

Latongla to Zhongar Birding Trail !!!!!!!!!

The trail from Latongla to Zhongar spans 13.10 km, descending from a peak elevation of 2,741 meters above sea level to a low point of 680 meters above sea level. The entire route can be completed in 5.5 - 6 hours at a normal walking pace.



The area encompasses diverse habitats, including forests, wetlands, and agricultural landscapes, making it an ideal spot for bird watching. This trail, a segment of the TBT, provides easy access and picturesque viewpoints along its path. Approximately 300 bird species are found in Latongla and Yongkola areas. The trail from Latongla to Zhongar is notable for featuring several globally threatened bird species, as detailed in the table:

Sl	Name	Scientific Name
1	Beautiful Nuthatch	<i>Sitta formosa</i>
2	Sikkim Wedge-billed Babbler	<i>Sphenocichla humei</i>
3	Chestnut-breasted Partridge	<i>Arborophila mandellii</i>

4	Great HornBill	<i>Buceros bicornis</i>
5	Rufous-necked Hornbill	<i>Aceros nipalensis</i>
6	Rufous-throated Wren-babbler	<i>Spelaeornis caudatus</i>
7	Satyr Tragopan	<i>Tragopan satyra</i>
8	Ward's Trogon	<i>Harpactes wardi</i>
9	Rufous- Necked Hornbill	<i>Aceros nipalensis</i>

Although there are always opportunities to see birds throughout the year, the Spring (March- May) and Autumn (Sept - Nov) months are when the weather is mildest and driest - ideal for spending days in the great wide open looking for flashes of fluttering wings. Between March to May and from September to November, are the best times to go birding in Bhutan, as these are the periods when many indigenous birds are at peak activity, and when most migratory species make an appearance.

March to May - Spring birds

Spring is the ideal season for bird watching in Bhutan, as native species venture into more accessible areas, leading to frequent sightings. The forests of the eastern Himalayas come alive with birdsong, while rhododendron trees, orchids, and diverse flora burst into bloom. Bhutan's rhododendron season is often compared to Japan's



renowned cherry blossom displays, with thousands of these intricate flowering trees showcasing a spectrum of colors from deep scarlet to soft pink. This spectacle draws many visitors to stroll through the country's botanical parks, over paths covered in vibrantly-hued petals. Amidst the blossoms and surrounding forests, avid birds watchers can spot woodpeckers, swallows, finches, and pleasant, including unique species such as the Bhutan Laughingthrush, Beautiful Nuthatch, and the **Rare Ward's Trogon**.



Ward's Trogon



Beautiful Nuthatch

Sept to Nov - Autumn birds

Autumn is regarded as the prime birding season in Bhutan, featuring clear skies, pleasant weather, and an abundance of birdlife. As the foliage begins to change color, migratory birds gather in Bhutan's forests and wetlands, offering a spectacular sight for bird enthusiasts and photographers alike.



Satyr Tragopan



Fulvetta

Ruins of Zhongar Dzong

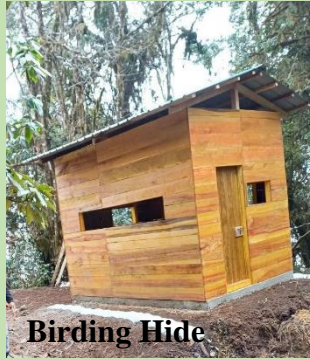
Zhongar Dzong is a large medieval ruin overlooking the valley between Lingmethang satellite town and Thidangbi Village. Constructed in the 17th century from white stone mined from the nearby Kuri-Chhu, it once stretched over 4 acres of land and was one of the largest fortresses in the country. Because of its size and construction material, the dzong came to be known as Zhongkar "white bowl" (zhong-bowl, kar-white). The trail runs below the ruins.



There are several oral accounts regarding the downfall of the glorious Dzong. According to one, after the completion of the Dzong, the king killed Zochhen Bala (the master architect) in the fear that a Dzong of equal or greater magnificence might be built. In his dying wish, Bala cursed that the Dzong be wiped out, and himself be reborn in the Dzong as a wrathful spirit. It is believed that Bala's curse

materialized leading to the ruin of the Dzong. Bala himself is believed to have been born as a huge snake in the Dzong.

Facilities available along the trail:



Birding Hide



Resting Place



Birding Deck



Toilet

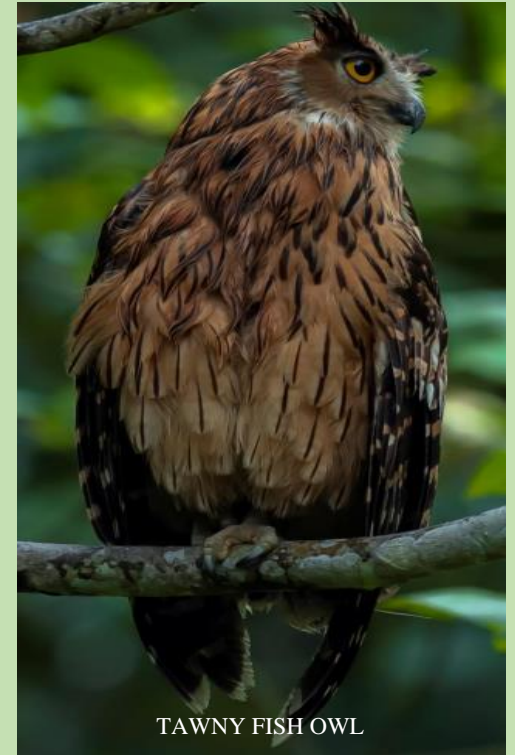
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Avian Adventures: - Discover Eco-Friendly Birding Trail from Latongla to Zhongar.



TAWNY FISH OWL

