

India - Tiger Direct!

Naturetrek Tour Report

10 – 19 January 2016



Royal Bengal Tiger



Royal Bengal Tiger



Leopard



Dhole (Asiatic Wild Dog)

Report compiled by Durgesh Singh & Pradeep Singh
Images Courtesy of Barbara Griffiths



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Tour Participants: Durgesh Singh & Pradeep Singh (leaders) with 12 Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Sunday 10th January

UK to India

The tour started with an overnight flight from Heathrow Airport to Mumbai, India

Day 2

Monday 11th January

Mumbai – Nagpur - Pench

We arrived in Mumbai late morning and then had an onward flight to Nagpur, arriving around 5pm. After collecting our luggage we headed for our vehicles. We left the airport by 5.45pm and then had a two hour drive to the Tuli Tiger Resort in Pench. Upon arrival we met the rest of the group who had been on the Tadoba pre-extension with Durgesh. In the evening we had a short briefing about the next day before having dinner and then retired for the night.

Day 3

Tuesday 12th January

Pench National Park

We had an early start on a clear, cool morning, leaving the hotel at 6.30am to be at the park gate for our first safari in Pench which started at 6.45am. Once inside the park we started to see some mammals including Spotted Deer, Sambar, Wild Boar and Common Langur. And on the drive we found birds such as Indian Scops Owl, Mottled Wood Owl and Jungle Owlet. At Junewani waterbody we enjoyed some good birding. We saw some Tiger footprints on the road and heard a few Spotted Deer alarm calls. Birding in the backwater area of the Pench river was also good. Northern Pintail, Ruddy Shelduck, Black-headed Ibis, Eurasian Spoonbill, Asian Openbill, Painted Stork, Gadwall, Woolly-necked Stork, White-naped Woodpecker, Red-wattled Lapwing, Plain and Jungle Prinias, Crested Serpent Eagle, Grey Nightjar, and Taiga and Red-throated Flycatchers were all seen. Mammal-wise, Gaur, Sambar, Nilgai and Common Mongoose were highlights.

Our afternoon safari started by 3pm. On the drive we saw four or five Golden Jackal. We also saw a pair of Wild Dogs feeding on a Spotted Deer close to the Sagwanban area. We saw some good birds but the wild cats eluded us today. We returned to the lodge after our drive and in the evening met for the checklist and then had dinner.

Day 4

Wednesday 13th January

Pench - Kanha

It was another clear, cool morning as we set off on our last drive in Pench National Park. We followed tracks on the road and waited at places where we heard alarm calls but still the Tigers eluded us. We passed through the spot where the Wild Dogs had made their kill yesterday. This time we saw three of them. They had finished off the kill and were dragging the remaining carcass around the jungle floor. One of the dogs came close to our vehicle and then went back to join the rest of the dogs. We had an early breakfast in the park and then did some riverside birding. After checking most of the areas it was now time to head for the exit.

We went back to the lodge, packed, had our lunch and then started for Kanha by 1.30pm. We passed through some busy towns and villages during our four hour drive, stopping a couple of times to stretch our legs. By 6pm we reached Kanha Jungle lodge, our stay for the next three days. After settling in to our rooms, we met to discuss plans, did our checklist while having drinks and then had dinner.

Day 5

Thursday 14th January

Kanha National Park

We had an early morning wake-up call at 5.30am and met for tea/coffee before starting for the park by 6.15am. Once in the park we started by seeing the usual mammals, and then we went to look for Tigers. After scanning some hilly roads and grasslands we noticed some jeeps waiting close to Chital line. We went there and received news that a female Tiger had been seen moving in the undergrowth. We waited for a while and then saw the female Tiger cross in front of one of our vehicles and vanish into the forest. Our group was using three jeeps and members in two of them saw the Tigress – wonderful for them and frustrating for people in the third jeep. Next we did some good birding before having breakfast. After breakfast we checked some more park areas before returning to the lodge.

At the lodge we had some time to rest. Some of us went for a walk to the riverside to look for birds and butterflies. After lunch we returned to the Park by 2.30pm for our afternoon safari. People in one of the jeeps saw a Tiger at the Dhawajhandi road while on their way back. This afternoon Crested Serpent Eagle, Little and Indian Cormorants, Little Grebe, Grey Bushchat, Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, Little Swift, Red-breasted Flycatcher and Barasingha were sighted. After the drive we came back to the lodge.

Day 6

Friday 15th January

Kanha National Park

It was another clear, cool morning which turned into a pleasant day. Today was quite exciting in terms of Tiger movement in the Park. Tiger tracks were found on a good number of park roads and alarm calls could be heard, signalling the presence of Tigers in the area. Early in the safari, group members in one of our jeeps saw a female Tiger walking at the edge of the forest. Later, after breakfast, a male and female Tiger were seen at the Umerjhola fireline. Birding was good around the Sondar water bodies, where there were many Barasinghas. Sightings this morning included Sirkeer Malkoha, Oriental Turtle Dove, Common Teal, Sambar and Barasingha.

Our afternoon drive was not so fruitful. We missed a Tiger close to the Umerjhola road, which was most likely sleeping under a bridge. We waited close to the bridge for a long time, but as soon we left to check another road, it was seen from another vehicle crossing the road. We returned to the lodge after the safari and in the evening did the checklist and had dinner.

Day 7

Saturday 16th January

Kanha National Park

The weather changed today and it was a cold, misty morning and a cloudy afternoon. We went to the Kisli area of the Park in the morning; a new zone to explore. We encountered some alarm calls around the Jamun Talab and Indri areas. The birding highlight was a Cinnamon Bittern, and we had good views of Gaurs.

After lunch at the lodge we went for our afternoon drive. People in one of our jeeps were lucky and saw two male Tigers at different places. One of the Tigers was walking towards the vehicle along the road and the vehicle had to reverse quite a distance out of its way! Black-naped Monarch, Chestnut-bellied and Velvet-fronted Nuthatches, White-browed Fantail, Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher, Marsh Sandpiper and Bluethroat were all seen during the afternoon drive. We also saw a group of fully grown male Barasinghas sitting out in the open at the Bisanpura meadows.

Day 8

Sunday 17th January

Kanha – Nagpur

After spending many hours searching, some of us hadn't been fortunate enough to spot a Tiger, and this morning was our last chance. Unfortunately the weather was against us and we were surprised to see rain. We hoped it would stop after an hour or so, but it kept getting heavier. We waited for daylight to come and then decide we would go for the drive, although five of the group opted out. After getting news that the park was open, we set off. Once in the park we saw a lot of Barasingha, Sambar and Spotted Deer out in the open, and spotted a few birds. No Tiger tracks were visible or alarm calls heard due to the rain. After a while the rain started pouring down and we decided to cut short the morning drive.

We came back to the lodge and packed our luggage. Durgesh then left with David and Stella and they headed off for the Satpura tour extension. Meanwhile Pradeep escorted the group to Nagpur. After reaching Nagpur, we checked in to Tuli Imperial hotel and later had dinner.

Day 9

Monday 18th January

Nagpur – In flight

We had a free morning before meeting for lunch. In the afternoon we went to the airport where we said goodbye to Pradeep and boarded a flight to Mumbai, and then another onwards to the UK

Day 10

Tuesday 19th January

India to UK

Our flight landed at Heathrow Airport and another Naturetrek adventure came to an end.

Species Lists

Birds (✓ = recorded but not counted; h = heard only)

	Common name	Scientific name	January						
			12	13	14	15	16	17	
1	Royal Bengal Tiger	<i>Panthera tigris tigris</i>			✓	3	✓		
2	Jungle Cat	<i>Felis chaus kelaarita or kutas</i>	✓						
3	Rhesus Macaque	<i>Macaca mulatta</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	
4	Common Langur	<i>Presbytis entellus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
5	Common Mongoose	<i>Herpestes edwardsi</i>	✓						
6	Golden Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>	✓	✓				✓	
7	Dhole (Asiatic Wild Dog)	<i>Cuon alpinus dukhunensis</i>	✓	✓					
8	Indian Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus giganteus</i>		✓					
9	Three-striped Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus pennarum</i>	✓	✓			✓		
✓0	Indian Giant Flying Squirrel	<i>Petaurista philippensis</i>			✓				
✓✓	Sambar	<i>Cervus unicolor</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
✓2	Barasingha (Swamp Deer)	<i>Cervus duvauceli branderi</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	
✓3	Chital (Spotted Deer)	<i>Cervus axis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
✓4	Indian Muntjac (Barking Deer)	<i>Muntiacus muntjak</i>				✓			
✓5	Nilgai (Blue Bull)	<i>Boselaphus tragocamelus</i>	✓	✓					
✓6	Indian Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
✓7	Gaur	<i>Bos gaurus</i>	✓		✓		✓		
Birds									
✓	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2	Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>			✓				
3	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓	✓					
4	Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	
5	Oriental Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>		✓					
6	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓		
7	Intermediate Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		
8	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
9	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
✓0	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
✓✓	Cinnamon Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus cinnamomeus</i>					✓		
✓2	Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>	✓	✓					
✓3	Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
✓4	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
✓5	Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>	✓						
✓6	Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>	✓	✓					
✓7	Red-naped Ibis	<i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>				✓	✓		
✓8	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	✓						
✓9	Lesser Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>			✓	✓	✓		
20	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>				✓	✓	✓	
2✓	Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	✓	✓					
22	Cotton Pygmy Goose	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>				✓			
23	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	✓	✓			✓		
24	Common Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
25	Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>	✓	✓	✓				
26	Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
27	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>		✓					
28	Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
29	Black Eagle	<i>Ictinaetus malaiensis</i>	✓				✓		

	Common name	Scientific name	January					
			12	13	14	15	16	17
30	Grey-headed Fish Eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus</i>	✓	✓				
3✓	Red-headed Vulture	<i>Sarcogyps calvus</i>		✓				
32	Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
33	White-eyed Buzzard	<i>Butastur teesa</i>	✓	✓				
34	Changeable Hawk-Eagle	<i>Nisaetus cirrhatus</i>		✓	✓	✓		
35	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>		✓				
36	Red Spurfowl	<i>Galloperdix spadicea</i>			✓	✓		
37	Red Junglefowl	<i>Gallus gallus</i>	✓	✓	✓	h	✓	
38	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
39	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>			✓		✓	
40	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	✓					
4✓	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>	✓	✓			✓	
42	Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
43	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>		✓				
44	Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>			✓		✓	
45	Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>					✓	
46	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>		✓	✓	✓		
47	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	✓	✓		✓		
48	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	
49	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	✓	✓				
50	River Tern	<i>Sterna aurantia</i>	✓	✓				
5✓	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>			✓	✓	✓	
52	Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>				✓		
53	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓					
54	Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
55	Yellow-footed Green Pigeon	<i>Treron phoenicoptera</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
56	Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
57	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	✓			✓	✓	
58	Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>	✓	✓		✓		
59	Common Hawk-Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus varius</i>			✓	✓		
60	Sirkeer Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus leschenaultii</i>				✓		
6✓	Southern Coucal	<i>Centropus {sinensis } parroti</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	
62	Indian Scops Owl	<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>	✓	✓			✓	
63	Mottled Wood Owl	<i>Strix ocellata</i>	✓					
64	Jungle Owlet	<i>Glaucidium radiatum</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	
65	Spotted Owlet	<i>Athene brama</i>	✓		✓	✓		
66	Grey Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus indicus</i>	✓					
67	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>		✓	✓			
68	Crested Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>	h		✓			
69	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	✓		✓		✓	
70	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	
7✓	Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>			✓		✓	
72	Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		
73	Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
74	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	✓	✓			✓	
75	Indian Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyrceros birostris</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
76	Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Megalaima zeylanica</i>	h	✓	✓	✓	✓	
77	Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	
78	Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos nanus</i>					✓	
79	Yellow-crowned Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos mahrattensis</i>	✓					
80	Lesser Goldenback	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	

	Common name	Scientific name	January						
			12	13	14	15	16	17	
8✓	White-naped Woodpecker	<i>Chrysocolaptes festivus</i>	✓					✓	
82	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		✓	✓				
83	Wire-tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>						✓	
84	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
85	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		✓	✓				
86	White-browed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla madaraspatis</i>		✓					
87	Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motacilla citreola</i>						✓	
88	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>			✓	✓			
89	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
90	Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>		✓					
9✓	Richard's Pipit	<i>Anthus richardi</i>						✓	
92	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	✓						
93	Large Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina macei</i>			✓	✓			
94	Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>	✓						
95	Scarlet Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>	✓			✓			
96	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
97	Blue-capped Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola cinclorhynchus</i>						✓	
98	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>		✓	✓			✓	
99	Jungle Prinia	<i>Prinia sylvatica</i>	✓						
✓00	Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>	✓		✓			✓	
✓0✓	Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	✓						
✓02	Tickell's Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus affinis</i>		✓					
✓03	Hume's Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus humei</i>	✓						
✓04	Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>	✓						
✓05	Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>			✓				
✓06	Asian Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa dauurica</i>				✓			
✓07	Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>	✓		✓	✓			
✓08	Taiga Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula albicilla</i>	✓						
✓09	Ultramarine Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula superciliaris</i>		✓					
✓✓0	Verditer Flycatcher	<i>Eumyias thalassina</i>	✓						
✓✓✓	Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>		✓					
✓✓2	Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>						✓	
✓✓3	Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>						✓	
✓✓4	Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	✓	✓	✓				
✓✓5	Indian Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulcata</i>	✓	✓					
✓✓6	Common stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	
✓✓7	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	✓	✓					
✓✓8	Pied Bushchat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>						✓	
✓✓9	Grey Bushchat	<i>Saxicola ferrea</i>			✓				
✓20	Indian Chat	<i>Cercomela fusca</i>		✓					✓
✓2✓	White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>						✓	
✓22	Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>						✓	
✓23	Indian Scimitar Babbler	<i>Pomatorhinus horsfieldii</i>			h	h			
✓24	Yellow-eyed Babbler	<i>Chrysomma sinense</i>						✓	
✓25	Jungle Babbler	<i>Turdoides striatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
✓26	Brown-cheeked Fulvetta	<i>Alcippe poioicephala</i>			h	h		✓	
✓27	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	✓	✓	✓				
✓28	Indian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta castanea</i>						✓	
✓29	Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>						✓	
✓30	Pale-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum erythrorhynchos</i>	✓						
✓3✓	Oriental White-Eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>	✓						

	Common name	Scientific name	January					
			12	13	14	15	16	17
✓32	Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>					✓	
✓33	Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	
✓34	Isabelline Shrike	<i>Lanius isabellinus</i>	✓					
✓35	Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>					✓	
✓36	Long-tailed Shrike	<i>Lanius schach</i>				✓	✓	
✓37	Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
✓38	Ashy Drongo	<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>			✓	✓		
✓39	White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>	✓	✓	✓			
✓40	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
✓4✓	Rufous Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
✓42	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>		✓				
✓43	Indian Jungle Crow	<i>Corvus culminatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
✓44	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
✓45	Asian Pied Starling	<i>Gracupica contra</i>			✓		✓	
✓46	Brahminy Starling	<i>Temenuchus pagodarum</i>	✓	✓				
✓47	Chestnut-shouldered Petronia	<i>Petronia xanthocollis</i>	✓	✓				
✓48	Red Avadavat	<i>Amandava amandava</i>		✓			✓	
Other fauna								
✓	Indian Flapshell Turtle	<i>Lissemys punctata</i>			✓		✓	

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Black-shouldered Kite