

India - Tiger Direct!

Naturetrek Tour Report

21st – 29th December 2025



Tiger



Gaur



Barasingha



Leopard

Tour report by Anurag Yadav



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Tour participants: Anurag Yadav (leader) with eight Naturetrek clients

Summary

This tour delivered an absolutely spectacular wildlife experience across Pench and Kanha National Parks, with the group enjoying approximately ten different Tiger sightings, each remarkable and unique in behaviour, habitat use, and presence: a true celebration of India's apex predator. We also recorded five Leopard sightings, highlighted by the unforgettable moment when a Tiger attempted to chase a Leopard up a tree, creating a heart-racing wildlife encounter for all. In Kanha, we were especially fortunate to see Dholes, a pack-forming and highly skilled predator rarely observed on safari, which added an extraordinary element to our sightings. One of the most dramatic moments of the tour was witnessing a Golden Jackal successfully hunting a Chital, offering an incredible insight into predator-prey dynamics. Beyond these thrilling carnivore encounters, we saw abundant classic Central Indian wildlife, including Gaur, Chital, Sambar, and the iconic Barasingha, alongside diverse landscapes of Teak and Bamboo forests woven through with streams and grasslands. All combined to make this a deeply rewarding and unforgettable journey into the heart of India's wilderness.

Day 1

Sunday 21st December

Clients left the UK and headed for India.

Day 2

Monday 22nd December

Anurag, our tour leader, met the clients at Delhi Airport, and we flew on to Nagpur. After breakfast at the Radisson, we began our journey to Pench. Upon arrival, we met the other group members who had come from Tadoba, where they had enjoyed some amazing wildlife sightings.

We then headed out for our first safari in the beautiful jungle of Pench National Park. During the drive, we spotted several bird species, including Crested Serpent Eagle, Ruddy Shelduck, Asian Green Bee-eater and a couple of Indian Scops Owls. We also came across an area where two subadult Tiger cubs were present, but they were too far away to observe properly, so we decided to continue searching for other wildlife. Later, we saw Golden Jackals on the road.

After returning to the lodge, we observed Indian Flying Foxes and a Checkered Keelback snake.

Day 3

Tuesday 23rd December

Today, we had a full-day drive in Pench National Park, with our main focus on spotting big cats during the morning safari. We started tracking as early as possible, and after carefully searching and listening to alarm calls, we came across two Tiger cubs sitting in beautiful light. Shortly afterwards, their mother appeared, and the cubs followed her as they came out onto the road.

We then decided to track other Tigers. After hearing alarm calls from Sambar, we spotted a female Tiger crossing the road. It turned out to be a very fruitful morning. Along the way, we also saw several bird species, including Indian Scops Owl, White-eyed Buzzard, Asian Openbill, Indian Roller and a few other common birds.

During the afternoon safari, we focused on Leopards, and explored the rocky areas of the park. After an extensive search, one jeep came across a female Leopard on a kill. She was inside the bushes, but we were still able to get a decent sighting. Meanwhile, another vehicle spotted a Tiger walking on the road.

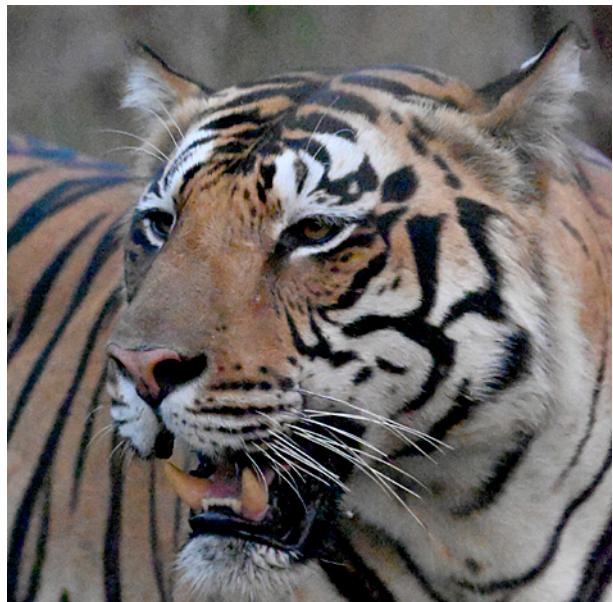
Day 4

Wednesday 24th December

Today was our last day in Pench National Park. During the safari, we spotted a Leopard on the road, with two cubs on the other side. Shortly afterwards, the female crossed the road as well. We also came across a herd of Gaur. We observed several bird species, including Paddyfield Pipit, Red-vented Bulbul, Indian Stone-curlew and Large-billed Crow. While continuing our search for other wildlife, we also sighted a Golden Jackal.



Crested Serpent Eagle



Tiger

After the safari, we had lunch and then departed for Kanha. En route, we spotted a Jungle Owlet. We stopped along the way for coffee and reached Kanha Jungle Lodge at around 5.30pm.

Day 5

Thursday 25th December

Today was our first full day in Kanha National Park, and we were mesmerised by the park's stunning landscape: towering Sal trees, open grasslands, and mist drifting through the forest. After tracking for some time, one jeep spotted a female Tiger, and shortly afterwards, a male Tiger emerged, seemingly in search of her. Observing the interaction and behaviour of these Tigers was truly fascinating. We also saw Kanha's flagship species, the Barasingha, and heard many rutting calls. Additionally, we were lucky to spot Blackbuck. Overall, it was an excellent morning drive. Meanwhile, the other vehicle in our group witnessed a male Tiger growling on the road, due to the presence of other Tigers in the area.

In the afternoon safari, we explored different zones and listened for alarm calls, but the jungle was very quiet. However, we did see regular species such as Sambar, Chital, Barasingha, and Bengal Sacred Langurs. One jeep saw a successful hunt of a Chital by a Golden Jackal!

In the evening, we enjoyed a wonderful Christmas dinner at the lodge, which was a perfect way to end the day.

Day 6**Friday 26th December**

Today, one jeep was allotted the Sarhi Zone, while the other was assigned to the Kanha and Mukki Zones. Soon after entering the forest, and within just ten minutes, we had an incredible sighting of a male Tiger, known as the Digidola male. He was spray-marking and attempting to establish his territory, and offered us a very close and memorable sighting.

Later, we moved towards the mountainous area, where we briefly glimpsed a Sloth Bear. We also observed several regular bird species, including Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, Taiga Flycatcher and Jungle Babbler. Additionally, we encountered a herd of Gaur.

Meanwhile, the jeep in the Kanha Zone received information during breakfast about a Leopard resting in a tree. They followed the intel, and were rewarded with a fantastic sighting of the Leopard comfortably perched on the tree: it was truly an amazing moment.

In the afternoon safari, we focused on birding and were fortunate to see four species of vultures gathered at a kill.

Day 7**Saturday 27th December**

Today, we headed out to the Kanha and Mukki Zones. After some searching, we spotted a Leopard resting high up in a tree, and we soon realised the reason why. After a while, a female Tiger appeared, searching for the Leopard, and she walked along the road right in front of us. Witnessing this interaction between two top predators was an incredible surprise. The other vehicle in our group also had a sighting of a male Tiger, crossing the road and moving into the grassland.

In the afternoon safari, we heard a Tiger roaring in the distance, gradually coming closer, though it never emerged into view. However, we did spot another Leopard moving through the jungle, and with that memorable sighting, the safaris came to an end.

Day 8**Sunday 28th December**

Today, we went out on a birding and village walk to experience the local life of the Baiga tribe. We interacted with the villagers, observed their daily routines, and also visited a local temple. During the walk, we spotted a few bird species, including Indian Scops Owl and Great Egrets, and learned interesting details about termite mounds and their importance in the ecosystem.

After lunch, we began our journey to Nagpur, bringing the trip to a relaxed close.

Day 9**Monday 29th December**

Clients caught their flights home, after a tremendous week in central India.

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Species lists

Birds (H = Heard only)

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic	Common name	Scientific name	December 2025						
			22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	Lesser Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>	✓	✓					
	Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	✓	✓	✓				
	Cotton Pygmy Goose	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>						✓	
	Indian Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>						✓	
	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Red Spurfowl - E	<i>Galloperdix spadicea</i>							✓
	Red Junglefowl	<i>Gallus gallus</i>				✓	✓	✓	
	Indian Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus asiaticus</i>			✓				
	Crested Treerswift	<i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>			✓		✓	✓	
	Asian Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>					✓	✓	
	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>		✓					
	Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>					✓		
	Common Hawk-Cuckoo	<i>Hierococcyx varius</i>					✓		
	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>		✓					
	Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>					✓	✓	
	Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>	✓	✓	✓				
	Yellow-footed Green Pigeon	<i>Treron phoenicopterus</i>			✓	✓	✓		
	Indian Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus indicus</i>		✓	✓				
	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	
	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>					✓	✓	
	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>		✓					
	Lesser Adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>					✓		
	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>					✓	✓	✓
	Little Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo niger</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
	Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>		✓					
	Red-naped Ibis	<i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>					✓		
	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>		✓					
	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Eastern Cattle Egret	<i>Ardea coromanda</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>							✓
	Red-headed Vulture	<i>Sarcogyps calvus</i>						✓	
	Cinereous Vulture	<i>Aegypius monachus</i>						✓	
	White-rumped Vulture	<i>Gyps bengalensis</i>					✓	✓	
	Indian Vulture - N	<i>Gyps indicus</i>					✓	✓	✓
	Griffon Vulture	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>						✓	
	Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
	Booted Eagle	<i>Hieraetus pennatus</i>						✓	
	White-eyed Buzzard	<i>Butastur teesa</i>		✓		✓			
	Spotted Owlet	<i>Athene brama</i>	✓						
	Jungle Owlet	<i>Glaucidium radiatum</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓
	Indian Scops Owl	<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓	
	Brown Fish Owl	<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>							✓
	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
	Indian Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyceros birostris</i>	✓				✓	✓	✓

E=Endemic, N=Near-endemic Common name	Scientific name	December 2025						
		22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>		✓			✓	✓	✓
White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>					✓	✓	✓
Asian Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>	✓			✓		✓	
Black-rumped Flameback	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>					✓		✓
White-naped Woodpecker	<i>Chrysocolaptes festivus</i>					✓		
Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>					✓		✓
Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>						✓	
Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Indian Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina macei</i>						✓	
Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>						✓	
Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
White-throated Fantail	<i>Rhipidura albicollis</i>						✓	
Rufous Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Indian Jungle Crow	<i>Corvus culminatus</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>					✓	✓	✓
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓
Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>					✓		
Jungle Babbler	<i>Argya striata</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>		✓			✓	✓	
Orange-headed Thrush	<i>Geokichla citrina</i>					✓		✓
Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>					✓		✓
White-rumped Shama	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>					✓	✓	✓
Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>						✓	
Taiga Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula albicilla</i>						✓	
Siberian Stonechat	<i>Saxicola maurus</i>						✓	
Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>				✓	✓		
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓
Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

Mammals

E=Endemic Common name	Scientific name	December 2025						
		22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Rhesus Macaque	<i>Macaca mulatta</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Bengal Sacred Langur - E	<i>Semnopithecus entellus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Northern Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus pennantii</i>						✓	
Indian Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus medius</i>	✓	✓					
Greater Asiatic Yellow Bat	<i>Scotophilus heathii</i>						✓	
Northern Red Muntjac	<i>Muntiacus vaginalis</i>					✓	✓	✓
Chital	<i>Axis axis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Barasingha	<i>Rucervus duvaucelii</i>				✓	✓	✓	
Sambar	<i>Rusa unicolor</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Gaur	<i>Bos gaurus</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Nilgai	<i>Boselaphus tragocamelus</i>	✓						
Blackbuck	<i>Antilope cervicapra</i>				✓	✓	✓	
Eurasian Wild Pig	<i>Sus scrofa</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	

E=Endemic		December 2025						
Common name	Scientific name	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Tiger	<i>Panthera tigris</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Ruddy Mongoose	<i>Urva smithii</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Dhole	<i>Cuon alpinus</i>						✓	
Golden Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Sloth Bear	<i>Melursus ursinus</i>					✓		

Reptiles

		December 2025						
Common name	Scientific name	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Bengal Monitor	<i>Varanus bengalensis</i>					✓	✓	✓
Checkered Keelback	<i>Xenochrophis piscator</i>		✓					