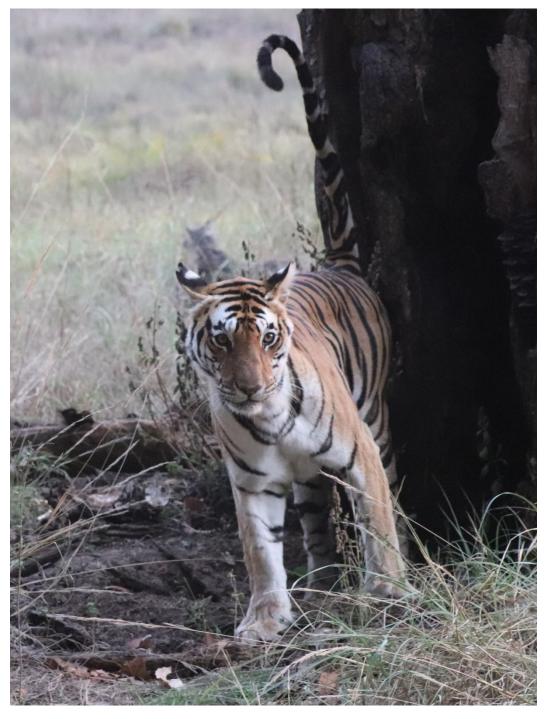
Just Tigers!

Naturetrek Tour Report

31st March – 12th April 2023



Tour report by Mr. Pradeep Rana & Mr. Yusuf, photos by Kathleen Green and Philip Jones



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Tour participants: Mr Pradeep Rana & Mr Yusuf (leaders) with 11 Naturetrek clients

Highlights

An amazing tour. One particular highlight was of a Sloth Bear. Usually, a Sloth Bear sighting is uncommon. If we get to see them, they will usually be at a distance, but the sighting we had was rarest of the rare! Initially we saw it at a distance in the woods, then we realised there was a Tigress with cubs just 200 meters away from where we saw the bear. We rushed and saw the mother walking away towards the bushes. When we came back to the Sloth Bear spot, we saw it walking parallel to the road and then it crossed the road and went towards a Ficus tree which was next to the road. We quickly positioned our vehicle and observed its behaviour for quite a long time. The bear sniffed the tree and stood up upright and started rubbing his back against the tree. The it laid down next to the tree on his back and started playing with the trunk of the tree. In between it raised his head to look at us and then it went back to doing its own stuff. Amazing!



Day 1

Saturday 1st April

Delhi - Sultanpur

The flight landed at Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi, where Pradeep and Yusuf met the group. We then had a ten-minute drive to our hotel, The Claridges. After checking in, everybody went to their rooms to freshen up and then we met again at 1:30 pm to go to Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary.

After an hour's drive we reached Sultanpur and saw lots of birds including egrets, herons, Painted Stork, Asian Openbill, Glossy and Black-headed Ibises, Eurasian Wigeon, Little Cormorant, Spot billed Duck, Northern Shoveler, Black Kite, Black-winged Stilt etc. We also saw a Blue Bull.

Back at the hotel we had a briefing about the next day.

Day 2

Sunday 2nd April

Delhi – overnight train

We left the hotel about 10:30 am for a sightseeing tour around Delhi, which included the Qutab Minar, Humayun's tomb, Lutein's Delhi and India Gate.

After lunch we went to the station to catch our overnight train to Jabalpur and once on the train, we settled in for the journey.

Day 3

Monday 3rd April

Jabalpur to Kanha National Park

We reached Jabalpur around 08:30am. We went straight to a hotel for breakfast and to freshen-up. The weather was clear and sunny and after breakfast, we started our drive to Kanha, seeing many species of birds and enjoying the countryside views.

We reached Kanha in time for lunch before entering the park for our first drive. We saw pug marks in the arterial road and heard some Sambar Deer panic calls. We had a good sighting of several mammals.

Back at the lodge we met later for the checklist and drinks, followed by dinner.

Day 4

Tuesday 4th April

Kanha National Park

Morning was pleasant and we were all excited. We saw a few interesting birds, including White-rumped Vulture, Jungle Owlet and Red-wattled Lapwings etc. We also saw quite a few mammals including Gaur, Sambar and Swamp Deer.

In the evening, we went to the Kanha meadow. We heard some faint alarm calls but were not sure if there was a Tiger in the vicinity. Finally the calls stopped but we waited for few more minutes until the Langurs started giving alarm calls. We waited and drove in the direction of calls and saw a female Tigress yawning deep inside the forest. After some time she walked out and we had a great sighting. The other vehicle saw a different female Tigress and a Sloth Bear.



In the evening we met for the checklist which was followed by dinner.

Day 5

Wednesday 5th April

Kanha National Park

We started our day early in the morning with tea and coffee, we were eager to explore the park. In the park, one of the vehicles saw a Tigress and later in the day few vehicles saw a Jungle Cat. We saw a number of other mammals like Swamp Deer, Spotted Deer, Gaur and a Jackal. The birds we saw included Red-headed Vulture, and many others.

As it was Wednesday, the park was closed for evening drives so we went for a jungle walk where we saw dragonflies, damselflies, flowering plants, fern, weaver ants, butterflies, few birds like egrets, sandpipers etc. Walking in the dense Saal (*Shorea robusta*) tree forest was an experience, one of the toughest trees in Indian forest. We also visited the local market.

In the evening we met for checklist, which was followed by a delicious dinner.

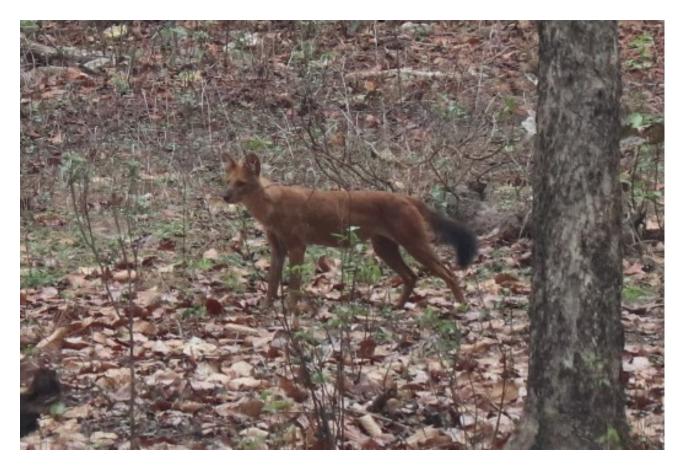
Day 6

Thursday 6th April

Kanha National Park

The morning was pleasantly cool as we gathered in the guest area for tea and coffee. We started early in the morning, and it was quite pleasant. We went in the park we were surprised by the number of paw marks inside park – from both male and female Tigers. Although we spent our time looking for Tigers, we only heard alarm calls on this drive.

We did however see Wild Dogs this morning and had great sightings of other mammals, birds, butterflies etc.



In the evening we had great sighting of a Tigress with her cub. After watching her for a while, we moved on and saw another close Tigress.



Day 7 Friday 7th April

Kanha National Park

The morning was pleasantly cool as we gathered in the guest area for tea and coffee. We had start visiting the undulating mountainous part of the forest saw woodpeckers, orioles, minivet and many other species of birds heard. Some panic calls of Sambar Deer and saw fresh pug marks of male and a female Tigers on the safari track. We tracked the Tiger and heard more alarm calls. Eventually, we saw a Leopard deep inside the forest, and finally, one vehicle was lucky to see a male Tiger while the other saw a Tigress with three cubs.

The evening drive was filled with excitement; we all saw a male Leopard for quite a while!



Once back at the hotel, we called it a night after checklist and dinner.

Day 8

Saturday 8th April

Kanha National Park

After a cup of coffee, we set out for another drive in the park, after seeing lots of birds on the way, we reached grassland. We heard some alarm call of Spotted Deer and Langur. A few vehicles saw two Wild Dogs.



After having our delicious lunch, we headed towards the park for new adventures and sightings, back in the undulating part of the forest where we spotted number of birds and mammals including Gaur, Sambar, Spotted Seer etc.

In the evening we did the checklist followed by dinner.

Day 9 Sunday 9th April

Kanha National Park

We started early in the morning and went to the park we saw number of different mammals. We heard many panic calls saw Tiger paw marks. It was quite clear that Tigers were in move last night. We saw scrap markings next to the arterial road - clear signs that Tigers are doing territorial markings - behaviour which is quite common amongst the cats.

When we reached to grassland we saw a Tigress, while a few vehicles saw a male and a female Tigress on a kill.

The evening drive was filled with excitement. We saw a few new species of birds and Ruddy Mongoose, we heard few panic calls of Langur, waited and saw a Leopard!

In the evening we did the checklist followed by dinner.



Day 10 Monday 10th April

Kanha - overnight train to Agra

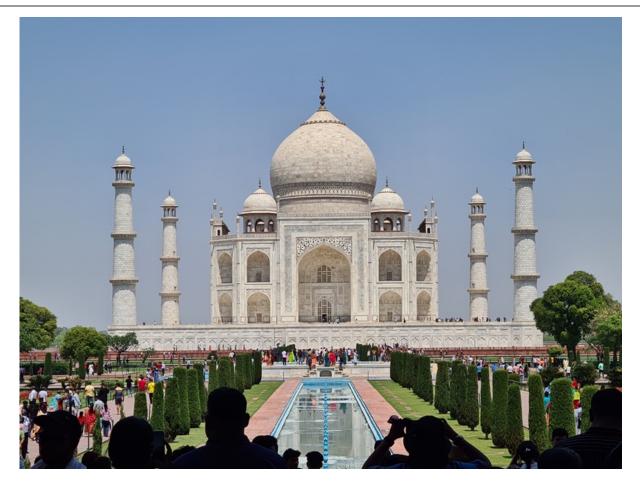
This morning we started our morning drive with high hopes as we visited the mystical forest of Kanha. We heard some alarm calls and waited for the Tiger to come out in the open but a Tiger crossed a little ahead where we positioned our vehicles. One of the vehicle did manage to see it crossing. We waited for the Tiger and heard panic calls of deers and a faint growl of male Tiger. We assumed that there were two Tigers in this small patch of forest and territorial conflict was going on between the two. After completing our safari, we came back to the lodge. We saw Gaurs, few species of vultures and other birds.

Then, we had an early lunch and packed dinner. We drove to Jabalpur to catch our overnight train to Agra. On the way we saw few birds like Black-winged Kite, Openbill Storks and Indian Roller.

Day 11 Tuesday 11th April

Arrive Agra; visit Taj Mahal

We left our slightly delayed train in Agra and got into our coach to go to our hotel where we had breakfast. After freshening-up, we left the hotel for a sightseeing tour Taj Mahal and baby Taj after lunch. In the evening after lunch, we caught a train to Delhi and checked into The Claridges.



Day 12

Wednesday 12th April

The group members then transferred to the airport for the flight back to the UK where the tour came to an end.



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Clockwise from top left - Jungle Owlet, Painted Stork, Indian Roller, Brahminy Starlings

Species lists

Birds (H = Heard only)

	April 2023																	
Common name Scientific na	ame	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11						
Little Grebe Tachybaptus	s ruficollis	✓					√											
Indian Cormorant Phalacrocora	ax fuscicollis	√																
Little Cormorant Phalacrocora	ax niger	✓		√														
Oriental Darter Anhinga mel	lanogaster	✓		√														
Grey Heron Ardea cinere	ea	✓		√														
Purple Heron Ardea purpu	rea	✓																
Great Egret Ardea alba		✓					√	√	✓		√							
Intermediate Egret Egretta intern	media			√		√	√			√								
Little Egret Egretta garze	etta	✓		√	√	√	√	√		√	√							
Indian Pond-heron Ardeola gray	⁄ii	✓			√	√	√	√	✓	√	√							
Cattle Egret Bubulcus ibis	S	✓	√	√	√	√	√	√	✓		√							
Cinnamon Bittern Ixobrychus c	cinnamomeus			√														
Painted Stork Mycteria leuc	cocephala	✓																
Black Stork Ciconia nigra	а			√				√										
Woolly-necked Stork Ciconia episo	copus			√	√		√											
Lesser Adjutant Leptoptilos ja	avanicus					√				√								
Black-headed Ibis Threskiornis	melanocephalus	✓																
Red-naped Ibis Pseudibis pa	apillosa			√														
Glossy Ibis Plegadis falc	cinellus	✓																
Lesser Whistling-duck Dendrocygna	a javanica						√		√	√								
Comb Duck Sarkidiornis	melanotos	✓																
Cotton Pygmy-goose Nettapus con	romandelianus	√					√											
Eurasian Wigeon Mareca pene	elope	√																
Common Teal Anas crecca																		
Spot-billed Duck Anas poecilo	orhyncha	√																

						A	pril 20	23				
Common name	Scientific name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Garganey	Spatula querquedula											
Northern Shoveler	Spatula clypeata	✓										
Tufted Duck	Aythya fuligula	✓										
Osprey	Pandion haliaetus	✓										
Oriental Honey-buzzard	Pernis ptilorhynchus				√							
Black-shouldered Kite	Elanus caeruleus			√		√		√		√		
Black Kite	Milvus migrans	✓	√	√								
Grey-headed Fish-eagle	Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus					√						
Egyptian Vulture	Neophron percnopterus											√
White-rumped Vulture	Gyps bengalensis			√	√	√	√			√		
Indian Vulture	Gyps indicus			√								
Eurasian Griffon	Gyps fulvus								√	√		
Red-headed Vulture	Sarcogyps calvus						√		√			
Short-toed Eagle	Circaetus gallicus			√								
Crested Serpent-eagle	Spilornis cheela				√	√	√		√	√	√	
Shikra	Accipiter badius				√							
Jerdon's Baza	Aviceda jerdoni				√							
White-eyed Buzzard	Butastur teesa					√		√	√			
Crested Hawk-eagle	Nisaetus cirrhatus			√								
Painted Francolin	Francolinus pictus								√			
Red Spurfowl	Galloperdix spadicea						√	√	√			
Painted Spurfowl	Galloperdix lunulata								√			
Red Junglefowl	Gallus gallus			√								
Indian Peafowl	Pavo cristatus	✓	√									
Sarus Crane	Grus antigone	✓										
Brown Crake	Amaurornis akool							√				
White-breasted Waterhen	Amaurornis phoenicurus	✓			√							
Purple Swamphen	Porphyrio porphyrio	√										

						Α	pril 20	23				
Common name	Scientific name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Common Moorhen	Gallinula chloropus	✓					√					
Common Coot	Fulica atra	✓										
Black-winged Stilt	Himantopus himantopus	✓									√	√
Eurasian Thick-knee	Burhinus oedicnemus							√				
Yellow-wattled Lapwing	Vanellus malabaricus				√							
Red-wattled Lapwing	Vanellus indicus	✓		√								
Green Sandpiper	Tringa ochropus			√	√							
Wood Sandpiper	Tringa glareola							√				
Common Sandpiper	Actitis hypoleucos									√		
Common Pigeon	Columba livia	✓	√		√							
Oriental Turtle Dove	Streptopelia orientalis		√			√	√	√	√	√	√	
Eurasian Collared Dove	Streptopelia decaocto	✓										
Spotted Dove	Streptopelia chinensis	✓	√									
Laughing Dove	Streptopelia senegalensis								√			
Yellow-footed Green Pigeon	Treron phoenicoptera			√								
Alexandrine Parakeet	Psittacula eupatria			√								
Rose-ringed Parakeet	Psittacula krameri	✓	√		√		√	√	√	√	√	
Plum-headed Parakeet	Psittacula cyanocephala				√		√		√		√	
Common Hawk-cuckoo	Cuculus varius			√	√	√	√	√	√		√	
Indian Cuckoo	Cuculus micropterus					√						
Asian Koel	Eudynamys scolopacea								√			
Sirkeer Malkoha	Phaenicophaeus leschenaultii			√	√			√				
Southern Coucal	Centropus {sinensis } parroti					√	√		√			
Indian Scops-owl	Otus bakkamoena									√		
Brown Fish-owl	Ketupa zeylonensis					√						
Jungle Owlet	Glaucidium radiatum					√	√	√	√	√	√	
Little Swift	Apus affinis								√			
Crested Treeswift	Hemiprocne coronata						√	√	/	√	√	

						Α	pril 20	23				
Common name	Scientific name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Common Kingfisher	Alcedo atthis			√								
White-throated Kingfisher	Halcyon smyrnensis	√		√								
Pied Kingfisher	Ceryle rudis				√							
Green Bee-eater	Merops orientalis	√		√								
Indian Roller	Coracias benghalensis			√								
Indian Grey Hornbill	Ocyceros birostris			√								
Malabar Pied-hornbill	Anthracoceros coronatus				√					√		
Brown-headed Barbet	Megalaima zeylanica				√	√	√	√	√		√	
Coppersmith Barbet	Megalaima haemacephala					√	√		√			
Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	Dendrocopos moluccensis nanus					√	√					
Streak-throated Woodpecker	Picus xanthopygaeus								√			
Lesser Goldenback	Dinopium benghalense			√								
White-naped Woodpecker	Chrysocolaptes festivus				√		√	√	√			
Indian Pitta	Pitta brachyura									√		
Dusky Crag-martin	Ptyonoprogne concolor			√					√			
Wire-tailed Swallow	Hirundo smithii				√	√				√		
Red-rumped Swallow	Cecropis daurica								√			
Forest Wagtail	Dendronanthus indicus									√		
Yellow Wagtail	Motacilla flava			√								
Grey Wagtail	Motacilla cinerea			√								
Paddyfield Pipit	Anthus rufulus					√		√	√	√	√	
Tree Pipit	Anthus trivialis						√					
Large Cuckoo-shrike	Coracina macei					√	√	√		√		
Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike	Coracina melaschistos						√				√	
Scarlet Minivet	Pericrocotus flammeus				√		√	√	√	√		
Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike	Hemipus picatus								√			
Red-vented Bulbul	Pycnonotus cafer	√		√	√	√	√	√	✓	√	√	
Golden-fronted Leafbird	Chloropsis aurifrons				√	\/	√		\/			

						Α	pril 20	23				
Common name	Scientific name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Common Iora	Aegithina tiphia						√					
Orange-headed Thrush	Zoothera citrina									√		
Zitting Cisticola	Cisticola juncidis					√		√				
Jungle Prinia	Prinia sylvatica	✓								√		
Ashy Prinia	Prinia socialis	✓			√	√						
Plain Prinia	Prinia inornata				√	√	√	√				
Common Tailorbird	Orthotomus sutorius				√					√		
Common Chiffchaff	Phylloscopus collybita							√				
Taiga Flycatcher	Ficedula albicilla								√		√	
Tickell's Blue-flycatcher	Cyornis tickelliae				√		√		√			
Oriental Magpie-robin	Copsychus saularis	✓		√								
White-rumped Shama	Copsychus malabaricus			√								
Indian Robin	Saxicoloides fulicata	✓			√							
Black Redstart	Phoenicurus ochruros	✓										
Grey Bushchat	Saxicola ferrea									√		
Black-naped Monarch	Hypothymis azurea				√	√						
Asian Paradise-flycatcher	Terpsiphone paradisi			√								
Puff-throated Babbler	Pellorneum ruficeps			√								
Indian Scimitar-babbler	Pomatorhinus horsfieldii						√		√			
Tawny-bellied Babbler	Dumetia hyperythra								√			
Yellow-eyed Babbler	Chrysomma sinense			√				√		√		
Large Grey Babbler	Turdoides malcolmi											√
Jungle Babbler	Turdoides striatus	✓		√								
Brown-cheeked Fulvetta	Alcippe poioicephala						√					
Great Tit	Parus major					√	√			√		
Indian Nuthatch	Sitta castanea					√				√		
Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	Sitta frontalis					√		√		√		
Purple Sunbird	Cinnyris asiaticus				/		√			/	/	

										April 2023											
Common name	Scientific name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11									
Oriental White-eye	Zosterops palpebrosus						√														
Eurasian Golden Oriole	Oriolus oriolus				√		√														
Black-hooded Oriole	Oriolus xanthornus				√	√	√	√		√	√										
Isabelline Shrike	Lanius isabellinus			√	√																
Brown Shrike	Lanius cristatus				√			√			√										
Long-tailed Shrike	Lanius schach						√														
Common Woodshrike	Tephrodornis pondicerianus						√														
Black Drongo	Dicrurus macrocercus	✓	√		√	✓	√	√		√	√										
Ashy Drongo	Dicrurus leucophaeus					√	√														
White-bellied Drongo	Dicrurus caerulescens						√			√											
Spangled Drongo	Dicrurus hottentottus								√												
Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	Dicrurus paradiseus				√	√	√	√	√	√	√										
Rufous Treepie	Dendrocitta vagabunda				√	✓	√	√	√	√	√										
House Crow	Corvus splendens	✓			√																
Indian Jungle Crow	Corvus {macrorhynchos}culminatus	✓		√	√																
Jungle Myna	Acridotheres fuscus					√															
Bank Myna	Acridotheres ginginianus										√										
Common Myna	Acridotheres tristis			√	√	√	√	√		√											
Asian Pied Starling	Gracupica contra	✓			√																
Brahminy Starling	Temenuchus pagodarum						√	√		√											
House Sparrow	Passer domesticus				√		√			√											
Chestnut-shouldered Petronia	Petronia xanthocollis				√																
White-rumped Munia	Lonchura striata				\																

Mammals

						Ар	ril 20	23				
Mammal Species	Scientific name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Royal Bengal Tiger	Panthera tigris tigris				√	√	√	√		√	√	
Leopard	Panthera pardus							√		√		
Jungle Cat	Felis chaus kelaarita or kutas					√						
Rhesus Macaque	Macaca mulatta	✓						√				
Common Langur	Presbytis entellus			√	✓	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Ruddy Mongoose	Herpestes smithii				✓	√	√	√		√		
Golden Jackal	Canis aureus			√								
Dhole (Asiatic Wild Dog)	Cuon alpinus dukhunensis						√		√			
Sloth Bear	Merursus ursinus				√							
Indian or Black-naped Hare	Lepus nigricollis								√			
Three-striped Palm Squirrel	Funambulus pennarum	✓								√	✓	
Five-striped Palm Squirrel	Funambulus pennanti		√									
Sambar	Cervus unicolor			√	✓	✓	✓	√	√	√	✓	
Barasingha (Swamp Deer)	Cervus duvauceli branderi			√	✓	√	√	√	√	√	✓	
Chital (Spotted Deer)	Cervus axis			√	✓	√	√	√	√	√	✓	
Indian Muntjac (Barking Deer)	Muntiacus muntjak			√								
Black Buck	Antilope cervicapra			√	√	√		√		√		
Nilgai (Blue Bull)	Boselaphus tragocamelus	✓	√									
Wild Boar	Sus scrofa			√								
Gaur	bos gaurus			√								

Others

			April 2023									
Common name	Scientific name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Indian Flapshell Turtle	Lissemys punctata				√			√		√		
Unnamed Lizard	Varanus griseus koniecznyi									√		
Signature spider	Argiope anasuja					√						

