

India - Tiger Direct!

Naturetrek Tour Report

4 - 13 May 2014

Report compiled by Indrajit Latey



Naturetrek Cheriton Mill Cheriton Alresford Hampshire SO24 0NG England

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

F: +44 (0)1962 736426

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Tour Leader: Indrajit Latey Naturalist & guide

Participants: Anne-Marie Harris
 Noel Davison Satpura extension
 Angie Davison Satpura extension

Day 1

Sunday 4th May

In flight from the UK

Day 2

Monday 5th May

The flight from Mumbai to Nagpur arrived on time and we left for Pench. Indian Rollers, Mynas and Shrikes were seen in plenty at the roadside all the way until we reached Pench. On arriving at Tuli Corridor we were welcomed and ushered to our cottages. A quick brief of the park was followed by delicious dinner after which we all called it a night.

Day 3

Tuesday 6th May

The morning started at 4:30 am. A quick cup of coffee and we were off to the park for our first safari. A pair of male Chitals doing a rut, and controlling their harem, welcomed us in the park. Cicadas were calling out in hundreds, which attracted birds like the Grey Hornbills, who were picking them off the tree trunks very easily. Wild boars foraged through the forest floor. Moving with no particular objective, they were furiously digging and looking for tubers and roots. As we were watching some Sambar deer, a pack of Wild Dogs wandered along the road towards us! There were 2 pups in this pack of 9, who were obviously out on a hunting lesson. Just as quietly as they appeared, they disappeared.

After lunch the weather changed for the worse. Lots of lightning and thunder was followed by rain. We thought our safari was going to be a wash out! Braving the rain we all went to the park only to be stopped dead in the middle of the tracks by a Tigress sitting under a tree! We were so surprised to see her that we nearly forgot to take pictures. She got up and walked into the forest before disappearing into thin air! It was a great sighting! Excitedly we drove around looking for her but we could not find her. Exiting the park at 6:45 pm we all did the checklist and had dinner.

Day 4

Wednesday 7th May

The morning started with a slight drizzle and there was also a chill. We went into the park hoping that the weather would change – which it did – for the better. Birds like the Changeable hawk eagle were seen sunning themselves, drying their down feathers. Some Sambar deer were looking quite alert...we waited for some predator to come out. As the calls died down so did our chance of seeing something exciting. Leaving the park we had lunch in Pench and then made our way to the next park – Kanha. En route we encountered a storm and had to get out of the car and move some tree branches out of the road. Arriving in Kanha we were welcomed by Tarun and his family. After getting comfortable at the lodge we all had an early dinner and went off to bed.

Day 5

Thursday 8th May

The morning wake up call was at 430 am! Arriving at the main gate of the park we all rumbled into the park to be welcomed by a plethora of alarm calls from Chital and Sambar deer. The Langur monkeys indicated that there was definitely a predator. Driving towards the epicentre of the action we spotted a Tigress in the bush. Resting, she had a 22 month old sub-adult cub besides her. There was a Sambar deer that they had brought down and were feasting on it. Knowing that they would be there for the next day or so we left the park and returned after lunch only to find out that the things were exactly the same.

On our arrival the sub adult Tiger came out of the bush and walked straight out towards us and sat down – 15 feet from our jeep! We could not believe our luck. Cameras clicked away, little realizing that the mother was also coming onto the road. She came into the open and sat a little away from the cub and then both of them went off to sleep. We were watching them for more than 20 minutes when a third Tiger emerged – another sub-adult male! He too joined his mother and brother sprawling right in the middle of the road. We were in seventh heaven, with three tigers relaxing in front of us!! We watched them for over an hour and very reluctantly left the park. We arrived excitedly at the lodge and had great views of the flying squirrel. After completing the species checklist we had dinner and hoped that the next day would be as good as this one.

Day 6

Friday 9th May

The day started with a slight drizzle. We were going to a different zone in the park – the Kanha zone. While we were driving towards the centre of the park, the weather started to clear. We saw some elephants patrolling, and the mahout told us that there was a male Tiger on its way towards the road. Strategically placing our jeep to get good views we had a wonderful sighting. The Tiger was slightly injured, but by the looks of it he would be able to recover. After crossing the road he ambled into the forest and disappeared. Another Tiger was sitting in the bush where it was barely visible. Had a deer walked towards it we would have seen an interesting encounter.

After lunch we drove near a lake, with a chance of seeing if we could get some more action. But we were not that lucky. With our hopes pinned for the next day we all returned from the park, to watch the flying squirrel glide over our heads. After a quick checklist we had dinner and went off to bed.

Day 7

Saturday 10th May

We had an early start since we were going to the western zone – Kisli. We had some great views of the Swamp deer with their majestic antlers moving through the grasslands. Wild Boars were in full strength digging into the earth. We even had a slight glimpse of a male Tiger in the undergrowth!

After returning to the lodge, we were taken for a nature walk by Jai – the youngest naturalist in central India. He shared with us his amazing knowledge and experiences. In the afternoon safari we had lots of alarm calls but no luck. The sun set from Sondhar tank was simply stunning. We all had had our luck and our quota of sightings was more than enough... That evening we had our farewell dinner under the stars.

Day 8

Sunday 11th May

In the morning there was a slight chill in the air. The grasslands were misty. We could not believe that we were in the middle of summer where temperatures could easily have been 40 degrees. In the morning we had some great sightings of Gaur. There were many little calves that were just discovering that grass is to be eaten! The guests took many photos of these endangered mammals and then we said goodbye to the park. After breakfast we said goodbye to our friends who departed for the Satpura extension. We left for Nagpur on a very hot afternoon. Arriving at the Tuli Imperial we had dinner and went to bed.

Day 9

Monday 12th May

After a lazy morning breakfast, the guests departed for Mumbai and onwards home to the UK.

Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek e-mailing list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers. Visit www.naturetrek.co.uk to sign up.

Naturetrek Facebook

We are delighted to launch the Naturetrek Facebook page so that participants of Naturetrek tours can remain in touch after the holiday and share photos, comments and future travel plans.

Setting up a personal profile at www.facebook.com is quick, free and easy. The [Naturetrek Facebook page](#) is now live; do please pay us a visit!

Species List

Birds (✓ = recorded but not counted)

	Common name	Scientific name	May					
			6	7	8	9	10	11
1	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	✓	✓		✓		
2	Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>	✓					
3	Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Oriental Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>	✓	✓				✓
5	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓					
6	Intermediate Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓
7	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>						
8	Indian Pond-heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>	✓	✓				
11	Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>	✓				✓	
12	Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>			✓	✓		
13	Lesser Adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>				✓		
14	Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>	✓					
15	Red-naped Ibis	<i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>			✓		✓	✓
16	Lesser Whistling-duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>			✓		✓	✓
17	Oriental Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>				✓		
18	Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>		✓		✓	✓	
19	Grey-headed Fish-eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus</i>	✓					✓
20	White-rumped Vulture	<i>Gyps bengalensis</i>				✓		
21	Long-billed Vulture	<i>Gyps indicus</i>		✓		✓		
22	Crested Serpent-eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>	✓				✓	
23	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>					✓	✓
24	Grey Francolin	<i>Francolinus pondicerianus</i>			✓	✓		✓
25	Red Spurfowl	<i>Galloperdix spadicea</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
26	Red Jungle Fowl	<i>Gallus gallus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
27	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
28	Small Buttonquail	<i>Turnix sylvatica</i>				✓		
29	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>				✓		
30	Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>		✓		✓		
31	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>	✓					
32	Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
33	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>		✓				
34	River Tern	<i>Sterna aurantia</i>	✓					
35	Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>					✓	
36	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		✓				
37	Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓
38	Yellow-footed Pigeon	<i>Treron phoenicoptera</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
39	Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>	✓					
40	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	✓					
41	Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>		✓				
42	Common Hawk-cuckoo	<i>Cuculus varius</i>	✓	✓				✓
43	Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamis scolopacea</i>	✓					
44	Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>		✓		✓		
45	Indian Scops-owl	<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>		✓				
46	Brown Fish-owl	<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>				✓		
47	Jungle Owlet	<i>Glaucidium radiatum</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	

	Common name	Scientific name	May					
			6	7	8	9	10	11
48	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	✓					
49	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
50	Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	✓					
51	Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
52	Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
53	Indian Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyrceros birostris</i>	✓	✓			✓	
54	Malabar Pied-hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros coronatus</i>	✓	✓				
55	Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Megalaima zeylanica</i>	✓			✓		
56	Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>	✓				✓	
57	Rufous Woodpecker	<i>Celeus brachyurus</i>		✓				
58	Black-rumped Flameback	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
59	Large Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina macei</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓
60	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓
61	Grey-breasted Prinia	<i>Prinia hodgsonii</i>					✓	
62	Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>					✓	
63	Oriental Magpie-robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓
64	Indian Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulicata</i>	✓					
65	White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>	✓				✓	
66	Jungle Babbler	<i>Turdoides striatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
67	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		✓				
68	Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>		✓				
69	Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
70	Red Jungle Fowl		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Mammals (M = male; F = female; C = cubs)

1	Royal Bengal Tiger	<i>Panthera tigris tigris</i>	1F		3C1F	1C1F	1M	
2	Rhesus Macaque	<i>Macaca mulatta</i>	✓		✓			
3	Common Langur	<i>Presbytis entellus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Ruddy Mongoose	<i>Herpestes smithii</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	
5	Golden Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	
6	Dhole (Asiatic Wild Dog)	<i>Cuon alpinus dukhunensis</i>	✓					
7	Indian Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus giganteus</i>	✓	✓				
8	Indian Tree Shrew	<i>Anathana ellioti</i>				✓		
9	Indian or Black-naped Hare	<i>Lepus nigricollis</i>	✓					
10	Three-striped Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus pennarum</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓
11	Indian Giant Flying Squirrel	<i>Petaurista philippensis</i>				✓	✓	
12	Gaur (Indian Bison)	<i>Bos guarus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Sambar	<i>Cervus unicolor</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Barasingha (Swamp Deer)	<i>Cervus duvauceli branderi</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓
15	Chital (Spotted Deer)	<i>Cervus axis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	Indian Muntjac (Barking Deer)	<i>Muntiacus muntjak</i>					✓	
17	Nilgai (Blue Bull)	<i>Boselaphus tragocamelus</i>	✓	✓				
18	Indian Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓