

Sinharaja rainforest tour

A 1 night & 2 days tour to Sinharaja World Heritage rain forest

With interpretative natural history guiding by Amila Salgado – Birdwing Nature Holidays



False lantern fly



Dawn Drooping



Sunrise from Martin's



Green Garden Lizard

Itinerary in brief

Day 01 Colombo/West coast (Wadduwa, Bentota, Beruwela)/ Sinharaja Rainforest

Day 02 Sinharaja Rainforest/ West coast /Colombo

Introduction.

Sinharaja World Heritage Site Reserve represents the largest expanse of lowland tropical rain forest (11,187 ha.) in Sri Lanka. It is a critically important refuge for a large number of threatened and endemic biodiversity.

The purpose of this holiday is to see & learn about its abundant natural history and to enjoy. Our walks will be slower paced enabling to spot natural history. When we do find an interesting 'subject' we will stop to observe them. If they remain long enough, we will obtain telescopic views for better clarity and appreciation. We access the forest along former logging trails on flat terrain. Therefore this tour is even suitable for people with difficulty in climbing. It is important to note that this tour is not suited for those interested in high-intensity trekking. Despite the slowness of our walks we will cover considerable ground during our explorations.

I have been visiting this magical rain forest since 1990 and it is my favourite wilderness habitat in Sri Lanka. I have also led many 'rain forest tours', 'birding tours' & 'natural history tours' to Sinharaja, which have been extremely popular. Visit my blog Gallicissa.blogspot.com to read reports of many trips that I have made since 2007.

Detailed Itinerary

Day 01 You will be picked up from your residence/hotel in Colombo/West Coast (Wadduwa, Bentota, Beruwela) between 6.00 -6.30 a.m. by Amila Salgado of Birdwing Nature Holidays. Thereafter we will drive to Sinharaja, via Matugama. En route at Weddagala, a 4 WD will await our arrival to shuttle us to the ticket office & to our accommodation as the road ahead is in a bad state. After obtaining our permits, we will reach Martin's Simple Lodge, our overnight accommodation, which is just 200 m from the park's entrance. We will arrive here in time for a tasty Sri Lankan rice and curry lunch. After a couple of hours' rest during the midday, we will visit Sinharaja rain forest along former logging trails, which provide prime access to the forest's interior and return to Martin's at dusk after some crepuscular birding. Dinner + checklist will end an exciting day 01.



Day 02 Tea/coffee at 6.00 a.m with Sri Lanka Blue Magpies, which usually arrive in first light to feed on moths attracted to the lights. Spot-winged Thrush may also present great views. Soon we will do a pre-breakfast walk listening to the forest melodies as the forest greets a new day. We will return to Martin's to enjoy a fine birding breakfast. Thereafter we will make a yet another visit to the forest interior along former logging trails, as yesterday and return to Martin's at midday for lunch. At 2.00 p.m. we will say goodbye to Sinharaja and get ourselves shuttled back to Weddagala in 4WD jeep before to return home between 6.00-7.00 p.m. En route we will make a couple of comfort + birding stops & also do our final log.



Red-faced Malkoha

Tree Nymph

Tree-climbing Crab

Purple-faced Leaf Money

What to expect?

Flora: The forest was subjected to logging from 1970 to 1977 and since then it had been under legal protection. Therefore we will be able to observe secondary forest in logged areas and primary forest in undisturbed areas and varying floristic assemblages accordingly. Over 60 % of the flowering **trees** found in Sinharaja are endemic and some of the highlights include 45 m high towering Dipterocarpus & Shorea trees, large-diameter Rattans, Pitcher plant & Ant plant.

Birds: Sinharaja is a hotspot for birds particularly for the endemics. Highlight of birding in Sinharaja is seeing mixed species bird flocks, which is a unique strategy adopted by birds in the tropics to maximize feeding efficiency and to reduce the risk of predation. Studied since 1981, Sinharaja's mixed-species bird flock research is the longest running study ever. On average, 12 species occur in the flocks comprising of 42 individuals. Orange-billed Babbler and Crested Drongo are found 92 % & 89 % respectively of the flocks and they jointly form the 'nuclear-species' of the flock. Other highlights may include Red-faced Malkoha, Malabar Trogon, Legge's Flowerpecker, Sri Lanka Blue Magpie & if lucky 'Sri Lanka' Bay Owl.

Butterflies: We may be able to see several large butterflies some of which may include the good looking Sri Lanka Birdwing, Tree Nymph, Clipper, Blue Mormon, Red Helan, Plum Judy & Cruiser

Dragonflies and Damselflies: These are richly represented and we may look for Red Skimmer, Dawn Dropwing, Luzon Skimmer, Black-tipped Demoiselle & Shining Gossamer-wing.

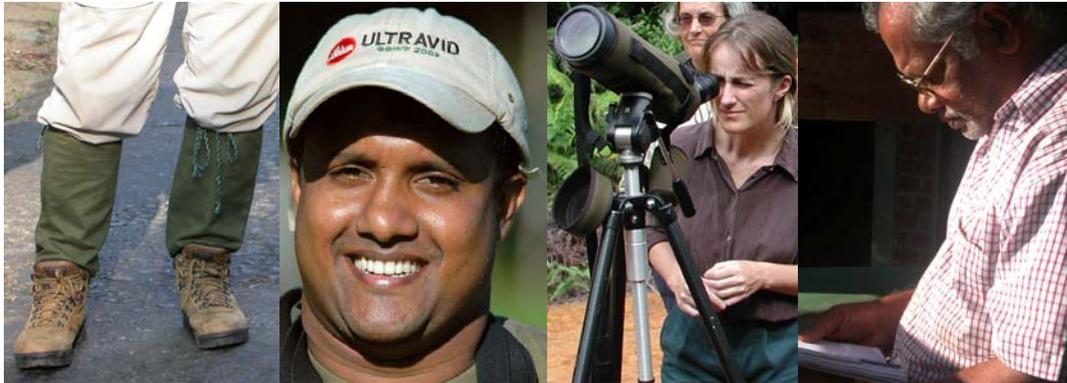
Mammals: The endemic 'Western' Purple-faced Leaf Monkey, which is a strict vegetarian and Giant's Squirrel & Layard's Squirrel are a few examples of the mammals which we may encounter.

Lizards: The forest has a good diversity of lizards, which may include Kangaroo, Green Garden, Sri Lanka Whistling & Hump-nosed Lizards.

Other fauna: Tree climbing crab, False Lanternfly, Giant Wood Spider & Giant Millipede.

Leeches: You will be provided a pair of leech socks to be worn in the forest for protection against leech bites.





Leech socks

Amila

fabulous scope views

our host, Martin

Accommodation: Martin's Simple Lodge – This family guest house is run by Martin Wijesinghe a local villager who had assisted many scientists for field work when scientific studies of Sinharaja were initiated in the 70's & 80's. Consequently he is blessed with an encyclopaedic knowledge of the fauna and flora of the forest, which he willingly shares. Martin has put up several rooms to accommodate guests and they provide rustic but nevertheless comfortable base for serious nature explorers who would like to stay close to the forest. Some of those rooms now come with hot water. His restaurant and balcony affords spectacular views of the primary forest. Martin provides tasty Sri Lankan meals cooked by a team of his daughters.

Tour Leader – Amila Salgado

Amila holds a record as the first birder from Colombo to visit Sinharaja rain forest in a tuktuk – an audacious feat achieved to bag the ultra-secretive Bay Owl in a daytime roost in Jan, 2007. He got hooked on birds in 1989 after a school project in St Peter's College, and made his first trip to Sinharaja the following year with a group of schoolmates, which earned him his first glimpses of the rare birding jewels & a host of birdie nicknames. He joined YZA, a local nature club, at an early age which was the beginning of the road to turn him into an all-round naturalist. Amila is a certified 'national-guide' under Sri Lanka Tourist Board. Before turning a full time naturalist guide, he was a Manager of a Wildlife tour company. He holds memberships in several local as well as overseas bird clubs and contributes articles to their ornithological publications. Apart from birding, Amila enjoys thrashing his clients at Scrabble. He ensures a total rain forest work out!

For rates and details e-mail info@birdwingnature.com or phone 0094-777-591155

Website: www.birdwingnature.com

Amila's Birding & Wildlife Blog: [Gallicissa...a birder in an endemic hotspot](#)

Photography & Program © BIRDWING Nature Holidays, Sri Lanka
All Rights Reserved 2007-2008

