

Tiger Direct!

Naturetrek Tour Report

29 March - 5 April 2010

Report compiled by Bharat Mandhyan



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Summary

What a wonderful tour! Its success was owed to all the people involved in making it so, whether it be the naturalist at Pench for superb guiding, to the staff of the hotels, to the local guides of each of the parks for their excellent spotting and knowledge of the forests, and thanks must go to the clients too, the holiday was a delight to lead and a pleasure for everyone.

Day 1

Monday 29th March

Cloudy day, moderately cool weather

Group arrived by Jet Airways flight from Mumbai that landed on time. Tour leader Bunty met the group at Nagpur International airport. The first birds to be seen on were a pair of Rock Pigeons (of feral origin) that found the top of a drive way at the airport to be a suitable place for nesting, and Red Throated Flycatcher and Brown Rock Chat were also seen outside the airport. It took us two hours to reach at Pench. We went to our comfortable rooms at the hotel for some rest that was much needed after a long flight. Some of the curious ones did not take much time to reassemble back in the lawns of the hotel, the garden was full of butterflies and dragonflies and there were Red-wattled Lapwings, Red-vented Bulbuls and Brown Rock Chats to view around the hotel. After lunch we did an afternoon game drive in three jeeps, mammals seen with ease were Sambar, Chital, and Common Langur.

Day 2

Tuesday 30th March

Warm, with traces of clouds

We headed into Pench NP. Once through the gate, we entered a different world, where the sound of the honking horn became a distant memory. After unsuccessful tiger tracking by jeep in the morning drive we got a chance to go on the elephant for the tiger show courtesy of the successful tracking by the mahout. The afternoon game was followed by good birding at the dammed Pench River on the southern boundary of the reserve.

Day 3

Wednesday 31st March

Bright sunny morning, warm afternoon and cloudy evening

We rose before dawn for tea, coffee and biscuits and after taking our early morning drive, we traversed the scenic Vindhya Hills as we transferred by road to Kanha.

We reached Kanha in about five and a half hours, and in between we stopped for a packed lunch and carried on for the rest of the journey, looking forward to seeing the moist deciduous Sal and Bamboo dominated forest habitat of Kanha. On arrival we checked in at Kanha Jungle Lodge.

Day 4

Thursday 1st April

Cool morning, windy, warm, bright and sunny later.

Today set the tone for our next three full days at Kanha. We took both the drives into the park, after having our tea, coffee and biscuits before dawn we started for the early morning drive at 6 am to be the first lot of jeeps going into the park. We were not successful with Tigers today but other mammals seen were Barasingha, Jackal, Sambar, Chital and Wild Boar.

Day 5

Friday 2nd April

Dry and bright, cool, cloudy later

After having our tea, coffee and biscuits before dawn we started for the early morning drive at 6 am to be in first going to the Mukki area. A male Tiger at Kanha meadow was seen in the afternoon game drive. We had planned to go to the plateau, but did not make it due to the tiger sighting and came out of Kisli Gate then drove back to Mukki about 50 kms, but our the fuel ran out about 8 kms before the hotel, so we waited about half an hour before help came, and got back to the hotel at 8.30 pm...

Day 6

Saturday 3rd April

Warm, bright and sunny

The morning game drive experienced a tiger sighting. The afternoon drive was pleasant since we planned to take the drive to this highest point in the park (Bhamni Dadar) for the sunset, and the views from the plateau were stunning. Two Short-eared Owls were seen hunting in the grassland there. After the sun went down we headed back to the Lodge.

Day 7

Sunday 4th April

Pleasant morning, warm afternoon, cool at night

Our tours last drive into Kanha this morning allowed everyone to say goodbye to the beautiful landscapes of the park and their delightful inhabitants. The rest of the day was given over to get everybody back to Nagpur. The drive took about six hours with some stops en route, and some good birds were seen on the way. Overnight was at Tuli International Hotel.

Day 8

Monday 5th April

Pleasant morning

Breakfast was served at the hotel before checking out to drop everybody at Nagpur Airport to catch the flight to Mumbai and onwards to the UK...

Species Lists

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,

English Name	Scientific Name	Rec.	Remarks
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	4	
Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>	3	
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	4	
Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>	6	
Oriental Darter	<i>Anbinga melanogaster</i>	2	
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	1	
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	1	
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	4	
Intermediate Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>	3	
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	4	
Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	6	
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	6	
Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>	3	
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	3	
Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>	3	
Lesser Adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>	3	
Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>	1	
Red-naped Ibis	<i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>	4	
Lesser Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>	3	
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	2	
Cotton Pygmy-goose	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>	1	
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas Penelope</i>	2	
Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	3	
Common Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	2	
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	1	
Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>	1	
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	3	
Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	3	
Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta fufina</i>	2	
Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	2	
Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>	1	
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	2	
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	2	
Oriental Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>	5	
Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	5	
Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	3	Often abundant in urban settings,

English Name	Scientific Name	Rec.	Remarks
			especially common in Delhi, but much scarcer or even absent in more rural areas
Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur Indus</i>	1	
Grey-headed Fish Eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus</i>	2	
Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	2	
Black-rumped Vulture	<i>Gyps bengalensis</i>	2	
Long-billed Vulture	<i>Gyps indicus</i>	3	
Red-headed Vulture	<i>Sacrogyps calvus</i>	2	
Short-toed Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	2	
Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela cheela</i>	4	
Pallid Harrier	<i>Circus macrourus</i>	1	
Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	4	Quite common and widespread
Eurasian Sparrow Hawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	1	
White-Eyed Buzzard	<i>Butastur teesa</i>	5	
Bonelli's Eagle	<i>Aquila fasciatus</i>	1	
Tawny Eagle	<i>Aquila rapax</i>	1	
Changeable Hawk Eagle	<i>Spizaetus cirrhatus</i>	2	
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	3	
Painted Francolin	<i>Francolinus pictus</i>	1	
Red Spurfowl	<i>Galloperdix spadicea</i>	3	
Red Junglefowl	<i>Gallus gallus</i>	3	
Painted Spurfowl	<i>Galloperdix lunulata</i>	1	
Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	6	
White-Breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>	1	
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	4	
Stone Curlew	<i>Burbinus oedicephalus</i>	2	
Small Pratincole	<i>Glareola lactea</i>	1	
Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>	3	
Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus indicus</i>	6	Very common, widespread and noisy
Little-ringed Plover	<i>Chardrius dubius</i>	1	
Kentish Plover	<i>Chardrius alexandrinus</i>	1	
Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatillus</i>	1	
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	3	
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	5	
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	2	
Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>	1	
River Tern	<i>Sterna aurantia</i>	1	
Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia neglecta</i>	5	
Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	4	
Eurasian Collard Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaoto</i>	3	
Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	5	Fairly common

English Name		Scientific Name	Rec.	Remarks
Laughing Dove		<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	2	Common and very widespread
Yellow-footed Pigeon	Green	<i>Treron phoenicoptera</i>	4	
Alexandrine Parakeet		<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>	4	
Rose-ringed Parakeet		<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	6	Common and widespread, one of very few species seen every day
Plum-headed Parakeet		<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>	3	
Grey-bellied Cuckoo		<i>Cacomantis merulinus</i>	2	
		<i>passerinus</i>		
Asian Koel		<i>Eudynamis scolopacea</i>	2	
Sirkeer Malkoha		<i>Phaenicophaeus leschenaultia</i>	3	
Greater Coucal		<i>Centropus sinensis</i>	4	Regularly encountered in a range of scrubby and grassland settings
Indian Scops Owl		<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>	5	
Brown Fish-owl		<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>	2	
Jungle Owlet		<i>Glaucidium</i>	5	
Spotted Owlet		<i>Athene brama indica</i>	3	
Short-eared Owl		<i>Asio flammeus</i>	1	
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>	3	
White-throated Kingfisher		<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	5	Common and very widespread, a frequent sight on roadside wires
Blue-bearded Bee-Eater		<i>Nyctyomys atbertoni</i>	2	
Green Bee-Eater		<i>Merops orientalis</i>	5	
Indian Roller		<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>	5	Frequently seen, often along roadsides
		<i>benghalensis</i>		
Hoopoe		<i>Upupa epops</i>	4	
Indian Grey Hornbill		<i>Ocyrceros birostris</i>	5	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>	4	
Coppersmith Barbet		<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>	4	Quite common, though much more often heard than seen.
Brown-capped Woodpecker	Pygmy	<i>Dendrocopos canicapillus</i>	2	
Yellow-crowned Woodpecker		<i>Dendrocopos mabrattensis</i>	2	
		<i>pallascens</i>		
Rufous Woodpecker		<i>Ceulus brachyurus</i>	2	
Streak-throated Woodpecker		<i>Picus xanthopygaeus</i>	1	
Scaly-breasted Woodpecker		<i>Picus squamatus</i>	1	

English Name	Scientific Name	Rec.	Remarks
Woodpecker			
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	
Oriental Skylark	<i>Alauda gulgula</i>	1	
Plain Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>	4	
Dusky Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne concolor</i>	1	
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundu rustica</i>	2	
Wire-tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundu smithii</i>	1	
Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>	3	
White Wagtail	<i>Motallica alba</i>	3	
White-browed Wagtail	<i>Motallica madaraspatensis</i>	2	
Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motallica citreola</i>	1	
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motallica flava</i>	2	
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motallica cinerea</i>	4	
Oriental Pipit	<i>Anthus ruulus</i>	3	
Tawny Pipit	<i>Anthus campestris</i>	1	
Long-billed Pipit	<i>Anthus similes</i>	1	
Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	2	
Large Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina macei macei</i>	4	
Rosy Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus roseus</i>	1	
Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>	2	
Long-tailed Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus ethologus</i>	3	
Scarlet Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>	2	
White-bellied Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus erythropygius</i>	1	
Red-whiskered Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>	1	
Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	6	Very common and widespread
Golden-Fronted Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>	4	
Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tibia</i>	2	
Orange-headed Thrush	<i>Zosterops citrina</i>	2	
Tickell's Thrush	<i>Turdus unicolor</i>	1	
Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	3	
Rufous-fronted Prinia	<i>Prinia buchanani</i>	1	
Grey-breasted Prinia	<i>Prinia hodgsonii</i>	2	
Jungle Prinia	<i>Prinia sylvatica</i>	3	
Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inomata</i>	1	
Booted Warbler	<i>Hippolais caligata</i>	1	
Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	2	Widespread in small numbers with birds recorded at all sites
Dusky warbler	<i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>	2	

English Name	Scientific Name	Rec.	Remarks
Tickell's Leaf warbler	<i>Phylloscopus affinis</i>	2	
Sulphur-bellied Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus griseolus</i>	3	
Hume's Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopu humei</i>	2	
Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>	3	
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	2	
Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>	4	
Ultramarine flycatcher	<i>Ficedula superciliaris</i>	1	
Verditer flycatcher	<i>Eumyias thalassina</i>	1	
Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>	3	
Oriental Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	5	
White-rumped Shama	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>	3	
Indian Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulica</i>	3	
Black Redstart	<i>Phoebastria ochrurus</i>	2	
Pied Bushchat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>	3	
Indian Chat	<i>Cercomela fusca</i>	1	
Common Stone Chat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	3	
White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>	1	
White-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>	4	
Asian Paradise-flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradise</i>	1	
Indian Scimitar Babbler	<i>Pomatorhinus horsfieldii</i>	1	
Yellow-eyed Babbler	<i>Chrysomma sinense</i>	1	
Jungle Babbler	<i>Turdoides striatus</i>	6	Generally common and widespread
Brown-cheeked Fulvetta	<i>Alcippe poioicephala</i>	3	
Great Tit	<i>Parus major(cinereus group)</i>	4	
Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>	2	
Purple Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>	5	Present throughout at low densities
Thick-Billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum agile</i>	3	
Pale-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>	1	
Oriental White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>	4	
Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	4	
Black-Hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>	4	
Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>	1	
Bay-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius vittatus</i>	1	
Long-tailed Shrike	<i>Lanius schach</i>	4	
Southern Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius meridionalis</i>	1	
Common Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis pondicerianus</i>	3	
Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>	5	Very common, a frequent site on roadside wires
Ashy Drongo	<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>	3	
White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>	5	
Hair-crested Drongo	<i>Dicrurus hottentottus</i>	2	

English Name	Scientific Name	Rec.	Remarks
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 splendens 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 tristis tristis</i>	6	Ubiquitous
Asian Pied Starling	<i>Sturnus contra</i>	2	Common in the vicinity of water
Brahminy Starling	<i>Temenuchus pagodarum</i>	3	
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus (indica group)</i>	3	Fairly common in most urban settings and in some more rural areas
Chestnut-shouldered Petronia	<i>Petronia xanthocollis</i>	5	
Red Avadavat	<i>Amandava amandava</i>	1	
White-rumped Munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>	1	
Common Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>	2	

Mammals

English Name	Scientific name	Rec.	Remarks
Royal Bengal Tiger	<i>Panthera tigris</i>	5	
Jungle Cat	<i>Felis chaus</i>	1	
Rhesus Macaque	<i>Macca mulatta</i>	4	Fairly common and widespread
Common Langur	<i>Presbytis entellus</i>	6	Fairly common and widespread, commoner in heavy woodland than the previous species
Common Mongoose	<i>Herpestes edwardsi</i>	2	
Ruddy Mongoose	<i>Herpestes smithii</i>	4	
Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>	5	
Dhole (Asiatic Wild Dog)	<i>Cuon alpinus dukhunensis</i>	2	
Indian Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus giganteus</i>	2	
Three-striped Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus pennarum</i>	6	
Five-Striped Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus pennantii</i>	2	
Gaur(Indian Bison)	<i>Bos guarus</i>	4	
Sambar	<i>Cervus unicolor</i>	6	

English Name	Scientific name	Rec.	Remarks
Barasingha (Swamp deer)	<i>Cervus duvauceli branderi</i>	3	
Indian Muntjac (Barking Deer)	<i>Muntiacus muntjak</i>	3	
Chital (Spotted Deer)	<i>Cervus axis</i>	6	
Nilgai	<i>Boselaphus tragocamelus</i>	3	
Indian Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>	5	

Reptiles

Reptile Species	Scientific name	Rec.
Flap-shelled Turtle	<i>Lissemys punctata</i>	3

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