

# Nepal's Butterflies

## Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

### Outline itinerary

|          |                              |
|----------|------------------------------|
| Day 1    | Depart London                |
| Day 2/4  | Phulchowki, Kathmandu Valley |
| Day 5/7  | Chitwan National Park        |
| Day 8/10 | Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge |
| Day 11   | Kathmandu                    |
| Day 12   | Fly London                   |



### Pokhara extension

|           |                              |
|-----------|------------------------------|
| Day 11/13 | Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge |
| Day 14    | Kathmandu                    |
| Day 15    | Fly London                   |



From top: Red-base Jezebel (*Delias pasithoe*), Paris Peacock (*Papilio paris*), Great Mormon (*Papilio memnon*)



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## Departs

### 2021

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Saturday 10th April – Wednesday 21st April 2021  | Cost: £4,195 |
| Pokhara extension: till Saturday 24th April 2021 | Cost: £1,295 |

### 2022

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Saturday 9th April – Wednesday 20th April 2022   | Cost: £4,295 |
| Pokhara extension: till Saturday 23rd April 2022 | Cost: £1,395 |

£600 reduction if booked without flights, land only trip.

### Single room supplement

£1095 (Add: £595 for Pokhara extension)

### Focus

Primarily butterflies, though mammals and birds will also be enjoyed

### Grading

Grade A. Easy walks and vehicular safaris only

### Dates & Prices are also available on

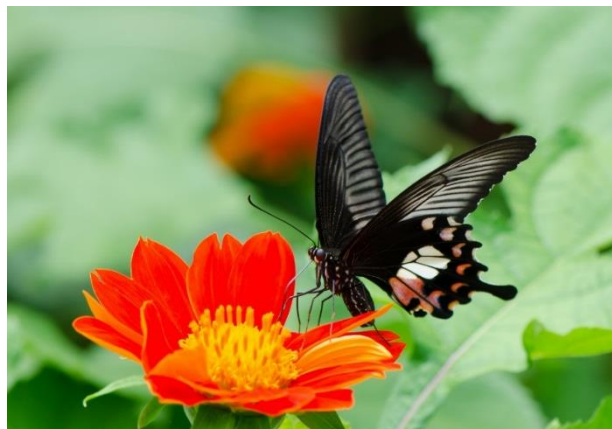
See [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk) (tour code NPL13) or current brochure

### Highlights

- Enjoy the butterflies of Nepal's hills and lowland jungles
- Visit the temperate forests of Phulchowki Mountain
- Stay at Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge - Nepal's most fabulous retreat, offering unrivalled Himalayan views
- Search for mammals & birds in the iconic Chitwan National Park
- Optional extensions to other national parks and reserves

## Introduction

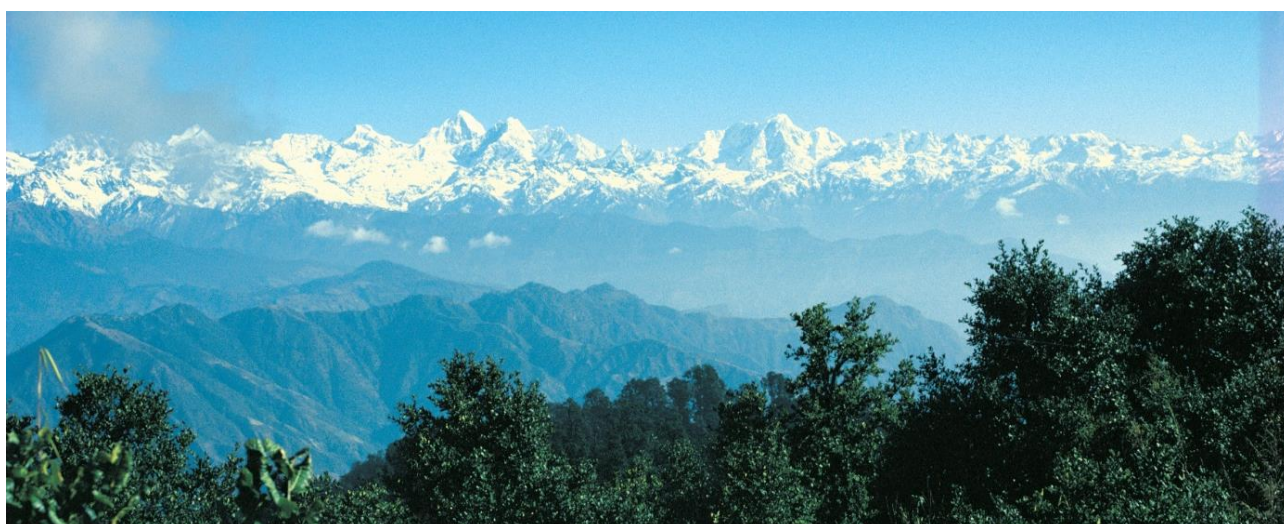
No larger than Great Britain, Nepal holds 10 times the number of butterfly species — 643 at the latest count! On this exciting new tour we will hope to see and photograph at least a hundred of these, focusing on three of the best and most accessible areas in Nepal for butterflies. First, in the company of local expert Mahendra Limbu, we will spend two days exploring the habitats that lie between the foothill gardens (4,500 feet) and the temperate oak and rhododendron forests on the 9,000-foot summit of Phulchowki, a magnificently forested peak on the southern rim of the Kathmandu Valley. Here we will search for such rarities as Golden Emperor, Great Hockeystick Sailer, Scarce Siren and Kaiser-i-Hind amongst a wealth of 50 or more other species. We will then descend to the lowlands of Nepal, lying just above sea level, to enjoy not just the wealth of butterflies, but the birds and large mammals as well, of Chitwan National Park. Finally, we'll drive to Pokhara for a 3-night stay at Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge. This is not just Nepal's finest lodge, with the most special views, wildlife and walking opportunities, but it is owned and managed by Marcus Cotton, a passionate conservationist and butterfly enthusiast. Here, we will hope to see spectacular species as Paris Peacock, Great Mormon, Red Helen and Red-base Jezebel alongside numerous blues, grass yellows, tree-browns, bush-browns, pansies and tigers! He has also encouraged Nepal's 'butterfly guru', Colin Smith, to train and enthuse the lodge's naturalist guides, who now diligently record the species they see. These guides, and hopefully Marcus and Colin, will join us here to make our stay at the lodge a memorable and a rewarding finale to Naturetrek's first 'butterfly tour' to Nepal.



Red Helen (*Papilio helenus*)



Orange Awl (*Bibasis jaina jaina*)





## Itinerary

Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.

### Day 1

### In Flight

We depart from London this afternoon on Qatar Airways' scheduled flight to Kathmandu, via Doha.

### Day 2

### Phulchowki, Kathmandu Valley

We arrive in Kathmandu in the early afternoon and transfer to the Hotel View Bhrikuti. This simple but comfortable hotel is situated at the foot of Phulchowki, the large forest-clad mountain (a foothill in comparison with Nepal's Himalayan giants!) that lies on the southern rim of the Kathmandu Valley and offers a variety of butterflies, birds and other wildlife unmatched by any of Nepal's other accessible foothills. The hotel offers a small swimming pool, flower-filled gardens and expansive views north over the Kathmandu Valley. We will spend three nights here, giving us two full days to explore the forests of Phulchowki and to search for some of the many butterflies they support.



Common Map (*Cyrestis thyodamas*)

### Days 3 – 4

### Phulchowki, Kathmandu Valley

During these two full days on Phulchowki, we will be looking for butterflies in the company of local expert Mahendra Limbu. The forested slopes of Phulchowki rise from the floor of the Kathmandu Valley (4,500 feet) to the mountain's summit at 9,000 feet. On one of the days we will drive by 4WD to the summit and walk down through the forests of oak and rhododendron, taking a picnic lunch en route. From here, if the weather is clear in



Indian Tortoiseshell (*Aglais kaschmirensis*)

the early morning, we may get good views of the snow-clad Great Himalaya, including the Annapurna range, Langtang and some of Nepal's other high peaks. We will also spend time exploring the subtropical forests of the lower slopes, where the greatest diversity of colourful butterflies will be. During these two days we will search for such rarities as Golden Emperor, Great Hockeystick Sailer, Scarce Siren and Kaiser-i-Hind amongst a wealth of 50 or more other species. On any damp wayside puddles we should find a variety of species mud-puddling, amongst them a variety of bright 'grass yellows' ... and we'll enjoy familiarising ourselves with such common groups as the blues, crows, pansies, tree-browns, bush-browns, tigers and others.

Phulchowki is also home to an exceptionally rich variety of birds and, as most of these will be breeding at this time of year, the forests will be filled with song. Many species of cuckoos are found here during the spring, along with a wealth of laughing-thrushes, babblers, bulbuls, barbets, flowerpeckers, flycatchers, sunbirds, tits and warblers. Most memorable of all though will be the truly exotic-looking Red-billed Blue Magpies.

If you would prefer to spend one of these days doing a sightseeing tour of the city and temples of Kathmandu we will be pleased to arrange this for you (but this must be booked with us prior to your departure from London and will cost £195 for any single traveller and £150 per person for 2 or more). The tour may include Nepal's largest Hindu temple at Pashupatinath, the Buddhist "stupa" (shrine) and Tibetan settlement at Boudhinath, and the fine temples and palaces of Patan's Durbar Square.

## Day 5

## Chitwan National Park

We will leave Kathmandu early this morning to begin the six to seven-hour drive to Chitwan National Park situated in the lowlands (or 'terai') of Nepal. On leaving the Kathmandu Valley the road follows the edge of the fast-flowing Trisuli River, home to such species as the beautiful White-capped Water Redstart and Plumbeous Water Redstart. A stop en route may allow us to see these bird species, as well as some of the wayside butterflies attracted to the flowering plants that the locals love to grow. We hope to reach Chitwan National Park in time for a late lunch, then either a game drive or walk in the vicinity of our lodge this afternoon.



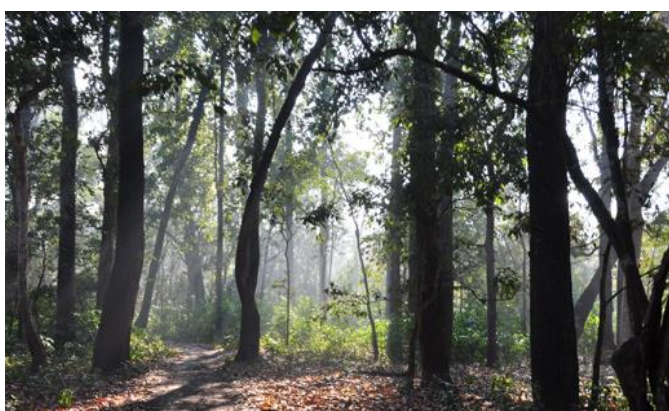
Indian Rhinoceros (left) and Orange-headed Thrush (right)

We'll be staying for the next three nights at the comfortable Tigerland Safari Lodge, its thatched en-suite villas sitting on stilts amongst the lodge's 20 acres which lie at the edge of Chitwan National Park. The lodge overlooks extensive riverine grasslands that lie along the northern edge of the national park. These offer a habitat for Chitwan's rich variety of grassland birds and mammals, but they also hold plenty of butterfly species.

## Day 6 – 7

## Chitwan National Park

Over the next two days we will explore Chitwan National Park. Its 932 square kilometres of Sal and riverine jungle offer a magnificent environment with a greater variety of wildlife than any other area of Nepal. More than 500 species of birds have been recorded here, as well as many mammals and reptiles. During our stay, we can expect to see the endangered Indian Rhinoceros, Wild Boar, Sambar, Muntjac, Spotted and Hog Deer, Rhesus and Hanuman Monkeys, and possibly Marsh Mugger and the fish-eating Gharial Crocodiles. Leopards, Sloth Bears, and Gaur (wild bison) are also fairly common and sometimes seen, especially in the spring. Tigers, however, although currently doing well in Chitwan, are very elusive and rarely seen! Indeed, the Tigers we will see here are more likely to be of the butterfly variety. Plain Tiger, Glassy Tiger and Common Tiger are all common here. Other butterfly species that we hope to see in Chitwan are too numerous to list here; they are also relatively poorly studied, so, of the hundred or more species that we could see, there should be some surprises.



Chitwan National Park (left) and Giant Hornbills (right)

In Chitwan, though, we will focus equally on the mammals and birds. Indeed, although we will spend time on foot both inside and outside the national park in search of butterflies, during our jeep safaris into the park we are required to stay on the jeeps at all times, viewing our butterflies, mammals and birds from the vehicle only (except when at hides/machans in the forest). We have timed this tour carefully to coincide with the best that the Nepalese spring (the 'pre-monsoon season') has to offer. It should maximise the range of butterflies we see, brought out by the warm weather and flush of spring growth encouraged by occasional pre-monsoon rainfall. In Chitwan, as elsewhere, the birds will be active and vocal. The jungle will be alive with the exquisite song of the White-rumped



Boat excursion on the Narayani River, Chitwan National Park



Sharma and the ceaseless song of the Indian Cuckoo and Common Hawk-cuckoo, while seasonal colour is provided by such summer visitors as Chestnut-headed and Blue-tailed Bee-eaters, Red-winged Crested Cuckoo, Dollarbird, Asian Paradise Flycatcher and Indian Pitta.

## Day 8 – 10

## Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge

From Chitwan we now head to the Pokhara Valley, a six or seven-hour drive away. The spectacular mountain views from the valley itself and the lakeside of Phewa Tal are renowned enough, but we will drive high above this tourist town to a peaceful wooded ridge a thousand feet above the valley floor. For the next three nights we will be staying at Nepal's finest tourist retreat, Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge. Set atop a high forested ridge, amongst the Himalayan foothills that surround the Pokhara Valley, TMPL looks straight onto the most spectacular panorama, comprising all of the iconic giants of the Annapurna range of the Great Himalaya. These include, when the weather is clear (and this cannot always be guaranteed!), views of Machhapuchhare (Fish-tail Mountain) and no fewer than three of the world's 8,000-metre peaks: Dhaulagiri, Annapurna I and Manaslu! Each of the lodge's spacious stone-built cottages has a private verandah or patio from which to soak in these fine views and the forest around; indeed, it can be tempting to relax and simply enjoy the views and forested grounds to which a wealth of wildlife is attracted, especially butterflies.



Peacock Pansy (*Junonia almana*)

Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge is owned and managed by Englishman Marcus Cotton, a passionate conservationist and butterfly enthusiast who has lived in Nepal since the 1980s. Around the lodge, Marcus has planted many flowering plants and shrubs to attract the butterflies. Amongst numerous blues, grass yellows, tree-browns, bush-browns, pansies and tigers, such frequent visitors as Common Flash, Common Bluebottle, Banded Tree-brown, Common Jester, Common Sailor, Danaid Eggfly, Purple Sapphire and the beautiful Indian Fritillary should be seen. We will also hope to see some of Nepal's most spectacular species – perhaps a Paris Peacock, Great Mormon, Spangle, Red Helen and Red-base Jezebel.



Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge



Those tempted to enjoy TMPL's avian highlights also will not be disappointed. It may be too late for April, however the ridge attracts a great many birds of prey, which drift overhead on the thermals that rise from it. Black Kites, Steppe Eagles and vultures (it is sometimes possible to see most of Nepal's eight species of vulture from this one ridge!) are the most obvious but, in spring, migrant eagles and falcons may also appear. There are many other special birds of this region, amongst them the endemic Spiny Babbler and noisy White-crested Laughing-thrushes; however, TMPL's star species in recent years has been the Blue-naped Pitta that has been seen and heard in the forest just below the lodge each April.



Spotted Jester (*Symbrenthia hypselis cotanda*)

Our three-night stay here will allow us the chance to walk amongst these hills and forests, through scrub and alder groves, and to enjoy the impressive sight of terraced fields, reaching thousands of feet up and down the mountainsides. The lower terraces are usually for rice, the higher ones for barley, wheat, potatoes, buckwheat and millet. It's a great region for butterflies, which we'll enjoy in the company of the TMPL guides who know them well, having been trained by Colin Smith whom we hope may also join us. As well as the butterflies and birds that we'll see on our walks, we may glimpse an interesting animal or two – Muntjac, Hanuman Monkeys, Orange-bellied Squirrels, Yellow-throated Martens and even Leopard all being seen here from time to time.

## Day 11

## Kathmandu

After a final morning's walk or relaxation on the terrace, we must reluctantly leave the lodge today, making the six to seven hours drive back down to Kathmandu. We arrive in Kathmandu in the evening and transfer to the Hotel View Bhrikuti, our base for a night.

## Day 12

## Fly London

We transfer to Kathmandu airport to catch a Qatar Airways morning flight to London. We are due to arrive in London by late-evening.



## Extension to Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge

Cost: From £1,295

Single room supplement: £595

(The minimum number of people required to run this extension is six, however we may run it in case of less numbers at our discretion, with local guides.)

### Day 11 – 13

#### Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge



Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge (left) and a Nepali woman (right)

We will enjoy another 3 nights at the beautiful Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge.

Our extra three-night stay here will allow you to relax and enjoy this place with some easy optional walks amongst these hills and forests.

### Day 14

#### Kathmandu

We must reluctantly leave the lodge today, making the six to seven hours drive back down to Kathmandu. We arrive in Kathmandu in the evening and transfer to the Hotel View Bhrikuti, our base for a night.

### Day 15

#### London

We transfer to Kathmandu airport to catch a Qatar Airways morning flight to London. We are due to arrive in London by late-evening. Flight times will be confirmed closer to departure dates.

## Other extensions

As you will appreciate, this holiday to Nepal is short and action-packed! Inevitably there are many other interesting places to visit in Nepal should you have time. As the majority of your holiday cost is spent on air fares, we would strongly recommend an extension to your 12-day holiday. If you don't fancy our scheduled Pokhara extension, we should be delighted to tailor a holiday extension for you that is suited to your particular objectives and needs. You might wish to sample some of the cultural delights of Nepal, for example, or even to visit another national park or tiger reserve. In Nepal, anything is possible; just call our very own India consultant, Rajan Jolly, on 01962 73301, for expert advice.

It should be noted that flight times vary on different days of the week – some return flights will be day-time flights, whilst others depart Kathmandu in the evening and arrive into the UK the following morning.

## Focus

Primarily butterflies, but also birds and mammals.

## Grading

Grade A. This is a butterfly and natural history holiday, based around easy walks and vehicular safaris. No trekking (except for optional moderate day walks in the hills around Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge) or great hardship is involved, and the holiday is suitable for those of all ages and degrees of fitness!



Danaid Eggfly (*Hypolimnys misippus*)

## Weather

April marks the height of spring in Nepal. It is also the 'pre-monsoon' season, when afternoon cloud can build up to cause occasional short rain storms that generally clear quickly to leave good views. Generally it will be sunny, especially in the mornings, with daytime temperatures of 20-25+°C around Kathmandu and Pokhara, and in the hills. In Chitwan it will be much hotter, generally 35+°C during the middle of the day, falling to 20+°C at night – sun hats, sun cream, cotton clothes and shorts all being needed at this season.

## Clothing

Please inspect the separate clothing list, sent to you on booking, thoroughly. Take lightweight clothing for daytime wear; however, warmer clothing will be useful for mornings and evenings, and a light jacket may be useful on Phulchowki and at Pokhara. Khaki or other "bush" colours are recommended, as bright colours can often scare the animals. Shorts and T-shirts will be equally essential in the heat of the lowlands... and a wide-brimmed hat is essential protection from heat-stroke and sunburn.

## Boat/Raft Trips

The boat/raft trips are done only if the water levels permit.

## Food & accommodation included in the price

The cost of all meals and accommodation is included in the price of this holiday, with the exception of lunches and dinners in Kathmandu.

## Tour leader

Mahendra Limbu and the guides at Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge. Marcus Cotton may also join us in Pokhara, if commitments permit.

## Extra expenses

Please note that we do not include the following in the cost of this holiday: main meals in Kathmandu, visa and all items of a more personal nature such as drinks, laundry, souvenirs, and tips for your guide and driver.

## Your safety & security

You have chosen to travel to Nepal. Risks to your safety and security are an unavoidable aspect of all travel and the best current advice on such risks is provided for you by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. In order to assess and protect against any risks in your chosen destination, it is essential that you refer to the Foreign Office website regularly prior to travel.

## How to book your place

In order to book your place on this holiday, please give us a call on 01962 733051 with a credit or debit card, book online at [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk), or alternatively complete and post the booking form at the back of our main Naturetrek brochure, together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost plus any room supplements if required. If you do not have a copy of the brochure, please call us on 01962 733051 or request one via our website. Please stipulate any special requirements, for example extension requests or connecting/regional flights, at the time of booking.

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Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge