

India - Tiger Marathon

Naturetrek Tour Report

28 March - 7 April 2014



Tiger



Sloth Bear



Indian Scops Owl



Red-wattled Lapwing

Report compiled by Bharat Mandhyan
Images courtesy of Ian and Geraldine Moore



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Day 1

Friday 28th March

Open, bright and sunny day, moderately cold morning

The flight landed on time and the group were met at Nagpur International airport. It took us two hours to reach at Pench. The group retired to the comfortable rooms of the hotel for some rest after a long flight and to get charged up for the forthcoming surprises.

Day 2

Saturday 29th March

Open, bright and sunny day mostly, moderately cold morning

We headed into Pench NP and managed to see Rhesus Macaque, Common Langur, Golden Jackal, Sambar, Chital and Nilgai as well as some good bird sightings on our park drives today.

Day 3

Sunday 30th March

Bright sunny morning, warm afternoon, moderately cold weather

We rose before dawn for tea, coffee and biscuits to start our early morning drive and after lunch we traversed the scenic Vindhya Hills as we transferred by road to Kanha. We reached Kanha in about three hours time, and were looking forward to mingling again with the different habitat of the moist deciduous Sal and Bamboo dominated forest of Kanha. On arrival checked in at Tuli Tiger Resort

Day 4

Monday 31st March

Windy, Bright and sunny, hint of cloud

After tea, coffee and biscuits before dawn we started for the early morning drive at 5.30 am to be in the first lot of jeeps going into the park. We left the barrier at khatia at 6 am entered through kisli gate at 6.15 am. At about 8 am we were the only jeep to see a sub adult male Tiger sitting majestically in the middle of a track - it stayed there for some time before getting disturbed by the forest guard coming on his bicycle from the other direction. It moved stealthily into the meadow, and after the guard was gone it came out again on the tracks before disappearing into the tall grass towards the stream.

We headed for our picnic breakfast which was served in the park at the Kanha canteen. On the afternoon game drive we managed to see a Tiger at a distance going for a drink – the forest guards said it had made a kill in the vicinity.

Day 5**Tuesday 1st April**

Sunny and warm day

After having our tea, coffee and biscuits before dawn we started for the early morning drive at 530 am. Both the game drives remained quiet as no tiger sightings were reported today. Other mammals seen were Barasingha, Sambar, Wild Boar and Jackal.

Day 6**Wednesday 2nd April**

Windy, bright and sunny

Today on the morning game drive we saw a Tiger in the thicket which was on a prowl and going after Sambar deer - then it just disappeared, we kept hearing alarm calls for a long time but the tiger never showed up again.

Having had our lunch we left the hotel at 1400 hrs to drive towards Bandhavgarh, in between we stopped for a leg stretch and carried on for the rest of the journey. We reached there at 1800 hrs and on arrival checked in at Bandhavgarh Jungle Lodge. We enjoyed dinner then everybody went to bed to get up early next morning.

Day 7**Thursday 3rd April**

Pleasant morning, warm afternoon, cool at night

We started the drive from the hotel at 5.45 am to queue up at the park entrance to enter at 6.00 am, and experienced some lovely sighting of a Tigress. On the afternoon game drive we did the zone 2 area of the park, and mammals seen were Sambar, Chital, Wild Boar and Jackal. Breakfast, lunch and dinner were served at the hotel

Day 8**Friday 4th April**

Pleasant morning, warm afternoon, cool at night

After having our tea, coffee and biscuits before dawn started the drive from the hotel at 5.45 am. We were not lucky today with tiger, but other mammals seen were Sambar, Chital, Wild Boar and Jackal.

Day 9**Saturday 5th April**

Windy and cloudy morning, hazy conditions, sunny afternoon and cool evening

We had an amazing sighting of a Sloth Bear which crossed the road in front of us and stayed nearby, turning the fallen leaves looking for ants and Mahua fruits. It stayed there for a few minutes then just walked away on the rocks disappearing into the thicket.

We traversed the scenic Vindhya Hills as we transferred by road to Khajuraho which took about five hours. We were looking forward to yet another variety of habitat - the dry deciduous Teak-dominated forest of Panna. On arrival we checked in at Ramada, which is spread over an expanse of wooded land with spacious and really comfortable rooms. We had an early dinner then everybody went bed.

Day 10

Sunday 6th April

Windy and cloudy morning, hazy conditions, sunny afternoon and cool evening

On the morning game drive we saw lots of pug marks of the Tiger and heard lots of alarm calls but didn't see any this time. Breakfast was had at a lovely spot called Dhundwa which is a magnificent gorge with many different species of vultures. On the afternoon game drive we were informed by the park officials about the regular sighting of leopard at a boating point in the park, but we had no luck this time.

Day 11

Monday 7th April

Cool sunny morning, sunny afternoon, cool evening

Today we went to visit a Gharial sanctuary which is situated around 20 km from Khajuraho, but first we saw the Ranoh waterfall, and gorge formed by granite and quartzite rock. At the sanctuary we also saw some vultures and jackal on a carcass. Breakfast was served at the hotel.

Later we visited the famous Chandela dynasty temples (western group of temples- Lakshmana Temple, Kandariya Mahadev Temple, Jagdambe Temple) starting at 9.30am to about 11.30am and then had lunch. After that the group was transferred to the airport to board the flight to Delhi. On arrival at Delhi they checked in at Westin Gurgaon hotel before returning to the airport to catch the flight back to the UK.

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Species List

Birds

Nomenclature and taxonomy generally follows Grimmett and Inskipp's *The Birds of Northern India* (2003) which follows the treatments in *The Birds of the Indian Subcontinent* (1999) by the same authors. Figures refer to the number of days the species was recorded out of the 7 days of the main tour,

Bird species	Scientific Name	No of Days	Remarks
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	1	
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	4	
Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>	8	
Oriental Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>	6	
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	6	
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	2	
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	8	
Intermediate Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>	4	
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	8	
Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	5	
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	8	
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>	2	
Black-crowned night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	1	
Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>	5	
Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>	4	
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	3	
Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>	4	
Lesser Adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>	5	
Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>	3	
Red-naped Ibis	<i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>	7	
Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	1	
Lesser Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>	6	
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	3	
Comb Duck	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>	1	
Cotton Pygmy goose	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>	1	
Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>	3	
Northern Shoveler	<i>Anus chrypeata</i>	2	
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	1	
Oriental Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>	7	
Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	4	
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	3	Often abundant in urban settings, especially common in Delhi, but much scarcer or even absent in more rural areas
Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	2	
White-rumped Vulture	<i>Gyps benghalensis</i>	3	
Long-billed Vulture	<i>Gyps indicus</i>	5	
Eurasian Griffon	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	1	
Red-headed Vulture	<i>Sacrogyaps calvus</i>	3	
Himalayan Griffon		1	
Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela cheela</i>	5	
Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	6	Quite common and widespread
White-Eyed Buzzard	<i>Butastur teesa</i>	5	
Changeable Hawk Eagle	<i>Spizaetus cirrhatus</i>	2	
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	3	
Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrines</i>	1	

Bird species	Scientific Name	No of Days	Remarks
Grey Francolin	<i>Francolinus pondiceranus</i>	3	
Jungle Bush Quail	<i>Perdica asiatica</i>	1	
Red Spurfowl	<i>Galloperdix spadicea</i>	3	
Painted Spurfowl	<i>galloperdix</i>	3	
Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	9	
Barred Button Quail	<i>Turnix suscitator</i>	1	
White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amauroni phoenicurus</i>	4	
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinule chloropus</i>	2	
Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>	1	
Bronzed Winged Jacana	<i>Metopidius indicus</i>	2	
Greater Painted Snipe	<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>	2	
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	4	
Stone Curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>	3	
Great Thick-knee	<i>Burhinus recurvirostris</i>	3	
Yellow wattled Lapwing	<i>Vannellus malabarica</i>	4	
Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus indicus</i>	6	Very common, widespread and noisy
Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	2	
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	1	
Black-tailed godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	2	
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stragnatalis</i>	3	
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	3	
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	4	
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	4	
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	2	
River Tern	<i>Sterna aurantia</i>	1	
Painted sandgrouse	<i>Pterocles indicus</i>	2	
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia neglecta</i>	3	
Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	2	
Eurasian Collard Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaoto</i>	3	
Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	5	Fairly common
Laughing Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	2	Common and very widespread
Yellow-footed Green Pigeon	<i>Treron p. phoenicoptera</i>	4	
Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>	7	
Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	9	Common and widespread, one of very few species seen every day
Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>	6	
Common Hawk Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus varius</i>	4	
Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>	6	Regularly encountered in a range of scrubby and grassland settings
Brown Fish owl	<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>	4	
Indian Scops Owl	<i>Otus bakamoena</i>	3	
Eurasian Eagle Owl	<i>bubo</i>	1	
Jungle Owlet	<i>Glaucidium</i>	2	
Spotted Owlet	<i>Athene brama indica</i>	2	
Grey Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus indicus</i>	1	
Savannah Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus affinis</i>	2	
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	3	
Crested Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne corona</i>	3	
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	3	
Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>	1	
White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	5	Common and very widespread, a frequent sight on roadside wires
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	1	
Green Bee-Eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>	5	

Bird species	Scientific Name	No of Days	Remarks
Blue-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>	1	
Indian Roller	<i>Coracias b. benghalensis</i>	5	Frequently seen, often along roadsides
Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	1	
Indian Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyroceros birostris</i>	3	Small numbers were seen at most wooded or parkland sites
Malabar Pied hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros coronatus</i>	1	
Brown-Headed Barbet	<i>Megalaima zeylanica</i>	2	
Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>	2	Quite common, though much more often heard than seen,
Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos canicapillus</i>	1	
Yellow-crowned Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos mahrattensis pallescens</i>	2	
Black-rumped Flameback	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>	4	The commonest and most widespread woodpecker with records coming from all wooded locations
White-Naped Woodpecker	<i>Chrysocolaptes festivus</i>	2	
Ashy-crowned Sparrow-lark	<i>Eremopterix grisea</i>	3	
Rufous-tailed Lark	<i>Ammomanes phoenicurus</i>	2	
Dusky Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne concolor</i>	1	
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundu rustica</i>	2	
Wire-tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundu smithii</i>	2	
Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>	2	
White Wagtail	<i>Motallica alba</i>	3	
White-browed Wagtail	<i>Motallica madaraspatensis</i>	1	
Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motallica citreola</i>	2	
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motallica cinerea</i>	4	
Oriental Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>	2	
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	2	
Large Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina macei macei</i>	4	
Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>	2	
Scarlet Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>	1	
Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	9	Very common and widespread
Blue-winged Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis cochinchinensis</i>	1	
Golden-Fronted Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>	1	
Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>	2	
Orange-headed Thrush	<i>Zoothera citrina</i>	4	
Tickell's Thrush	<i>Turdus unicolor</i>	1	
Grey-breasted Prinia	<i>Prinia hodgsoni</i>	1	
Ashy Prinia	<i>Prinia sociallis</i>	1	
Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inomata</i>	1	
Striated Grassbird	<i>Megalurus palustris</i>	1	
Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>	1	
Tickell's Blue flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickelli</i>	3	
Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	3	Widespread in small numbers with birds recorded at all sites
Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>	3	
Oriental Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	4	
Indian Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulica</i>	3	
Black Redstart	<i>Phoebastria ochrurus</i>	2	
Pied Bushchat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>	1	
Indian Chat	<i>Cercomela fusca</i>	1	
White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>	1	
Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>	2	
Common babbler	<i>Turdoides caudatus</i>	3	

Bird species	Scientific Name	No of Days	Remarks
Large Grey Babbler	<i>Turdoides malcolmi</i>	5	
Jungle Babbler	<i>Turdoides striatus</i>	6	Generally common and widespread
Brown-checked Fulvetta	<i>Alcippe poipocephala</i>	3	
Great Tit	<i>Parus major(cinereus group)</i>	3	
Black-lored Tit	<i>Parus xanthogenys</i>	1	
Purple Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>	9	Present throughout at low densities
Oriental White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>	4	
Black-Hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>	4	
Long-tailed Shrike	<i>Lanius schach</i>	4	
Bay-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius vittatus</i>	2	
Common Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis pondicerianus</i>	4	
Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocerus</i>	5	Very common, a frequent site on roadside wires
White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>	2	
Greater Racket-Tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>	2	
Rufous Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta agabunda</i>	5	Widespread at fairly low densities
House Crow	<i>Corvus s. splendens</i>	3	common around settlements, but less frequently seen in wooded areas
Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos culminatus</i>	6	Generally found in more wooded settings than the last species, though with some habitat overlap, and never in such large concentrations
Bank Myna	<i>Acridotheres ginginianus</i>	2	Rather localised, sometimes the dominant myna but generally scarce and heavily outnumbered by Common Mynas
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres t. tristis</i>	6	Ubiquitous
Asian Pied Starling	<i>Sturnus contra</i>	2	Common in the vicinity of water
Chestnut-tailed starling	<i>Sturnia malabarica</i>	3	
Brahminy Starling	<i>Temenuchus pagodarum</i>	3	
Rosy Starling	<i>Pastor roseus</i>	1	
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	3	Fairly common in most urban settings and in some more rural areas
Chestnut-shouldered Petronia	<i>Petronia xanthocollis</i>	4	
Common Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	2	

Mammals

Species	Scientific name	No. of Days	Remarks
Royal Bengal Tiger	<i>Panthera tigris</i>	4	
Rhesus Macaque	<i>Macca mulatta</i>	6	Fairly common and widespread
Common Langur	<i>Presbytis entellus</i>	12	Fairly common and widespread, commoner in heavy woodland than the previous species
Common Mongoose	<i>Herpestes edwardsi</i>	1	
Ruddy Mongoose	<i>Herpestes smithii</i>	3	
Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>	7	
Sloth Bear	<i>Merursus ursinus</i>	1	
Indian Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus giganteus</i>	3	
Indian Tree shrew	<i>Anathana ellioti</i>	2	
Indian or Black-naped hare	<i>Lepus nigricollis</i>	2	
Three-striped Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus pennarum</i>	3	

Species	Scientific name	No. of Days	Remarks
Five-Striped Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus pennantii</i>	6	
Gaur(Indian Bison)	<i>Bos guarus</i>	4	
Sambar	<i>Cervus unicolor</i>	7	
Barasingha (Samp deer)	<i>Cervus duvauceli branderi</i>	3	
Indian Muntjac	<i>Muntiacus muntjak</i>	3	
Chital (Spotted Deer)	<i>Cervus axis</i>	7	
Chousingha	<i>Tetracerus quadricornis</i>	1	
Khincara (Indian Gazelle)	<i>Gazelle bonnetti</i>	2	
Nilgai	<i>Boselaphus tragocamelus</i>	5	
Indian Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>	7	
Bengal Fox	<i>Vulpes bengalensis</i>	1	

Reptiles

Reptile Species	Scientific name	No. of Days	Remarks
Flap-shelled Turtle	<i>Lissemys punctata</i>	1	
Marsh Mugger	<i>Crocodylus palustris</i>	2	

