

# India - Tiger Direct!

Naturetrek Tour Report

10 - 17 November 2014

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Report compiled by Yusuf Rizvi



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Tour Leader: Yusuf Rizvi Naturalist & local guide

Participants: Robert Brady  
Heather Brady  
Nev Rimes  
Steph Rimes  
Jacky Stepanenko

## Day 1

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> November

Travel to Nagpur.

## Day 2

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> November

The group arrived early at the Nagpur airport, with excitement and eagerness, and we started our journey to Pench National Park. On the way we saw a few birds. At the camp we checked in and, after a briefing about the next day's plans, we all had dinner.

## Day 3

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November

The morning was cloudy and unusually warm. We saw quite a few birds and some pugmarks, but no luck with the King of the Beasts.

In the evening our luck changed, as we saw four Dhole (Asiatic Wild Dogs) and, after a while, saw a Leopard close at hand. We were all happy to see the Leopard, although we were not able to take photographs, as the Leopard got off the rock and moved away. Then it started raining heavily, so we headed back to the lodge. On the way, we saw a pair of Wild Dogs again. In the evening, we did the checklist before we had dinner.

## Day 4

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> November

This morning was again not so cold and, after tea and coffee at the camp, we started our last drive in Pench National Park. We heard a few distress calls of Langur and Chital (Spotted Deer). We again were lucky, with a good sighting of a pair of Wild Dogs and we also saw quite a few birds; however, the Tiger remained elusive. Back at the camp, we had an early lunch and checked out, before we started our five and a half hour journey to the Kanha National Park. We reached the Lodge in good time, and we were welcomed by Tarun, Dimple and Vinod. After the tea and coffee, we were able to see an Indian Giant Flying Squirrel go up a Sal tree and glide over the top of our heads. We did the checklist and, after dinner and a briefing, we all called it a night.

## Day 5

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> November

Morning in the deciduous Sal forest is always mesmerizing, with its peculiar forest smell, and birds chirping all around. We started our day with fresh Tiger tracks, and as we started following, we also heard a few alarm calls. Also we saw quite a few birds which were new for the checklist. The group were pleased to see Swamp Deer eating water weeds.

The afternoon drive seemed to be quiet, and the Tiger again remained elusive. We had dinner after doing the checklist.

## Day 6

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> November

This morning was promising, and cooler the previous day. We saw the tracks of a tigress with sub adults (grown cubs), but no alarm calls indicated that Tigers might be present. Today four of our guests were going on elephant back for an hour. We were given two different time slots, so Robert and Heather went on elephant back at 7:00am. Meanwhile, while our guests Nev and Steph in the other vehicle saw a magnificent Tiger. Unfortunately, when Jacky and I reached the spot, after dropping Robert and Heather at the elephant camp, the tigress had already disappeared into the thickets. Back at the lodge, we went for a Nature walk for over an hour, seeing some interesting birds, butterflies and other invertebrates.

On the afternoon game drive, we saw Wild Dogs chasing a few Spotted Deer, at a distance in the meadow. Towards the end of the drives, we heard some alarm calls, possibly indicating the presence of a large cat, but then it was time to return to the lodge. We did the evening checklist, followed by dinner.

## Day 7

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November

After tea and coffee in the morning we started our game drive. Today we had to travel a long distance to reach the other zone, Kisli. On the way we saw some tracks, possibly from early morning. We followed them for over four kilometres, and little later in the Kisli zone saw more tracks of a mother with sub adults. We also saw quite a few birds.

In the afternoon drive we heard a few distress calls of Sambar, and was told by a mahout that just a few minutes before, he saw a tigress crossing over the other side of the tracks, from where the calls were coming. We checked the parallel road and waited for a long time, then we checked the other area. We heard more calls, and although we did not see the Tiger, we did hear one growling.

## Day 8

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> November

This was our last game drive, so with high hopes we started out on safari. We heard quite a few distress calls of Langur and Sambar which were quite close, and we also heard growling which was not too far away. We could see the Sambar looking in a direction which was hardly 10 metres from the road, where most of the people were eagerly waiting for the tigress to come out. But then a noisy diesel vehicle approached and might have disturbed the tigress, as we could see the Sambar looking away towards the hill and giving the distress call. We also heard the Tiger, which was now going further towards the hill. Jacky decided to give up going to on the elephant back ride, as it was our last chance to see a Tiger. We checked the other crossing points, but the distress calls stopped, and no Tiger was visible.

Back at the lodge we had a little time to prepare for our departure. We had packed lunch which we enjoyed at a beautiful setting on the rocks, on the way to Nagpur. We made it on time in Nagpur, where we had our last farewell dinner together as a group.

## Day 9

Monday 17<sup>th</sup> November

Next day Nev, Steph and Jacky had a early flight so we went to dropped them off at the airport, whereas Robert and Heather had late departure.

While we were a little disappointed not to have had more sightings of Tiger, we were reminded how secretive and rare these magnificent beasts are, and we appreciated seeing the pugmarks and hearing their growls. The Leopard sighting was particularly exciting, and we saw many other mammals and birds in this fascinating area of India.

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## Species List

Birds (✓ = recorded but not counted)

	Common name	Scientific name	November						
			10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
4	Intermediate Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Indian Pond-heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	✓	✓	✓				
8	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>		✓					
9	Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>			✓				
11	Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>			✓				
12	Lesser Adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Red-naped Ibis	<i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>						✓	
14	Lesser Whistling-duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>				✓	✓	✓	
15	Cotton Pygmy-goose	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>				✓		✓	
16	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓
17	Common Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓
18	Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓
19	Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	✓						
20	Grey-headed Fish-eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus</i>		✓					
21	Red-headed Vulture	<i>Sarcogyps calvus</i>							✓
22	Crested Serpent-eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>		✓	✓		✓		
23	White-eyed Buzzard	<i>Butastur teesa</i>		✓					
24	Indian Spotted Eagle	<i>Aquila hastata</i>		✓					
25	Changeable Hawk-eagle	<i>Spizaetus cirrhatous</i>		✓					
26	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>				✓			
27	Jungle Bush-quail	<i>Perdica asiatica</i>		✓					
28	Red Spurfowl	<i>Galloperdix spadicea</i>			✓		✓	✓	
29	Red Junglefowl	<i>Gallus gallus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
30	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
31	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>			✓				
32	Bronze-winged Jacana	<i>Metopidius indicus</i>						✓	
33	Greater Painted-snipe	<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>						✓	
34	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>		✓				✓	
35	Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
36	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>					✓		
37	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>			✓				
38	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>			✓				
39	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>			✓				✓
40	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓						✓
41	Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
42	Laughing Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>			✓				✓
43	Yellow-footed Pigeon	<i>Treron phoenicoptera</i>		✓			✓	✓	
44	Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
45	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>		✓				✓	✓
46	Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	
47	Common Hawk-cuckoo	<i>Cuculus varius</i>		✓		✓		✓	

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			10	11	12	13	14	15	16
48	Sirkeer Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus leschenaultii</i>				✓	✓	✓	
49	Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>				✓	✓		✓
50	Spot-bellied Eagle Owl	<i>Bubo nipalensis</i>							✓
51	Indian Scops-owl	<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>		✓		✓		✓	✓
52	Jungle Owlet	<i>Glaucidium radiatum</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
53	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>			✓				
54	Crested Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>				✓	✓	✓	
55	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>				✓			
56	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
57	Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>			✓				
58	Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>		✓	✓	✓			✓
59	Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
60	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	
61	Indian Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyrceros birostris</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
62	Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Megalaima zeylanica</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	
63	Black-rumped Flameback	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
64	White-naped Woodpecker	<i>Chrysocolaptes festivus</i>				✓			
65	Dusky Crag-martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne concolor</i>	✓						
66	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>					✓	✓	
67	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		✓					
68	White-browed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla madaraspatensis</i>			✓				
69	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>			✓			✓	✓
70	Oriental Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>						✓	
71	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>		✓	✓		✓		✓
72	Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>				✓			
73	Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>		✓	✓		✓		
74	Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>				✓			
75	Oriental Magpie-robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>			✓				
76	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>						✓	
77	Pied Bushchat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>			✓				
78	Jungle Babbler	<i>Turdoides striatus</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
79	Brown-cheeked Fulvetta	<i>Alcippe poioicephala</i>				✓	✓		✓
80	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		✓					✓
81	Thick-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum agile</i>		✓					
82	Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>					✓		
83	Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
84	Long-tailed Shrike	<i>Lanius schach</i>			✓		✓		
85	Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
86	Ashy Drongo	<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>				✓			
87	White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
88	Hair-crested Drongo	<i>Dicrurus hottentottus</i>		✓					
89	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
90	Rufous Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
91	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	✓						
92	Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
93	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
94	Asian Pied Starling	<i>Gracupica contra</i>	✓		✓				✓
95	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓		✓				
96	Red Avadavat	<i>Amandava amandava</i>						✓	
97	White-rumped Munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>				✓			
98	Nutmeg Mannikin	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>						✓	✓

	Common name	Scientific name	November						
			10	11	12	13	14	15	16

## Mammals

1	Royal Bengal Tiger	<i>Panthera tigris tigris</i>					✓		
2	Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus</i>		✓					
3	Rhesus Macaque	<i>Macaca mulatta</i>	✓	✓	✓				✓
4	Common Langur	<i>Presbytis entellus</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	Three-striped Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus pennarum</i>		✓	✓		✓		✓
9	Indian Giant Flying Squirrel	<i>Petaurista philippensis</i>			✓	✓	✓		
10	Gaur (Indian Bison)	<i>Bos guarus</i>		✓		✓		✓	✓
11	Sambar	<i>Cervus unicolor</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	Barasingha (Swamp Deer)	<i>Cervus duvauceli branderi</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Chital (Spotted Deer)	<i>Cervus axis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Indian Muntjac (Barking Deer)	<i>Muntiacus muntjak</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓
15	Nilgai (Blue Bull)	<i>Boselaphus tragocamelus</i>		✓	✓				
16	Indian Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓