

GOA INDIA
29th January - 13th February 2005



Dawn at Morjim Beach

Ann Hodgson

A first trip to the Indian subcontinent for both Ann and myself. We booked a standard package holiday through Thomas Cook and paid a hefty upgrade to Premium Cabin mainly because of the horror stories we had heard about lack of legroom, etc. on the long flights to Goa. From what we saw on our Air 2000 flights the stories were probably true but as it transpired we had done the best thing and was money well spent, particularly given the circumstances on the return flight following our little mishap (read on!). The hotel we had chosen, based on talking to others who had already stayed there, was the Marinha Dourada Resort in Arpora/Baga. We can thoroughly recommend it as a good base in North Goa. Our room was spacious, very clean (beds made and room cleaned every day) and more than adequate with a ceiling fan and air conditioning. Power cuts were frequent (up five in a day!) and virtually regular just at dusk when everyone was showering or putting their lights on! Take a couple of torches with you although candles were provided in the rooms. The restaurant was quite reasonable and the food and service good. There is nightly 'entertainment' including Indian Karaoke, various groups and special nights which included at one point Rajasthan fire-dancers performing just before the bingo. Good fun if you don't take it too seriously and it isn't really intrusive. All of the staff at the hotel were helpful and extremely polite, making it a pleasure to stay there. The grounds offer good all round views for raptors, etc., there are salt pans just across the road and several other sites within walking distance offering excellent birding. There are tourist taxis just outside which seem to operate on a fixed tariff basis for various destinations, many of the drivers know the birding sites but not all are 'birders' as such. A half-day to Morjim Beach starting before dawn and returning at lunch time cost R500 (we were getting R79-R80 to the £ sterling). You can easily book taxis outside the hotel or in Baga outside the Beira Mar Hotel. You will also be approached by taxi drivers who spot you as a birder and offer all sorts of species at various sites – beware, many do not know the specific sites for things like owls, etc. but can get you to the general area. There are some good taxi driver 'guides' and it is best to chat with other birders who have been to Goa before or have even just been around for a few days and they will usually be able to advise you who should be avoided. There is also a free 'bus' service (actually a four-wheel drive vehicle) every hour between 09:00-18:00 hrs from the front gate to Baga and return.



Marinha Dourada Resort

Ann Hodgson

Eating out was no problem and we visited Baga in the evening several times where there are loads of restaurants. We had no stomach problems although we tended to keep away from too much salad and religiously drank only bottled water (and beer!). The hotel and most decent restaurants seemed to have their own filtration systems and things like curries, noodle dishes and even the steaks we tried were excellent. We found Bernard's Place in Baga in the evening and Lila's during the day (only open until 6:00 pm) were very good value.

Health : We had jabs or boosters for Typhoid and Hepatitis A, all of our other inoculations being up-to-date. We also took anti-malarials, Chloroquine and Paludrine, for one week before, during and four weeks after the holiday. Ann took Anti-histamines just before and during the trip and, again, although this did not prevent being bitten it lessened the effects of bites. We sprayed bug-repellent on exposed flesh and also on trouser legs, etc. but only a few times. We were not troubled by mozzies (except at Saligao Zor one evening where there were also some aggressive red ants which just loved feet in sandals!) although there were some around the poolside bar at the Beira Mar in the evenings. It got very hot indeed after mid-morning and you definitely need a good sun block and hat. I advise that you drink plenty of bottled water; we were drinking up to five litres a day and also brushed our teeth in it. Most of the time we wore shorts and sandals but some of the tracks were a bit rough and overgrown so long trousers and lightweight boots were also used. After our experience on the loose shale at Baga Hill (and despite Ann wearing good boots) it would pay to be extra careful in these situations. Ann was also unwell one morning in the second week with a pain in her side and, as we were worried it might be a side-effect of her fall, she saw a Doctor that the hotel use. He was there within fifteen minutes, was very good and thorough and correctly diagnosed a muscle spasm due to sleeping awkwardly! He gave her some anti-inflammatory tablets and a gel to rub on her side which solved the problem in a couple of hours. He also gave us a prescription for a further supply of the tablets which we filled in a local pharmacy in Calangute. His total charge was only R650.



Green Bee-eater

Field Guides, etc. : We mainly used *A Pocket Guide to the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent* by Grimmett, Inskipp & Inskipp supplemented by *A Field Guide to the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent* by Kazmierczak. While in Goa I managed to buy a copy of *Birds of Goa* by Heinz Lainer which is a reference work rather than an identification guide. I had read loads of trip reports from the internet (particularly through Surfbirds site) and others from friends and compiled my own list of site details as the birder's guide by Harris is now out of print and most likely out of date. There were a number of birders staying around and in Baga and Calangute and most were pretty helpful with information when asked.

Itinerary :

29th January	Flew Newcastle – Gatwick, leaving home at 07:00 a.m. We departed Gatwick at 16:30 on a Boeing 767 and reaped the benefit of paying the upgrade to premium as the leg room was good and, with three seats available to us, we managed to sleep and the drinks were free!
30th January	8000 kms and 8 ^{1/2} hours later we landed at Dabolim, Goa at 06:30 a.m. local time. Immigration procedures were not too long but there were still queues to get the inevitable piece of paper stamped! After negotiating/'fighting' with the very pushy 'porters' outside the arrival hall (at that time in the morning even a few choice Geordie phrases failed to deter them and it is easier to give in!), we were transferred to Arpora with another couple in a six-seater mini-bus which only took about 45 mins. After settling in our room we birded around the hotel grounds and across the road around the salt pans.
31st January	After heavy rain for a few hours in the morning (the first rain in January in Goa ever according to some!) we had another look around the local area. As it dried out we caught the free bus to Baga, had a quick look at the northern end of the fields then went to the Beira Mar, running the gauntlet of every shopkeeper in the main street who can obviously identify you as 'new blood', where we spent a couple of hours birding from the pool side! A good way to introduce yourself to the local birds including a Baillon's Crake sitting out in the open about 4 metres away! In the evening we took a taxi with 'Papa' to Arpora Woods near the Club Cabana. Highlights here were a couple of Asian Paradise Flycatchers and stunning views of an Indian Pitta.
1st February	We explored Baga Hill during the morning going up along the narrow track at the western end. After a couple of hours good birding we were descending down the same track when Ann fell a few feet on some loose shale and landed badly on her right ankle. After a struggle and using my tripod as a crutch we managed to get down the last few hundred metres then flagged a passing taxi to take us back to the hotel. Although shaken, Ann was convinced that her ankle was only sprained and didn't want to see a doctor. After we compressed the injured area with ice packs and an elastic bandage, she had a couple of days rest and felt o.k. and could walk quite well on it. It was only when we returned to the UK and had a check up at hospital that we discovered she had actually broken her fibula!! The accident made us change our plans somewhat and we curtailed some of our intended destinations and had to cancel the three day trip to Backwoods camp. In the evening I had a quick visit to Arpora Woods and was rewarded with a couple of Orange-headed Thrushes and a Blue-faced Malkoha.
2nd February	Not wanting to go far today, we just birded around the hotel and I took a taxi into the capital Panaji and bought a walking stick for Ann. In the early evening I went to Saligao Zor with 'Papa' and we hunted for the regular Brown Wood Owl which I eventually found roosting at the top of the highest tree! The woods here were quiet apart from a small party of Tawny-bellied Babblers and some vicious Red Ants and annoying mosquitoes. Late evening saw a huge roost of small birds, mainly Baya Weavers but also Jungle Mynas and Chestnut-tailed Starlings, next to the salt pans at the hotel and single Night Heron and Grey Nightjar flying over the grounds.
3rd February	Just after dawn I went up Baga Hill on the track at the eastern end and found a fruiting tree near the top that was attracting a good range of birds including a couple of Crimson Sunbirds and a number of Coppersmith and Brown-headed Barbets. A troop of Langur Monkeys scared the living daylights out of me as they went bounding away through the trees! During the heat of the day we messed around the hotel and watched from our balcony which produced among others, a fishing Osprey and a Woolly-necked Stork flying by. Later we took a taxi to the Beira Mar again where, above the usual evening swirl of Black Kites, a single White-rumped Vulture soared around eventually being lost to sight westwards.
4th February	At dawn walked along the road to Baga and explored the north end of the fields (avoiding many people doing what they have to do in the morning!). The whole area really needs to be worked thoroughly but by mid-morning the rising temperatures had driven me back for breakfast! During the late afternoon we took a taxi to Morjim Beach where there were loads of gulls and terns but no shade from the still very strong sun. Also the tide was just rising so many birds were out on the sand bars in the estuary. We saw Great Black-headed and Brown-headed gulls together with a few Heughlin's Gulls, the latter species being absent on our return visit five days later. The new bridge over the river shortens the journey time to this site as previously you needed to catch a ferry.

5th February	An early morning visit to Arpora Woods paid off with good views of a Blue-bearded Bee-eater as well as a ridiculously close Crested Serpent Eagle sitting on a bush! Back at the hotel two Oriental Honey Buzzards decided to display over the grounds wheeling in and around the many Black and Brahminy Kites while a Black-capped Kingfisher flew by. During the afternoon we spent another pleasant few hours watching from the Beira Mar over the fields.
6th February	A pre-dawn start with Santosh to Carambolim. First stop was the wood beyond the small village where we immediately found two Jungle Owlets in overhead trees and then, a short distance away, the pair of roosting Brown Hawk Owls. We spent a little time scanning the flooded fields just beyond the wood as there were loads of waders present and things like Asian Brown Flycatcher in the roadside trees. This area could have done with longer but we had to move on to Carambolim Lake. Here the water level appeared to be quite low and there were not as many duck as I had expected. We did locate five Pygmy Cotton Geese, a single Darter and, of course, loads of jacanas. We also watched a Mongoose at close range apparently excavating a hole in a sandy bankside. Santosh took us to some flooded fields (or 'tank') near to Old Goa but I doubt if I could find this site again. There were many more duck here all crammed together on the relatively small area of water.
7th February	Another dawn visit to the east track up Baga Hill which again proved productive with a couple of Rufous Treepies being obliging and (finally) a Black-lored Tit. The fruiting tree was still attracting a number of birds including several barbets, half a dozen Golden Orioles and both Plain and Thick-billed Flowerpeckers. Most of the afternoon was taken up digi-scoping around the salt pans.
8th February	Most of the day was spent shopping in Calangute and then birding around the Marinha Dourada. An early evening visit to Arpora Woods was again successful. This site definitely repays a number of visits as I saw different species each time I went there.
9th February	A pre-dawn start to go to Morjim Beach again. Our timing was perfect on this visit as the tide was almost high just an hour or so after dawn. The gulls were gradually pushed off the sand bars and most came into the beach at some point including 17 Great Black-headed Gulls several of which were nearly in full summer plumage. Large numbers of plovers were also present with Lesser and Greater Sand Plovers next to each other and Kentish nearby for comparison! The area just behind the beach was also explored but we could not find any Barred Button Quail despite extensive searching. Early evening was spent watching from the Beira Mar poolside where I saw another Mongoose in the fields.
10th February	Another pre-dawn start to go to inland to Mayem Lake. We spent the next few hours at this excellent site just watching a small group of trees that were attracting a variety of species. Highlights were another Jungle Owllet which gave great views in the 'scope and a pair of Malabar Pied Hornbills which we first heard before they flew past at close range making a hell of a racket! In the early evening I returned again to Arpora Woods and finally caught up with a Tawny Eagle which had been seen previously by others.
11th February	Yet another pre-dawn start to return to Mayem Lake with another birder staying at the hotel. We spent the whole morning from dawn just watching from the shaded side of the lake. Excellent views of a Brown Fish Owl, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Malabar Whistling Thrush and Greater Racket-tailed Drongo to name a few of the highlights. This is an excellent site! In the evening Ann and I returned to the Beira Mar and then went to a small pool behind the Cavala Hotel where there were two very obliging Greater Painted Snipe to round off the day!
12th February	A day spent digi-scoping and birding around the hotel, a final visit to the Beira Mar and some last minute shopping in Baga before having to pack our bags.
13th February	Up at 04:00 a.m. for the bus to the airport where we were greeted by the usual scrum of porters all of whom wanted to take Ann in a wheelchair to the front of the queues – very embarrassing as they pushed other tourists literally out-of-the-way! Flight departed more or less on time. Excellent views of Oman then Iran and Eastern Turkey in bright sunshine before we landed 10 ^{1/2} hours later in cloudy conditions at Gatwick. There was a problem on board for some passengers (but luckily not us) as there were not enough premium upgrade seats available for all of those who had paid the supplement. The Cabin Crew promised full refunds for those involved but there were, quite rightly, some disgruntled travellers! After a meal and a long wait in the airport we eventually flew Gatwick – Newcastle and arrived home about 10:30 p.m.

CLASSIFIED LIST
(order follows Grimmett & Inskipp)

Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus*

Single birds heard, but not seen, on Baga Hill 1st & 3rd February.

Lesser Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna javanica*

About 30 were on Carambolim Lake on 6th February when good numbers also present on a flooded 'tank' near Old Goa.

Cotton Pygmy Goose *Nettapus coromandelianus*

Five were at Carambolim Lake on 6th February.

Teal *Anas crecca*

Good numbers (but not counted) were present on a flooded 'tank' near Old Goa on 6th February.

Garganey *Anas querquedula*

Many were present on a flooded 'tank' near Old Goa on 6th February.

Pintail *Anas acuta*

A few were with other duck on a flooded 'tank' near Old Goa on 6th February.

Shoveler *Anas clypeata*

A few were with other duck on a flooded 'tank' near Old Goa on 6th February.

Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense*

Two were in the roadside trees near the Marinha Dourada on 4th February, a pair behind Morjim Beach on 9th, one at Mayem Lake on 10th where two were present on 11th.

Brown-headed Barbet *Megalaima zeylanica*

Two were at a fruiting tree on Baga Hill on 3rd February.

White-checked Barbet *Megalaima viridis*

One was at Baga Hill on 1st February where four were seen on 7th and also noted at Mayem Lake on 10th.

Coppersmith Barbet *Megalaima haemacephala*

Five were on Baga Hill on 3rd February where three seen on 7th. At least six were at Mayem Lake on 10th where even more were present on 11th.

Malabar Pied Hornbill *Anthracoceros coronatus*

Two of these noisy and conspicuous birds flew very close through trees at Mayem Lake on 10th February.

Hoopoe *Upupa epops*

Only single birds were noted at Marinha Dourada on 30th January, Baga Fields on 31st January and 4th February, Arpora Woods on 1st February, and Carambolim Lake on 6th.

Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis*

Singles were seen near Arpora on 30th January and probably the same bird there on 2nd February, at the Beira Mar on 31st January and 5th & 9th February, near Morjim Beach on 4th February, Carambolim Wood on 6th, and near Mayem Lake on 11th.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Seen daily with one-two birds in a number of waterside sites.

Stork-billed Kingfisher *Pelargopsis capensis*

Single birds seen regularly at the Marinha Dourada salt pans and behind the Beira Mar. Also noted at Mayem Lake.

White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis*

Seen daily in widespread areas not necessarily associated with water. Up to four birds seen loosely together.



White-throated Kingfisher



Stork-billed Kingfisher

Black-capped Kingfisher *Halcyon pileata*

One flew past our balcony at the Marinha Dourada on 5th February and one seen later the same day at the Beira Mar may well have been the same bird. Another was at Morjim Beach on 9th, two at Mayem Lake on 10th where one was seen on 11th.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*

One-two were at the Marinha Dourada salt pans on 31st January, 3rd & 7th February, three at Carambolim Lake on 6th, singles at Morjim Beach on 9th and Mayem Lake on 10th where three were seen together on 11th.

Blue-bearded Bee-eater *Nyctornis athertoni*

A single bird was watched at close-range at Arpora Woods on 5th February as it appeared to search in holes in several trees, possibly attracted to some kind of insect nest. This is apparently a scarce or rare species in Goa and two birds had been reported together here a few days earlier.

Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis*

The commonest bee-eater recorded, seen daily in many localities but usually no more than half a dozen birds together in one area.

Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus*

Seen virtually daily in small numbers in a number of coastal or near coastal sites but also at Mayem Lake.

Chestnut-headed Bee-eater *Merops leschenaultia*

Two were seen very well at Mayem Lake on 11th February.

Asian Koel *Eudynamys scolopacea*

One was near Arpora Woods on 9th February but four were at Mayem Lake on 10th where probably up to ten birds were visiting fruiting/blossoming trees on 11th.

Blue-faced Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus viridirostris*

A single bird was seen at the small 'quarry' area at Arpora Woods on 1st February.



Blue-tailed Bee-eater

Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis*

One was at the Beira Mar on 3rd February and other singles at Morjim Beach on 4th and near Baga on 12th.

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Small numbers were seen at the Marinha Dourada, the Beira Mar where up to a maximum of eight, and Carambolim Fields. Most sightings were of two-three in flight.

Plum-headed Parakeet *Psittacula cyanocephala*

A total of nine were around the Marinha Dourada on 31st January, a pair inspecting a hole in a palm tree at Morjim Beach on 9th February and about six at Mayem Lake on 11th.

Indian Swiftlet *Aerodramus unicolor*

About 15 were over the Mayem Lake area on 11th February.

Asian Palm Swift *Cypsiurus balasiensis*

Small numbers seen at the Marinha Dourada and the Beira Mar (maximum ten on 31st January) on several dates.

House Swift *Apus affinis*

Seen daily in several localities sometimes in good numbers but often very high.

Crested Treeswift *Hemiprocne coronata*

Two-three were at Mayem Lake on 11th February.

Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis*

One sitting in the crown of a palm at Mayem Lake on 11th February flew to what is apparently its usual roosting trees where it was still present three hours later. Good views were had of this big owl.

Brown Wood Owl *Strix leptogrammica*

One was present in the regular roost site at Saligao Zor on 2nd February.

Jungle Owlet *Glaucidium radiatum*

Two were located in the small wood at Carambolim on 6th February and a single was at Mayem Lake on 10th.

Spotted Owlet *Athene brama*

A pair were seen daily (and heard making a variety of snores, hisses, etc. every night) at a hole in a tree behind our room at the Marinha Dourada. Another pair were on the roadside near Lila's on the way to Baga Bridge on 4th February.

Brown Hawk Owl *Nibox scutulata*

A pair were roosting together at Carambolim Wood just after dawn on the morning of 6th February.

Grey Nightjar *Caprimulgus indicus*

One flying through the Marinha Dourada grounds on 2nd February was considered to be this species.



Spotted Owlet

Rock Dove *Columba livia*

Seen in a number of localities and including quite a few obvious 'feral' pigeons. Also multiple parties of apparent 'racing' pigeons passing over places like Baga Hill were noted.

Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis*

Seen daily in small numbers although seemed quite numerous behind Morjim Beach.

Red Collared Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica*

One was at Arpora Woods on 5th February.

Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

Perhaps surprisingly I only noted this species on one day in Baga.

Orange-breasted Green Pigeon *Treron bicincta*

Three were at Mayem Lake on 10th/11th February.

Pompadour Green Pigeon *Treron pompadora*

Two were together at Mayem Lake on 11th February, although about 20 birds seen here flying over the lake just after dawn and against the rising sun seemed likely to have been this species.

White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus*

Up to ten were seen at the Beira Mar , one in Baga Fields and two at Mayem Lake.

Baillon's Crake *Porzana pusilla*

A single bird was seen very well at the Beira Mar Hotel on three dates.

Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyrio*

Large numbers at Carambolim Lake on 6th February were not counted.

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Small numbers noted only at the Beira Mar.

Coot *Fulica atra*

Noted only at Carambolim Lake and the flooded field near Old Goa on 6th February.

Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

A couple were seen at the flooded fields near Carambolim on 6th February. In addition, single snipe sp. were twice seen very briefly in Baga Fields.

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

A party of seven flew out of the Chapora estuary at Morjim Beach on 9th February.

Redshank *Tringa tetanus*

Small numbers were present almost daily on the Marinha Dourada salt pans. Also noted at Carambolim flooded fields.

Marsh Sandpiper *Tringa stagnatilis*

Seen and heard daily on the salt pans outside the Marinha Dourada where up to a dozen birds could be present. Also seen at Carambolim flooded fields.

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

As Marsh Sandpiper but probably more numerous.

Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*

Singles were at Baga Fields on 4th February and the Beira Mar between 5th - 11th.

Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*

Small numbers regularly seen at the Marinha Dourada salt pans and also at the Beira Mar and Carambolim flooded fields.



Marsh Sandpiper

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos*

Small numbers regularly seen at the Marinha Dourada salt pans and at the Beira Mar.

Little Stint *Calidris minuta*

Dozens were present with large numbers of other waders at Carambolim flooded fields on 6th February.

Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii*

One was at the Marinha Dourada salt pans on 2nd February and about 12 at Carambolim flooded fields on 6th.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

Noted only at the flooded fields near Carambolim Wood on 6th February where about three were present.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Several were scattered around the flooded fields near Carambolim Wood on 6th February.

Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis*

A male and a female were seen very well together on a weed-filled pool behind the Cavala Hotel in Baga on 11th.

Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*

Good numbers at Carambolim Lake on 6th despite fairly low water levels. Also present at the flooded field near Old Goa where they outnumbered the following species.

Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus*

Many were present at Carambolim Lake on 6th February where they appeared to outnumber the previous species and also at the flooded field near Old Goa where there were far fewer.

Small Pratincole *Glareola lacteal*

A superb gathering of probably 500 birds on the flooded fields near Carambolim Wood just after dawn on 6th February. In contrast a single bird flew past Morjim Beach on 9th.

Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*

Up to 13 were at the Marinha Dourada salt pans on several dates and several were at Carambolim flooded fields on 6th February.

Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola*

Two were at Carambolim flooded fields on 6th February.

Little Ringed Plover *Charadrius dubius*

Small numbers were seen on several dates at Marinha Dourada salt pans and also at Carambolim flooded fields. There were good numbers on and around the football pitch area at Baga after heavy rain on 31st January.

Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus*

A few were at Morjim Beach on 4th February where about 20 were present with sand plovers on 9th.



Greater Sand Plover



Lesser Sand Plover

Lesser Sand Plover *Charadrius mongolus*

One was at the Marinha Dourada salt pans on 3rd February, about 40 at Morjim Beach on 4th where about 100 were present on 9th. Several were also on the flooded fields near Carambolim Wood on 6th.

Greater Sand Plover *Charadrius leschenaultia*

15 were at Morjim Beach on 4th February where 20 were present on 9th, several on the flooded fields near Carambolim Wood on 6th and one at the Marinha Dourada on 7th

Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus*

Quite widespread with small numbers regularly noted at Marinha Dourada, Baga Fields and Mayem Lake and a maximum of 20 near Morjim Beach on 4th February.

Caspian Gull *Larus cachinnans*

Several hundred were present on both visits to Morjim Beach on 4th and 9th February.

Heughlin's Gull *Larus heuglini*

Just a small number (probably less than six individuals) were located amongst other gulls at Morjim Beach on 4th February.

Great Black-headed Gull *Larus ichthyaetus*

About 20 were at Morjim Beach on 4th February, mainly in winter or transitional plumage and including one-two 2nd year birds. On 9th, 17 were present but more adults almost attaining summer plumage.

Brown-headed Gull *Larus brunnicephalus*

Several hundreds were milling about Morjim Beach and on the sand bars in the estuary on 4th February but numbers had declined on 9th.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

Many were present with other gulls at Morjim Beach on 4th and 9th February. The only other record was one flying over Marinha Dourada salt pans on 30th January.



Great Black-headed Gull

Slender-billed Gull *Larus genei*

Four-five adults were amongst the gull flock at Morjim Beach on 4th February.

Gull-billed Tern *Sterna nilotica*

Three were at Morjim Beach on 4th February and several over Carambolim Lake on 6th.

Lesser Crested Tern *Sterna bengalensis*

There were at least 30 at Morjim Beach on 4th but difficult to count when mixed in with the huge gull flock on sand bars. 12, perhaps more, were still present on 9th.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*

About 20 were at Morjim Beach on 4th and 9th February were mostly winter plumaged birds. Another observer thought some of these birds may have been Saunder's Tern *Sterna saundersi* but if they were I couldn't separate them.

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

At least one visited the Marinha Dourada salt pans area on several dates with possibly the same bird at Baga Fields.

Black Kite *Milvus migrans*

Ubiquitous – virtually impossible to look anywhere during the day and not see this species. A wide range of plumages and moult! Perhaps a little less numerous around Mayem Lake on both visits.

Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus*

Not as numerous as the previous species but still very widespread and in good numbers.

White-bellied Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster*

A long-established nest at Arpora Woods contained large young and adults seen here and regularly over Baga Hill and the Marinha Dourada were presumably from this pair.

White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis*

A single bird was over Baga Fields on the evening of 3rd February. An unexpected sighting, given the state of vulture populations in India.

Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela*

One was at Arpora Woods on 5th February and two at Mayem Lake on 11th.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

One-two were at the Beira Mar on 31st January and 3rd & 9th February, and one at Carambolim Lake and two near Old Goa on 6th.

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus*

An adult male flew past the Beira Mar on 5th February.



Crested Serpent Eagle

Crested Goshawk *Accipiter trivirgatus*

A single, at Mayem Lake on 10th February, perched in the same tree as a Changeable Hawk Eagle(!), was located for us by a local birder.

Shikra *Accipiter badius*

A single male, amazingly pale-looking in the bright sunlight, was apparently displaying over the Marinha Dourada and nearby woods on 30th January. It or another was over the same area on 2nd February and two together on 9th.

Besra *Accipiter virgatus*

A small dark-backed accipiter flying through the hotel gardens and trees at the Beira Mar on 31st January was possibly this species. Singles were seen at Arpora Woods on 1st & 10th February. Another was flushed at close range near the Marinha Dourada salt pans on 3rd. It was carrying a small lizard or snake and was immediately attacked and robbed by a passing Brahminy Kite. The startled hawk bolted into a palm tree where I was able to watch it through the telescope.

Oriental Honey Buzzard *Pernis ptilorhyncus*

Two were soaring over Baga Hill/Marinha Dourada area on 31st January where birds were also seen on 5th & 7th February. Two were very low over the hotel for about ten minutes on 12th. Singles were also seen at Arpora Woods on 31st January and 10th February.

White-eyed Buzzard *Butastur teesa*

A single was soaring over a nearby hillside at Mayem Lake on 11th February.

Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

One flew east over the Marinha Dourada on the morning of 2nd February.

Tawny Eagle *Aquila rapax*

One over Arpora Woods on the evening of 10th February was apparently the bird which had been present for several days.

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis*

A first-winter bird seen well over Mayem Lake on 11th February was a little unexpected.

Booted Eagle *Aquila pennatus*

Singles were over Arpora Woods on 8th February and Baga Hill on 11th.

Changeable Hawk Eagle *Spizaetus cirrhatus*

A single bird was seen at Mayem Lake on 10th & 11th February being very vocal just after dawn on the first morning.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Perhaps surprisingly, the only bird noted was a single on roadside wires near Arpora on 6th February.

Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*

A single noted at Carambolim Lake on 6th February was the only one seen.

Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger*

Seen virtually daily at the salt pans and fish lakes at the Marinha Dourada. Small numbers also noted at the lagoon at Baga Fields, Carambolim flooded fields, Carambolim Lake, near Old Goa and Mayem Lake.

Indian Cormorant *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*

One was at the Marinha Dourada on 30th January.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*

Common around the Marinha Dourada/Arpora area particularly in the salt pans/paddies near Arpora bridge. Counts of up to 25+ made.

Western Reef Egret *Egretta gularis*

Noted only at the Mandovi River when passing Panaji in taxis on 2nd and 6th February, the few birds seen being dark morphs.

Great White Egret *Egretta alba*

Noted virtually daily particularly at the Marinha Dourada salt pans where up to half a dozen were present. Also seen at Mayem Lake.

Intermediate Egret *Egretta intermedia*

Noted on several dates at the Marinha Dourada salt pans with a maximum of six on 31st January. Single also seen at the Beira Mar on two dates.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Widespread and seen daily in many areas.

Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii*

Widespread and seen daily mainly in 'wet' localities but also in dry fields with Cattle Egrets.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*

One-three were noted at the Marinha Dourada salt pans, Carambolim flooded fields and Carambolim Lake.

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*

Singles were at the Beira Mar on 31st January and 5th February, four at Carambolim Lake on 6th when one near Old Goa and another at the Marinha Dourada on 12th.

Little Heron *Butorides striatus*

Singles were at the Marinha Dourada fish pond on 31st January-2nd February, along the roadside to Baga Bridge on 4th February and at Mayem Lake on 10th.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*

One flew over the Marinha Dourada at dusk on 2nd February and at least two were roosting in trees behind Morjim Beach on 4th and 9th.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*

Seven were at Carambolim Lake on 6th February.

Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus*

One flew west over the Marinha Dourada from the direction of Baga Fields on 3rd February.

Indian Pitta *Pitta brachyuran*

Superb views of a bird just near to the Club Cabana at Arpora Woods on the evening of 31st January. This appears to be a regular wintering(?) site.

Golden-fronted Leafbird *Chloropsis aurifrons*

One was at Baga Hill on 3rd February.

Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach*

Seen almost daily, and virtually always single birds, in several localities but particularly around Baga/Arpora.

Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda*

One was at the Beira Mar on 31st January, two on Baga Hill on 7th February and one at Arpora Woods on 10th.

House Crow *Corvus splendens*

Ubiquitous with large numbers everywhere we visited.

Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos*

One was in the grounds of the Marinha Dourada on 31st January and 3rd February and another at Baga Hill on 7th.



Long-tailed Shrike



Ashy Woodswallow

Ashy Woodswallow *Artamus fuscus*

Noted regularly particularly around the Marinha Dourada salt pans where up to eight on wires and up to 15 at the Beira Mar and smaller numbers near Old Goa.

Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus*

One was at the Marinha Dourada on 30th January, three at Arpora Woods on 31st, two on Baga Hill on 1st February, where seven on 3rd and six on 7th, and four – six at Mayem Lake on 10th/11th.

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus*

Singles were at Baga Hill on 3rd February and Carambolim Wood on 6th with three at Mayem Lake on 11th.

Large Cuckooshrike *Coracina macei*

One was at Mayem Lake on 11th February.

Black-headed Cuckooshrike *Coracina melanoptera*

Two were at Arpora Woods on 1st & 8th February and another at Mayem Lake on 11th.

Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*

Singles were at Baga Hill on 1st & 3rd February, Carambolim Fields on 6th, two at Arpora Woods on 10th and another at Mayem Lake on 11th.

Scarlet Minivet *Pericrocotus flammeus*

Seen only at Mayem Lake on 11th February.

White-throated Fantail *Rhipidura albicollis*

Two were at Arpora Woods on 31st January and 1st February where a total of five seen on 8th. One was on Baga Hill on 3rd February.

Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*

Widespread and seen almost daily particularly around field edges.

Ashy Drongo *Dicrurus leucophaeus*

Two were at each of Arpora Woods and Baga Hill on 1st February with six at the latter on 3rd and singles on several other dates.

White-bellied Drongo *Dicrurus caerulescens*

Two were at Arpora Woods on 1st February and one-two on 8th.

Bronzed Drongo *Dicrurus aeneus*

One was at Arpora Woods on 10th February and one-two at Mayem Lake on 10th/11th

Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus*

One, complete with amazing tail streamers, seen in flight at Mayem Lake on 11th February.



Black Drongo

Asian Paradise-flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradise*

Three were together at Arpora Woods on 31st January.

Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia*

Three were at Arpora Woods on 1st February where one on 8th and two at Mayem Lake on 10th.

Common Woodshrike *Tephrodornis pondicerianus*

One was at Arpora Woods on 31st January and two on 5th February.

Malabar Whistling Thrush *Myiophonus horsfieldii*

Good views of two of these retiring thrushes at Mayem Lake on 11th February.

Orange-headed Thrush *Zoothera citrina*

One-two seen at Arpora Woods on 1st, 8th and 10th February.

Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa daurica*

One-two were in roadside trees near the flooded fields at Carambolim on 6th February.

White-bellied Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis pallipes*

One was at Mayem Lake on 10th February.

Tickell's Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis tickelliae*

Two were at Baga Hill on 1st February and another on 7th.

Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica*

One was at the Beira Mar on 31st January and about five different birds at Baga Fields on 4th February.

Oriental Magpie Robin *Copsychus saularis*

A pair were near the Marinha Dourada on 31st January when one at the Beira Mar, two at Baga Fields on 4th February, one at Morjim Beach on 9th and others at Mayem Lake on 10th/11th.

Indian Robin *Saxicoloides fulicata*

A pair were at Carambolim flooded fields on 6th February.

Stonechat *Saxicola torquata*

A male was at the Beira Mar on 31st January and 5th February with about four (one male) in Baga Fields on 4th February. Another was at Carambolim on 6th.

Pied Bushchat *Saxicola caprata*

Pairs and single birds were seen regularly in several localities with, for example, at least two pairs around the Marinha Dourada area.

Chestnut-tailed Starling *Sturnia malabarica*

Good numbers were roosting in low bushes on an island in a creek next to the Marinha Dourada salt pans most evenings. Up to ten were regularly around the hotel and also on Baga Hill and at the Beira Mar.

Rose-coloured Starling *Sturnus roseus*

Small numbers appeared to be roosting in low bushes on an island in a creek next to the Marinha Dourada salt pans on several evenings. Also seen on several days around the hotel. A maximum of 50 were at the Beira Mar on 3rd February. Six at Carambolim flooded fields on 6th.



Pied Bushchat

Common Myna *Acridotheres tristis*

Not common! Five were at the Marinha Dourada with Jungle Mynas and Rose-coloured Starlings on 31st January, four at Baga Hill on 3rd February and one at the Beira Mar on 5th.

Jungle Myna *Acridotheres fuscus*

Apparently widespread and seen daily sometimes in good numbers.

Black-lored Tit *Parus xanthogenys*

Only seen once, at Baga Hill on 7th February.

Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Surprisingly scarce. Three were at the Marinha Dourada salt pans on 31st January and six at Carambolim Lake on 6th February.

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*

Seen almost daily in small numbers with a maximum of 12 at the Marinha Dourada salt pans on 3rd February.

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*

Quite numerous with some large gatherings in early mornings on overhead wires and later in the day in higher flying feeding parties.

Red-whiskered Bulbul *Pycnonotus jocosus*

Widespread and seen in many localities.

Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer*

Six were at Baga Fields on 4th February, two at Carambolim flooded fields on 6th, two at Arpora Woods on 8th and 10th, several behind Morjim Beach on 9th and a few at Mayem Lake on 11th.

White-browed Bulbul *Pycnonotus luteolus*

Noted regularly at Arpora Woods with up to three-four on 1st, 5th and 10th February. Two were at Carambolim flooded fields on 6th and five on Baga Hill on 7th



Red-rumped Swallow

Grey-breasted Prinia *Prinia hodgsonii*

Three were at Arpora Woods on 8th February and five together at Mayem Lake on 11th

Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata*

Singles were at the Marinha Dourada on 30th January, Baga Fields on 4th February and Carambolim flooded fields on 6th.

Ashy Prinia *Prinia socialis*

Two were at the Beira Mar on 31st January and 9th February.

Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola*

At least two were at the Beira Mar on 31st January where one was present on 5th February.

Blyth's Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum*

Unexpectedly widespread in all sorts of habitat and all elevations. Often detected by their call. Up to half a dozen in a day seen.

Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus*

Only one seen at the Beira Mar on 31st January.

Booted Warbler *Hippolais caligata*

Two were at the Beira Mar on 31st January where at least one was present on 9th February.

Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius*

Singles were at the Beira Mar on 31st January, on Baga Hill on 7th February and Arpora Woods on 10th.

Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides*

One-two were noted at the Marinha Dourada, Arpora Woods, Carambolim Wood, Baga Hill and Mayem Lake.

Tytler's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus tytleri*

A single small phylloscopus watched by myself and another English birder at Arpora Woods on 1st February was thought to be this species. It was about the size of a Greenish (one nearby for comparison) but 'different' with plain green-olive upperparts and dull whitish underparts. Long fairly narrow whitish supercilium, no wing bars or crown stripe, dark legs and a fairly short tail. Plumage neat and apparently not abraded. Although seemingly an unlikely occurrence, this rare species has been reported in Goa before. The record is noted here for completeness.

Puff-throated Babbler *Pellorneum ruficeps*

One was at Arpora Woods on 1st February where three on 8th and 10th and two on Baga Hill on 7th.

Tawny-bellied Babbler *Dumetia hyperythra*

A small group of about six were at Saligao Zor on 2nd February, one on Baga Hill on 3rd and two at Arpora Woods on 8th and 10th.

Jungle Babbler *Turdoides striatus*

About six were at Arpora Woods on 1st February with several there on 8th. Another was at Mayem Lake on 10th.

Brown-cheeked Fulvetta *Alcippe poioicephala*

One was at Baga Hill on 1st February and about four at Arpora Woods on 10th.

Malabar Lark *Galerida malabarica*

Two were at the Marinha Dourada salt pans on 2nd February and several on Baga Fields on 4th.

Thick-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum agile*

One was at Baga Hill on 7th February and two at Mayem Lake on 11th.

Plain Flowerpecker *Dicaeum concolor*

Several were at Baga Hill on 1st February and one on the eastern track on 7th.

Purple-rumped Sunbird *Leptocoma zeylonica*

Widespread and seen in many localities.

Crimson-backed Sunbird *Leptocoma minima*

Two were at Arpora Woods on 5th February and one on 10th.

Purple Sunbird *Cinnyris asiaticus*

One was on Baga Hill on 3rd February and another at Mayem Lake on 11th.

Loten's Sunbird *Cinnyris lotenia*

Two were on Baga Hill on 1st February and another on 7th.

Crimson Sunbird *Aethopyga siparaja*

Two were at Baga Hill on 3rd February, one at Arpora Woods on 5th and another at Mayem Lake on 10th/11th.

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Only very small numbers noted around Baga Fields/Baga on four dates.

White-browed Wagtail *Motacilla madaraspatensis*

At least one, possibly two pairs, were around the Marinha Dourada and salt pans throughout.



White-browed Wagtail

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

Scarce. Several were on Baga Fields on 4th February and small numbers at Carambolim Lake on 6th.

Richard's Pipit *Anthus richardi*

Two were at the Marinha Dourada on 30th January and one with Paddyfield Pipit at the salt pans on 31st, one at Baga Fields on 4th February and another on overhead wires at the Beira Mar on 9th. A number of other brief sightings of singles, usually in flight and with apparently several different calls, around Baga Fields could have been this species or presumably Blyth's.

Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus*

Pairs and singles were seen several times around the Marinha Dourada area on five dates with a maximum count of eight on 3rd February. Several were also noted at Baga Fields.

Tawny Pipit *Anthus campestris*

Two were at Morjim Beach on 9th February.

Blyth's Pipit *Anthus godlewskii*

Difficult to pin down, but two birds seen well and distinctive calls heard at Baga Fields on 4th February. Several other sightings could well have referred to this species.

Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus*

About 50 behind the Beira Mar on 31st January where seen regularly and also noted on a number of occasions on Baga Fields. A very large roost in bushes near the Marinha Dourada held perhaps several hundred birds on 2nd February.

White-rumped Munia *Lonchura striata*

Noted on many dates in several localities with, for example, up to 30 at the Beira Mar.

Scaly-breasted Munia *Lonchura punctulata*

One was at the Beira Mar on 3rd February where several were present on 5th and 15 at Baga Fields on 4th