

India - Tiger Direct!

Naturetrek Tour Report

12th – 20th January 2026



Tiger with cubs



Tiger



Spotted Owlets



Tiger

Tour report by Swanand Deshpande and Anurag Yadav



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Tour participants: Swanand Deshpande and Anurag Yadav (leaders) with ten Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Monday 12th January

Clients departed from London for India.

Day 2

Tuesday 13th January

Anurag and Swanand met the clients at Nagpur Airport in the dead of night, and then we drove to the hotel for some rest. Around 10.00am, the clients were briefed about the day's programme, after which we departed for Pench National Park. En route, we stopped at a wetland for birding, and recorded some excellent sightings, including Grey-headed Swamphen, Purple and Indian Pond Herons, Barn Swallow, and both Pheasant-tailed and Bronze-winged Jacanas. We reached Tuli at around 12.30pm, checked into the hotel, and had lunch.

Later in the afternoon, we headed out for our first game drive. During the drive, we encountered common mammals such as Chital, Bengal Sacred Langur and Golden Jackals. One of the vehicles picked up strong alarm calls from Golden Jackals, and moved in that direction. After careful scanning, the team spotted a large male Tiger at a distance. Although far off, the sighting was rewarding, as the Tiger stood up and walked about, offering a memorable view. We also recorded several bird species during the safari, including Indian Scops and Mottled Wood Owls, Jungle Owlet, Indian Grey and Malabar Pied Hornbills, and Stork-billed, Pied and White-throated Kingfishers. Meanwhile, the other vehicle witnessed an exciting sighting of a sub-adult male Tiger crossing the road: truly a spectacular moment.

After returning from the safari, we enjoyed a meal and observed Indian Flying Foxes near the lodge. The day concluded with a checklist session, followed by well-earned rest.

Day 3

Wednesday 14th January

Today marked our first full day in Pench, and it began with an unforgettable highlight. Almost as soon as we entered the park, we were incredibly fortunate to witness a rare and extraordinary sight: a young male and female Tiger right beside our jeep. The pair mated in full view, making it a truly breathtaking and once-in-a-lifetime experience. The morning safari also rewarded us with some excellent bird sightings, including Crested Treeswift, Bar-headed Goose, Black-hooded Oriole, Crested Hawk-Eagle and Northern Pintail, adding richness to an already remarkable start to the day.

In the afternoon, we headed to Khursapar, the gate on the Maharashtra side of Pench National Park. The magic continued almost immediately upon entry, when a female Tiger walked straight towards us, creating a moment of pure awe and exhilaration. The birdlife during this safari was equally impressive, with sightings of Grey-headed Fish Eagle, Osprey, Gadwall, and both Jungle and Spotted Owlets. Overall, it had been a day filled with extraordinary wildlife encounters: we made some memories that will stay with us forever.

Day 4

Thursday 15th January

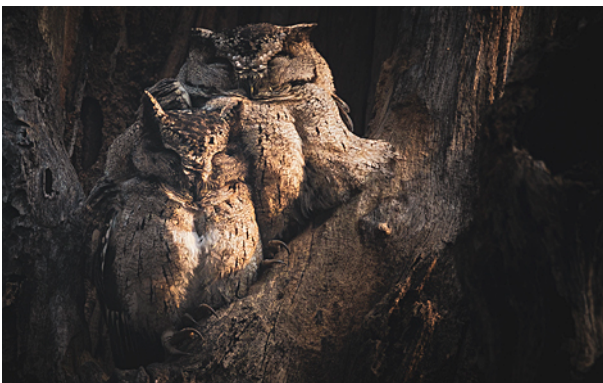
Today marked our final day in Pench National Park, and it turned out to be a wonderful conclusion to an unforgettable journey. The day began with some fantastic bird sightings, including Crested Hawk-Eagle, Great Egret, Northern Shoveler, Cotton Pygmy Goose, Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Black-rumped Flameback and Crested Serpent Eagle. Soon afterwards, we encountered a magnificent sight: a large male Tiger resting on the opposite bank of the Pench River. As we quietly moved closer and peeped through the foliage, he noticed us, making for a thrilling and intimate wildlife moment. Not long after, we were lucky to spot a female Tiger moving gracefully through the grasslands, adding yet another highlight to our final safari.

After concluding the safari, we returned to the hotel, checked out, and then visited a nearby village school. Interacting with the children was a truly wholesome and heartwarming experience, offering a meaningful cultural connection beyond the jungle. We then began our journey towards Kanha, and arrived there on time.

Day 5

Friday 16th January

This was our first full day in Kanha National Park, and we were completely mesmerised by its breathtaking landscape: towering Sal trees, expansive grasslands, and soft mist drifting through the forest. It set the perfect tone for the day's adventures. In the morning, we began by tracking a Tiger with her cubs. We found very fresh pugmarks and followed them across a wide stretch of the park, but she remained elusive and never emerged. After covering several areas, we shifted our focus, and soon encountered Kanha's iconic Barasingha. As we continued, we were treated to sightings of Barasingha herds, Wild Boa, and numerous Golden Jackals moving through the grasslands. We also spotted some impressive Gaurs along the way. Eventually, our patience paid off, and we finally saw the female Tiger in the open grassland, along with a male visible at a distance. The scene, set against Kanha's vast landscape, was truly unforgettable.



Indian Scops Owls



Barn Swallow

In the afternoon, we returned to the Mukki zone, with a single goal in mind. Early on, we had a brief encounter with a shy male Tiger which crossed the road swiftly, so fast that we missed getting a proper look. Undeterred, we explored other parts of the park, and our efforts were rewarded when the same female Tiger appeared once again, walking across the grassland and gradually coming closer. We even witnessed her marking her territory, a powerful and intimate moment in the wild. Overall, it was a fulfilling day filled with some stunning wildlife encounters.

Day 6

Saturday 17th January

This morning we explored the Kanha zone, which looked absolutely stunning, with its vast, open grasslands. On the way, we heard several alarm calls indicating the presence of a Leopard. We waited patiently, hoping for an appearance, but unfortunately, the cat never emerged. Once we reached the grasslands, we began scanning the area, and came across Blackbuck grazing peacefully. The birdlife was exceptional, and we had sightings of Red Avadavat, Jerdon's Leafbird, Scarlet Minivet, White-rumped Shama, Grey and Forest Wagtails, and White-throated Kingfisher. Although we did not have a big cat sighting during the morning safari, we did catch a fleeting glimpse of a *small* cat darting across the road. It was too quick to identify, but the moment itself added excitement to the drive.

In the afternoon, we headed to the Mukki zone, where the safari proved rewarding in its own way. We spotted several owls, including Jungle and Spotted Owlets, and Indian Scops Owl, along with Tickell's Thrush. Other wildlife sightings included Golden Jackals and a Jungle Cat, which was a delightful and memorable encounter. Overall, it was a calm yet enriching day, filled with beautiful landscapes, excellent birding, and subtle moments of wildlife magic.

Day 7

Sunday 18th January

Today, we headed out to the Mukki zone, and what a surprise awaited us! Almost as soon as we entered the forest, we were treated to an extraordinary sight: a Tigress walking through the jungle with her two tiny cubs. Such sightings are extremely rare, and watching the cubs confidently cross the road right in front of us was truly magical. It was a moment of pure joy and a perfect reward after a relatively dry day in the park earlier. Apart from the incredible Tiger sighting, the safari also offered excellent birdlife. We spotted Black Stork, White-naped Woodpecker, Bluethroat, Northern Pintail, Teal, Indian Pond Heron, Jungle Babbler and several other species.

In the afternoon, during our final safari, the park continued to impress us. We recorded some wonderful bird sightings, including Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher, Brown Shrike, Brown Fish Owl, Spotted Owlet and White-rumped Vulture. We also encountered Golden Jackals and Gaurs, and the day concluded with a stunning sunset that painted the landscape in warm hues. It was a perfect and memorable way to end our safaris in Kanha, filled with rare wildlife moments, beautiful birds, and unforgettable scenes from the wild.

Day 8

Monday 19th January

Today, we explored the grounds of the lodge and spent some time birding. Our sightings included Indian Scops Owl, Red-wattled Lapwing, White-throated Kingfisher and Black-hooded Oriole. We also observed a fascinating variety of spiders and insects, such as the Ornate Web Spider, a Crab Spider (seen in its exoskeleton) and a Fig Wasp. Along the way, we learned about different tree species and local plants, adding a deeper understanding of the ecosystem. We came across pugmarks of a Leopard and Dholes, a fitting reminder of the wild surroundings we had encountered throughout the journey. We then spent some peaceful time by the river, before returning to the lodge for a hearty breakfast. Afterwards, we checked out and departed for Nagpur. At the hotel, we were excited to spot members of the Indian Cricket Team, which was an unexpected highlight! It was a wonderful and memorable way to conclude an incredible wildlife adventure.

Day 9

Tuesday 20th January

We caught our very early flights home, arriving at Heathrow around lunchtime, local time.



Tiger

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Species lists

Birds (H = Heard only)

Common name	Scientific name	January 2026						
		13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Lesser Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Bar-headed Goose	<i>Anser indicus</i>		✓	✓				
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>		✓	✓				
Cotton Pygmy Goose	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>			✓	✓			
Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Mareca penelope</i>			✓				
Indian Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>		✓	✓	✓			
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>				✓		✓	
Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>		✓	✓				
Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>		✓	✓				
Ferruginous Duck	<i>Aythya nyroca</i>			✓	✓			
Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Red Spurfowl - E	<i>Galloperdix spadicea</i>	H					✓	
Painted Spurfowl - E	<i>Galloperdix lunulata</i>				✓			
Red Junglefowl	<i>Gallus gallus</i>		H	✓	✓			
Black Francolin	<i>Francolinus francolinus</i>						✓	
Jungle Bush Quail - N	<i>Perdica asiatica</i>	H						
Indian Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus asiaticus</i>	✓						
Savanna Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus affinis</i>	✓		✓	✓			
Crested Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>						✓	
Asian Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>			✓	✓			
Alpine Swift	<i>Tachymarpis melba</i>				✓	✓		
Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	✓			✓		✓	
Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>		✓	✓	H	✓		
Sirkeer Malkoha	<i>Taccocua leschenaultii</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Green-billed Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus tristis</i>						✓	
Common Hawk-Cuckoo	<i>Hierococcyx varius</i>					H	✓	
Indian Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus micropterus</i>				✓			
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>		✓	✓				
Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>			✓	✓			
Yellow-footed Green Pigeon	<i>Treron phoenicopterus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Grey-headed Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio poliocephalus</i>				✓			
White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>				✓			
Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	✓	✓		✓			
Indian Stone-curlew	<i>Burhinus indicus</i>		✓					
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>			✓				
Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>				✓	✓	✓	
Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>				✓			
Bronze-winged Jacana	<i>Metopidius indicus</i>		✓					
Common Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	

Common name	Scientific name	January 2026						
		13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>		✓	✓			✓	
River Tern	<i>Sterna aurantia</i>		✓	✓				
Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>		✓	✓		✓		
Lesser Adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>						✓	
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Oriental Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>		✓	✓		✓		
Little Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo niger</i>		✓		✓		✓	
Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>			✓	✓	✓		
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>			✓				
Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>			✓				
Red-naped Ibis	<i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Cinnamon Bittern	<i>Botaurus cinnamomeus</i>			✓				
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>			✓	✓		✓	
Medium Egret	<i>Ardea intermedia</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Eastern Cattle Egret	<i>Ardea coromanda</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>		✓		✓			
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	✓		✓	✓			
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>			✓				
Black-winged Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>			✓	✓		✓	
Crested Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>			✓			✓	
White-rumped Vulture	<i>Gyps bengalensis</i>		✓				✓	
Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>			✓	✓		✓	
Changeable Hawk-Eagle	<i>Nisaetus cirrhatus</i>		✓	✓	✓			
Black Eagle	<i>Ictinaetus malaiensis</i>						✓	
Shikra	<i>Tachyspiza badia</i>			✓	✓	✓		
Grey-headed Fish Eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus</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>Ocyrceros birostris</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>		✓			✓	✓	
Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Asian Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Psilopogon zeylanicus</i>		✓	✓	✓			
Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Yungipicus nanus</i>				✓	✓		
Black-rumped Flameback	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	
White-naped Woodpecker	<i>Chrysocolaptes festivus</i>					H		
Rufous Woodpecker	<i>Micropternus brachyurus</i>				✓			
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>						✓	
Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>			✓				

Common name	Scientific name	January 2026						
		13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Scarlet Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus speciosus</i>			✓	✓			
Indian Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina macei</i>					✓	✓	
Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Ashy Drongo	<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>		✓			✓		
White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>		✓			✓	✓	
Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>						✓	
White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>			✓				
Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>		✓	✓	✓			
Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>				✓		✓	
Rufous Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>		✓	✓		✓		
Indian Jungle Crow	<i>Corvus culminatus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Red-whiskered Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>					✓	✓	
Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Wire-tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>		✓		✓		✓	
Common Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>					✓		
Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>					✓	✓	
Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>				✓	✓		
Grey-breasted Prinia	<i>Prinia hodgsonii</i>					✓		
Jungle Prinia	<i>Prinia sylvatica</i>						✓	
Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>				✓	✓		
Indian White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>					✓	✓	
Puff-throated Babbler	<i>Pellorneum ruficeps</i>					✓	✓	
Jungle Babbler	<i>Argya striata</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>					✓	✓	
Indian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta castanea</i>						H	
Jungle Myna	<i>Acridotheres fuscus</i>						✓	
Bank Myna	<i>Acridotheres ginginianus</i>					✓		
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Orange-headed Thrush	<i>Geokichla citrina</i>				✓	✓	✓	
Indian Blackbird - N	<i>Turdus simillimus</i>						✓	✓
Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Indian Robin	<i>Copsychus fulicatus</i>					✓		
White-rumped Shama	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>					✓	✓	
Blue-throated Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis rubeculoides</i>					✓		
Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>				✓	✓	✓	
Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>					✓		
Ultramarine Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula supercilialis</i>						✓	
Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>					✓	✓	
Taiga Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula albicilla</i>					✓		
Blue-capped Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola cinclorhyncha</i>						✓	
Siberian Stonechat	<i>Saxicola maurus</i>					✓	✓	
Brown Rock Chat	<i>Oenanthe fusca</i>				✓			
Jerdon's Leafbird - N	<i>Chloropsis jerdoni</i>					✓		
Golden-fronted Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>				✓	✓	✓	
Thick-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Pachyglossa agilis</i>				✓			
Yellow-throated Sparrow	<i>Gymnoris xanthocollis</i>				✓	✓		
Indian Silverbill	<i>Euodice malabarica</i>					✓		
White-rumped Munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>					✓		

Common name	Scientific name	January 2026						
		13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Red Avadavat	<i>Amandava amandava</i>					✓	✓	
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		✓	✓			✓	
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		✓	✓				
White-browed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla maderaspatensis</i>		✓					
Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>		✓	✓			✓	
Olive-backed Pipit	<i>Anthus hodgsoni</i>					✓		

Mammals

Common name	Scientific name	January 2026						
		13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Rhesus Macaque	<i>Macaca mulatta</i>		✓		✓			
Bengal Sacred Langur - E	<i>Semnopithecus entellus</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Northern Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus pennantii</i>		✓		✓	✓		
Indian Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus palmarum</i>		✓		✓	✓		
Indian Giant Flying Squirrel	<i>Petaurista philippensis</i>					✓	✓	
Indian Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus medius</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>Antelope cervicapra</i>					✓	✓	
Eurasian Wild Pig	<i>Sus scrofa</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Tiger	<i>Panthera tigris</i>		✓				✓	
Jungle Cat	<i>Felis chaus</i>					✓		
Ruddy Mongoose	<i>Urva smithii</i>				✓		✓	
Golden Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓	