

Just Tigers!

Naturetrek Tour Report

19 - 29 January 2013

Report compiled by Bharat Madhyan



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Weather

Night temperatures were low so that early morning and evening game drives in open-topped vehicles required warm clothes, although blankets were provided. Midday temperatures were pleasantly warm and it was generally very sunny, although some mornings were briefly quite misty and it drizzled on one of the days...

Day 1

Saturday 19th January

Delhi

The guests arrived in two different flights and were transferred to The Westin Gurgaon hotel. After lunch the team was fortified and ready for our day's birding at Sultanpur Jheel. We stopped first at a reservoir, where amongst many wildfowl were Common and Red-crested Pochards and Spot-billed Ducks. Raptors were good too with Osprey and Imperial Eagle.

At Sultanpur, we had a walk: initially in woodland, picking up our first Red-breasted Flycatchers, Hoopoes and Brown-headed Barbets, but later looking over the lake itself, where 1000s of Shovelers swam. Bird highlights were perhaps the Imperial Eagle, Purple Swamphens, White-throated Kingfisher, Little Green Bee-eaters, Large Grey Babbler, Ashy Prinia, Grey Francolin - and more. On the animal front we also saw several large Nilgai sheltered under the trees. We headed back to the hotel. An early night was called for as we had an early start...

Day 2

Sunday 20th January

Delhi to Kanha

We took our packed breakfast from the hotel and headed for the short flight to Jabalpur at 6.55am, and we arrived in time for a second breakfast at Jackson's Hotel at Jabalpur. We left Jabalpur and slowly drove south to Kanha. We made several interesting stops along the way birding along the roadside and by lakes, where we could see Red-naped Ibis, Woolly-necked Stork, White-throated and Pied Kingfisher and Pheasant and Bronzed-winged Jacana.

We arrived at Tuli Tiger Resort. After having our lunch we lazed out a bit, and had an early dinner and dreamt of things to come...

Day 3**Monday 21st January**

Kanha

With the weekend over the routes were a little less busy, we did the Kanha zone of the park on the morning drive in the tropical moist deciduous sal dominated forest, and had breakfast at the centre point of Kanha National Park.

The highlight was a glimpse of a Leopard outside the park while driving back to the resort. The afternoon drive was in the Kisli zone which turned out successful with a Tigress sighting strolling away majestically on the tracks before disappearing into the undergrowth. Back at the resort we enjoyed our dinner and retired to bed.

Day 4**Tuesday 22nd January**

Kanha

After having our tea, coffee and biscuits before dawn we started for the early morning drive at 6am to queue up to go into our stipulated zone of the park. After leaving the barrier at Khatia at 6.30am we entered through Kisli gate and what an amazing morning we had...we saw a Tigress with three cubs making their way across the road before disappearing into the woods! This was a memory of a lifetime! ...then we had our picnic breakfast at Kanha. The afternoon game drive was in the Sarhi zone, which turned out to be a good birding area.

Day 5**Wednesday 23rd January**

Kanha

The park was closed today, we had little longer lie in, and after breakfast we took a walk in the resort premises, then took a forest trail behind the resort looking for birds in this pristine woodland along the River Banjar, then we crossed the river to reach the village called Manegaon, where we explored the village including the primary school where all the children were sitting outside in the sun, and we also went and saw where the local spirit made of Mahua flowers was brewed. We were back at the resort for lunch, and after a siesta we visited the weekly market at the Mocha village which was a good shopping opportunity for some.

Day 6**Thursday 24th January**

Kanha

After having our tea, coffee and biscuits before dawn we started for the early morning drive at 5.45 am to be in the park, and after leaving the barrier at Khatia at 6am we entered through Kisli gate but the weather today was not in our favour as it drizzled all day long. The afternoon game drive in the Kisli zone remained very quiet too.

Day 7**Friday 25th January**

Kanha

The morning game drive was done in the Sarhi zone - we waited at a place where there had been a kill before, and stayed there for quite some time but nothing happened so we decided to go for breakfast to return back later. During the afternoon game drive we experienced some lovely birding, before heading back for dinner...

Day 8

Saturday 26th January

Kanha

We had our elephant ride this morning at the Kanha zone, it was an amazing experience for everybody, riding on the back, rocking and rolling, the mahouts nudged the elephants with their feet making them move forward into the undergrowth, and they were going up and down the hill like a four wheel drive! After the ride and breakfast we were back on the jeep trail, and managed to have a sighting of a disappearing Tigress in the woods at the Shrivantala area. Our afternoon game drive was at the Kisli zone where we did some birding.

Day 9

Sunday 27th January

Kanha to Agra

Our final day for game drives, we did the Kisli zone, we had some good birding but no tiger sightings today. We spent the afternoon driving to Jabalpur and taking our packed dinner, and took the overnight train to Agra.

Day 10

Monday 28th January

Agra

We did a little birding from open carriage doors on the way, finding Marsh Sandpiper and Common Redshank before the train pulled into Agra station. We headed to our Hotel Rajmahal, and after lunch we did the magnificent Mughal Agra Fort built by the great Akbar. Later we went to see the Baby Taj on which it is said that Taj Mahal was designed.

Day 11

Tuesday 29th January

Agra to Delhi

Our final day in India, and visiting the Taj Mahal at sunrise was wonderful. After breakfast we visited the grand Fatehpur Sikri another fine and grand art exhibition of the great Mogul Emperor Akbar.

After lunch we said our goodbyes to Agra, and headed by road to Delhi it took us about 5 ½ hrs to reach at the Sarovar Portico and carried on our return journey to the UK. Thank you for all those wonderful memories!

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Species Lists

Birds

	Bird species	Scientific Name	Sightings	Remarks
1	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>	4	
2	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	4	
3	Little Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax niger</i>	8	
4	Oriental Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>	1	
5	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	1	
6	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	1	
7	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	2	
8	Intermediate Egret	<i>Egretta intermedia</i>	1	
9	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	5	
10	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	5	
11	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	6	
12	Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>	2	
13	Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>	2	
14	Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>	5	
15	Black-necked Stork	<i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>	2	
16	Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>	2	
17	Red-naped Ibis	<i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>	2	
18	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	1	
19	Lesser Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>	4	
20	Grey-lag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	1	
21	Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	1	
22	Comb Duck	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>	1	
23	Cotton Pygmy Goose	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>	1	
24	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	1	
25	Common Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	1	
26	Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>	1	
27	Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	1	
28	Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	1	
29	Red-crested Pochard	<i>Netta rufina</i>	1	
30	Common Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	1	
31	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	1	
32	Oriental Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhyncha</i>	3	
33	Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	4	
34	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	3	Often abundant in urban settings, especially common in Delhi, but much scarcer or even absent in more rural areas
35	Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	3	
36	White-rumped Vulture	<i>Gyps bengalensis</i>	2	
37	Long-billed Vulture	<i>Gyps indicus</i>	5	
38	Red-headed Vulture	<i>Sacrogyaps calvus</i>	3	
39	Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela cheela</i>	4	
40	Eurasian Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	2	
41	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>	2	Quite common and widespread

	Bird species	Scientific Name	Sightings	Remarks
42	White-Eyed Buzzard	<i>Butastur teesa</i>	4	
43	Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	1	
44	Greater Spotted Eagle	<i>Aquila clanga</i>	1	
45	Imperial Eagle	<i>Aquila fasciatus</i>	1	
46	Changeable Hawk Eagle	<i>Spizaetus cirrhatus</i>	2	
47	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	3	
48	Red Spurfowl	<i>Galloperdix spadicea</i>	1	
49	Red Jungle fowl	<i>Gallus gallus</i>	3	
50	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	7	
51	Sarus Crane	<i>Grus antigone</i>	2	
52	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurionis phoenicurus</i>	2	
53	Purple Swampphen	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i>	1	
54	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	1	
55	Common Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	1	
56	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>	1	
57	Bronzed-winged Jacana	<i>Metopidius indicus</i>	1	
58	Greater Painted Snipe	<i>Rostratula benghalensis</i>	2	
59	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	4	
60	Stone Curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>	4	
61	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>	4	
62	Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus indicus</i>	6	Very common, widespread and noisy
63	White-tailed Lapwing	<i>Vanellus leucurus</i>	1	
64	Little ringed Plover	<i>Chaadrius dubius</i>	2	
65	Common snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	2	
66	Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	2	
67	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	1	
68	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	1	
69	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	4	
70	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	2	
71	River Tern	<i>Sterna aurantia</i>	1	
72	Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia neglecta</i>	3	
73	Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	2	
74	Eurasian Collard Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaoto</i>	3	
75	Red-collard Dove	<i>Streptopelia tranquebarica</i>	1	
76	Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	5	Fairly common
77	Laughing Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>	2	Common and very widespread
78	Yellow-footed Green Pigeon	<i>Treron phoenicoptera phoenicoptera</i>	4	
79	Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>	4	
80	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	6	Common and widespread, one of very few species seen every day
81	Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>	3	
82	Common Hawk cuckoo	<i>Cuculus varius</i>	4	
83	Common Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	1	
84	Sirkeer Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus leschenaultii</i>	2	
85	Greater Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>	2	Regularly encountered in a range of scrubby and grassland settings
86	Indian Scops Owl	<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>	2	

	Bird species	Scientific Name	Sightings	Remarks
87	Jungle Owlet	<i>Glaucidium</i>	2	
88	Spotted Owlet	<i>Athene brama indica</i>	2	
89	Asian palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>	1	
90	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>	3	
91	Indian Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus asiaticus</i>	1	
92	Crested Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne corona</i>	3	
93	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	3	
94	Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i>	1	
95	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	5	Common and very widespread, a frequent sight on roadside wires
96	Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	1	
97	Green Bee-Eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>	5	
98	Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis benghalensis</i>	5	Frequently seen, often along roadsides
99	Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	1	
100	Indian Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyrceros birostris</i>	3	Small numbers were seen at most wooded or parkland sites
101	Brown-Headed Barbet	<i>Megalaima zeylanica</i>	2	
102	Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>	2	Quite common, though much more often heard than seen,
103	Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos canicapillus</i>	1	
104	Yellow-crowned Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos mahrattensis pallescens</i>	2	
105	Streak-throated Woodpecker	<i>Picus xanthopygaeus</i>	1	
106	Black-rumped Flameback	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>	4	The commonest and most widespread woodpecker with records coming from all wooded locations
107	White-Naped Woodpecker	<i>Chrysocolaptes festivus</i>	2	
108	Ashy-crowned sparrow-lark	<i>Eremopterix grisea</i>	1	
109	Plain Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>	1	
110	Dusky Crag Martin	<i>Ptyonoprogne concolor</i>	1	
111	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundu rustica</i>	2	
112	Wire-tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundu smithii</i>	4	
113	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>	2	
114	White Wagtail	<i>Motallica alba</i>	3	
115	White-browed Wagtail	<i>Motallica madaraspatisensis</i>	1	
116	Citrine Wagtail	<i>Motallica citreola</i>	2	
117	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motallica cinerea</i>	4	
118	Oriental Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>	4	
119	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	2	
120	Large Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina macei macei</i>	4	
121	Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>	2	
122	Scarlet Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>	1	
123	Long-tailed Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus ethologus</i>	1	
124	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>	6	Very common and widespread
125	Golden-Fronted Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>	1	
126	Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>	2	
127	Orange-headed Thrush	<i>Zoothera citrina</i>	1	
128	Tickell's thrush	<i>Turdus unicolor</i>	2	
129	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>	2	

	Bird species	Scientific Name	Sightings	Remarks
130	Jungle Prinia	<i>Prinia sylvatica</i>	1	
131	Ashy Prinia	<i>Prinia socialis</i>	1	
132	Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inomata</i>	1	
133	Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	3	Widespread in small numbers with birds recorded at all sites
134	Sulphur-bellied warbler	<i>Phylloscopus griseolus</i>	1	
135	Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>	3	
136	Red-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula parva</i>	4	
137	Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickellae</i>	1	
138	Grey-headed canary Flycatcher	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>	1	
139	Oriental Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	4	
140	Indian Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulica</i>	3	
141	White-rumped Shama	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>	1	
142	Black Redstart	<i>Phoeicurus ochruros</i>	2	
143	Pied Bushchat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>	1	
144	Grey Bushchat	<i>Saxicola ferrea</i>	1	
145	Common Stonechat	<i>Saxicola torquata</i>	2	
146	Indian Chat	<i>Cercomela fusca</i>	1	
147	White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>	1	
148	Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>	3	
149	Puff-throated Babbler	<i>Pellorneum fuficeps</i>	1	
150	Indian scimitar Babbler	<i>Pomatorhinus horsfieldii</i>	1	
151	Yellow-eyed babbler	<i>Chrysomma sinense</i>	1	
152	Large Grey Babbler	<i>Turdoides malcolmi</i>	1	
153	Jungle Babbler	<i>Turdoides striatus</i>	6	Generally common and widespread
154	Brown-cheeked Fulvetta	<i>Alcippe poioicephala</i>	4	
155	Great Tit	<i>Parus major(cinereus group)</i>	3	
156	Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>	2	
157	Purple Sunbird	<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i>	5	Present throughout at low densities
158	Thick-Billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum agile</i>	3	
159	Oriental White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>	4	
160	Black-Hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>	4	
161	Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>	1	
162	Long-tailed Shrike	<i>Lanius schach</i>	4	
163	Common Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis pondicerianus</i>	4	
164	Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>	5	Very common, a frequent site on roadside wires
165	White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>	2	
166	Hair-crested Drongo	<i>Dicrurus hottentottus</i>	2	
167	Greater Racket-Tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>	2	
168	Rufous Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta agabunda</i>	5	Widespread at fairly low densities
169	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens splendens</i>	3	common around settlements, but less frequently seen in wooded areas
170	Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos culminatus</i>	6	Generally found in more wooded settings than the last species, though with some habitat overlap, and never in such large concentrations

	Bird species	Scientific Name	Sightings	Remarks
171	Bank Myna	<i>Acridotheres ginginianus</i>	2	Rather localised, sometimes the dominant myna but generally scarce and heavily outnumbered by Common Mynas
172	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis tristis</i>	6	
173	Asian Pied Starling	<i>Sturnus contra</i>	2	Common in the vicinity of water
174	Brahminy Starling	<i>Temenuchus pagodarum</i>	3	
175	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus (indica group)</i>	3	Fairly common in most urban settings and in some more rural areas
176	Chestnut-shouldered Petronia	<i>Petronia xanthocollis</i>	4	
177	Red Avadavat	<i>Amandava amandava</i>	1	
178	Nutmeg Mannikin	<i>Lonchura puctulata</i>	1	
179	Common Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>	1	

Mammals

1	Royal Bengal Tiger	<i>Panthera tigris</i>	3	
2	Rhesus Macaque	<i>Macca mulatta</i>	4	Fairly common and widespread
3	Common Langur	<i>Presbytis entellus</i>	5	Fairly common and widespread, commoner in heavy woodland than the previous species
4	Common mongoose		1	
5	Indian Small Mongoose	<i>Herpestes edwardsi</i>	1	
6	Ruddy Mongoose	<i>Herpestes smithii</i>	3	
7	Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>	3	
8	Indian Flying Fox	<i>Pteropus giganteus</i>	3	
9	Three-striped Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus pennarum</i>	3	
10	Five-Striped Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus pennantii</i>	6	
11	Gaur (Indian Bison)	<i>Bos guarus</i>	4	
12	Sambar	<i>Cervus unicolor</i>	5	
13	Barasingha (Swamp deer)	<i>Cervus duvauceli branderi</i>	2	
14	Indian Muntjac (Barking Deer)	<i>Muntiacus muntjak</i>	3	
15	Chital (Spotted Deer)	<i>Cervus axis</i>	5	
16	Nilgai	<i>Boselaphus tragocamelus</i>	2	
17	Indian Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>	5	

Reptiles

1	Flap-shelled Turtle	<i>Lissemys punctata</i>	1	
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