

Just Tigers!

Naturetrek Tour Report

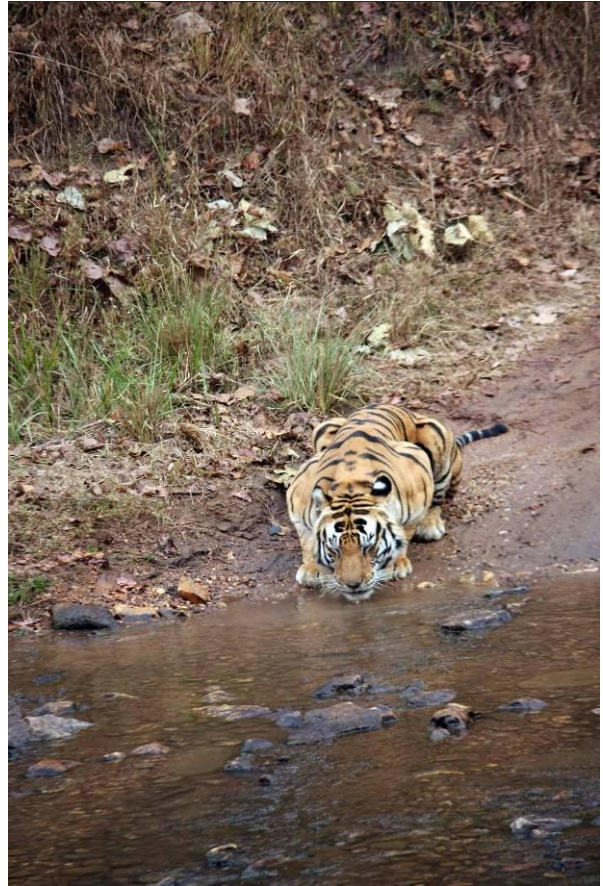
16 - 28 December 2011



Gaur



Tiger



Tiger

Report compiled by Harish Sharma
Images courtesy of Ian Balmer



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Day 1

Friday 16th December

Departure from the UK

Day 2

Saturday 17th December

All were welcomed off the inbound flight from Dubai and were escorted by car to the Hotel Country Inn and Suites for one night. After lunch we gathered in the lobby and drove to the Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary. It took about an hour and half to get there. We spent about nearly three hours at this superb wetland and saw many species of birds such as Northern Pintail, Gadwall, Spot-billed Duck, Comb Duck, Grey Lag and Bar-headed Geese, Common Sandpiper, White-throated Kingfisher, Greater Spotted Eagle, Eurasian Marsh Harrier, Sarus Crane, Painted and Black-necked Stork, Little Cormorants, Great Cormorants etc. After a wonderful day, we returned to the hotel at 7 p.m.

Day 3

Sunday 18th December

After breakfast, we checked out of the hotel. Since we had done some excellent birding at Sultanpur the previous day, all decided this morning to cancel the planned visit to the Okhla Bird Sanctuary and go to see Old and New Delhi. First, we started with India's largest mosque, Jama Masjid, in Old Delhi. It is a superb building where 21,000 people can sit to pray at one time. Afterwards, we had a very enjoyable cycle rickshaw ride from the Jama Mosque through the very narrow street of Chandni Chawk market and ending at the Red Fort. We spent about an hour at Red Fort and saw some beautiful buildings. Then we visited the New Delhi area where we saw the India Gate, Presidents House, Parliament of India and some other Government buildings. Finally, we visited the Humayun and reached Hazrat Nizamuddin railway station at 1 p.m. to catch our overnight train to Jabalpur. We had lunch at Kumsum restaurant. The train was on time at 1525 hours and we saw the beautiful countryside, where people were working in their fields before sunset. The packed dinners were eaten at 7 p.m. and we retired to our bunks at 9:30 p.m.

Day 4

Monday 19th December

The train arrived at Jabalpur railway station. From there we drove 10 minutes in two different cars to the Hotel Narmada Jacksons where we had an opportunity to refresh before breakfast. We then proceeded to Kanha-kisli. It took about three and a half hours. We checked in at Hotel Tuli Resort, enjoyed lunch and I briefed the group about the park safaris.

We started our first game drive with two different jeeps at 2:30 p.m. We had a close encounter with a dozen Gaurs, a rapidly declining Indian Bison. We also saw a large number of Spotted Deer, Sambar, Swamp Deer, Wild Boar and a Golden Jackal. A Jungle Cat was seen walking in the middle of the road for about ten minutes! We also enjoyed a large number of birds such as Jungle Babbler, Black-shouldered Kite, Indian Peafowl, Spotted Dove, Greater Coucal, Jungle Owlet, Lesser Whistling Duck etc, before returning to the hotel at approximately 6 p.m. After working on our checklist and having dinner at 7:30 p.m., we retired to our beds at 9 p.m.

Day 5

Tuesday 20th December

In the morning the wake up call came at 4:30 a.m. After a quick cup of tea/coffee, we left for the game drive at 5 a.m. The formalities for entry to the park took place at Khatia gate. After following pugmarks of a male tiger, we spotted a male tiger walking along the roadside! Then he came in front of our vehicle, walking very gently, marking and spraying the trees. We were privileged to see the tiger for about thirty minutes!! Packed breakfast was eaten at the Kanha center point. Again we heard the alarm calls of deer and monkeys for about twenty minutes but did not see a tiger. We returned to the hotel at 11:45 p.m. Lunch was served at 1 p.m.

Our afternoon game drive started at 2:30 p.m. We drove in the park for about two hours but did not hear any alarm calls. When we were returning, we saw the very fresh pugmark of a male tiger and after a few minutes drive, we saw him walking in middle of the road. It was unbelievable how lucky we were seeing two different tigers in one day! We saw some good birds for our list such as Black Stork, Red-naped Ibis, Shikra, Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Kentish Plover , Black-rumped Flameback etc. We returned to the lodge at 5:45 p.m. Again after this we did the checklist and had dinner, and went to bed at 9 p.m.

Day 6

Wednesday 21st December

We left for the park at 5 am, after having tea/coffee with packed breakfast. We saw many deer, Three Striped Palm Squirrels and two Golden Jackals that were eating a Langur monkey carcass. This morning's mahout did not find any tigers for the tiger show. On Wednesday afternoon the park is closed, so we went bird watching behind the resort and there we saw a herd of Spotted Deer, two Golden Jackals and many good birds. The birds we saw today were Jungle Bush Quail, Green Sandpiper, Spotted Owlet, Grey-breasted Prinia, Common Tailorbird, Black-naped Monarch etc. We had a presentation on tigers at 7 p.m. by the lodge naturalist Rachit. After that we had dinner, did the checklist and went to bed at 9:30 p.m.

Day 7

Thursday 22nd December

We again had tea/coffee before we left for the game drive at 5 a.m. The whole morning was very quiet in the park.. The mahout did not find any tigers for the tiger show, but we saw some male Swamp Deer at close range.

After having lunch at the hotel we set off on our afternoon game drive at 2:30 p.m. We drove through the beautiful sal trees and some grassy patches and heard alarm calls of Langur monkeys. We suddenly spotted a male leopard sitting behind the bamboo, hardly 15-20 yards from the vehicle! We watched him for a few minutes and then he moved a bit further. We also drove a few yards further and saw him again sitting by the roadside. It was an absolutely superb sighting! We returned to the lodge at 6 p.m., dinner was served at 7:30 p.m. We added some new species for the checklist and retired to bed at 9 p.m.

Day 8**Friday 23rd December**

We again had tea/coffee, before we left for the game drive at 5 am. We saw fresh pugmarks of a tigress and heard many alarm calls in kanha meadows but did not see a tiger from the jeep. This morning a mahavat found a tiger, so we were rewarded with a tiger sighting from elephant back! We also saw our first Barking Deer in the park. After a great morning we returned the lodge.

After lunch at the hotel, we started our afternoon game drive at 2:30 p.m. We were near the stream, hearing many bird calls and suddenly we heard something walking on the dry leaves, and it was a male tiger, Munna. He started walking towards our vehicle before disappearing into the woods. Nearly at the same time our second vehicle saw a Sloth Bear! After a great evening we returned to the lodge at 6 p.m. The birds we saw today were Crested Serpent Eagle, Changeable Hawk Eagle, Crested Treeswift, Long-tailed Shrike etc. Dinner was served at 7:30 p.m., we did the checklist and retired to bed at 9 p.m.

Day 9**Saturday 24th December**

We were off to the park again at 5 a.m. This morning there was no tiger show, so we decided to go to Bhamni Dadar, from where we had fantastic panoramic view of the tiger reserve. It was very quiet on the afternoon game drive also. The birds we saw today were Indian Courser, Egyptian Vulture, Painted Francolin, Common Hawk Cuckoo, Yellow-eyed Babbler, Long-billed Pipit etc. After having dinner and adding some new species for the list, we retired to bed at 9 p.m.

Day 10**Sunday 25th December**

As on previous days our wake up call came early at 4:30 am and we left for the park at 5 am. This morning we heard only alarm calls of monkeys and deer but were not fortunate enough to see a tiger. The afternoon game drive was very quiet also. The birds we saw today were the Indian Roller, Yellow Wagtail, Black Drongo, Roufous Treepie etc. We completed our routine of updating the checklist before the dinner was served at 7:30 p.m. We retired to bed at 9 p.m.

Day 11**Monday 26th December**

Again as a daily routine wake up calls came at 4:30, we had tea/coffee before we left for the last game drive at 5 a.m. We heard some strong alarm calls of deer and langur monkeys but did not see a tiger. We got back to the hotel at 11:30 am for a quick wash and to pack our luggage. We had an early lunch at 12 before we checked out of the hotel. We drove three and a half hours to the railway station in Jabalpur to catch our overnight train with packed dinner. The train was on time at 1805 hours. Packed dinners were eaten at 7 pm and we retired to our bunk beds at 9:30 pm.

Day 12**Tuesday 27th December**

When the train arrived at Gwalior, we ate our packed breakfast which was delicious. The train was delayed when we arrived at Agra railway station. We were transferred and escorted by car to the Hotel ITC Mughal, where we had a room to refresh and change.

Later on we went to visit the famous Taj Mahal. We explored The Taj for about two hours and then we made our way to see the Agra Fort, another great building from the Mughals. We had lunch in a local restaurant and then we visited our last monument called Baby Taj. We made a quick stop at a marble shop before we proceeded to Delhi by road. It took approximately four and a half hours to reach Delhi. We checked in at the Hotel Country Inn and Suites for one night. I said final goodbyes to all and the next morning they were all transferred by our representative to the Indira Gandhi International Airport to catch the flight home .

Day 13

Wednesday 28th December

Homeward bound

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Species List

Birds (✓ = recorded but not counted individually)

	Common name	Scientific name	December										
			17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
1	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
2	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	✓										✓
3	Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Oriental Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>	✓										
5	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	✓										✓
6	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	✓										
7	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	✓							✓			✓
8	Intermediate Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓			✓
9	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
10	Indian Pond-heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓		
11	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
12	Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>	✓										
13	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>				✓	✓			✓	✓		
14	Black-necked Stork	<i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>	✓										
15	Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>	✓										
16	Red-naped Ibis	<i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
17	Lesser Whistling-duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
18	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	✓										
19	Bar-headed Goose	<i>Anser indicus</i>	✓										
20	Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>											✓
21	Comb Duck	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>	✓										
22	Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>	✓										
23	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	✓										
24	Common Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	✓										
25	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓										
26	Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>	✓										
27	Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	✓										✓
28	Oriental Honey-buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>										✓	
29	Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		
30	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	✓	✓									✓
31	Grey-headed Fish-eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus</i>								✓			
32	White-rumped Vulture	<i>Gyps bengalensis</i>				✓			✓				
33	Red-headed Vulture	<i>Sarcogyps calvus</i>						✓			✓		
34	Crested Serpent-eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>							✓	✓	✓		
35	Eurasian Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	✓										
36	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>				✓			✓	✓		✓	
37	Greater Spotted Eagle	<i>Aquila clanga</i>	✓										
38	Changeable Hawk-eagle	<i>Spizaetus cirrhatus</i>				✓			✓	✓			
39	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>				✓				✓			
40	Painted Francolin	<i>Francolinus pictus</i>								✓			
41	Jungle Bush-quail	<i>Perdicula asiatica</i>					✓						
42	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
43	Red Junglefowl	<i>Gallus gallus</i>								✓	✓		
44	Sarus Crane	<i>Grus antigone</i>	✓	✓									
45	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amauromis phoenicurus</i>	✓										
46	Purple Swampfen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>	✓										
47	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	✓										
48	Common Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	✓										
49	Indian Courser	<i>Cursorius coromandelicus</i>								✓			
50	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	✓										✓
51	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
52	Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
53	Little -ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>											✓

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			17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
54	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>					✓							
55	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>												✓
56	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>												✓
57	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>												✓
58	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>												✓
59	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>					✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
60	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	✓											✓
61	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	✓											
62	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>												✓
63	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓										✓
64	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	✓											✓
65	Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
66	Laughing Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	✓			✓								✓
67	Yellow-footed Pigeon	<i>Treron phoenicoptera</i>												✓
68	Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
69	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
70	Pied Cuckoo	<i>Clamator jacobinus</i>				✓			✓					
71	Indian Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus micropterus</i>										✓		
72	Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>			✓	✓			✓					
73	Indian Scops-owl	<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>						✓			✓			
74	Jungle Owlet	<i>Glaucidium radiatum</i>			✓		✓	✓				✓		
75	Spotted Owlet	<i>Athene brama</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
76	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>												✓
77	Crested Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>				✓				✓				
78	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	✓		✓						✓	✓		
79	Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>			✓					✓	✓			
80	Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
81	Eurasian Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
82	Indian Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyrceros birostris</i>							✓	✓				
83	Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Megalaima zeylanica</i>												✓
84	Black-rumped Flameback	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>					✓							
85	Plain Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>	✓		✓									
86	Wire-tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>				✓	✓							
87	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
88	White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>		✓										
89	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>											✓	
90	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>					✓	✓						
91	Long-billed Pipit	<i>Anthus similis</i>									✓			
92	Large Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina macei</i>				✓		✓			✓			
93	Scarlet Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>						✓						
94	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
95	Grey-breasted Prinia	<i>Prinia hodgsonii</i>					✓							
96	Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>	✓			✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	
97	Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>					✓							
98	Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>	✓											
99	Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>	✓											
100	Oriental Magpie-robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>								✓				
101	Indian Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulicata</i>	✓											
102	Black Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>	✓											
103	Grey Bushchat	<i>Saxicola ferrea</i>				✓								
104	Common Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓		
105	Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>					✓							
106	Yellow-eyed Babbler	<i>Chrysomma sinense</i>										✓		
107	Jungle Babbler	<i>Turdoides striatus</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
108	Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>				✓						✓		
109	Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>					✓					✓		
110	Long-tailed Shrike	<i>Lanius schach</i>							✓	✓	✓			

	Common name	Scientific name	December										
			17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
111	Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
112	White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>						✓					
113	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
114	Rufous Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
115	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	✓										✓
116	Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
117	Bank Myna	<i>Acridotheres ginginianus</i>	✓										✓
118	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
119	Asian Pied Starling	<i>Gracupica contra</i>											✓
120	Brahminy Starling	<i>Temenuchus pagodarum</i>											✓
121	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>											✓
122	Red Avadavat	<i>Amandava amandava</i>	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓		
123	White-rumped Munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>				✓							
124	Nutmeg Mannikin	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	✓										

Mammals

1	Royal Bengal Tiger	<i>Panthera tigris tigris</i>				✓			✓				
2	Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus</i>						✓					
3	Jungle Cat	<i>Felis chaus kelaarita or kutas</i>				✓	✓		✓	✓			
4	Rhesus Macaque	<i>Macaca mulatta</i>	✓		✓								✓
5	Common Langur	<i>Presbytis entellus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Ruddy Mongoose	<i>Herpestes smithii</i>				✓					✓		
7	Golden Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>			✓	✓	✓						
8	Sloth Bear	<i>Merursus ursinus</i>							✓				
9	Indian or Black-naped Hare	<i>Lepus nigricollis</i>							✓				
10	Three-striped Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus pennarum</i>				✓	✓	✓				✓	
11	Five-striped Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus pennanti</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	Black Buck	<i>Antilope cervicapra</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
18	Nilgai (Blue Bull)	<i>Boselaphus tragocamelus</i>	✓										
19	Indian Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>			✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Reptiles

1	Monitor Lizard	<i>Varanus bengalensis</i>							✓				
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