

India's Wildlife - A Photography Tour

Naturetrek Tour Report

22nd October – 2nd November 2025



Gaur



Jungle Owlet



Tiger



Asian Elephant

Tour report by Iliaz Khan



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Tour participants: Iliaz Khan (leader) with three Naturetrek clients

Summary

This tour was a remarkable success, offering guests an unforgettable experience in Bandhavgarh National Park. Sightings of twelve different Tigers, including the famous Raa, with her three cubs and a Tiger in water, were spectacular behavioural moments captured. Over 150 bird species were recorded, reflecting the region's rich avifauna. A rare encounter with a wild Indian Elephant added extra excitement to the journey. A spiritual visit was made to the sacred Shesh Shaiya, the magnificent statue of Lord Vishnu reclining on a seven-headed serpent, located in the heart of the park.

Overall, the tour was highly rewarding and memorable, combining thrilling wildlife encounters, exceptional photography opportunities, and deep cultural significance.

Day 1

Wednesday 22nd October

Guests took flight BA257 from London to Delhi, landing at 8.00am the next day.

Day 2

Thursday 23rd October

From the airport we went to Hotel Pride Plaza and checked in around 10.00am. At 4.00pm we checked out and went to the Nizamuddin railway station, to catch our train to Katni (Bandhavgarh).

Day 3

Friday 24th October

We arrived at Katni railway station at 5.45am and drove to Bandhavgarh. After about two hours, we reached our hotel and checked into the Hotel Bandhav Vilas. After lunch, we went for our first afternoon safari. We were lucky to see a Tiger with her three cubs. After the safari, we returned to the hotel, had dinner, and ended the day with wonderful memories.

Day 4

Saturday 25th October

We woke up early in the morning and got ready for our first morning safari. Today our safari was in the Tala Zone, which is in the famous core area of Bandhavgarh National Park. During the safari, luck was not much in our favour, and we were unable to spot a Tiger this time. However, we enjoyed watching a variety of beautiful birds along the way.

After returning from the morning safari, we enjoyed a hot lunch at the hotel and rested for a while. For the afternoon safari, we headed back to the same zone, but the weather was not favourable, and again we could not spot a Tiger. However, we did see some beautiful birds and Indian Gaur. We returned to the hotel, and then completed our checklist before dinner.

Day 5

Sunday 26th October

Today we explored zone no. 3, known as Khitauli. As soon as we entered through the gate, we came across very fresh Tiger pugmarks, and the forest welcomed us with the sound of birdsong. We enjoyed our breakfast in the forest during the safari, surrounded by the calm and natural beauty of the wilderness. However, as yesterday, the weather was not favourable; it was cloudy with light rain throughout the drive.

Although we didn't spot a Tiger, we clearly heard strong alarm calls, indicating the presence of a predator nearby. During the safari, we enjoyed sightings of various birds, Sambar, and Bengal Sacred Langurs. Just before our safari ended, we came across the fresh pugmarks of a Leopard.

After lunch at the hotel, we began our afternoon safari in the same zone (Khitauli). However, as soon as we started, the rain began, and the weather conditions became unfavourable for spotting Tigers or birds. So, for this afternoon safari, we simply enjoyed the forest and soaked in its natural beauty.

Day 6

Monday 27th October

We began our morning safari in zone 2 (Magadhi). As soon as we entered the forest, the sounds of birds welcomed us. We explored various Tiger territories and even came across fresh pugmarks, but we didn't get a Tiger sighting today. We enjoyed our breakfast and then did some wonderful birding. We spotted Red Avadavat, Zitting Cisticola, Plain Prinia, Indian Cuckooshrike and many more species. We returned to the hotel with beautiful memories.

During the afternoon safari, just like in the morning, we heard several strong alarm calls, but we were still unable to spot a Tiger. However, we did get some beautiful bird sightings, including a Jungle Nightjar.

After returning from the safari, we enjoyed high tea. Later, we refreshed ourselves, had dinner, and completed our daily checklist. After that, we retired to our rooms for the night.

Day 7

Tuesday 28th October

We began our early morning safari with a refreshing tea and coffee at the hotel, before departing for the Tala Zone. After scanning the area for about thirty minutes, we explored different parts of the zone and came across three different Tigers. However, they were resting deep inside the forest, so we could only observe them from a distance. The sightings were memorable, though not very photogenic.

After a delicious lunch at the hotel, we headed out again for our afternoon safari in the same zone. Unfortunately, the weather turned unfavourable, with light rain, and we were unable to spot any Tigers. After finishing the safari, we returned to the hotel, freshened up and gathered in the restaurant to complete our checklist. We enjoyed dinner and concluded the day.

Day 8

Wednesday 29th October

This morning, we began our day with the tea and coffee hospitality at the hotel, before heading out for our morning safari in the Khitauli Zone. Shortly after entering the park, we noticed the fresh pugmarks of a Tiger and her cub. Following the track, we carefully scanned the area, and after about thirty minutes, we heard a deep growling call from the forest.

Around fifteen minutes later, a magnificent male Tiger emerged from the dense jungle, giving us an incredible sighting. Soon after, we were also fortunate to spot a female Tiger in the same area.

As we were wrapping up our safari, while scanning the trees, we spotted a beautifully camouflaged Brown Fish Owl perched quietly. It had truly been a fantastic and memorable morning for our guests, filled with excitement and great sightings.



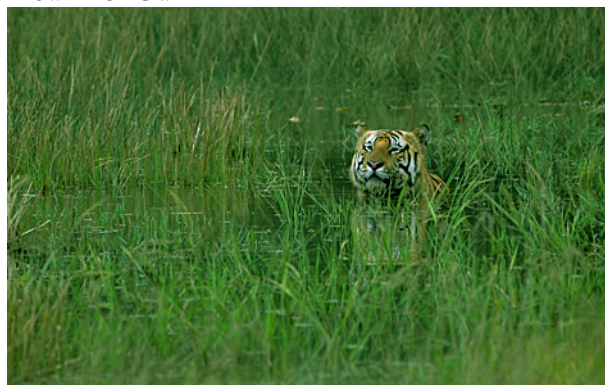
Lesser Adjutant



Brown Fish Owl



Tiger



Tiger

Day 9

Thursday 30th October

This morning, we began our safari in the Khitauli Zone and entered the park at 6.00am. About twenty-five minutes into the drive, we spotted the female Tiger, Raa, with her three eight-month-old cubs. A little later we also saw a male Tiger, DM, resting in the water. Apart from these incredible sightings, we also observed a Mottled Wood Owl. We enjoyed a wonderful breakfast in the middle of the forest after our exciting Tiger sightings.

After a hot and delicious lunch at the hotel, we began our afternoon safari. However, the weather didn't favour us this time, as rain began to fall and the forest grew quite dark. Even so, we enjoyed the serene atmosphere, listening to the soothing sounds of raindrops and the peaceful calls of birds.

Day 10

Friday 31st October

We began our last safari in Bandhavgarh National Park, exploring the Tala Zone. Similar to the previous day, it rained throughout the safari, and although we didn't spot any Tigers this time, we thoroughly enjoyed the experience of being in the forest during the rain. We had a hot and delicious breakfast in the heart of the jungle, where we were lucky to spot a Golden Jackal near the breakfast point.

After the last morning safari, we returned to the hotel and went to our rooms to freshen up. Later, we enjoyed a delicious hot lunch at Hotel Bandhav Vilas. After lunch, we packed our luggage and placed it outside the room, as it was time to check out from the hotel.

At 3.30pm, we checked out from the hotel and began our road journey from Bandhavgarh National Park to Katni Junction, to board our train to Agra, as it was the nearest railway station. It was a wonderful experience travelling overnight by train.

Day 11

Saturday 1st November

This morning, we arrived in Agra on time. At the railway station, we were greeted by our ground staff, who took excellent care of us and assisted with our transfer to the Hotel Grand Mercure. A day-use room had already been arranged for us there, where we freshened up and enjoyed our totally English breakfast.

Afterward, we began a new chapter of our journey: a monuments tour in Agra. We visited three of the city's most iconic landmarks: the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Itmad-ud-Daulah (also known as the Baby Taj). By the end of the tour, our guests were delighted, and filled with wonderful memories and stories.

After completing our monuments tour, the group parted ways in two directions; one couple continued their journey to explore more of India's wildlife, while one guest accompanied me back to Delhi by the Gatimaan Express train.

We arrived in Delhi on time and continued by taxi to Hotel Pride Plaza. After enjoying a delightful meal, we left for the airport to catch our guest's international flight, bidding a fond farewell to incredible India.

Day 12

Sunday 2nd November

The departing client arrived safely home in the UK.

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Species lists

Birds (H = Heard only)

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic		October-November 2025									
Common name	Scientific name	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1
Lesser Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>				✓				✓		✓
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>										✓
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>										✓
Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Red Spurfowl - E	<i>Galloperdix spadicea</i>				✓						
Red Junglefowl	<i>Gallus gallus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Grey Junglefowl - E	<i>Gallus sonneratii</i>						✓				
Jungle Bush Quail - N	<i>Perdica asiatica</i>									✓	
Jungle Nightjar - N	<i>Caprimulgus indicus</i>					✓					
Crested Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>		✓		✓						
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	✓	✓					✓	✓		✓
Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamis scolopaceus</i>	✓						✓			✓
Indian Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus micropterus</i>				✓		✓				
Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>						✓		✓		
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>								✓	✓	
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>									✓	
Yellow-footed Green Pigeon	<i>Treron phoenicopterus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>										✓
Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>										✓
Grey-headed Swampphen	<i>Porphyrio poliocephalus</i>										✓
White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>	✓									✓
Sarus Crane	<i>Antigone antigone</i>										✓
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>				✓	✓				✓	✓
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	✓	✓								✓
River Lapwing	<i>Vanellus duvaucelii</i>										✓
Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>			✓						✓	
Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bronze-winged Jacana	<i>Metopidius indicus</i>										✓
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>				✓						✓
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>										✓
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>			✓							✓
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>										✓
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>										✓
River Tern	<i>Sterna aurantia</i>										✓
Brown-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus</i>										✓
Lesser Adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>										✓
Asian Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>				✓				✓		✓
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>			✓							
Little Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo niger</i>							✓	✓		

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic		October-November 2025									
Common name	Scientific name	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1
Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>										✓
Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>										✓
Red-naped Ibis	<i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>		✓		✓					✓	
Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>										✓
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		✓							✓	✓
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>									✓	
Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>										✓
Medium Egret	<i>Ardea intermedia</i>		✓						✓		✓
Eastern Cattle Egret	<i>Ardea coromanda</i>		✓			✓				✓	✓
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>										✓
Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>			✓							✓
Red-headed Vulture	<i>Sarcogyps calvus</i>			✓				✓		✓	
Indian Vulture - N	<i>Gyps indicus</i>			✓		✓			✓		
Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>						✓	✓		✓	
Changeable Hawk-Eagle	<i>Nisaetus cirrhatus</i>						✓	✓		✓	
Shikra	<i>Tachyspiza badia</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>							✓			
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	✓									✓
White-eyed Buzzard	<i>Butastur teesa</i>							✓			
Spotted Owlet	<i>Athene brama</i>			✓			✓	✓			
Jungle Owlet	<i>Glaucidium radiatum</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Brown Fish Owl	<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>							✓			
Mottled Wood Owl - E	<i>Strix ocellata</i>								✓		
Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>					✓		✓	✓		
Malabar Pied Hornbill - N	<i>Anthraceroceros coronatus</i>			✓			✓	✓	✓		
Indian Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyrceros birostris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>									✓	
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>										✓
Asian Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Psilopogon zeylanicus</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Psilopogon haemacephalus</i>		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Yungipicus nanus</i>								✓		
Black-rumped Flameback	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		
White-naped Woodpecker	<i>Chrysocolaptes festivus</i>			✓				✓	✓		
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis pondicerianus</i>				✓		✓	✓	✓		
Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>						✓		✓		
Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>				✓			✓	✓		
Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>			✓			✓	✓			
Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic		October-November 2025									
Common name	Scientific name	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1
White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>				✓			✓	✓	✓	
Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Indian Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>		✓								
Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>			✓					✓	✓	
Long-tailed Shrike	<i>Lanius schach</i>					✓		✓		✓	✓
Rufous Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Indian Jungle Crow	<i>Corvus culminatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>						✓	✓			
Cinereous Tit	<i>Parus cinereus</i>		✓								
Red-whiskered Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>	✓									
Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grey-throated Martin	<i>Riparia chinensis</i>									✓	
Eastern Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>			✓	✓					✓	✓
Streak-throated Swallow	<i>Petrochelidon fluvicola</i>									✓	✓
Hume's Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus humei</i>		✓								
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>								✓		
Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>		✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>					✓					
Ashy Prinia	<i>Prinia socialis</i>	✓	✓	✓							✓
Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>					✓					
Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Indian White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>	✓						✓	✓		✓
Tawny-bellied Babbler	<i>Dumetia hyperythra</i>								✓		
Indian Scimitar Babbler - E	<i>Pomatorhinus horsfieldii</i>						✓		✓		
Puff-throated Babbler	<i>Pellorneum ruficeps</i>						✓		✓		
Jungle Babbler	<i>Argya striata</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bank Myna	<i>Acridotheres ginginianus</i>	✓	✓							✓	✓
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brahminy Starling	<i>Sturnia pagodarum</i>	✓									✓
Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Indian Robin	<i>Copsychus fulicatus</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
White-rumped Shama	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>			✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Asian Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa dauurica</i>						✓				
Verditer Flycatcher	<i>Eumyias thalassinus</i>							✓	✓	✓	
Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Brown Rock Chat	<i>Oenanthe fusca</i>		✓								
Golden-fronted Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>			✓							
Purple Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris asiaticus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Scaly-breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>							✓			
Red Avadavat	<i>Amandava amandava</i>					✓					
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>			✓				✓	✓	✓	
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>										✓

Mammals

E=Endemic		October-November 2025									
Common name	Scientific name	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1
Rhesus Macaque	<i>Macaca mulatta</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bengal Sacred Langur - E	<i>Semnopithecus entellus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Indian Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus palmarum</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓
Indian Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus medius</i>					✓					
Northern Red Muntjac	<i>Muntiacus vaginalis</i>				✓			✓	✓		
Chital	<i>Axis axis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Sambar	<i>Rusa unicolor</i>		✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	
Nilgai	<i>Boselaphus tragocamelus</i>								✓		
Ruddy Mongoose	<i>Urva smithii</i>							✓			
Indian Grey Mongoose	<i>Urva edwardsii</i>				✓	✓			✓		
Tiger	<i>Panthera tigris</i>		✓				✓	✓	✓		
Golden Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>			✓						✓	

Reptiles

E=Endemic		October-November 2025									
Common name	Scientific name	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1
Indian Flapshell Turtle	<i>Lissemys punctata</i>						✓				