

message:

# SICKLEBILL SAFARIS



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# SRI LANKA

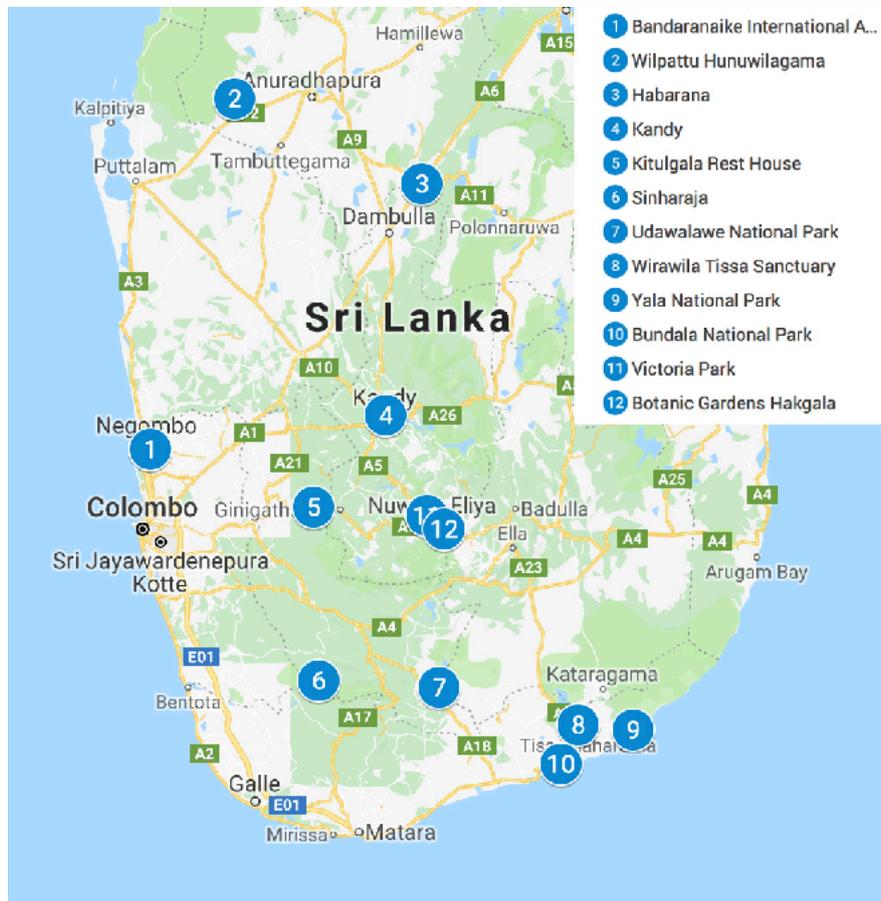
## ITINERARY

**1ST - 17TH DECEMBER 2019**





## SRI LANKA: A BRIEF OVERVIEW



### SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka is an island nation located in the Indian Ocean just south of India. Officially known as the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. It is famous for its Buddhist ruins. Sri Lanka has a diverse landscape which ranges from rainforest to arid plains and highlands to sandy beaches.

Its geographic location and deep harbours made it of great strategic importance from the time of the ancient Silk Road all the way through to World War II. Sri Lanka's recent history has been marred by a thirty year civil war which ended in 2009 with the defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The official languages are Sinhala, Tamil and English.

Sri Lanka is a diverse and multicultural country and is home to many different religions, ethnic groups and languages. It has a rich Buddhist heritage and the first known Buddhist writings of Sri Lanka, the Pali Canon, date back to the fourth Buddhist council in 29 BC. It is famed for its Buddhist ruins including the spectacularly sited citadel fortress of Sigiriya. Buddhist ruins in the ancient capital of Anuradhapura go back more than 2000 years.

The food of Sri Lanka is full of flavour and for many people a highlight of their visit. While much of it is highly spiced there are always cooler options and most hotels have western menus for the less adventurous. Vegetarians are well catered for.

## TOUR INFORMATION

**This 17 day tour** visits some of Sri Lanka's best birding spots where we would expect to see most if not all of the local endemics (of which there are 34). There are a further 53 species which are endemic to both India & Sri Lanka that can be found on this tour.

**This tour starts** and ends in Katunayake, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

### **Costs will include:**

16 nights accommodation, meals as per itinerary, 1 litre of bottled water per day, airport transfers within Sri Lanka, transport including driver & fuel, site fees, local guides, guide services of tour leader, bird list.

### **Cost does not include:**

Drinks, snacks, visas, laundry and items of a personal nature are not included.



Baya Weaver



Asian Paradise Flycatcher

### **DIFFICULTY**

This is not a difficult tour. While there is some walking involved the trails are well maintained and not steep. There can be some rough roads after wet weather in some of the national parks and climbing in and out of the jeeps can be a bit awkward at times.

### **ACCOMMODATION**

All accommodation on this tour is in comfortable air-conditioned ensuite rooms.



Loten's Sunbird

## TOUR PRICE & INFORMATION (GROUP OF 6)

### TOUR DURATION:

16 Nights, 17 Days

### LAND COST:

AUD\$6,865.00 per person Twin Share.

### SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:

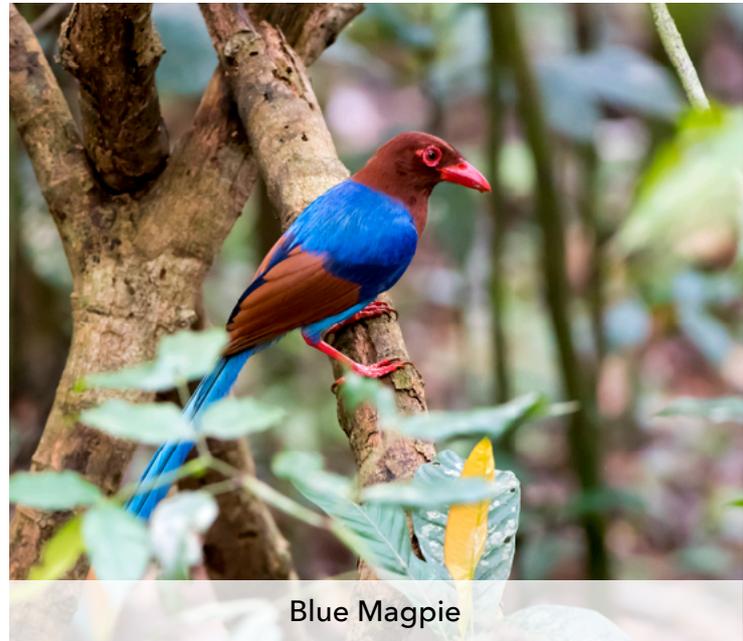
AUD\$1,390.00

### FLIGHTS:

These would be in addition to the land cost and will depend on where you are travelling from. We are happy to book flights for you.

### GROUP SIZE:

6 Clients + Sicklebill Safaris guide & Local guide



Blue Magpie

## ABOUT YOUR GUIDES



### JUN MATSUI

Jun has had a lifetime interest in wildlife and started as working as a bird guide in 1993. He first arrived in

Australia in 1999. After spending a year traveling around and volunteering at various bird hotspots including Broome Bird Observatory he eventually took a job as a specialist bird tour guide for inbound Japanese groups, based in the tropical Far North Queensland town of Cairns. He is a keen photographer and has been involved in several bird publications including photo guides to Far North Queensland in both English and Japanese. Jun joined Sicklebill Safaris in 2007 .



### UPALI EKANAYAKE

Upali is the senior most Ornithological Tour Leader (Regd.No. N/TGL/775)in Sri Lanka. He has been leading bird tours for more than 30 years and is well known in the birding world. He is also a highly accomplished all-

round naturalist. He was previously attached to the Zoology Department of the University of Peradeniya. He has undergone training in the U.K. in Terrestrial Ecology and Conservation with attachments at Aberdeen and Cambridge Universities, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (R.S.P.B.) and the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology (I.T.E.).

## ABOUT THE BIRDING AREAS

### WILPATTU NATIONAL PARK

Wilpattu National Park is located approximately 180km north of Colombo. It covers 131,693 hectares and ranges from 0 to 152 metres above sea level. It is one of the oldest parks in Sri Lanka and is world-renowned for its leopards. Wilpattu National Park is also famous for its 'Willus' which are natural, sand-rimmed water basins or depressions that fill with rainwater of which there are nearly 60 spread throughout the park.

### SIGIRIYA ROCK FORTRESS

Sigiriya or Sinhagiri is an ancient rock fortress located in the northern Matale District near the town of Dambulla in the Central Province. The name refers to a site of historical and archaeological significance that is dominated by a massive column of rock nearly 200 metres high. According to the Culavamsa, an ancient Sri Lankan chronicle, the site was selected by King Kasyapa for his new capital. He built his palace on top of the rock and decorated the sides with colourful frescoes. On a small plateau half way up the side of the rock he built a gateway in the form of an enormous lion and the name of this place is derived from this structure, Sīhāgiri, the Lion Rock. The capital and the palace were abandoned after the king's death and was used as a Buddhist monastery until the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

### ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS

The Royal Botanic Gardens are located about 5.5km's from the city of Kandy in the Central Province of Sri Lanka. They are renowned for their collection of orchids and the garden includes more than 4000 different species of plants including orchids, spices, medicinal plants and palm trees. The Botanic Gardens

cover 147 acres and, despite being a popular gathering place, they are a great place to see birds.

### UDAWATTA KELE SANCTUARY

Udawatta Kele Sanctuary (often spelt Udawattakele) is a historic forest reserve on a hill-ridge in the city of Kandy. It covers 257 acres and during the days of the Kandyan Kingdom was known as 'Uda Wasala Watta' which in Sinhalese means 'the garden above the royal palace'. It is famous for its avifauna but also boasts a large variety of plant species, particularly shrubs & small trees. Approximately 80 bird species have been recorded in the sanctuary.

### KITHULGALA

An area of gardens and forests in a well populated valley. It is a great place for **Green-billed Coucal**.

### SINHARAJA FOREST RESERVE

Sinharaja Forest Reserve has been designated a Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage Site by UNESCO. Comprised of hilly, virgin rainforest it was saved from the worst of the commercial logging by its inaccessibility. All of Sri Lanka's rainforest endemics can be found here.



Black-rumped Flameback

## ABOUT THE BIRDING AREAS

### UDAWALAWE NATIONAL PARK

Udawalawe National Park was created to provide a sanctuary for wildlife displaced by the construction of the Udawalawe Reservoir on the Walawe river as well as to protect the catchment of the reservoir. It covers 30,821 hectares and is an important habitat for water birds and Sri Lankan Elephants. A number of endemic birds can be found here.

### YALA NATIONAL PARK

Yala National Park is the second largest national park in Sri Lanka. The Park covers 989 square kilometres and is located about 300 kilometres from Colombo. It is well known for its variety of animals and is important in the conservation of Sri Lankan elephant, Sri Lankan leopard and aquatic birds. It has one of the highest leopard densities in the world. It is also listed as one of the 70 important bird areas in Sri Lanka with 215 bird species being sighted in the park.

### BUNDALA NATIONAL PARK

Bundala National Park is much less visited than the nearby Yala National Park but is an excellent stop for birders as it protects an important area of coastal wetlands famous for its aquatic birdlife. It provides a great chance to see crocodiles, wild boar, mongoose, monitor lizards, elephants and monkeys.

### VICTORIA PARK, NUWARA ELIYA

Victoria Park is a public park located in Nuwara Eliya and was originally a research field of Hakgala Botanical Garden. It was formally named in 1897 to commemorate Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee. A large number of bird species can be found in the park.

### HORTON PLAINS NATIONAL PARK

Horton Plains National Park is a protected area in the central highlands of Sri Lanka and is covered by montane grassland and cloud forest. It is located at an altitude of 2100 - 2300 metres and is rich in biodiversity. Many of the species found here are endemic to the region. It was designated a park in 1988. Approximately 87 species of birds can be found in this region.

### HAKGALA BOTANICAL GARDEN

Hakgala Botanical Garden is the second largest botanical garden in Sri Lanka and is contiguous to Hakgala Strict Nature Reserve. Many of the birds from the nature reserve can be found around the botanical garden grounds. For rose lovers there are more than 100 different species of roses found on the grounds.



Tea Estates - Nuwara Eliya



Mugger Crocodile



## SRI LANKA 2019 TOUR PLAN

### Days 1 - Sunday 1st December 2019

Arrive in Colombo. Transfer to your hotel. Local birding can be arranged for those who arrive early enough to take advantage of it.

*Accommodation: Katunayake*

*Meals Included: Dinner*

### Day 2 - Monday 2nd December 2019

Travel to Wilpattu. Start the day with a bit of local birding then drive up to Wilpattu. There are some interesting wetlands on the way which may be worth a look. Afternoon in the park, **Indian Peafowl, Yellow-billed Babbler, Indian Robin, Brown Fish Owl, Jerdon's Bushlark, Indian Paradise Flycatcher, Indian Jungle Crow** and **Pale-billed Flowerpecker** are all likely possibilities. We will also be looking for mammals, such as **Sambar, Indian Axis Deer, Water Buffalo, Wild Boar** and of course **Leopard** and **Sloth Bear**.

*Accommodation: Wilpattu area*

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Days 3 - Tuesday 3rd December 2019

Morning back in Wilpattu. Early morning and late afternoon are best for **Leopards** and **Sloth Bears**. Afternoon travel to Habanara stopping at various birding spots along the way. **Jacobin Cuckoo, Sri Lanka Grey Hornbill** and various raptors can be seen. Arriving at Habarana we will check into our hotel and if time permits bird the local area. The big tank to the back of TOC is a great birding locale.

*Accommodation: Habanara area*

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Day 4 - Wednesday 4th December 2019

Full day around Habarana. **Indian Pitta, Red-backed Flameback, Blyth's Reed Warbler, Green Warbler, Tawny-bellied Babbler, Loten's Sunbird**, the western form of **Baya Weaver, Jerdon's Nightjar** at dusk, **Jerdon's Leafbird** and **Orange-headed Thrush** are all to be found here.

*Accommodation: Habarana*

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



White-throated Kingfisher



Indian Muntjac (Barking Deer)



Black-hooded Oriole



Serendib Scops Owl



## SRI LANKA 2019 TOUR PLAN (CONT.)

### Day 5 - Thursday 5th December 2019

Travel to Kandy via Sigiriya where there is some good birding to be had around the tanks and moat at the base of the fortress rock. In recent years a **Shaheen Falcon**, (currently regarded as a very distinctive form of **Peregrine Falcon**) has been nesting in the caves on the rock, **Dark-fronted** and **Brown capped Babblers**, **Thick-billed Flowerpecker** and **Tri-coloured Munia** can all be seen in this area. On arrival at Kandy we will check into our hotel and then visit the very well laid out Botanic Gardens. This is a very popular spot for families to picnic and play but good birding can be had here. **Lesser Hill Myna**, **Orange Minivet**, **Red-faced Barbets**, **Sri Lanka Green Pigeon**, **Common Hawk-Cuckoo** and **Indian Pitta** can be found amongst the exotic trees and flower beds.

*Accommodation: Kandy*

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Day 6 - Friday 6th December 2019

Start the day birding the old Royal preserve at Udawattakele. Well maintained tracks can be followed through the forest and with **Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher**, **Sri Lanka Hanging Parrot**, **Layard's Parakeet**, a perched **Besra**, **Greater Flameback** and **Indian Blue Robin** are amongst the birds that can be seen.

We then continue over to Kithulgala and check into our hotel before going birding locally **Chestnut-backed Owlet**, **Orange-billed Babbler**, **Spot-winged Thrush**, **Oriental Hobby** and **Grey Wagtail** can be seen close to the lodge and Indian Scops Owl roosts nearby.

*Accommodation: Kithulgala*

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Day 7 - Saturday 7th December 2019

Full day around Kithulgala. A walk across a suspension bridge to an area of forests and gardens may yield **Indian Pitta**, **Sri Lanka Crested Drongo** and **Green-billed Coucal** while an afternoon trip up into the hills may yield **Rufous-bellied Eagle**, **Plum-headed Parakeet**, **Indian Robin** and with luck **Chestnut-headed Bee-eater**.

*Accommodation: Kithulgala*

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



Purple Sunbird



Brown Wood Owl



Baya Weaver Nests



Blue-tailed Bee-eater



## SRI LANKA 2019 TOUR PLAN (CONT.)

### Days 8 - Sunday 8th December 2019

Head over to Sinharaja. A stop on the way at the famous gem city of Ratnapura can be very interesting and good for souvenirs. Arriving at Sinharaja you will check into your hotel and then head up to the Park HQ where **Indian Blue Magpies** can often be seen.

*Accommodation: Sinharaja*

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Day 9 - Monday 9th December 2019

Full day in Sinharaja National Park. It is a steep ride up to the park trail entrance but Sri Lankan Frogmouths can be found on the way up. The best way to see birds here is to walk the trails and wait for mixed flocks which come through and contain such goodies as **White-faced Starlings, Sri Lanka Laughing Thrush, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Sri Lanka White-eye, Malabar Trogon** and **Red-faced Malkoha**. A late afternoon trek for **Serendib Scops Owl** may be possible for the keener members of the group.

*Accommodation: Sinharaja*

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Day 10 - Tuesday 10th December 2019

Continuing to bird the Sinharaja area with an early morning visit to "Spurfowl Lodge" for **Sri Lanka Spurfowl** and **Spot-winged Thrush**. Indian **Pigmy Woodpecker, Yellow-billed Babbler, Indian Blue Magpie** and **Brown-breasted Flycatcher** are amongst the birds that can often be seen on the walk along the track to the lodge. The balance of the day will be spent birding the local area including the wet area near the Blue Magpie Lodge where **Slaty-legged Crake** can sometimes be found.

*Accommodation: Sinharaja*

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



Blue Tiger Butterfly



Copper Smith Barbet



Crested Hawk Eagle



Dusky Blue Flycatcher



## SRI LANKA 2019 TOUR PLAN (CONT.)

### Day 11 - Wednesday 11th December 2019

This morning will see us heading for Udawalawe National Park where we will spend the afternoon. This is a good park for **Asian Elephant** and if we are lucky **Jungle Cat** and we hope to see **Sirkeer Malkoha**, **Grey-bellied Cuckoo**, **Barred Buttonquail**, **Yellow-wattled Lapwing**, **Jungle Prinia**, **Marshall's Iora**, **Painted Stork**, **Lesser Adjutant** and more.

*Accommodation: Uduwalawe*

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Day 12 - Thursday 12th December 2019

We start the day with a second visit to Udawalawe National Park. Early morning is a great time for viewing game and we will be there as the park opens. Later in the day we head south to Tissamaharama and Yala. "Tissa" is famous for its wetlands and this afternoon we start by visiting the huge Debaraweve wetlands which are on the edge of the town. We can hope for **Yellow** and **Black Bitterns**, **Watercock** and other water birds plus raptors including **Crested Serpent Eagle**. In the trees nearby we hope to see **Ring-necked Parakeets**, **White-naped Woodpecker** and **Red-backed Flameback**. In recent years a **Jungle Owlet** has been found just a short walk away.

*Accommodation: Tissamaharama*

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



Crested Serpent Eagle



Asian Elephant



White-napped Woodpecker



Giant Squirrel



## SRI LANKA 2019 TOUR PLAN (CONT.)

### Day 13 - Friday 13th December 2019

An early start sees us at Yala National Park. This is a very popular park and areas where animals are being seen can become crowded with rangers sending out alerts by radio. **Leopards** are particularly popular and traffic jams can develop when one is found. **Elephants** and **Sloth Bears** are also big draws. The Yala area suffered badly in the Boxing Day Tsunami of 2004 and there is a memorial to those who died at the site of the old Rest House which was destroyed at that time. This is a designated place for picnics where you can get out and stretch your legs, which is not possible in most areas of the park. **Streaked Weavers** build interestingly shaped nests in reedbeds, **Blue-faced Malkoha**, **Sri Lankan Green Pigeon**, **Orange-breasted Green Pigeon** and **Green Bee-eater** are other possibilities here.

Returning to "Tissa" during the heat of the day we will venture forth again late afternoon to another wetland to look for more shorebirds and for flocks of the almost grosbeak-like **Brahminy Starlings** wheeling overhead.

*Accommodation: Tissamaharama*

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Day 14 - Saturday 14th December 2019

An early morning visit to Bundala NP. This is an area of wetlands and saltpans with a good selection of shorebirds such as **Broad-billed Sandpiper** and **Red-necked Phalarope**. Terns are also well represented with **Little, Saunders, Gull-billed, Great-crested, Lesser Crested, Common, White-winged Black** and **Caspian Terns** all possible. **Small Pratincole, Painted Snipe, Spot-billed Pelican** and perhaps **Black-necked Stork** can also be seen.

After a rest at our hotel during the heat of the day late afternoon of sees us back around "Tissa" birding the local area.

*Accommodation: Tissamaharama*

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



Greater Coucal



Green Bee-eater



Grey-headed Fish Eagle



Indian Pitta



## SRI LANKA 2019 TOUR PLAN (CONT.)

### Day 15 - Sunday 15th December 2019

Leaving "Tissa" we take the main road through other areas of Yala where **Asian Elephants** frequently cross the road and **Stripe-necked Mongoose** can often be seen going about their business. We start to head back north climb the winding road up into the central mountains through the tea estates to Nuwara Eliya. Here the temperature is much cooler than on the lowlands around "Tissa" and sweatshirts and jumpers that have been carried around finally get a chance to be used.

Victoria Park in the afternoon is a good place to bird with **Pied Thrush**, **Yellow-eared Bulbul** and **Kashmir Flycatcher**. **Hill Swallows** can be seen over the town.

*Accommodation: Nurawa Eliya*

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Day 16 - Monday 16th December 2019

Today we head up to Horton Plains, a lovely upland area where **Sambar Deer** graze and the local subspecies of **Purple-faced Leaf Monkey** is known as **Bear Monkey** because of its extremely woolly coat - an adaptation not required by its lowland relatives. We will be looking for birds such as **Sri Lanka Bush Warbler**, **Sri Lanka Whistling Thrush**, **Yellow-eared Bulbul** and **Indian Blackbird**.

A visit to Hakgala Botanical Gardens may be possible in the late afternoon.

*Accommodation: Nurawa Eliya*

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Day 17 - Tuesday 17th December 2019

Sadly today we head back to Colombo. There will be a chance to visit a tea plantation if desired. We will arrive back in the afternoon and flights out can be booked from early evening onwards. Day rooms or extra nights can be arranged depending on flight times.

*Meals Included: Breakfast & Lunch*



Indian Roller



Purple-faced Leaf Monkey



Jungle Cat



Jungle Owlet



## FURTHER USEFUL INFORMATION FOR SRI LANKA

Further information about this tour will be sent to people once registration is confirmed. This includes:

- General information for travellers to Sri Lanka
- Contact list
- Checklist of birds

**Air Arrangements** - There are no domestic flights on this tour. We are happy to arrange international flights but depending on your point of origin it may be cheaper to arrange them from your home country.

**Airport Transfers** - All airport transfers within Sri Lanka are included in the tour.

**Smoking** - As most of our clients and all of our guides are non-smokers we would ask you to respect this and not to smoke in bedrooms, in vehicles or nearby on trails. We book non-smoking accommodation where it is available.

**Tour Inclusions and Exclusions** - The tour fee is in AUD and is based on twin occupancy. Cost includes accommodation as per itinerary, transfers, meals as per itinerary, site fees, guide services & bird list. Flights are given as a separate cost and this is not guaranteed until booked and paid for.

The fee does not include airport taxes, visa fees (you will need to check your visa requirements for Sri Lanka), drinks, optional tips to local drivers and guides, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

**Tour Registration** - To register for this tour let us know you would like to join us and we will send you the Registration/Release and Indemnity forms and an invoice for your deposit. Please fill in the forms and return them along with a **deposit of AUD\$500.00** per person. If registering by phone, a deposit must

be received within fourteen days, or the space will be released. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 120 days out from the tour start date.

### **Trip Cancellation and Emergency Insurance -**

We strongly recommend you consider purchasing comprehensive trip insurance, which includes trip cancellation, loss or damage to baggage and property, missed flights and also medical insurance (including a medical evacuation option), to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, we cannot offer any refund once we have paid for items.

When making a decision regarding health insurance you should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to your home country may cost well in excess of AU\$50,000. Uninsured travellers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

## FURTHER USEFUL INFORMATION FOR THIS TOUR (CONT.)

You are **strongly advised** to take out personal, health, baggage and holiday insurance before travelling. Please note Sicklebill Safaris does not accept responsibility or liability for any acts, omissions or defaults of service providers such as airlines, hotels, sightseeing, transfer, vehicle car hire services, or cruise lines and the like, whether negligent or otherwise, or for your acts, omissions, defaults, conduct, state of health, conditions or other circumstance or for any events beyond Sicklebill Safaris control. We will prepay your tour in advance and are happy to provide documentation for insurance purposes to prove we have paid for these services but will be unable to reimburse you ourselves. We will have paid the money you paid us out in good faith and will no longer have it at our disposal to refund you.

**Responsibility** - For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Sicklebill Safaris, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the reverse side of the registration form. Sicklebill Safaris acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour.

Sicklebill Safaris accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Sicklebill Safaris reserves the right to substitute hotels of a similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Sicklebill Safaris reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Sicklebill Safaris. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.