

Just Tigers!

Naturetrek Tour Report

1 - 13 April 2016



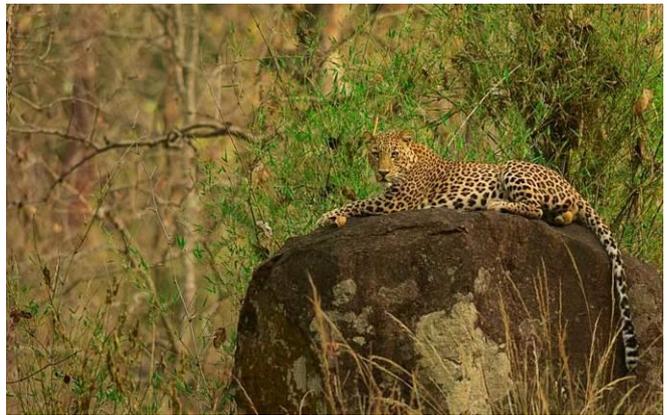
Barahsingha/ Swamp Deer



White Rumped Shama



Langur



Leopard

Report and images by Kaustubh Mulay



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Tour participants: Kaustubh Mulay (leader) with seven Naturetrek clients

Summary

Day 1

Friday 1st April

The tour started with a flight from the UK to India.

Day 2

Saturday 2nd April

Our flight landed at Delhi airport and after passing through immigration and collecting our bags, we were met and taken to the Hotel Novotel where we checked in. Later we met again and went to Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary where we spent a couple of hours birding. It was very hot and we were tired after the long flight to India, so we returned to the hotel at 6.30pm. After a briefing about plans for tomorrow, we were free to relax for the rest of the evening.

Day 3

Sunday 3rd March

Today was sunny and breezy and we spent some time sightseeing in Delhi before leaving for Jabalpur. We visited Qutb Minar with our local tour guide, and later we saw India Gate and Rashtrapati Bhavan on the way to lunch at Pindi restaurant.

After lunch we saw some more of Lutyen's Delhi before going to Humayun's Tomb. After visiting the monument we headed for Hazrat Nizamuddin train station where we collected our packed dinner and boarded the train to Jabalpur. We had our dinner on the train before sleeping on board.

Day 4

Monday 4th April

We reached Jabalpur at 10am on a sunny and pleasant morning, and went to the Narmada Jackson Hotel for a wash and change before breakfast. We then started our journey to Kanha which took us three and a half hours.

We arrived at Tuli Tiger Resort in time for lunch, and then set off on an afternoon drive in Kanha National Park. We went to the Kisli area of the park and enjoyed a good first drive seeing Gaur, Sambar Deer, Spotted Deer and some birds. We heard a lot of alarm calls from the Barking Deer and Sambar Deer, but the predator preferred to be hidden in the undergrowth. We then returned to lodge.

It started to drizzle at the lodge, and we did our checklist before dinner and bed.

Day 5

Tuesday 5th April

We started our morning at 5am with tea and biscuits in the lodge before leaving for the park gate. Our drive was in the Kanha zone where we saw a beautiful Peacock (Indian Peafowl) perched on the tree, and we watched some Spotted Deer and Langur monkeys. We were also very lucky to see a Leopard on an open rock. We watched it for quite a while before he crossed the road and disappeared. Continuing our drive, we had a nice

sighting of a Royal Bengal Tigress twice crossing the road and later disappearing into the dense bushes. We waited patiently but the tigress moved further inside the bushes. We moved on and were just in time to watch three of the same tigress' four cubs in the grassland and one of them came out into the open for a drink at the nearby waterhole.

We went back to the lodge for brunch and started our afternoon drive at 3.30pm. We went towards the Kisli area where we saw some Gaur and Sambar Deer. We returned to the lodge after our drive, did our daily checklist, had dinner and then retired to bed.

Day 6

Wednesday 6th April

It was sunny but cold on our drive in Mukki this morning. We had some good birding in terms of raptors, spotting Crested Serpent Eagle and Changeable (Crested) Hawk-Eagle. At Sondar Tanks we saw Little Grebe.

We went back to the lodge for brunch. In the afternoon the park was closed so we went for a walk to the nearby village market in Mocha. It was a weekly market and had all kinds of things on display. During our visit it started raining heavily, so we had to take shelter at one of the shops! Before sunset, we came back to the lodge in a Tuktuk.

In the evening we did our checklist and had dinner before retiring to bed.

Day 7

Thursday 7th April

Today we drove towards Mukki. It was very quiet this morning. We watched herds of Barasingha Deer (Swamp Deer) crossing the road and photographed some Langur babies with their mothers.

We returned to the lodge for brunch and later we again entered the park. We watched a huge herd of Gaur just on entering the park, and had a distant sighting of a wonderful Jungle Owlet.

We returned to the lodge after our drive, did our daily checklist, had dinner and then retired to bed.

Day 8

Friday 8th April

We were at Kisli this morning. Here we heard alarm calls and found some tracks, but the tiger remained elusive. We saw some birds including Brown-headed and Coppersmith Barbets, and Black-rumped Flameback. We also had a beautiful sighting of a Jackal which we watched for a long time.

In the afternoon we went to the Sarhi area where we drove to the confluence of the two big streams; a beautiful and serene place where we watched a tree covered with beehives. As we headed forward, we heard a lot of alarm calls by Langur, Sambar Deer and Rhesus Macaques, which pointed at the presence of a Leopard. Unfortunately we were running out on time and had to continue our drive to exit the park.

After returning to the lodge, we did our checklist before dinner and then retired for the night.

Day 9

Saturday 9th April

We drove to Kanha in the morning. It was very quiet till we reached Link 8 where we had to clear the road as a tree had fallen across. After moving across the stretch, we heard Barking Deer alarm calls next to the road and we waited till the calls moved further inside the forest. We then continued with our drive and came across fresh tiger pug marks on the road. We followed them to the Link 7 Waterhole but it was quiet there. We did see a White-rumped Vulture and many Crested (Oriental) Honey Buzzards during our drive. As we drove back towards the gate, we had a good sighting of a Sloth Bear resting in the shade of the Bauhinia Vines.

We had brunch at the lodge and then, in the afternoon, we drove to Kisli. It was getting darker and darker due to the clouds that were gathering. We watched Sambar Deer, Barasingha and other wildlife before deciding to leave as the winds picked up and it started to rain heavily with lightning. As we were just about to reach the main road we heard a few Spotted Deer alarm calls, followed by the magical word "TIGER" - there she was standing up in the grassland in the rain. She just stood there for a while before disappearing into the tall grasses. Wonderful!

It was now nearly park closing time so we returned to our lodge, very content with our hard-earned sighting. We later met for the checklist, followed by dinner and then we retired to bed.

Day 10

Sunday 10th April

In the morning we went to the Mukki area. We saw the very fresh tracks of a male tiger heading in the opposite direction, and also fresh pug marks of a tigress near a patrolling camp, but she had gone into the forest before we arrived. We saw quite a few birds on our drive before we returned to the lodge for our brunch.

On our afternoon drive we enjoyed some good birdwatching and also heard a lot of alarm calls.

Day 11

Monday 11th April

In the morning we were in the Kisli area. We saw quite a lot of pug marks made by a tigress and a male tiger, and we followed distant alarm calls. As the calls faded away, we returned to the first place we had heard the alarm calls and just around one of the bends we encountered the big dominant male Tiger, popularly known as 'Munna', who crossed the road and vanished into the dense vegetation. We waited to see if he would come out again but he didn't so we continued and spent some time photographing Langur Monkeys with their young, and watched an Orange (Scarlet) Minivet in the trees.

We came back to the lodge for brunch and then we had to pack our bags ready for leaving. At 12.30pm we left for Jabalpur. After tea at Kalchuri we continued to the railway station where we collected our packed dinner and settled onto the train.

Day 12

Tuesday 12th April

Our train reached Agra at 9.30am and we went directly to the Four Points by Sheraton for breakfast, and then for a wash and change. With a local tour guide we started sightseeing at 11.30am. First we went to the Taj Mahal, and then for lunch at the 'Only' restaurant. After lunch we went to see some marble works, finishing our visit in

the workshop. Later we went to the Red Fort, and then returned to ‘Only’ Restaurant where John and Teresa left us as they were continuing with a Tour Extension and going to Chambal and later to Bharatpur.

The remaining group members left for the railway station and boarded the train to Delhi. We took a packed dinner to eat during the train journey. On reaching Delhi and drove straight to the airport where we said goodbye to Helen who was staying overnight before a flight out in the morning. We then boarded our flight back to the UK.

Day 13

Wednesday 13th April

Our flight landed back in the UK and another Naturetrek adventure came to an end.

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Species Lists

Mammals (✓=recorded but not counted)

	Common Name	Scientific name	April										
			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
1	Royal Bengal Tiger	<i>Panthera tigris tigris</i>				✓					✓		✓
2	Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus</i>				✓							
3	Rhesus Macaque	<i>Macaca mulatta</i>		✓	✓								
4	Common Langur	<i>Presbytis entellus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Golden Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>			✓	✓			✓		✓		✓
6	Sloth Bear	<i>Merursus ursinus</i>									✓		
7	Three-striped Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus pennarum</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
8	Sambar	<i>Cervus unicolor</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Barasingha (Swamp Deer)	<i>Cervus duvauceli branderi</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Chital (Spotted Deer)	<i>Cervus axis</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Indian Muntjac (Barking Deer)	<i>Muntiacus muntjak</i>			✓		✓	✓					✓
12	Nilgai (Blue Bull)	<i>Boselaphus tragocamelus</i>	✓										
13	Indian Wild Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Gaur	<i>Bos gaurus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Birds

1	Little Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>					✓	✓		✓			
2	Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</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	Eastern Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus coromandus</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
12	Cinnamon Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus cinnamomeus</i>	✓										

	Common Name	Scientific name	April										
			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
13	Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>	✓										
14	Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>	✓										
15	Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>	✓										
16	Red-naped Ibis	<i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
17	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	✓										
18	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	✓										
19	Lesser Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>				✓	✓			✓			
20	Knob-billed (Comb) Duck	<i>Sarkidiornis melanotos</i>	✓										
21	Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>	✓										
22	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	✓										
23	Indian Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>	✓										
24	Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>	✓										
25	Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	✓										
26	Western Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>				✓							
27	Crested (Oriental) Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
28	Black-shouldered Kite	<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>					✓		✓	✓			
29	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	✓	✓	✓								
30	White-rumped Vulture	<i>Gyps bengalensis</i>									✓		
31	Red-headed Vulture	<i>Sarcogyps calvus</i>									✓		
32	Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
33	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
34	White-eyed Buzzard	<i>Butastur teesa</i>				✓							
35	Changeable Hawk-Eagle	<i>Nisaetus cirrhatus</i>				✓	✓	✓		✓			
36	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>				✓			✓	✓			
37	Red Spurfowl	<i>Galloperdix spadicea</i>				✓		✓	✓			✓	
38	Painted Spurfowl	<i>Galloperdix lunulata</i>			✓								
39	Red Junglefowl	<i>Gallus gallus</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
40	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
41	Sarus Crane	<i>Grus antigone</i>		✓									
42	White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amauornis phoenicurus</i>	✓										
43	Grey-headed (Purple) Swamphen	<i>Porphyrio poliocephalus</i>	✓										
44	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	✓										

	Common Name	Scientific name	April										
			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
45	Eurasian Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	✓										
46	Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	✓										
47	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus malabaricus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
48	Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
49	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	✓										
50	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	✓										
51	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>								✓	✓		
52	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	✓										
53	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓								
54	Oriental Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
55	Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
56	Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>								✓			
57	Yellow-footed Green Pigeon	<i>Treron phoenicoptera</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
58	Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria</i>	✓				✓	✓	✓				
59	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓				
60	Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>				✓	✓	✓			✓		
61	Common Hawk-cuckoo	<i>Cuculus varius</i>							✓	✓			✓
62	Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamis scolopacea</i>											✓
63	Southern Coucal	<i>Centropus (sinensis) parroti</i>			✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	
64	Indian Scops Owl	<i>Otus bakkamoena</i>											✓
65	Brown Fish Owl	<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>							✓		✓		
66	Jungle Owlet	<i>Glaucidium radiatum</i>							✓	✓			✓
67	Spotted Owlet	<i>Athene brama</i>	✓										
68	White-rumped Spinetail	<i>Zoonavena sylvatica</i>					✓			✓			
69	Crested Treeswift	<i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>									✓		
70	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>					✓						
71	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
72	Blue-bearded Bee-eater	<i>Nyctornis athertoni</i>			✓								
73	Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
74	Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
75	Indian Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyrceros birostris</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
76	Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Megalaima zeylanica</i>								✓		✓	

	Common Name	Scientific name	April										
			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
77	Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Megalaima haemacephala</i>								✓	✓		
78	Streak-throated Woodpecker	<i>Picus xanthopygaeus</i>										✓	
79	Black-rumped Flameback (Goldenback)	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓			
80	White-naped Woodpecker	<i>Chrysocolaptes festivus</i>							✓				
81	Wire-tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>					✓		✓				
82	Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>							✓				
83	White-browed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla madaraspatensis</i>					✓						
84	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>									✓	✓	
85	Tree Pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>									✓		
86	Large Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina macei</i>					✓		✓	✓	✓		
87	Orange (Scarlet) Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
88	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
89	Golden-fronted Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>							✓				
90	Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>							✓				
91	Orange-headed Thrush	<i>Zoothera citrina</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
92	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>							✓				
93	Ashy Prinia	<i>Prinia socialis</i>							✓				
94	Plain Prinia	<i>Prinia inornata</i>							✓	✓			
95	Clamorous Reed-warbler	<i>Acrocephalus stentoreus</i>							✓	✓			
96	Common Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>	✓						✓	✓			
97	Sulphur-bellied Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus griseolus</i>							✓				
98	Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
99	Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
100	White-rumped Shama	<i>Copsychus malabaricus</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	
101	Indian Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulicata</i>	✓			✓							
102	Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓			
103	Indian Scimitar-babbler	<i>Pomatorhinus horsfieldii</i>							✓				
104	Tawny-bellied Babbler	<i>Dumetia hyperythra</i>							✓				
105	Yellow-eyed Babbler	<i>Chrysomma sinense</i>							✓				
106	Large Grey Babbler	<i>Turdoides malcolmi</i>	✓										
107	Jungle Babbler	<i>Turdoides striatus</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
108	Brown-cheeked Fulvetta	<i>Alcippe poioicephala</i>					✓	✓	✓			✓	

	Common Name	Scientific name	April										
			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
109	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓				
110	Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>							✓				
111	Purple Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris asiaticus</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓			
112	Oriental White-Eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>				✓	✓		✓	✓			
113	Eurasian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>							✓				
114	Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
115	Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>			✓	✓							
116	Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
117	White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>				✓	✓	✓		✓			
118	Spangled Drongo	<i>Dicrurus hottentottus</i>						✓					
119	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
120	Rufous Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
121	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	✓										
122	Indian Jungle Crow	<i>Corvus (macrorhynchos) culminatus</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
123	Bank Myna	<i>Acridotheres ginginianus</i>	✓										
124	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
125	Asian Pied Starling	<i>Gracupica contra</i>				✓	✓		✓	✓			
126	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>											
127	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>			✓				✓	✓			
128	Chestnut-shouldered Petronia	<i>Petronia xanthocollis</i>								✓			

Other fauna:

1	Indian Flapshell Turtle	<i>Lissemys punctata</i>				✓	✓	✓				
2	Common Garden Lizard	<i>Calotes versicolor</i>						✓	✓	✓	✓	
3	House Gecko sp.	<i>Hemidactylus or Gehyra sp.</i>			✓	✓		✓			✓	
4	Rock Agama	<i>Agama sp.</i>					✓					
5	Indian Skitter Frog	<i>Euphlyctis cyanophlyctis</i>					✓	✓	✓	✓		