, and extensive mudflats support a wide range of resident and migratory shorebirds, especially during the winter months. Visitors can expect to see species such as Grey Plover, Common Greenshank, Whimbrel, Lesser Sand Plover, and flocks of terns including Common and Black-naped Terns. Raptors are frequently seen along the coast, with Brahminy Kite and White-bellied Sea Eagle being conspicuous and often photographed.

Mangrove forests, which fringe many creeks and estuaries, are among the most productive birding habitats in the islands. Early morning walks along mangrove edges can reveal Mangrove Flycatcher, Brown-winged Kingfisher, Stork-billed Kingfisher, and Chestnut-winged Cuckoo. Wetland pockets and freshwater swamps further attract herons, egrets, and rails, offering opportunities to observe species that are rarely seen on the mainland.



No birding visit to the Andamans is complete without experiencing nocturnal birding. The islands are renowned for their owls and nightjars, several of which are endemic or near-endemic. After dusk, forest tracks resonate with calls of Andaman Scops Owl and Andaman Hawk-Owl, while nightjars may be encountered hawking insects along quiet roads.

Overall, birding in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands combines scenic beauty, biological uniqueness, and a sense of exploration. For mainland tourists, it provides not only the chance to add rare and endemic species to their lists, but also an opportunity to experience a quieter, less disturbed natural environment where birds remain an integral part of everyday island life.

Chidiyatapu & Badabalu

Located at the southernmost tip of South Andaman, Chidiyatapu—often referred to as the “Bird Island” of the Andamans—is among the most rewarding birding destinations in the archipelago. The area is characterised by a mosaic of evergreen forest, woodland edges, coastal scrub, and open shoreline, allowing birders to encounter a wide variety of habitats within a compact area. Well-maintained trails and forest roads make it particularly accessible for visitors from the mainland, including those new to birdwatching.

The forested interiors are home to many of the Andaman endemics, and early mornings are especially productive. Species such as Andaman Bulbul, Andaman

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DAY 2

SUNDAY

15 | 02 | 2026

Field visit/Guided bird walk (with packed breakfast)

05:00HRS

Tea

10:50 HRS

Technical Session I

11:00 HRS

Technical Session II

12:00 HRS

Lunch

13:00 HRS

Visit to NSCB Island / Cellular Jail / Chatham / Nature Park (Optional)

13:30HRS

15:00HRS

Field visit/ Guided bird walk

Dinner

19:30HRS

20:00HRS

Field visit/Guided bird walk at Chidiyatapu Reserve Forest Area.(Optional) / Star-Gazing (Optional)

Treepie, Andaman Drongo, and Andaman Wood Pigeon are frequently recorded, while quieter stretches may yield sightings of Andaman Coucal or Andaman Crake. Mixed-species feeding flocks move steadily through the canopy, providing excellent opportunities for prolonged observation and photography.

Chidiyatapu's coastline adds further interest, with rocky shores and adjacent forest attracting birds that utilise both marine and terrestrial environments. White-bellied Sea Eagle, Brahminy Kite, and various terns are commonly seen, while kingfishers patrol creeks and coastal pools. As evening approaches, the area becomes one of the best locations in South Andaman for nocturnal birding, with Andaman Scops Owl, Andaman Hawk-Owl, and nightjars often heard or observed along the access road.

Badabalu offers a contrasting yet complementary birding experience, centred around wetlands, mangroves, and open grassland patches. The presence of freshwater bodies and marshy areas makes this site particularly attractive for waterbirds and wetland-associated species, especially during the migratory season.

Birding here is generally relaxed and slow-paced, with birds often feeding in the open. Species such as Lesser Whistling Duck, Purple Swamphen, White-breasted Waterhen, and various herons and egrets are commonly encountered. Muddy edges and shallow pools can host migratory waders including Wood Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, and occasionally Ruff or Temminck's Stint, depending on the season.

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DAY 3

MONDAY

16 | 02 | 2026

Field visit/Guided bird walk (with packed breakfast)

05:00HRS

Tea

10:50HRS

11:00HRS

Technical Session III

12:00HRS

Technical Session IV

Lunch

13:00HRS

Visit to NSCB Island / Cellular Jail / Chatham / Nature Park (Optional)

13:30HRS

15:00HRS

Field visit/
Guided bird walk

Dinner

19:30HRS

20:00HRS

Field visit/ Guided bird walk at Chidiyatapu Reserve Forest Area / Star - Gazing (Optional)

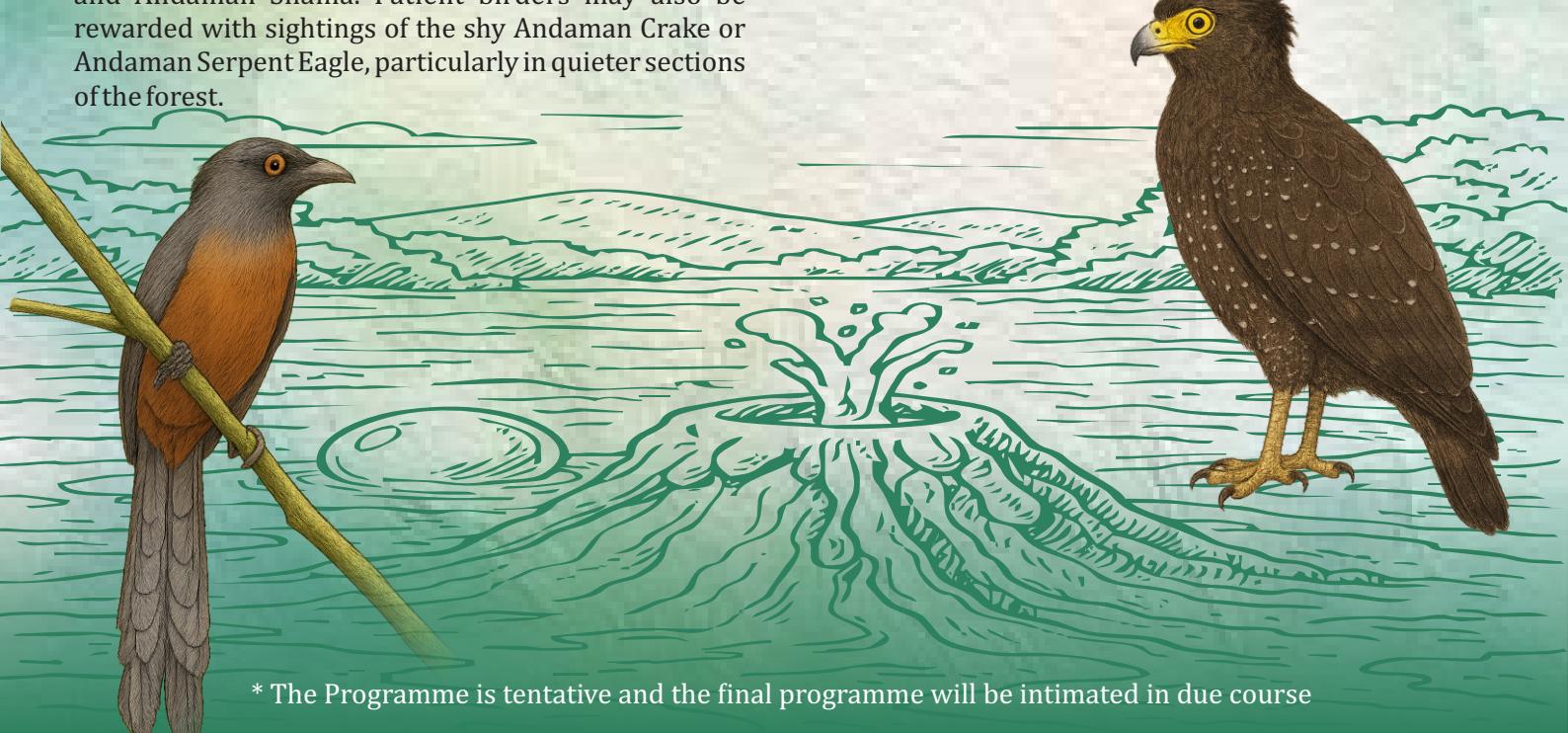
Mount Manipur National Park

Mount Manipur National Park, located in South Andaman, is one of the most significant forest birding destinations in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Rising from near sea level to over 350 metres, the park encompasses a range of elevations and forest types, creating ideal conditions for a rich and largely endemic avifauna. For visitors from the Indian mainland, birding here offers an immersive experience in dense tropical forest that contrasts sharply with most protected areas on the subcontinent.

The park is dominated by mature evergreen and semi-evergreen forest, with a closed canopy, thick understorey, and occasional clearings along forest roads and viewpoints. These habitats support many of the Andaman Islands' signature species. Commonly encountered birds include Andaman Wood Pigeon, Andaman Bulbul, Andaman Drongo, Andaman Treepie, and Andaman Shama. Patient birders may also be rewarded with sightings of the shy Andaman Crake or Andaman Serpent Eagle, particularly in quieter sections of the forest.

One of the highlights of birding in Mount Manipur National Park is the presence of mixed-species foraging flocks, which move steadily through the mid-storey and canopy. These flocks often include flowerpeckers, leaf-warblers, and drongos, offering excellent opportunities for prolonged observation and photography. The dense vegetation also favours skulking species, making careful listening as important as visual scanning.

Forest edges and viewpoints within the park provide occasional openings where raptors and larger birds can be seen soaring or crossing valleys. White-bellied Sea Eagle and Crested Serpent Eagle are sometimes observed, especially during the warmer parts of the day. The park's streams and damp forest floors further attract insectivorous birds, adding to the diversity encountered along walking routes.



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DAY 4

TUESDAY
17/02/2026

Field visit/Guided bird walk (with packed breakfast)

05:00HRS

Tea

10:50HRS

11:00HRS

Technical Session V

12:00HRS

Technical Session VI

Lunch

13:00HRS

15:00HRS

Interactive Session

17:00HRS

Valedictory Function

Dinner

19:30HRS

20:00HRS

Field visit/ Guided bird walk at Chidiyatapu Reserve Forest Area

Sippighat & Ograbraj

Sippighat and Ograbraj, located close to Port Blair, is one of South Andaman's most accessible and productive wetland birding areas. The landscape here is shaped by a network of creeks, freshwater pools, paddy fields, and adjoining mangroves, creating a mosaic of habitats that support a wide range of resident and migratory birds. For mainland visitors, Sippighat offers an excellent introduction to wetland birding in the Andamans, with good visibility and frequent bird activity.

The shallow wetlands and flooded fields attract numerous waterbirds, particularly during the winter months. Common sightings include Lesser Whistling Duck, Little Grebe, Indian Pond Heron, Purple Swamphen, and White-breasted Waterhen.

The open mud margins are used by migratory waders such as Common Sandpiper, Wood Sandpiper, and Marsh Sandpiper, while egrets and herons are often seen feeding in small groups.

Mangrove-lined channels add further diversity, with kingfishers being a notable highlight. Stork-billed, Collared, and occasionally Ruddy Kingfishers may be observed along creeks and drainage channels. The surrounding scrub and field edges support passerines, including munias, prinias, and wagtails, making slow, methodical birding particularly rewarding.

Together, Sippighat and Ograbraj wetlands showcase the wetland bird diversity of South Andaman. While Sippighat offers easily accessible and visually rewarding birding, Ograbraj appeals to those seeking quieter surroundings and the chance to observe more secretive species. Visiting both sites allows birders to



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DAY 5

WEDNESDAY

18 | 02 | 2026

Field visit/Guided bird walk (with packed breakfast)
(Optional)

05:00HRS

09:00 HRS

Checkout from place of stay

experience the contrasting wetland habitats that play a crucial role in sustaining the islands' avifauna. Lookout for the Andaman Teal in these areas.

Kalatang and Shoalbay

Kalatang is a relatively little-known yet highly rewarding birding site. The area features a varied landscape of secondary forest, open fields, and pockets of dense vegetation, creating suitable conditions for observing a wide range of bird species. This habitat diversity supports both forest-dwelling birds and open-country raptors. Kalatang is also an excellent site for night birding, as nocturnal species such as Andaman Hawk-Owl and Andaman Nightjar become active after dusk. Seasonal fruiting trees in the area attract bulbuls, flowerpeckers, and woodpeckers, making daytime birding equally productive.

Shoal Bay is an ecologically significant coastal zone characterised by extensive mangroves, estuarine channels, and intertidal mudflats. These habitats support a rich assemblage of waterbirds and waders, making the area particularly attractive for birdwatching. The exposed mudflats host various sandpipers, plovers, and whimbrels, while the mangrove forests provide ideal habitat for kingfishers and egrets. Shoal Bay is considered one of the best locations in the Andamans to observe Black-capped Kingfisher, Ruddy Kingfisher, and Pacific Reef Heron.

Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park

Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park, located along the western coast of South Andaman, offers a unique birding experience that combines marine, coastal, and forest ecosystems within a compact and scenic landscape. Comprising a group of small islands, coral reefs, mangroves, sandy beaches, and adjoining evergreen forest, the park supports a diverse assemblage of bird species that are closely associated

with coastal and island habitats. For visitors from the mainland, birding here provides an opportunity to observe species rarely encountered away from the sea. The park's intertidal zones, lagoons, and coral-fringed shores are particularly productive for waterbirds and waders. During low tide, exposed mudflats and sandy stretches attract shorebirds such as Grey Plover, Lesser Sand Plover, Whimbrel, Common Redshank, and flocks of terns including Black-naped and Common Terns. The shallow waters also support herons and egrets, while the quieter creeks are frequented by Indian Pond Heron and Striated Heron.

Raptors are a conspicuous presence throughout the park. White-bellied Sea Eagle is frequently observed soaring above the coastline or perched on tall trees overlooking the sea, while Brahminy Kite is a regular sight near beaches and fishing areas. Forested islands and coastal woodland also host a variety of passersines, including bulbuls, drongos, and sunbirds, adding to the overall diversity.

Birding in Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park is best undertaken during the early morning or late afternoon, when bird activity is highest and light conditions are favourable. Boat journeys between islands often provide additional opportunities to observe seabirds and coastal raptors. Overall, the park offers a distinctive blend of coastal and island birding, making it an essential stop for those seeking to experience the full range of avian habitats found in the Andaman Islands.



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