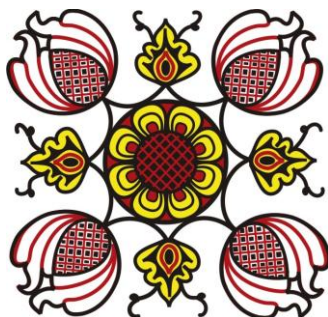


# Quarterly Tours – No. 7



**National Trust – Sri Lanka**

**24<sup>th</sup> November 2007**

**Compiled by Nilan Cooray**

**National Trust - Sri Lanka**  
*Quarterly Tours – Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2007*

**Programme**

## **Sinharaja Rainforest**

Inscribed on the World Heritage list in 1988, Sinharaja is the last viable remnant of Sri Lanka's tropical lowland rainforest. Situated in the south – west lowland wet zone within Sabaragamu and Southern provinces it covers an area of 11,187 hectares of primary and secondary forests. This narrow strip of undulating terrain consists of a series of ridges and valleys. It is drained by an intricate network of streams, which flow into the Gin Ganga on the southern boundary and Kalu Ganga, on the northern boundary.

The Sinharaja region has long featured in the legends and lore, and its name, literally in meaning lion (sinha) king (raja), perhaps refer to that original "king -sized" or royal forest. It was in 1936 that Sinharaja was first recognized as being "the only considerable patch of virgin tropical rainforest in the Island". Owing to its inaccessibility and steep, hilly terrain, the reserve remain untouched until 1968 when a government directive was issued to extract timber for the plywood sawmill and chipwood complex established at Kosgama. From 1971 until 1977, when the logging was banned, largely due to public pressure, about 14000 ha of forest in the western sector were selectively logged. Since 1977, the Forest Department has given high priority to protecting the reserve and in 1978 began planting *Pinus caribaea* along the periphery to establish a live boundary and a buffer zone. Sinharaja was accepted by UNESCO as a biosphere reserve in 1978. Recognizing the need for maximum possible

protection the site in near declared as a National Heritage Wilderness Area under the National Heritage wilderness Areas Act No. 03 of 1988 of Sri Lanka's 830 endemic species, 217 trees and woody climbers are found in the low land wet zone. Of these, 139 (64%) have been recorded in the reserve, 16 of which are considered to rare. A variety of plants of known benefit to than such as palm kitul, wewal, cardamom, dun and weniwal are present. There are 21 endemic bird species found in the reserve and a number of rare insects, reptiles and amphibians. Being the habitat for rare and endangered species and an outstanding site for study of the process of biological evolution, the reserve was declared as a World Heritage Site in 1988.

Sinharaja is the best location to see mixed species bird flocks. According to a study carried out on the mixed species bird flocks, 42 individual birds occur in the flocks on average, which makes this the world's largest mixed species bird flock. The mixed species Bird flock study of Sinharaja forest has been continuing since 1981 and is considered as the World's longest studied bird flock study. On a birding trip to Sinharaja a birdwatcher can see close to 18 of the 27 endemic bird species although the actual number of endemic birds recorded at Sinharaja is more. The former logging roads provide the best access for prime birding in Sinharaja where a mixed species bird flock and give you with a mouthwatering selection which include Orange-billed Babbler, Crested Drongo, Red-faced Malkoha, Ashy-headed Laughing Thrush, Green-billed Coucal, Lesser Yellownap, Orange Minivet, Indian Scimitar Babbler, Black-napped

Monarch, Yellow fronted Barbet, White-faced Starling, Sri Lanka Spurfowl, Yellow-browed Bulbul, Bronze-winged Pigeon, Spot-winged Thrush, Sri Lanka Myna, Legge's Flowerpecker, Brown-backed Needletail, Green Imperial Pigeon, Sri Lanka Blue Magpie, Chestnut-backed Owlet, Sri Lanka Frogmouth, Sealy Thrush, Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot, Black-throated Munia, Layard's Parakeet, Black Eagle, Crested Goshawk, Dark-fronted Babbler and Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, As the dusk falls you could look for the sub-continental endemic Sri Lanka Frogmouth.



*Crimson-backed Flameback, female*



*Ceylon Wood-Shrike*



*Ceylon Whistling-thrush,*



*Ceylon Crested Drongo, male*



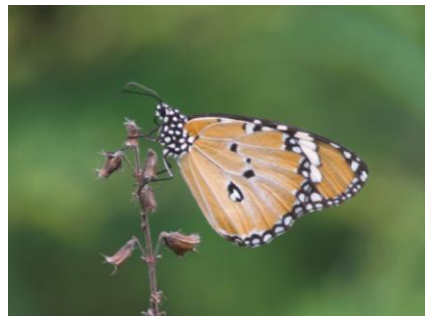
*Ceylon Blue Magpie*



*Spider*



*Common Tiger*



*Plain Tiger*



*Plum Judy*



*Ceylon Tree Nymph (Idea iasonia)*



*Vegetation*

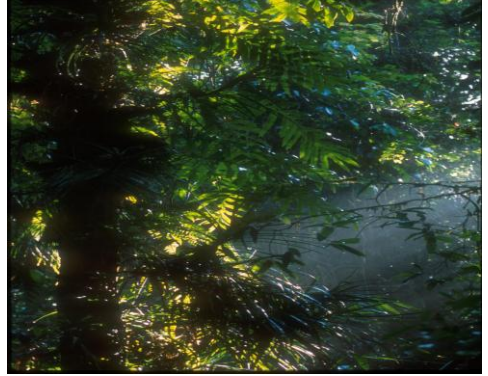


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