









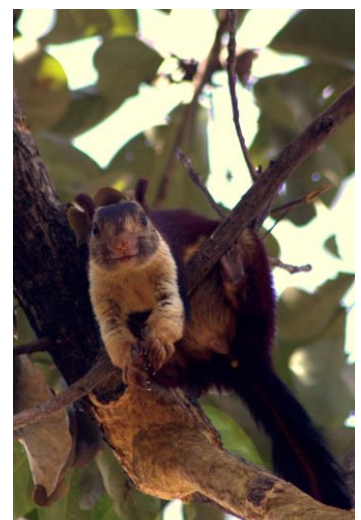
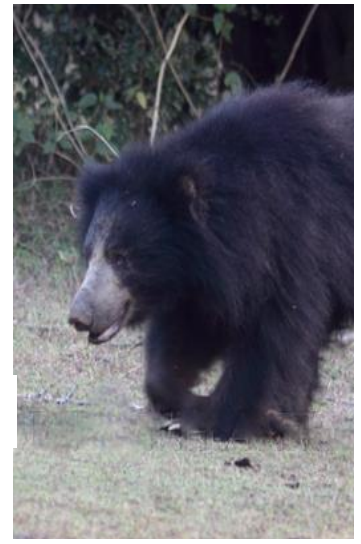


## Little Known India Safari with Bandhavgarh & Varanasi Extensions

**Destination:** Madhya Pradesh, India **Duration:** 22 Days **Dates:** 9<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> Jan

-  Seeing a total of 5 sloth bears, including a mother and cub in Satpura NP.
-  Seeing Indian foxes and a possible rusty-spotted cat at the Jhinna night safari camp
-  Spotting a huge record total of over 180 species of birds throughout the tour.
-  Taking in the incredible sights of Varanasi from a cruise on the River Ganges.
-  Having an adult female tiger cross the road directly in front of our vehicle.
-  Spotting an incredible 4 different leopards in Satpura including a mother of 2 cubs.
-  Watching a huge 4m mugger crocodile basking from 10m away
-  Seeing a record 30 species of mammals, including the elusive Indian tree shrew
-  Spotlighting both Central Indian species of civets as well as 4 species of owls!
-  Exploring Satpura on foot, tracking big cats without the safety of the vehicle



### Tour Leader / Guides

Martin Royle (Royle Safaris Tour Leader)  
 Ali & Amit (Guides in Satpura NP)  
 Vikrash, Lakhan, Babudal, Rameshwar & Vishnu (Guides in Satpura NP)  
 Rajah, Avijeet, Mukesh, Jagat & Pravid (Guides in Bandhavgarh NP)  
 Bijou, Swami, Prahad Singh, Manush & Asharam (Guides in Panna NP)  
 Shalindra (Cultural guide in Varanasi)

### Participants

Mr. Roy Cyster  
 Mrs. Lee Cyster

### Overview

Day 1:	Delhi
Days 2-8:	Satpura NP
Days 9-12:	Bandhavgarh
Days 13-14:	Panna NP
Day 15-16:	Jhinna
Day 17:	Panna NP
Days 18-20:	Varanasi
Day 21:	Delhi



# Day by Day Breakdown

## Overview

India is the 8<sup>th</sup> most biodiverse country in the world and with a great network of national parks throughout the nation there is wildlife to thrill any wildlife enthusiast. This tour will visit a couple of national parks that are often overlooked, these being Satpura and Panna. As well as visiting Satpura and Panna we will also be heading to the tiger rich park of Bandhavgarh before finishing the tour in the cultural melting pot of Varanasi on the banks of the sacred Ganges. India today faces many problems, increasing populations and the shameless exploitation of all natural resources means that protected land and effective conservation is hard to come across in India. However there are some protected areas and new ones on the way, the main focus of all conservation in India is the iconic tiger. But through protecting the tiger the other wildlife in India has benefited as well. That is why it is essential to understand the tiger and the ups and downs it has had in India, before you can appreciate the reason that so many of India's national parks are now havens for wildlife, even though the tiger may not be the most common or most prominent member of its' fauna.

It is hard to imagine a world without wild tigers, a world without the largest species of cat, a world without the majestic beauty of the orange and black predator. Unfortunately it is just as hard to imagine a world where tigers roamed from Turkey to Korea, Iran to Indonesia; a world where there were around 40,000 tigers in India alone! But this was the world only 100 years ago. For the vast majority of people alive today the tiger has always been a rare and endangered species. To try and think of the tiger as common or widespread is to think of a time at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century when a hunter could easily shoot and kill 20 in a day!

As a global community we missed the boat with tiger conservation, no country took any steps to ensure their continued survival until a survey in the 1970's brought back worrying findings from their long thought stronghold. With a population in India of only around 1,500 and extermination from 50% of their historic range the fate of the tiger was firmly hanging in the balance. India started the conservation work by initiating Project Tiger and by creating numerous Tiger Reserves around the country, fully guarding the parks and ploughing millions of dollars into the project the numbers increased. In fact the numbers peaked in 1989 to 4,334 in India. The project was working and tigers were coming back strong. This was of little surprise to scientists who predicted that with protection and an adequate prey base the tigers fast breeding, relatively large litters and high survival rate would mean they would repopulate quickly.

However the project and for the most part the conservation world took their eye off the ball and the flow of money to the parks and guards began to waiver and the same people who were once employed to protect the tiger were now having their heads turned by Chinese smugglers offering them massive paydays for dead tigers. A survey in 2006 found that the number of tigers had fallen to 1,411 a 60% decline since 2002, this data coupled with the fact that several 'Tiger Reserves' had no tigers left inside them and an independent study finding that the tiger's habitat globally had continued to decrease and was only 7% of its former range; left Project Tiger with no choice. The project began to plough money into the project again and in effect had to start from scratch. This time international agencies like WWF and TOFT were more heavily involved and the most recent survey suggests a 12% increase and tiger numbers of 1,706 in India as of 2011.

The news for tigers is also good elsewhere with the Russian Far East increasing its population from 40 to over 400 since the 1940's, with tiger conservation in Burma, Thailand and Indonesia taking centre stage with large tiger preserves opening up as well increasing numbers in Nepal and the ambitious Terai Arc Landscape project (Tiger Corridor) in the Himalayan foothills taking form quickly.

The plight of the tiger is still precarious but at least things seem to be looking up. If we can get China on board then the fate of the tiger could be ensured for many more generations yet. And in 2010 all 13 countries where tigers live met at the first multi-national conservation meeting for one species ever. This summit in Russia ended with all countries (including China) agreeing to double tiger numbers to around 7,500 by the next Chinese year of the tiger in 2020.

So when the Project Tiger was started in India, 9 reserves were fenced off to protect the remaining large populations of tigers. Since then many more parks and reserves have been started and along with the tigers many of India's lesser known species have also been protected. Firstly Satpura is probably most well known for its population of sloth bears that are seen more often here than any other park in the world, in fact the low density of tigers here means that you are much more likely to see sloth bears, dhole and leopards than elsewhere. Which is precisely why we visit Satpura in this tour before we move on to one of the best (if not the best place in the world) to see tigers. Being one of Project Tiger's original 9 reserves and one of the highest densities of tigers in the world, the national park of Bandhavgarh in Madhya Pradesh is a remarkable and beautiful place. This tour takes place during a time of change, one in which a new alpha male tiger is establishing himself on the park, Barnera is the great-grandson of legendary tiger Charger. From Bandhavgarh and its large tiger population we head to Panna National Park. This is one of the parks that had all of its tigers poached not long ago, but increased protection and reintroductions from surrounding parks have rekindled the population here, but it is other less well known species that will be the focus of our time in Panna; as this is the first park in India to allow night safaris. Since starting these



recently the sightings of civets, leopard cats, hyenas and bears have increased. So we will see what awaits us here before ending the tour with a couple of nights in the historical and culturally important city of Varanasi, the oldest continually inhabited city on earth and built on the banks of the famous River Ganges. Here we will be immersed in the Hindu religion and culture and with a little bit of luck possibly spot a Gangetic river dolphin as they eek out a living in this heavily polluted river.

This trip report documents on a day by day account the highlights of the tour as well as including a sightings log of all the species seen and identified.



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## Day 1 **Delhi**

*Arrival*

After arriving in Delhi a few minutes early (which is unusual for flights in and out of Delhi) Roy and Lee were collected and taken to the Imperial hotel, where we checked in before a quick lunch in one of their many restaurants. Then afterwards Roy and Lee visited the relatively new Akshardham Hindu temple, built in 2005 this colossus temple complex took 10,000 volunteers and artisans to construct and is considered to be the largest dedicated Hindu temple in the world. Afterwards the rest of the afternoon was spent resting in the grounds of the hotel before heading out to Connaught Place for dinner.

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## Day 2 **Satpura National Park**

*Travelling*

This morning we left Delhi early to catch our flight to Bhopal, via Lucknow. The flight was uneventful and on time (which was a nice surprise as the fog usually puts a damper on all travel in and out of Delhi in January). Once we arrived in Bhopal we met our driver Vinod and were taken through the towns and villages of Madhya Pradesh until we reached the lush wheat fields growing in the shadow of the Satpura hill region. From here we took quieter and quieter roads until we arrived at the wonderful and hidden away Reni Pani Jungle Lodge. On arrival we were greeted by Khag and Khim (our ever attending butlers for our stay here) and were shown to our rooms. We freshened up and met in the main lodge for a briefing where we met the guides Ali and Amit before having drinks and dinner. With a 5:45am start tomorrow we didn't stay up very late and hit the hay in anticipation for the first day exploring Satpura National Park and Tiger Reserve.

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## Day 3 **Satpura National Park**

*Wildlife Watching*

Today was the first of our early starts as we began to explore the first of our Indian parks on this trip. Setting off for the park at 5:45am in our jeep we spotted Indian hares (the black-naped subspecies) and a pair of spotted owlets before reaching the Dardwa River and the park gate. Crossing the still river as the orange glow of the rising sun began to creep over the Satpura hills was a great way to start the day and our first wildlife sightings were only a minute from entering the park. The large meadow close to the entrance of the park is usually full of chital (the spotted deer) and this morning was no different with several groups around. There is also a small pond which is home to several of India's more impressive water birds including grey & purple herons, white-throated kingfishers, painted storks, red-wattled & river lapwings and comb ducks as well as several duller species of wader like green sandpipers and black-winged stilts. It wasn't long before we had also seen a small group of peahens and the first of several majestic sambar deer. We then spent the majority of the early morning in the denser areas of the park searching for leopards. Seeing various tracks of different levels of freshness around we thought we were in the right area. This was confirmed when we stopped to listen to the sounds of the jungle and heard langur and sambar alarm calling nearby. We stopped to listen to the alarms and wait for the sign of the leopard before hearing a male leopard vocalising nearby. This rasping coughing call is a contact call used by the male to attract or locate females but despite our best efforts we didn't see the leopard and carried on until we came to a large herd of gaur. Made up mostly of females and young, they did have one adolescent male with them. We watched as several of them eat some of the various plants that make up their eclectic diet (grass, leaves and even bark from trees such as teak). We also saw a couple of the young males play fighting, locking horns and pushing each other. Learning the vital skills that will one day enable them to breed. One of the females also had a genetic mutation that made her appear much paler (more of a pale brown) colour than the rest of the gaur. Before leaving this herd we also saw the adolescent male sniffing eagerly around one of the females, before grimacing in the familiar Flehmen response as he sucks the scent into the Jacobson's organ in the roof of his mouth. We then left the gaur and headed to the small forestry department elephant camp. They keep a small group of elephants (1 male, 5 females and a calf) and they are used for both anti-poaching patrolling and elephant-back safaris. We had breakfast here close to the river in the presence of many species of forest birds including rufous treepies, spotted doves, red-vented bulbuls, jungle babblers and plum-headed parakeets.



After breakfast we continued through some of the more open forested areas, interspersed with small maidens (meadows) and stumbled across a sloth bear. This male was head down ambling parallel to the road, his nose very close to the ground sniffing out his next meal of ants or termites. We followed him at a distance of between 20-30m for around 5 minutes before he walked off the road and down into small valley out of sight. It was a great sighting of a foraging bear, they are usually seen head down and using their incredible sense of smell to locate animals under 0.5cm in length from up to 1m underground solid ground. Then their 10cm long curved claws are employed to rip open the next or mound and the flexible lips of the elongated snout then form a closed seal around the excavated hole and the suction begins. They do not have long sticky tongues like anteaters and instead have lost their central incisors that leave a hole direct into the mouth when the mouth is closed. So the ants or termites are sucked right in. Along with dust and other debris, all of which makes the sloth bears faeces very easy to identify as they are full of glossy insect body casings and much sandy gravel or whatever the local terrain is. After the bear sighting we found the large herd of gaur again and the young males were still at play fighting and testing their own strength. On the way out of the park we saw more sambar, langurs, wild boar and chital in very good numbers. We then left the park and drove back to the lodge for brunch and a couple of hours rest before re-entering the park for an afternoon game drive. This drive was very close to a carbon-copy of the mornings drive with a male bear sighting, many guar and good sambar, chital, langur and wild boar sightings. On returning to the lodge for the evening meal we caught up on the days sightings and decided that tomorrow we would have a morning game drive followed by a boat trip upstream from the entrance gate in the afternoon.



## Day 4 Satpura National Park

## Wildlife Watching

This morning we once again rose pre-dawn and headed to the park entrance for a jeep safari. The safari was pretty quiet but it was none the less peaceful to explore this little visited park in central India. Being around 2,500km<sup>2</sup> in area the park and its surrounding sanctuaries (Pachmarhi and Bori) that incorporate the Satpura Tiger Reserve, it is one of the larger tiger reserves in Madhya Pradesh and for the majority of our time in the park we almost had the entire place to ourselves. This mornings drive resulted in the more common mammals such as lots of sambar, gaur, chital, langurs and wild boars. We did hear sambar alarm calls shortly before we stopped for breakfast at a nice rocky lagoon. We stopped and waited for only saw relatively fresh leopard tracks nearby. After breakfast we continued and other than a large male gaur and female with a calf close to the road it was very quiet, before sambar and langur alarm calls broke the serenity. They were strong calls and pretty close but we couldn't get to where they were coming from and the midday heat was approaching. Meaning that even if we could get to the alarm calls the predator was probably just looking for a shady and hidden spot to spend the hottest part of the day and would invariably be concealed from us. So we left for Reni Pani and our brunch. This afternoon we had a boat safari downstream the Tawa River and one of its tributaries the Sundwar River. Along the river we saw many species of birds, of which a breeding pair of pied kingfishers was one of the first. They sat on the banks of the river close to their circular nest hole and posed in the afternoon sun. Allowing us to see them closely and notice the difference in plumage from the male and female, namely that the male has continuous black bars across his chest whilst the female has two isolated black patches just anterior of the shoulders. We also spent time following a couple of beautiful ospreys as they perched on some of the submerged and now dead trees, before finding one of them later with a fish gripped firmly in its talons. Carrying the fish head first in its feet as it flew away, we turned our attention to a large 3m long mugger crocodile basking on the mud bank. We positioned ourselves around 7m away from the huge reptile and watched as one of the most successful designs that nature has ever come upon sat and watched us through the unflinching and cold eye. After a few minutes we moved on and the sound of the engine starting spooked the crocodile into entering the water and revealing the speed that they can move at for short bursts. A part from a second crocodile (around 1.8m long) that roared at us and shot into the water on our approach the rest of the boat safari was very bird-centric. With species such as bar-headed geese, white-throated kingfishers, red-naped ibis, great egrets, grey herons, Indian & great cormorants, common greenshanks, spotted redshanks, little stints, little-ringed plovers, river & red-wattled lapwings and many more species all being spotted in good numbers. We also found a juvenile grey-headed fish eagle calling loudly for its parents to feed it. However the eagle seemed very adept at flying and its plumage was very close to adult so we were unsure how much feeding the youngster would require and whether the parents are deliberately not feeding it to force it into hunting for its own food. We stopped and watched for a while to see if the adults would come back but decided that they probably wouldn't any time soon and he then flew off anyway. On our way back to the lodge we spotted a female nilgai but other than this large antelope close to camp the rest of the journey was uneventful.

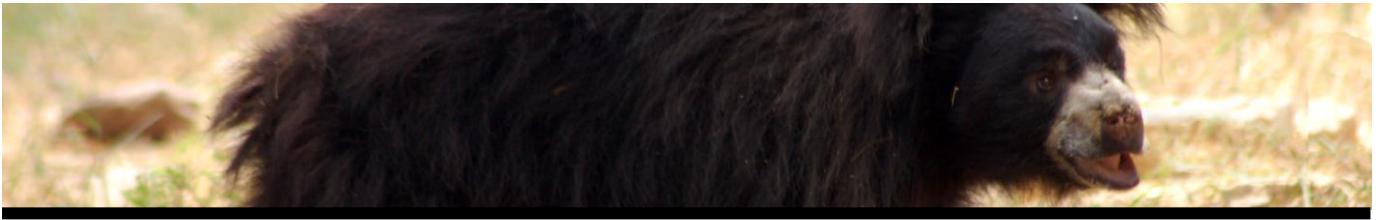


## Day 5 **Satpura National Park**

## *Wildlife Watching*

This morning we entered the park a little later for a guided walk through the teak forests and grasslands. After a short boat transfer to the Sundwar tributary we disembarked and headed into the park and towards one of the grassy meadows that also acts as a drainage channel for the river during the monsoon. During the monsoon the nutrient rich water pours into this small valley and when it drains into the main river the soil left behind is very fertile, as a result lush green grasses grow here and this is a fact taken advantage of by gaur, wild boars and sambar in large numbers. However this is usually in the evening and night and when we walked through we could see plenty of evidence of these herbivores using the area but no sightings as of yet. Along the way through into the forest Ali and our Forestry Department guide told us of various plant uses. Both for food and for medicine by the local people, fascinating plants such as the Indian gooseberry, reni berry (of which the lodge is named after), teak, crocodile-bark tree, wood apple, mahau tree, ebony and wild lavender as well as the very invasive plant lantana from South America. Whilst walking through the ebony and teak we wandered into a large group of foraging langurs, leaves and stems dropping from above us followed by the crashing of branches giving their presence away. We also briefly heard a sambar alarm call but it was not repeated and probably not a predator, so we carried on. Whilst walking amongst the forest the smaller inhabitants take centre stage and we saw many funnel-web spider holes, lined with a thick mat of silk that covers their lair. We tried to lure one out but our heavy footsteps will have alerted the spider to large (potential predators) outside and we were unsuccessful in getting one to rush out. A subterranean invertebrate we were able to tempt to the surface was an antlion. This amazing larvae lives a life that the best Sci-Fi writers would have a hard time imagining as they make slippery pits of sand to trap insects then exposing their powerful and oversized jaws out of the sand to grab any unwitting creature. We also saw a colony of red-weaver ants scurrying up and down a tree to and from their nest made from 'gluing' leaves together. But the most obvious invertebrates were the many stunning butterflies that took to the air as soon as the temperature increased sufficiently to get the blood pumping around their wings. We saw many individuals including the common sailor, common pierrot, common bushbrown, common grass-yellow, common jezebel and the common tiger. As with walking through any forest it is always easier to get closer to the birdlife and we spent time observing mixed foraging flocks containing species such as great tit, Indian yellow tit, greater racket-tailed drongo, black drongo, plum-headed parakeet, Tickell's blue flycatcher, small minivet, red-vented bulbul, oriental white-eye, Hume's leaf-warbler and common ioras. We then headed to a nice view point on the banks of the river for breakfast, along the way we saw tracks of civets, a small cat (possibly jungle cat) and leopard as well as leopard scrape sites including one that still had wet sand from fresh urine. However the leopard was not around, so we continued and had breakfast in the company of a crested serpent eagle perched overlooking a good reptile catching spot close to us. After breakfast we continued and saw fresh evidence of bears, leopards and civets as well as more birds. Now flycatchers such as the Asian brown flycatcher and black-naped monarch were out as the air has warmed up enough for insects to take to the air. We also came across a large group of chital and sambar grazing in the open meadows of the drainage channels. As we approached the boat to return to the lodge we saw a small sounder of wild boar drinking at the river. However little did we know that the real excitement of the day would arrive as we drove back down the dirt track to Reni Pani. As we neared the lodge grounds a female leopard and her two cubs appeared on the road right in front of us. They quickly disappeared into the thick lantana that covers much of this section of buffer forest. The introduced tangle of vegetation making for a perfect leopard hiding spot and it wasn't long before they were all completely out of sight. We searched for them for a little while but to no avail, however to see a leopard and cubs outside of a park and at 11am in the broad daylight is amazing!

After this incredible sighting and lunch we headed back to the park in the afternoon for another jeep safari. On entering the park we crossed a large meadow, created by the presence of a village here in the past. This meadow is usually home to chital and langurs and this afternoon we saw very large numbers of chital, langurs, Rhesus macaques, wild boar and plenty of bird species with black drongos and Indian peafowl being the most conspicuous. Continuing into the park we saw a nice group of sambar resting in the shade of some trees in the open drainage channels, the group consisted of females and several fawns of several ages and a small flock of rufous treepies. These colourful cousins of the common magpie eat dried skin and parasites from the deer and in many ways fill the niche of ox-peckers in Africa. The majority of the game drive was quiet with good views of a great coucal one of the highlights before arriving at the park ranger's elephant camp. It was the elephant's bath time and we stopped and watched the mahouts and elephants having a nice bath in the river. As well as the adult male and 4 female elephants there is a very mischievous 4 year old female called Lakshmi and she came over to play with us. However even at 4 years old they are far too strong to play with and after reaching into the jeep and rocking it gently we had to leave her. This however coincided with strong langur alarm calls from not far away. We went and found the troop of langurs and could see them looking agitated and staring into the dense bamboo off the road. We waited but couldn't see into the vegetation and eventually decided to leave and head back to the lodge. It was only the next day that we learned that from another road (one we thought would be too far away from the alarm calling) a leopard was seen crossing the road and heading into the dense vegetation on our side.



## Day 6 **Bori Wildlife Sanctuary**

## *Wildlife Watching*

Today we planned to spend the whole day inside the park and have lunch at a camp located in the Bori Sanctuary. Satpura Tiger Reserve is made up of the Satpura National Park as well as the Pachmarhi and Bori Sanctuaries and all together comprise an impressive 2,500km<sup>2</sup> of protected land and only by spending the full day in the park is it possible to reach this section as you have to pass over the Satpura hills. The main focus for this trip was to see if we could locate the local pack of dhole. Over the last 2 years they had been regularly seen close to the main entrance however this season they had moved off and headed to pastures new. Exactly where no body knew and why was even more of a mystery. So we decided to head to Bori Sanctuary as this was good habitat for dhole and there was another pack known from around here. Although they are seen rarely (in comparison to the pack that used to live near the entrance gate). On the way to the sanctuary we saw the 'usual' species including a large male sambar with an usual mutated right antler with 4 prongs instead of 3! We also found two large adult male gaur fighting before running off. It is approaching the breeding season for gaur and then males are sizing each other up and forming a hierarchy before the most dominate males will rejoin the female dominated herds for mating. We then came across a large herd of female and young gaur with an adult male, obviously this male had already won his battle with some other local males for the breeding rites to this herd; but he will doubtlessly face numerous other challengers over the next few weeks of the rutting and breeding season. We had breakfast on a hill in the middle of manmade fire-break line. These unnatural barriers are cleared of vegetation to segment the park into zones, so that when wildfire spreads they are stopped at these fire-breaks and do not wipe out all of the forest in the park, but instead the natural fires only burn sections at a time. Thus rejuvenating sections of the park with nutrient rich ash whilst keep some areas free of fire and places that animals can escape from. As we began to descend the Satpura hills we had great views of several Indian giant squirrels. These 1m long squirrels can provide hours of fun as you watch them scurry from tree to tree and hang from their strong rear legs to free their hands up to chew on bark and hard nuts. Along the road to Bori we stopped at an ancient Hindu temple, dedicated to Siva the Hindu god charged with ridding the world of evil. The temples looked like something straight out of an Indiana Jones or Jungle Book movie, all over grown and reclaimed by the jungle. We did find evidence of sloth bears using the temples as well as a relative new offering to the god showing that at least some local people (and animals) use the temples. Along the dry bed of a monsoonal river we saw our first tiger pug marks, despite having around 40 tigers in Satpura they are rarely seen here and whilst here we focus our attention on the sloth bears, leopards and dhole which are all very hard to see in other Indian parks were tigers are often easier to see. We then arrived at the Bori Sanctuary and the large meadows marking the past presence of villages. In fact we had only just completed the paperwork and entered the sanctuary when we saw a large herd of nilgai cross the road. Made up of females and young it was nice to see many together. We also had an excellent view of another crested serpent eagle in great light for photographs. As we watched the eagle we heard very close langur and peafowl alarm calls, then samabr alarming. The calls were repeated close together and many different animals were alarming, these are very good signs that a predator is moving around. So we went in search of the animal, we patiently waited and patrolled a small hillock where the alarms seemed to be aimed and our patience paid off as we had very brief views of a leopard before it melted into the foliage and away up the hillock. We waited here to see if the leopard would re-emerge but when all of the langurs, nilgai, sambar and peafowl in the area stopped calling and began to feed and relax again we headed onto the camp and lunch. The camp is located close to the Churna village. This is last village located inside the Bori Sanctuary and one of only three remaining in the Satpura Tiger Reserve. The local government and Project Tiger are in the process of relocating the village so that they can begin to comprehensively protect the wildlife and manage the park (although adequate park management in India is not something that occurs very often). On our approach to the camp we saw a crested serpent eagle on the ground with a freshly caught snake and inside the camp we found another Indian giant squirrel, this one very close and allowing for some great shots as it acrobatically hung from his rear legs and fed. After lunch we drove a short distance through a very tall and thick sal forest towards some ancient rock art. This kind of sal forest once covered the majority of India either side of the Ganges from the Terai in the north to the tropical Western Ghats in the south. But the British Empire amongst others had logged most of the areas leaving only a handful of virgin sal forests left in central India and this was one of those. The size of the trees compared to other forests in the park was a stark reminder of the affect that man has had on even the seemingly pristine national parks of Madhya Pradesh. Once we arrived at the cliff we climbed the steps up above the canopy of the forest and to the cave paintings. Painted with red and white natural paints they depict local animals such as gaur, tigers, wild boar, deer as well as some unusual species like porcupines and pangolins. They also show scenes of celebration, war and hunting with some showing intricate armour and weaponry and some very basic figures. Whilst no body has conclusively studied this paintings the current thought is that there are many different ages represented here from



10,000 years ago up to around 500 years ago. Whilst standing on the narrow ledges where the paintings are you can see a huge amount of the reserve and the view is truly stunning. After climbing the stairs down it was time to head back towards the main gate and back to the lodge. Along the way back we had great views of a jungle owl before seeing a brown fish owl perched above a small stream, as we watched the owl we saw a giant squirrel climb along and straight towards the owl. It got to about 50cm away before realising it was there and then alarmed right next to the owl. The owl surprising didn't move despite the squirrel being well within the size range of prey for this large owl. So we watched this bizarre stand off, the owl unflinching and the squirrel looking for ways to squeeze past before turning around and going back the way it came. Whilst here we also saw a grey-headed canary flycatcher and oriental white-eyes fluttering close by too. We then drove most of the way back without much of note, chital, sambar, gaur and wild boar all in good numbers but nothing out of the ordinary; that was until we spotted a sloth bear mother and cub around 20m off the side of the road on a rocky patch of ground. They looked intently in our direction using their hearing and keen sense of smell to try and identify what we were before running off into the forest and out of view. Sloth bear cubs spend most of their time riding around on the back of their mother until they are around one third of her size and this usually happens around 6-8 months old. The fact that this cub was walking and running on its own and its small size suggested that it was not much older than this age. This was the last notable sighting of the day as we headed back to the lodge for dinner and a rest after a long day exploring Satpura and Bori.



## Day 7 **Satpura National Park**

## *Wildlife Watching*

Today we entered Satpura National Park on a jeep twice, in the morning and afternoon. On the dirt track leading to the lodge we had a close encounter with a small Indian civet. The spotted civet with a black banded tail ran out into the road right in front of us and luckily Ali was alert and slammed the breaks on just in time. When we reached the park Ali got us special permission to drive some of the hill roads, a tiger had been heard around there yesterday afternoon and despite the long shot we thought it would be worth a try. Along the way to the hills we had excellent views of Rhesus macaques as they went about their daily routines, feeding, playing, fighting, grooming and sunbathing. Not that dissimilar from the lives of many people I know! As we climbed the Satpura hills we stopped at an old lava flow, the basalt rocks now forming a natural view point out over the forest, Tawa River and the farmland beyond. Whilst here we heard sambar alarm calls but from a part of the forest we couldn't reach, also on the basalt was the old skeleton of a gaur, due to the healthy condition of the teeth it was almost certainly the victim of a tiger and further evidence of their present in the hilly and seldom visited area of the park. As we began to descend the hills on the opposite side of them we heard macaque alarm calls and quickly found the troop still looking nervous, we then found fresh leopard tracks on the road and probably just missed the leopard by 5 minutes. Further down the same road we saw fresh tracks of a male sloth bear heading in the same direction as us, so we followed them and after a couple of minutes came across the bear himself. Walking around 30m ahead of us, head down sniffing the ground intently and unaware of us creeping up behind. After a minute or so of following as stealthily as possible the grumble of the engine alerted him to us and he headed into the jungle off the road. Heading up the rocks onto the hillsides we left him and went to the same small lake and rocks we breakfasted at the other day. With a small basking crocodile, drying great cormorants, passing oriental pied hornbills and squawking plum-headed parakeets we ate the packed breakfast before continuing our safari. The only notable sightings on the way back to the park entrance was a stunning crested serpent eagle on a ghost tree in great light and a very cooperative Tickell's blue flycatcher. Two of the best photographic opportunities so far on the tour and a nice way to end before brunch back at Reni Pani.

The afternoon safari was quite quiet with the exceptional sighting of an Indian blackbird, both the male and female. This has recently been split from the Eurasian blackbird into a few different species and the Indian species is very rare in Central India and even rarer during the winter, but we had great views and they were defiantly Indian blackbirds. As well as this we spent a few minutes watching a small herd (9) sambar on the edge of a small lake, all females with 3 young fawns and one very amorous male. The male with an impressive rack of antlers had targeted one of the females (for unknown reasons as she seemed to have a young fawn with her and if probably not receptive) for all of his attention. We watched as he carefully and proudly approached her, his head and antlers held upright and his marching walk with forelegs held straight with every step. Only to then see her run away, followed by the male, slowly walking after her. He even tried rubbing his antlers on the ground to collect leaves, grass and mud on them and also stamping. Stamping for sambar is a very important way to communicate mood as they have pedal glands and pheromones are released with each stamp, so by strongly stamping his forelegs he is trying everything; send out visual, audible and olfactory queues to the female. But (at least whilst we watched) it was not working. We then headed to the river bank and to a spot where the dhole had been seen many times in the previous seasons, we didn't see them this time but there was a crocodile basking on the opposite bank, some bar-headed geese too and many other water birds. Once we returned to the lodge, after dinner and when we had retreated to our cottages



we had a nocturnal guest; in the morning we learned from Amit that he saw a leopard on the dry river bed that runs next to the cottages. Very possibly the female or one of the cubs we had seen the other day as she had been seen on a few occasions in and around the lodge grounds in the last 12 months.



## Day 8 Satpura National Park & Surrounds

### *Wildlife Watching*

Due to new regulations across the state of Madhya Pradesh the parks would be closed on Wednesdays and so we couldn't enter the park, instead we had a morning boat ride downstream on the Tawa River. This was a new side of the park that we hadn't explored and along with the more commonly seen water birds we added small pratincoles to our species list. We also had great close up views of red-naped ibis, Asian openbill storks, white-throated kingfishers and also an hunting osprey. We also saw a large herd of gaur grazing on the banks of the river and as we got near we saw to huge males sizing each other up, but no fight ensued as they parted company and both disappeared into the grass and back to the jungle. We breakfasted in a quiet tributary of the Tawa and relaxed in the company of calling red-naped ibis, Eurasian kingfishers and river terns before returning to the lodge in the late morning. This afternoon Ali took us to the agricultural fields where we aimed to see some different bird species to the jungle and river species as well as the beautiful blackbuck that inhabit the fields and take advantage of the abundant wheat-grass during the winter. It wasn't long before we spotted a male and female walking through the vibrant green field. The male being a dark burgundy and not quite the rich black colour that gives the species its name. It is the deep black coat and long spiralling horns that contributed to their demise, during the colonial era in India the British and Maharajas hunted these antelopes for trophies almost to extinction. But with agricultural lands growing and many small sanctuaries established just for them they are making a good comeback from the deserts of Gujarat and Rajasthan through the Gangetic Plain and even into the Nepalese Terai. Another factor helping their comeback is the possible reintroduction of their main predator, the Indian cheetah. In order for any reintroduction to be considered there first has to be a healthy population of the cheetah's prey and this includes the rare blackbuck and rarer Indian gazelle (or chinkara). Both of which are doing well with added conservation efforts. We carried on after these two animals had disappeared over a ridge and it was only another 10 minutes when we came across a larger herd. This time 9 animals, all males except for one female and in this herd there were two mature males sporting the black coat and tall horns spiralling several times. We got out of the vehicle and walked as close as we could to the herd, getting to within 40m of them before they walked away from us. All except for a mature male and the lone female that stayed a little longer and then began to panic; running and stotting (the impressive straight legged leaping gait of some antelopes) from left to right and then back again. As the sun was beginning to set the farmers were trying to shoo the blackbuck off their fields for one last time before nightfall, as a result these two blackbuck were being pushed from one side of the field to the other. All the time the rest of the herd looked on from a smaller field just behind, why they didn't just join the rest of the herd and relax we couldn't guess. But eventually they left the area and so did we. Along with the blackbuck we went in search of the rare Indian courser in a nearby field and found a pair very close by. As well as the courser we also had good views of paddyfield pipits, red-rumped larks, grey, white, yellow and white-browed wagtails, common babblers and large grey babblers. As the sunset across the fields we didn't head back to the lodge, instead we travelled to a canal taking water from the Tawa for irrigation. This was the haunt of the Indian eagle-owl, the largest owl in India was known to roost near this canal so we waited for nightfall before spotlighting. Just before the sunset we saw two ruddy mongooses and then began to hear a couple of eagle-owls calling to each other. However contrary to previous visits here there was not much calling and it took us longer than anticipated to see one, even then it flew into the woodland very quickly and it wasn't until we were heading back towards the lodge that we saw one perched on a branch over the road. Allowing us great views before taking off and silently flying off into the night. On the way back through the buffer zone forests we spotlighted for mammals and found a common palm civet climbing a tree next to the road, a foraging barking deer some Indian hares and also an Indian scops owl hunting above the road. Even though we never entered the park today we managed to see so much wildlife, including several species of mammals which goes to show the importance of having a rich and well managed buffer zone and tolerant farmers. Something that would be a stark contrast to the desolate and barren buffer zones around Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, our next destination.

## Day 9 Bandhavgarh National Park

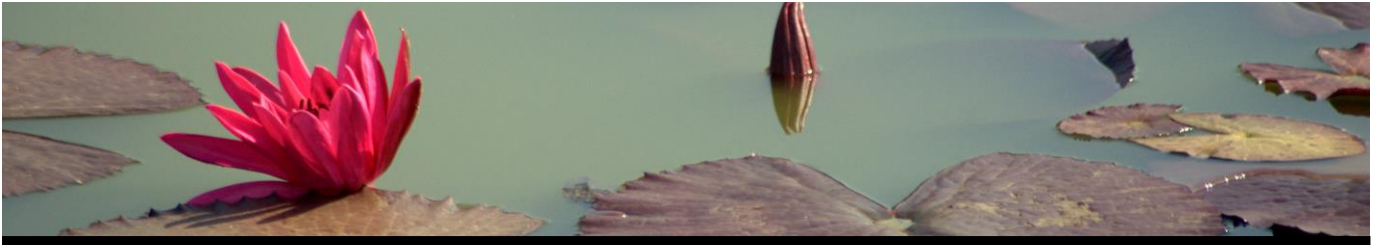
### *Travelling*

This morning we rose later than usual and after a leisurely breakfast we said our goodbyes to Ali and the rest of the staff at Reni Pani and loaded up the vehicle with Chhoti our driver. The drive itself was rather uneventful; we saw plenty of bird life as we drove through the agricultural lands of Madhya Pradesh. The main species being common mynahs, jungle crows, spotted doves, Indian rollers, black & white-bellied drongos, house sparrows, red-vented bulbuls, cattle egrets and feral rock pigeons. However we did see a male Montagu's harrier as well as white-eyed





buzzards and both Rhesus macaques and northern-plains grey langurs to liven the journey up. We also drove through a couple of local markets, these markets taking place on the sides of the road as well as the middle of the road meaning all we could see was a sea of people as we headed towards them. With a lot of horn blowing and some patient driving we navigated the crowds skilfully and off we headed to the park with the highest densities of tigers anywhere in the world, Bandhavagarh National Park. Taking a total of around 9 hours to get from Reni Pani to Tala and a good 2 hours stuck in the bustling town of Jabalpur, when we arrived at the resort we were tired and ready for a relaxing night before our first safari of Bandhavgarh tomorrow. Living just enough time for dinner and an introduction to the staff including the head naturalist of the resort Jagat before hitting the hay.



## Day 10 **Bandhavgarh National Park**

## *Wildlife Watching*

Entering the park as soon as the gates opened at 06:30am we headed down our allocated routes (B&D) and it wasn't long before we saw fresh tracks of a tigress and 3 cubs and the signs of them lying in the sandy road. This particular tigress's cubs are 14 months old and are pretty independent, spending as much time away from her as with her as they learn the vital skills needed to survive. In 4 short months they would be pushed out by the mother as forced to search out their own territories; sometimes the mother will allow female cubs to take a small section of her territory or an adjoining section until they are old enough to find and successfully defend their own. However males are forced to find a free territory over a much larger distance. The average dispersal distance for females is 10km and for males 30km but some males have been known to move over 100km in search of a good territory. The problem with this behaviour is that parks like Bandhavgarh are surrounded by villages and agricultural land, meaning that as soon as the transient tiger leaves the park it runs the high chance of causing conflict with humans and traditionally this conflict ends badly for the tiger. In the Tala zone of Bandhavgarh (where we would be having all of our game drives) there is one dominant male who oversees the territories of at least 3 adult females and 2 sub-adult tigers. Currently all of these females have cubs, 2 litters of 3 and one of 4 making a total population of tigers in the Tala zone of Bandhavgarh (105km<sup>2</sup>) 16 tigers. Far greater than the 'normal' density of tigers in this kind of habitat which scientists have found to be around 6 tigers per 100km<sup>2</sup>. But this is testament to the high prey densities here and also the ever presence of tourists in and around the park which discourages poachers; something that could be reversed if the Indian Forestry Department get their wish and ban all tourism in the future. But that is a very long and convoluted story for another time. We no alarm calls heard from around these tracks we carried on and soon saw fresh tracks of the male, most probably the dominant male here, a tiger named Barnera. Barnera took over from his father B2 after B2's death in November 2011. This lineage of tigers carries the genes of the famous and magnificent male Charger. B2 being the son of Mohini the daughter of Charger and the equally famous Sita. With various member of this family tree having been poached, hit by vehicles, electrocuted and injured by villagers it is great news that the blood line of the tiger 'that changed the world' is still around in the form of the huge Barnera. We followed his tracks to the territory of another female, this one also with 3 cubs but these cubs being 18 months old and very close to dispersal. The fact that the cubs are ready to leave the mother is the sign for Barnera that the mother will be receptive for mating any day now and almost certainly the reason for him arriving in her territory. Following his tracks we arrived at the spot where they met a female's tracks and up they went into a hill covered with thick bamboo. We waited in the area for a while and heard chital alarm calls but after a short while the chital and langurs calmed down and so we moved on towards the ranger station. To get to the ranger station we passed along the perimeter wall of the floor and the contrast between protected and pristine forest and the cleared and desolate villages in the buffer zone was a stark reminder of the problems facing tigers if they want to leave the park. Whilst driving along the road close to the road we heard red jungle-fowl and Indian peafowl alarm calls but couldn't pin point the source. Plus these two species are known to alarm call for snakes, eagles, jackals and many species of predator other than tigers so they are not the most reliable animal to listen to. Along the way we saw more chital and langurs with very young fawns and babies close to the road; we also met a jeep that showed us pictures of the female tiger they had seen on the road where we had seen Barnera's tracks meet the females. They had seen her just before he arrived and off they went into the bamboo. We did see a large male wild boar digging up bamboo roots before arriving at the ranger station and stopping for some tea and coffee as well as allowing our guide and driver to speak to the rangers and find out if any other tigers had been seen and if they have a heads up on where to go. Unfortunately there were no further sightings or known movements of tigers on the D route we would take back out of the park and the only notable sighting was a large troop of langurs noisily running onto the road and chasing each other, very possibly fighting with a rival troop as they seemed very worked up about something but they were not alarm calling.



During the afternoon safari we were allocated the same route and this held the chances of seeing the possible mating pair we had come close to seeing this morning. However the whole game drive was very quiet, much quieter than usual. We saw plenty of chital, sambar deer, wild boar, langurs and macaques but very little evidence of tigers. The only interesting sightings were of an orange-headed thrush and a pair of Tickell's thrushes (which are not really known from around here and where an interesting sighting). We saw these two thrush species whilst waiting for alarm calls at a small water hole where 3 male sambar deer came down to drink from. As the sun began to sink in the sky we did hear some alarm calls but were not able to locate the deer making them as they were all from off the roads. Then as we left the park we heard news that a tiger had been seen by a couple of jeeps on our route around 30 minutes before. The female that it known to have three 14 month old cubs, we staked the area out as long as possible but to no avail, she had disappeared into the bamboo on the far side of sitabhavn meadow and there was no sign of the cubs following her path. Also due to the strict rules enforced in Bandhavgarh we had to leave the park on time so away we left. When we returned to the resort they were putting on a BBQ and traditional tribal dancing in the gazebo. Around the bonfire the colourful dancers vigorously shook tambourine like shakers and bear drums to a fast rhythm of song and movement. The men and women were great and showed us a variety of different dances whilst we were served fresh BBQ kebabs, tandoori chicken and grilled mushrooms. After the wonderful performance we had the main course and then off to bed to prepare for our second day in Bandhavgarh.

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## Day 11 **Bandhavgarh National Park**

## *Wildlife Watching*

Today we had Mukeesh drive us around, he is one of the senior management of the resort and a former jeep driver. He has disappointed that we hadn't seen a tiger so took it upon himself to make sure we did today! Well his driving was exceptional as we headed out with Ajeet in search of the big cat. With A&C routes we quickly found pugmarks from both male and female tigers walking along the road. This was very close to the same spot that we surmised mating maybe going on yesterday. So we staked out the area and waited for a while but it was very likely that they had climbed up onto the hill and would possibly come down later in the afternoon but not whilst the morning chill was still in the air. Whilst we waited here though we were entertained by a large troop of Rhesus macaques, they fought, ate, groomed and played around the large fig trees on either side of the road. Occasionally making alarm calls, but probably more in the form of aggression towards other macaques as they play fought and jostled for position at the best clump of figs. Once they started coming down to the ground and moving around the bamboo we realised that the tigers are probably not around here and so moved on. As we drove around to the meadows and where the female was seen late last night we spotted a common Indian mongoose on a dry river bed walking away from us. We then spoke to another jeep who told us that the female was in the meadow. So we drove quicker to get to the meadow. As we arrived the line of 5 or 6 jeeps met us and the row of long camera lens and eager tourists all looking and pointing in one direction draw our eyes to the beautiful coat of the female as she walked from left to right ahead of us in the meadow, the sun shining brightly and showing her orange, black & white coat in the most splendid of ways. We positioned ourselves at the end of the queue just in time for her to walk right in front of us and across the road. She entered the meadow on the other side and walked off towards the jungle, crossing the small manmade water holes with a swift jump she entered the thick bamboo. We saw her moving through the jungle in the dappled light and made our way to a road that ran parallel to the forest and her path and watched as we saw her every now and again in between the tree trunks and clumps of bamboo. Once she had vanished into the forest we heard sambar alarm calls and then langur, showing us that she had continued her pathway through the forest and towards a hill. As we waited to see if she would emerge one last time a lesser adjutant stork flew low past us, the largest bird in India powerfully flapping its colossus wings to get airborne and moving to another meadow. We waited a while and then heard chital alarm calls from the other side of this forest, away from where the tigress had walked. We thought this may be the cubs so moved to see if we could find them, we spent the next few minutes watching the meadow and tree line as well as visiting a nearby waterhole. We also meet the two mahouts on their tiger patrol to see if they knew where the cubs were, but they had not seen them today. After a while we gave up waiting and went to visit the ancient statue of Siva and the caves of the old Maharaja's palace. The statue (Sheshshaiya) depicts the god Siva lying down next to a water tank, once used by the resident Brahmins (priests) for rituals during the times where the Maharaja still lived on Bandhavgarh hill. As well as this shaded spot all overgrown with mosses and ferns the horse stables and still prominent, carved directly into the rock. After this it was about time to leave and head back to the resort for breakfast.

During the afternoon we once again had route A&C and went to see if the mating pair of tigers had emerged onto the road or if there was any fresh tracks to lead us in the right direction. On the way we spotted a female barking deer close to the road, we stopped as she foraged around and didn't bolt. It is unusual to see a barking deer so close and in the open for so long and we took advantage with some great photographs. When we got to the bamboo covered hill where the tracks were this morning we didn't see anything, hear any alarm calls or see any fresh pugmarks so we decided to head towards sitabhavn meadow to see if the female and cubs (the female we saw last night were still around). When we arrived we met with a couple of other jeeps and some forestry workers and learnt that a male had also shown up here and that all of the tigers were around, just out of sight. We waited close to the Badi Gufa caves, these ancient manmade caves were used by the Maharajas and local villages during the parks inhabited days. The low slung carved ceilings making for a good roosting site for bats, however after checking each



room we only found 3 bats huddled together. The species here is the Blythe's horseshoe bat and after checking the pictures we confirmed this to be the species. Almost as soon as we exited the caves chital began alarm calling very close (within 100m of us) so we quickly climbed into the jeep and with the help of the other 3 jeeps around we all positioned ourselves at intervals along the road and looked hard into the jungle. We could hear the alarm calls moving from left to right and then we heard growling. Most probably a contact call from the female to the male or maybe the female to the cubs. We followed the alarm calls and the sounds of the growling but they were heading down a route that not of the jeeps here had access to enter. Unfortunately the forestry guards had cleverly positioned at the entrance to this route so we couldn't enter at all. Even when Mukesh saw the tiger emerge from the jungle and walk across and down the road around 100m away from us and away down the other route, incredibly frustrating! So we stayed where we were and waited hoping that the male or cubs would follow the female. We heard sporadic alarm calls over the next 30-40 minutes that we waited here but didn't see another tiger. However whilst staring into the jungle Martin noticed some movement on the trunk of tree and on closer inspection an Indian tree shrew came into view. This small mammal is not rare as such but they are one of the most seldom seen species in the whole of India and this is the most northern border of their range. We watched as it climbed a nearby tree and vanished into the undergrowth. Whilst not a tiger this was a far rarer sight not just in Bandhavgarh but all over India and was the first time any Royle Safaris tour had seen one. We waited around here, alternating between sections of jungle, a water hole and the meadow with no avail, so as the evening drew closer we had to leave and before we left we saw a good sized herd of chital and a long sambar together at a waterhole (their size difference clearly discernable as they drank next to each other). But close to the entrance gate we saw a crush of jeeps and stopped to find out that a few minutes before Barnera the dominate tiger had crossed the pathway and headed into the jungle. One of the forestry workers had a video on his phone but the tiger was unfortunately long gone. If we hadn't stopped for the deer maybe we would have seen him, alas the ifs, buts and maybes of safaris! On different note, with the addition of tiger, Blythe's horseshoe bats and the Indian tree shrew our mammal total was growing and the possibility of a new Royle Safaris record was on the cards.



## Day 12 **Bandhavgarh National Park**

## *Wildlife Watching*

This morning Mukesh once again took us out on routes C & A, the first hour or so was very quiet with no fresh tracks of the female we saw yesterday or her cubs. Closer to the village border we saw tracks from Barnera made from this morning so we followed his tracks. This led us to a secluded meadow surrounded by tall sal forest, whilst stopping for a toilet stop we heard growling from the other side of the meadow followed by chital alarm calls so we headed over there. We waited close by the elephant patrolling camp but other than a large flock or feeding red-vented bulbuls there was not much going on. We then collated information from other jeeps and the forestry workers and found out that one jeep had seen Barnera very briefly cross the road and head down route E. Another road that is out of bounds at the moment and another sense of frustration. We also heard reports of the three 14 month old cubs playing. There were not seen but it cubs playing in the jungle we headed there to see if they would come out into view. We waited with a couple of other jeeps close to where the cubs were heard as well as where fresh female tracks were seen heading high up into the hills. We were not here for very long before we heard very close chital alarm call and drove around the corner towards it, only to see a young female (approximately 3 years old and probably just coming into oestrous for the first time and looking for a mate, it may even be the scent of this female that is the reason why we had seen so much movement from Barnera in the area) waking down the road ahead of us along the road. She then turned right into the bamboo and continued to walk parallel to the road through the bamboo thickets for around 200m before heading up the hillside and out of sight. This marked the end of the morning safari and as Mukesh had taken us off our designated route in order to see this tiger he was keen to not be late leaving as well as and try to avoid punishment.

Then after lunch in our last jeep safari of Bandhavgarh we had Jagat the head naturalist for the Tiger's Den Resort (he was occupied with another group that arrived the day before us up until this point). We were allocated routes C-A again and made our way the meadows shortly after the entering the park. Along the way we stopped to watch a large troop of Rhesus macaques feeding on grass seeds close to the road and in nice light for pictures. We also found a very impressive chital stage, his antlers approaching 1m long and very sharp. This male looked like he would have little trouble in challenging other males for mating rites in the coming days. We then came to a very lively troop of langurs on either side of the road. We watched them for several minutes and observed the young males spring-boarding of a fallen tree next to the road, running and jumping heavily on the large branches and using the momentum to fling them into the air and onto the other side of a small dry stream bed. They seemed to



do this as it was a very visual display and the noise created by the creaking wood was very loud. We also watched as the females and older males groomed each other, chattering their teeth together in a comfort or contact call. By only spending 10 minutes with them we easily noticed several different behaviours and sounds they use in their elaborate and complex communication. We went to the waterhole where the cubs had been heard around over the last couple of days and staked it out for a while, we saw a large flock of peafowl, a small group of chital (one of which had a fawn that must have been a couple of days old) and a coppersmith barbet but little else. We then drove around waiting for alarm calls and intently looking deep into the bamboo for signs of tigers, whilst Jagat told us about some more of the plant and trees that make up the Central Indian jungles. Having heard from Ali in Satpura about the varied plant and tree life that is used by humans and animals alike it was nice to see the same trees used in the same ways here as well as different species such as a few very large banyan trees and also some epiphytic orchids. We then heard of two cubs that had been very briefly seen crossing the road along our route but further down. So we headed there and arrived at a large bamboo grove and waited. Being very close to the park boundary and with much human activity going on we were a little surprised to hear that one of the tigers had moved into the isolated clump. We waited a while (but it was near the end of the allocated afternoon safari time) and I suspected that the tiger had moved out of this very noisy and overlooked resting spot whilst the other jeep was looking somewhere else. It only takes a tiger a couple of seconds to cross a road and then it melts into the undergrowth only 1m off the road. So it was that we finished our last safari of Bandhavgarh and with 2 sightings of female tigers on the road in front of us we would head to Panna National Park to try the unique and pioneering night safaris tomorrow. On arriving back at the resort we were met by a large troop of langurs taking advantage of the water in the fountain and also getting very interested in our tea, coffee and biscuits! We marked the end of our time here with a nice evening presentation by Jagat on the history and controversial future of the park and its charismatic mammal species.

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## Day 13 Panna National Park

### *Travelling*

This morning we were met at Tiger's Den Resort by our driver Chhoti at around 08:15am and transferred through the overused buffer zone of Bandhavgarh National Park, then the Pashupat Wildlife Sanctuary (both of which help make up the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve) and on to Panna National Park. The landscape once again full of agricultural land interspersed with flat plains and rocky outcrops, very typical of the Deccan Plateau and most of Central India. The main animals seen were the usual birds such as red-vented bulbuls, house & jungle crows, chestnut-shouldered petronias, house sparrows, common & bank mynahs, spotted doves and feral rock pigeons. But there was a pair of Indian grey hornbills and a couple of oriental honey-buzzards. We made good time on the journey and arrived around midday. We were met by Sorabh and Pappu who would look after us whilst here and later than evening we met Bijoy who would be our naturalist around the camp fire. We then ate dinner and went to bed to rest before our first trip into the third and final national park of this tour.

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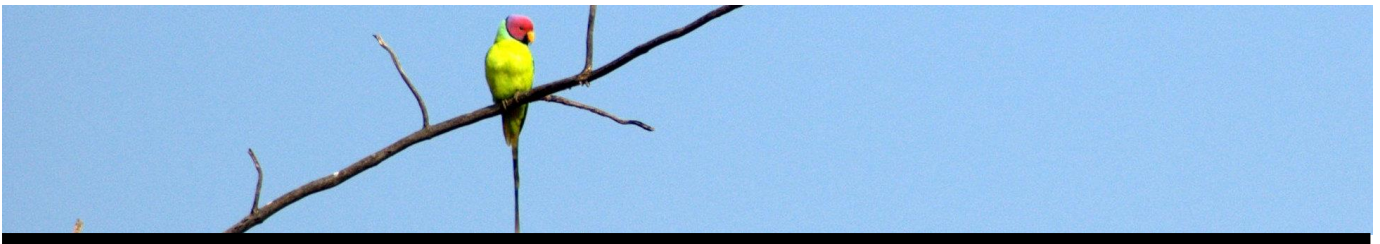
## Day 14 Panna National Park

### *Wildlife Watching*

This morning we entered the park with Bijou and the forestry guide Manoosh, this morning was very cold and the first 45 minutes or so was very quiet due to the chill hanging in the air. As the sun began to rise and the air warm up our first sighting was of three female chinkara in one of the grassland plateaus that dominate the park. Further around the park we saw many nilgai and sambar. These two species make up the main prey of the tiger in the park and are preferentially preferred to the smaller chital. The chances of seeing tigers in Panna is much lower than at Bandhavgarh but the chances are increasing as a couple of the litters born here early on during the reintroductions are approaching the age where they are looking for their own territories and so they are moving around more. As a result it is not uncommon to hear much alarm calling (as well as the 17 tigers here now (including a new litter) there are also leopards, dhole and Indian wolves here) and it wasn't long before we heard chital alarming and a very agitated looking sambar. Tail up, staring intently and stomping; all signs of nervousness but without the loud alarm call the sambar has not yet seen the threat and is probably reacting to the more skittish chital as they alarm call. As we waited around this sambar a very young fawn came into view and this may be the reason for the increased awareness. As we waited a little longer the alarm calls died down and the mother sambar stopped staring so intently down into the valley so we moved on and unfortunately we could not see into the valley ourselves. Along with the alarm calls and plentiful bird song that is the usual soundtrack to a Central Indian tiger safari we heard the occasional piercing bugle of the male chital's rutting call. This high pitched call is used to advertise his readiness to mate to females as well as declare his strength in fighting other males. Whilst the chital do breed throughout the year and you can see males with antlers at all stages of development at any time of the year, there is a peak in breeding in January and February and so the bugle is a common call at this time of year. A little further on during the safari we saw fresh tiger pugmarks walking with 2 cubs as well as even fresher leopard tracks cutting across the tigers' tracks. All of these prints made this morning or last night and an indication that we were in the right part of the park. This was further confirmed when we drove past a road (closed to the public) where the tiger tracking vehicle was waiting. As the tigers here have only recently been reintroduced all of the adults has a radio collar and are monitored 24 hours a day. This vehicle has a couple of scientists or forestry workers inside who monitor the tiger's movements. Their presence here is a sure sign that the female and cubs has not moved too far from the



tracks we found just down the road. Close to this area we heard sambar and langur alarm calls along a fire-break line, we could see the sambar in the mist but didn't see any predators. We then went to the banks of the Ken River to have a toilet break and some tea, along this section of river we saw a large mugger crocodile basking as well as a crested serpent eagle on the opposite bank. We followed the river back towards the entrance of the park and past the old hunting lodge. This lodge is mostly ruins now but the remains cut an impressive figure on the opposite bank, it was the old Maharajas of the area that first protected the area and are the main reason for there being any forest here at all. Further towards the entrance we came across a mother nilgai and her suckling calf as well as two golden jackals trotting alongside the jeep as they searched for recent kills and other carcasses to feed upon. We then made it back to the lodge for a late breakfast and a few hours of relaxing before re-entering the park. On the way into the centre of the park we stopped and Bijou told us about the various trees that dominate the park and make the forest here different from Bandhavgarh, trees such as teak and acacia dominate the park (as well as grassland), making the park look and feel a little more like East Africa than typical India. Other trees that live here are heavily used by the local people such as bombax (or silk cotton) trees, palas trees whose flowers are used to produce the coloured powder and dye for Holi festival. Shortly after entering the park Martin spotting a jungle cat sitting in the wild basil that grows in abundance in the lowlands of the park. We managed to get a good view of the jungle cat just 10m away from the road, before it got up and disappeared into the grass. A little further along and we watched as a mating pair of rose-ringed parakeets enlarged a nesting hole in a dead teak tree. We drove past lots of large holes in the earth made by foraging sloth bears before a male chinkara crossed the road. Seeing a typical gazelle in the grasslands just enhanced the image of Africa that betrays this section of India. However the rest of the afternoon drive was quite quiet. Lots of chital, sambar and nilgai as usual in Panna but also a great view of 2 brown fish owls perched, large basking crocodiles and many birds such as painted spurfowl and painted sandgrouse. We heard a couple of chital alarm calls but couldn't pin point them and also found fresh sloth bear tracks but they lead into the dense forest. On the way out of the park we had a very large troop of langurs cross the road in front of us. It was interesting to watch their grooming, social interactions, subtle facial expressions and calls to each other as one by one they plucked up the courage to cross the road. It was particularly interesting to see the young ones call loudly to their mothers in a high pitched squeak until they decided they were brave enough to cross the road and run straight into their mothers arms. After this crossing we left the park for the night and headed back to the lodge for dinner and some sleep before a long day including a night safari.



## Day 15 **Ken River & Ganjou Wildlife Sanctuary**

## *Wildlife Watching*

Today being a Wednesday the park was closed so we had a morning boat trip along the Ken River just outside of the lodge. The river is widely regarded as one of (if not the cleanest large river in Central India) and due to the lack of pollution and the normal overfishing pressures of other rivers there is a wealth of life here. However the number and abundance of aquatic plants in the river has declined over the years. But at present the aquatic plants still support a great variety of fish and their predators including water snakes and birds. During the 1.5 hours on the water we saw many of these bird species and even found a olive keelback snake wrapped up in a clump of grass. Just how Swarmy found it was quite incredible. Highlights of the boat safari were great views of pied, white-throated and the impressive stork-billed kingfisher as well as nice views of little cormorants sunning themselves, lapwings patrolling the shoreline and prinias that fluttering around in the patches of the grass that give the small islands valued vegetation for many small bird species. On the way back to the lodge we came across a local fisherman on a small rubber tube (locally used as cheap boats) retrieving his net. He showed us the small number of fish he had caught. A stark reminder that even though this is one of the last clean and unpolluted rivers in Central India there are still declining numbers of all river creatures. On our return to the lodge we had some time to relax and pack an overnight bag before we would leave for the jungle camp where our night safari would leave from.

After lunch we left for the Ganjou Wildlife Sanctuary which is one of the sanctuaries that make up the Panna Tiger Reserve. This journey took us through the small village of Panna and then a long way into the buffer forest that makes up the Ganjou Wildlife Sanctuary. It was only a few weeks ago that one of the tiger cubs was seen in this forest (probably looking for a territory to call his own), but it would be very rare indeed to see a tiger this close to human habitation and we hoped for leopard or possibly some of the nocturnal species that are hard to see, such as Indian foxes, rusty-spotted cats, leopard cats, civets and possibly the very elusive striped hyena. But to get to the camp we drove for a couple of hours. First through the buffer zone forest containing many troop of macaques and langurs and intersected with rivers; along one of the dry monsoonal rivers we spotted a pair of Indian grey mongooses foraging and digging for insects. We then passed through many agricultural areas; the main crops being grown here are mustard and wheat. The wheat particularly attracts huge numbers of birds and we came across of large flock of rose-ringed parakeets (some 100 plus strong), when they took to the air it was a brilliant



explosion of green. We also large flocks of chestnut-shouldered petronias and small flocks and individual grey babblers, jungle babblers, common mynahs, bank mynahs and long-tailed shrikes. We also stopped at an artificial lake, mainly used to help irrigate the farmland it attracts many species of birds including the occasional sarus crane. This time there were no sarus cranes but there were some red-necked phalaropes that are unusual for this area of India as well as many wire-tailed swallows, common teals, common sandpipers, great egrets and a variety of other birds such as lapwings, kingfishers, waders and ducks. We then arrived at the jungle camp and met Asharam who runs this camp and would be our spotter this evening. After dark we headed out to the forest and with the high powered spotlight we spent the next couple of hours searching for some of the seldom seen animals in India. We quickly found a couple of Indian foxes, golden jackals and two common palm civets. We had great views of one of the foxes as it scurried around in the forest and also a common palm civet that was close to the jeep until it climbed a tree and retreated to its day nest in a tree hollow. Later on we heard a sambar alarm calling close to the camp but we couldn't pin point the location, then just before we arrived back at the camp we saw a mottled wood owl close up. We then ate dinner at the camp before heading to our tents. At around 11:30pm the sambar was heard again alarm calling and this time it was followed by the rasping call of a leopard. This call doesn't travel too far and the leopard must have been within 50m of the camp. Bijou and Asharam went out to see if they could see the leopard but it was too dark and the forest too dense to pick up any eye-shine.

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## Day 16 Ganjou Wildlife Sanctuary

## Wildlife Watching

This morning we awoke to the sound of langur alarm calls and many birds feeding around the camp and the small gardens here. After breakfast we left for the Ken River Lodge. Along the way we saw many nilgai (their presence throughout the night was obvious due to the strange, loud and elaborate shouts, whistles and whoops that the local farmers used to scare them from their fields. This battle raged all night long and is repeated every night during the wheat and rice growing seasons). We then stopped at the aptly named Kilkilla Nala (Kingfisher River) and spotted a pied, white-throated and also had excellent views of a Eurasian kingfisher. A little further around we spotted a couple of dogs feeding on what looked like a fresh cattle carcass. Bijou and Martin would investigate this later to see if there was any obvious signs of predation here. On our return to the lodge we rested and enjoyed the views of the peaceful Ken River. Then when it was time to return to the night camp, Roy explained that he was not feeling 100% and he was planning on staying here, Lee also decided to stay. So Martin and Bijou would try the night safari once again whilst Surabh and Pappu looked after Roy & Lee at the lodge. Driving back through the buffer zone forest was relatively uneventful except that we came across three dogs that had cornered a young langur up a tree. So we got out and chased the dogs away for a few minutes. They were very persistent and the langur was too scared to come down and rejoin the rest of the troop that had moved further away. We spent as long as we could there and gave the langur the best possible chance but the dogs in areas like this throughout India are now one of the largest causes of fatalities amongst langurs. The feral dog populations in India are a major problem but with estimates between 50 million and 100 million dogs in India it is probably a problem that is beyond help now. Disease control and small scale eradications from protected areas is all we can realistic hope for now. We also stopped to have a look at the cow carcass we saw this morning, there were many crows on the scene but no vultures (a further sign of their decline) and one dog still feeding. We quickly inspected the carcass and couldn't see any obvious sign of predation (no wounds on the neck of head) and the body seemed to have only been scavenged after death. We also saw no prints of hyena or leopard. We asked the park official if we could come back here after dark as part of our night safari, but it was outside the bounds of our permitted area and we were denied.

However the night safari would produce a great surprise, along with chinkara, sambar, golden jackal and a common palm civet we heard chital alarm call followed by some commotion in the jungle and then some wheezing. It was very hard to decipher but one possibility was that the chital (or a chital) was taken by a leopard. The wheezing and struggling lasted around 5 minutes, then there was a very eerie silence. It was close to where we heard the leopard last night but the forest was very dense and could only pick up occasional eye-shine deep in the jungle. It would have been leopard height from the ground but then again a 2-3 year old chital would also be that height so it is impossible to say what it was. However towards the end of the safari we found a rusty-spotted cat lying down at the base of the tree, we followed it as it got up and slunk away into the meadow and then into the forest beyond. The last sightings we had before getting into the camp were off wild boar and a very nice view of a spotted owlet.



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## Day 17 Panna National Park

## Wildlife Watching



The drive back from the jungle camp to the lodge was quite quiet with many nilgai and bird species that are commonly seen in the area. Then in the afternoon we entered the park for our last afternoon jeep safari of the tour. This time we were going to go deep into the park and onto the 3<sup>rd</sup> plateau. The park's centre has three high plateaus that are home to lush grasslands and scrub forest, as well as some impressive cliffs and one of the largest vulture colonies in Central India. On the way up to the plateau we saw chinkara, nilgai, langurs, sambar and chital and from the top of the plateaus we had great views back down over the forest and the Ken River. As we only had half a day safari to get to the vulture colony we moved quickly through the grasslands. When we reached the Misty Gorge (created by a monsoonal river and waterfall) where around 60 long-billed vultures sat on the cliffs. There had only just been vulture census a few days before and around 300 breeding pairs had been counted from the park and this number is increasing (albeit slowly each year). We stayed and watched the vulture colony for a while (as well as seeing a troop of langurs climb effortlessly up the vertical cliff), Bijou explained that the first female tiger reintroduced here used to use the bottom of the gorge near the colony as her den. As we watched the vultures on the far side a peregrine falcon flew from its nest close by us (hidden from view by an overhanging rock) and powerfully flew high into the sky before diving down into the gorge and returning to its nest. A few minutes later the falcon emerged again and this time perched high on a tree overlooking the gorge and giving a great view of all of the pigeons coming and going from the cliff side. As the light began to fade we headed back to the entrance of the park and spotted a solitary black stork on the banks of a stream flowing down towards the Ken River. We also found fresh tracks of a tiger and cubs from this morning, we also heard close by chital, sambar and langur alarm calls and staked out a small area of grassland with a small stream running through it. Close by here another jeep had seen a leopard cross the road quickly so we waited here as long as we could until we need to exit before the gates closed for the night. But we did have time to stop and see two grey-headed fish eagles in their nest on the banks of the river. Their large nest looking precarious high in the tree tops. We then returned to the lodge for our last evening meal on the banks of the Ken River before heading to the holiest of holy cities in India tomorrow.

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## **Day 18      Panna National Park & Varanasi      *Wildlife Watching & Travelling***

This morning we had our last jeep safari of the tour and quickly found two male chital sparring. There is no fixed rutting season for the deer in India as the sub-tropical climate ensures year around vegetation in good amounts, however there is an increase in the rut during winter and these two males were practising for next year. They strutted in front of each other to size their opponent as well as rake their antlers on the ground to collect grass and other vegetation to make themselves seem more intimidating. They then clashed antlers and fought without any real malice or conviction but with every move they were learning the behaviours they would have to know for when they are mature. A little further on we saw a rufous treepie collecting parasites from a young sambar, whilst watching this symbiotic relationship we heard alarm calls from chital and sambar and went in that direction. We came across a young male sambar drinking from a river and looking very nervous. He then alarmed again and we kept our eyes peeled around him. We then saw what looked like the back of a leopard moving swiftly through the grass, only when it came into clearer view did we see that it was a male wild boar. But it had the sambar as well as us fooled for a short while. We then moved to the location where T4 (one of the female tigers) was seen briefly the day before, there was no fresh evidence of her still being around here and with us having to get a flight from Khajuraho in the early afternoon we left the park a little earlier than usual. When we returned to the lodge we had breakfast, collected our baggage and left for the short trip to Khajuraho airport.

The flight to Varanasi was on time and we made it to the hotel on the banks of the river by mid afternoon. Varanasi is one of the oldest cities in the world and being built on the banks of the Ganges River it has always been a very spiritual and holy place for Hindus. There is also a lot of Buddhist and Muslim history in the city and its surroundings and we aimed to explore this history as well as its current religious attractions over the next couple of days. As for now we made our way through the bustling city streets before walking down one of the ghats to be transferred by boat to our hotel. As we were located in the old city the streets here are not made for vehicles and even the little tuk-tuks are not permitted to enter the winding, medieval streets; so the only ways in and out were by boat or walking. So in the evening we sat on the rooftop in the restaurant with a view over the darkening river and prepared for sightseeing tomorrow.

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## **Day 19      Varanasi & Sarnath      *Sightseeing***

After breakfast this morning Roy and Lee met their local city guide Shalindra for their tour. Throughout the day they visited some of the best sites in Old Varanasi and New Varanasi as well as visiting the holy site of Sarnath (very close to Buddha's feet). One of the more modern temples in Varanasi is the Bharat Mata Temple, this was constructed in 1936 in the University grounds and has a marble relief map of a unified India including the mountains, plains and oceans, there are no dedications to gods or deities but instead the temple is dedicated to Mother India and the map takes pride of place. Other sites in the city included the many ghats that allow the millions of Hindu worshippers access to their famous and sacred river for bathing, drinking, washing and of course passage to the next life after they die. With over 80 ghats and all of them with a unique story it is impossible to describe them all here, however there are some very famous ghats such as Assi Ghat which is located on the confluence of the



Ganges and Assi Rivers and dedicated to lord Shiva; Dasaswamedh Ghat which is one of the oldest ghats in Varanasi and dates back many thousands of years, but despite this it is unspoilt and clean. Other famous ghats include Harish Chandra Ghat which is the most commonly used 'burning ghat'. As a result it is very busy and very sensitive, it is best viewed from the river on a morning cruise down the Ganges. As well as walking some of the many winding and maze like streets of the Old City and walking along some of the ghats and watching the many worshippers go about their daily puja, Shalindra took Roy and Lee to Sarnath. Sarnath is where Prince Siddhartha Guatama (Buddha) conducted his first sermon around 2,500 years ago. There are many Buddhist monuments around Sarnath but during the Mughal occupation of India in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries many of the 'idols' were destroyed and Sarnath was left in mostly ruins. However there are some very prominent features still here such as the Ashoka pillar, which is the national symbol of India and a very good and comprehensive museum dedicated to the place and its amazing history.

Then on returning to the hotel for a little break Roy and Lee met up with Shalindra once again and were taken downstream of the Ganges to the Dasawamedh Ghat. Every night just after dark the Aarti ritual is played out on a few of the ghats. This puja is performed with a lamp burning ghee and is offered to many different deities but in Varanasi most often Shiva. The lamps are swung around whilst songs praising the diety are sung by priests. It is one of the oldest rituals in Hinduism and has a history dating back to the Vedic texts of around 4,500 years ago. After this ceremony we had dinner after briefly looking for a barn owl that Martin had seen roosting on the building wall next door to our hotel.



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## Day 20     **Varanasi**

## *Sightseeing*

This morning Roy and Lee took a cruise down the sacred River Ganges, the early morning is one of the best times to experience the River Ganges and watch the many different ways that the river is used by the local people. Whilst many Hindus come here at least once in the lives and spend the time bathing and drinking the sacred water, there are local people that use the water to collect fish, wash their clothes and the bedding of the many hotels, collect drinking water, bath themselves and even go to the toilet. It is quite phenomenal to see the many hundreds of worshippers come here and the range of activities you see. Then when you cruise past the burning ghats you see the real reason why this city developed to its grand size and gained such wide fame. It is seen as the place to come to die if you are a Hindu and by having your ashes scattered on the Ganges you will be ensured of a quick passage to the next life. As the sun rose higher into the sky they returned to the hotel and enjoyed a relaxing afternoon walking down the ghats and the winding roads. Before dinner Roy and Lee also went back down to Dasawamedh ghat to watch the Aarti again.

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## Day 21     **Delhi**

## *Travelling*

Today we had a slow day, returning to the airport at around midday to catch our return flight to Delhi. The flight was uneventful and we arrived back in good time. We were actually upgraded to a suite in the Imperial as there was a conference in town. It was a shame that we only had a short amount of time to make the most of the shameless opulence offered by the most exclusive place in Delhi (and possibly India) to stay. After freshening up and resting for a while we met in the reception of the hotel and then headed to get some western food. Whilst the food in India is great, after a few weeks of the same style of curry we were all craving something more familiar. It doesn't get much more familiar than pizza from Pizza Hut. So we celebrated a successful tour including 5 sloth bears, 4 leopards and 2 tigers as well as a record number of birds and mammals for a Central India tour and enjoyed our last evening meal in India together.

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## Day 22     **Home**

## *Departure*

This morning we had breakfast at the Imperial and what a breakfast it is at the Imperial, just about everything you could imagine. It was a good way to start the day before a long flight back to London for Roy and Lee in the early afternoon. Then after breakfast we travelled to the airport in time to catch the return flight home.



# Species List

Little Known India plus Bandhavgarh National Park & Varanasi Extension  
Jan 2013

## Mammals (\* = heard or signs only)

	Common Name	Binominal Name
1	Indian tree shrew	<i>Anathana ellioti</i>
2	Blackbuck	<i>Antelope cervicapra</i>
3	Chital	<i>Axis axis</i>
4	Gaur	<i>Bos gaurus</i>
5	Nilgai	<i>Boselaphus tragocamelus</i>
6	Golden Jackal	<i>Canis aureus</i>
7	Sambar	<i>Cervus unicolor</i>
8	Jungle Cat	<i>Felis chaus</i>
9	Three-striped Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus palmarum</i>
10	Five-striped palm squirrel	<i>Funambulus pennanti</i>
11	Chinkara	<i>Gazella bennettii</i>
12	Indian grey Mongoose	<i>Herpestes edwardsii</i>
13	Ruddy Mongoose	<i>Herpestes smithii</i>
14	Indian crested porcupine	<i>Hystrix indica</i>
15	Black-naped Hare	<i>Lepus nigricollis</i>
16	Rhesus Macaque	<i>Macaca mulatta</i>
17	Indian pangolin	<i>Manis crassicaudata</i>
18	Sloth bear	<i>Melursus ursinus</i>
19	Honey badger	<i>Mellivora capensis</i>
20	Indian Muntjac	<i>Muntiacus muntjak</i>
21	Leopard	<i>Panthera pardus</i>
22	Tiger	<i>Panthera tigris</i>
23	Common palm civet	<i>Paradoxurus hermaphroditus</i>
24	Indian Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus coromandra</i>
25	Rusty-spotted cat	<i>Prionailurus rubiginosus</i>
26	Indian giant squirrel	<i>Ratufa indica</i>
27	Blyth's horseshoe bat	<i>Rhinolophus lepidus</i>
28	Southern Plains Gray Langur	<i>Semnopithecus dussumieri</i>
29	Asian house shrew	<i>Suncus murinus</i>

January																					
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30	Wild Boar	<i>Sus scofra</i>
31	Black-bearded tomb bat	<i>Taphozous melanopogon</i>
32	Small Indian civet	<i>Viverricula indica</i>
33	Indian fox	<i>Vulpes bengalensis</i>

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## Birds (\* = heard or signs only)

	Common Name	Binominal Name
1	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>
2	Bank Mynah	<i>Acridotheres ginginianus</i>
3	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
4	Common sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>
5	Spotted sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularia</i>
6	Common lora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
7	Eurasian kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
8	Brown crake	<i>Amaurornis akool</i>
9	White-breasted waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus</i>
10	Rufous-tailed lark	<i>Ammomanes phoenicura</i>
11	Eurasian teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
12	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
13	Spot-billed duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>
14	Asian openbill stork	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>
15	Oriental darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>
16	Bar-headed goose	<i>Anser indicus</i>
17	Oriental pied hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros albirostris</i>
18	Richard's pipit	<i>Anthus richardi</i>
19	Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>
20	Tree pipit	<i>Anthus trvialis</i>
21	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>
22	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
23	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
24	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
25	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>
26	Spotted Owlet	<i>Athene brama</i>
27	Indian eagle-owl	<i>Bubo bengalensis</i>
28	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>

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		2														1					
							2														
	~30			1		2	73	~70							3	10	58	7	10	2	~25











## Freshwater Fish (\* = heard or signs only)

	Common Name	Binominal Name
1	Giant danio	<i>Devario aequipinnatus</i>
2	Rohu	<i>Labeo rohita</i>
3	Silver razorbelly minnow	<i>Salmostoma acinaces</i>

January																							
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
						6																	
														1									
					-20																		

## Notable Invertebrates (\* = heard or signs only)

	Common Name	Binominal Name
1	Green weaver ants	<i>Oecophylla sp.</i>
2	Antlion	<i>Myrmeleo sp.</i>
3	Trapdoor spider	<i>Conothele sp.</i>
4	Common bush brown	<i>Bicyclus safitza</i>
5	Common grass yellow	<i>Eurema hecabe</i>
6	Common pierrot	<i>Castalius rosimon</i>
7	Common Indian stick insect	<i>Carausius morosus</i>
8	Common jezebel	<i>Delias eucharis</i>
9	Common tiger	<i>Danaus genutia</i>
10	Common sailor	<i>Neptis hylas</i>
11	Golden orb spider	<i>Nephila pilipes</i>
12	Common pond skater	<i>Gerris lacustris</i>

January																							
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
				100's																			
				1																			
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