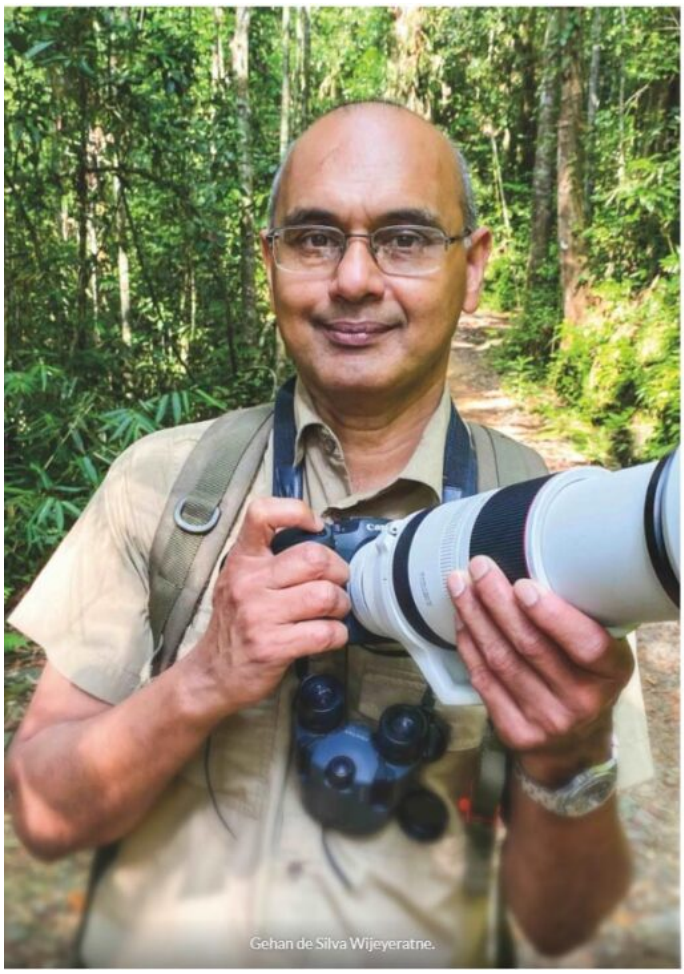
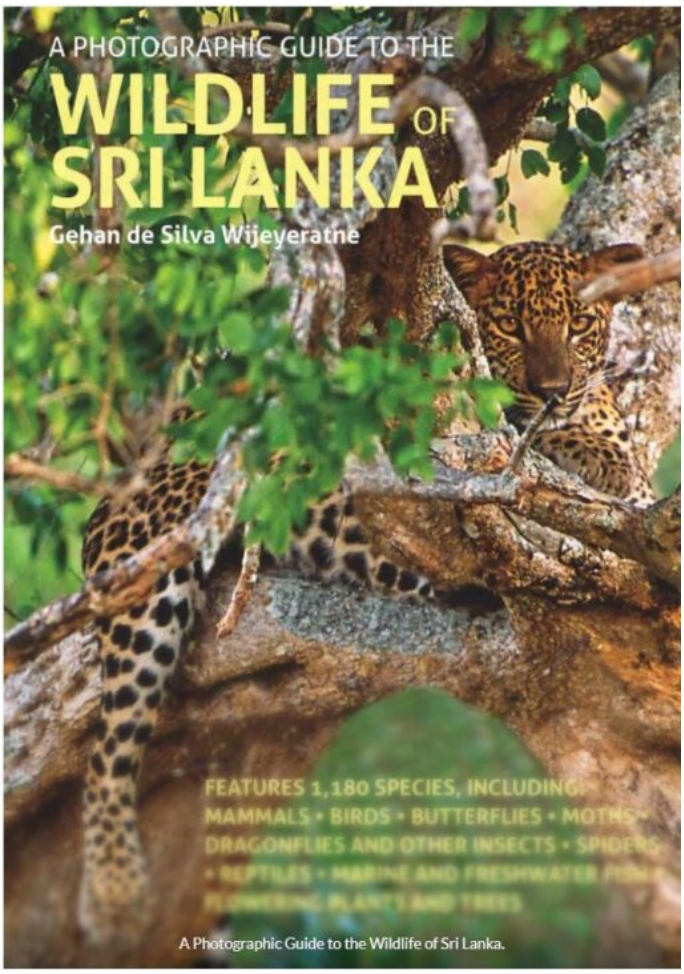
A Photographic Guide to the Wildlife of Sri Lanka

Posted on





British publisher John Beaufoy Publishing has released another exciting title in its collection of Sri Lankan natural history books. If you are looking for a comprehensive field guide to Sri Lankan wildlife, “A PhotographicGuide to the Wildlife of Sri Lanka” is designed to be the go-to resource. British birder and wildlife expert David Lindo, known as The Urban Birder, states that this guide is “as essential for visiting Sri Lanka as carrying your passport.”

Gavin Thomas, author of the “Rough Guide to Sri Lanka”, is familiar with the country from his multiple visits. He states, “Dedicated naturalists will find it an invaluable field guide during their trips to the island, while the book also serves as a comprehensive desktop resource for anyone wishing to deepen their knowledge of Sri Lanka’s remarkable wildlife and biodiversity. As such, it will likely prove indispensable to a wide range of readers—first-time visitors, those involved in the tourism industry, including tour and wildlife guides, and anyone else working to develop and promote Sri Lanka’s eco-tourism potential.”

Sanjiva Gautamadasa, General Manager of Malabar Hill, a luxury boutique hotel in Weligama, agrees. He explains that the hotel decided to sponsor the book because it makes a wonderful gift for guests staying for extended periods and could contribute to broader skills development in tourism. Helen Macdonald, author of the bestselling “H is for Hawk”, which has sold over a million copies and won the Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction and the prestigious Costa Book of the Year, shares her enthusiasm. She describes the guide as “spectacularly useful and wonderful.”



Black-necked Stork (*Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*) in flight.



Angled Pierrot (*Caleta decidia*), a striking black-and-white butterfly.

Whether you are drawn to Sri Lanka to escape work, stress, or worry, one thing you cannot escape is the wildlife; it is everywhere. More visitors are attracted by the island’s natural wealth, especially its birdlife.

According to her, “The sheer breadth of its contents, the perfectly chosen photographs, and the clear, informative text make it a model guide that is essential for both experts and amateurs interested in the natural world. Sri Lanka is an exceptional destination for nature lovers, and this book does justice to the nation’s wildlife. I traveled the island with this book and referred to it constantly. It was invaluable during a leisurely evening bird walk around the Malabar Hill hotel (an event of the Galle Literary Festival) and during an intensive wildlife-watching trip across Sri Lanka hosted by Jetwing Hotels.” Few have done more to promote the discovery of Sri Lanka’s biodiversity than Rohan Pethiyagoda, an internationally recognized biodiversity explorer. He notes, “Whether you are drawn to Sri Lanka to escape work, stress, or worry, one thing you cannot escape is the wildlife; it is everywhere. More visitors are attracted by the island’s natural wealth, especially its birdlife.”



Sri Lankan Jackal *(Canis aureus naria).*



Marsh Skimmer *(Orthetrum luzonicum)*, a common dragonfly of Sri Lanka.



Toque Macaques (*Macaca sinica)* with infants, a primate species endemic to Sri Lanka.

Referring to the book, he adds, “A Photographic Guide to the Wildlife of Sri Lanka is your indispensable companion for navigating the astonishing diversity of life that you will encounter during your holiday. It helps identify nearly every animal you see while also showcasing dozens of species that may be rare or nocturnal.

Although the book is 448 pages long, it is compact enough to fit into a generous pocket. Notably, its photographs of the 1,180 species covered are clear enough to identify almost every species you will observe in the field. Additionally, the lead author and principal photographer is the most celebrated field naturalist this country has produced. There simply isn’t a better guide to help you explore the extensive wealth of species you will encounter.”

The book covers over 90 percent of all birds, mammals, and dragonflies recorded in Sri Lanka. It includes 453 birds, 122 mammals, 72 reptiles and amphibians, 90 freshwater and marine fish, 144 butterflies, 121 dragonflies, 66 other insects, 72 other invertebrates, and 42 plants—totaling 1,180 species.

The guide features detailed topographical diagrams from six illustrators and over

1,250 photographs from more than 60 photographers.
Lead-authored and primarily photographed by Gehan de Silva Wijeyeratne, the book has section contributions from various experts, including Amila Sumanapala for insects, Anslem de Silva and Kanishka Ukuwela for reptiles, and Dinal Samarasinghe for amphibians, among others.

According to John Beaufoy of John Beaufoy Publishing (JBP), it has been a work in progress for around ten years. Gehan is both the author and principal photographer for three-quarters of the book's content.

He began assembling material for the book through a series of earlier works, starting in 2015 with "A Naturalist's Guide to Birds" and "A Naturalist's Guide to Butterflies and Dragonflies", both published by JBP. These were followed by "Naturalist's Guides" to mammals, wildflowers, and trees. The writing and photography from each of these projects provided the foundation for the 880 species accounts included in this guide. Although the book is compact, its coverage is significant, as no other photographic guide to Sri Lankan wildlife addresses dragonflies and mammals as comprehensively.

Rosemary Wilkinson, who oversaw the book's publication for JBP, highlights a key strength of the book: Gehan's collaborative approach. He was eager to showcase the talent of Sri Lankan field naturalists and scientists. According to her, "Gehan not only recognized that inviting another 13 section authors would accelerate the project's completion, but he also saw the book, published by an international publisher, as a fantastic platform to draw attention to Sri Lankan scientists working on groups ranging from spiders to land snails."

Helen Macdonald says, "I cannot recommend this book highly enough." Rohan Pethiyagoda adds, "This book, your hat, and your swimwear are all you need for the wildlife holiday of a lifetime on this serendipitous isle."

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Stripe-necked Mongoose *(Herpestes vitticollis),* Sri Lanka's largest mongoose species.