

WILDWINGS GUJURAT & TADOBA TOUR 5-18 FEBRUARY 2017

RICHARD WEBB

Wildwings Davis House Lodge Causeway Bristol BS16 3JB

+44 01179 658333 www.wildwings.co.uk

LEADERS - Richard Webb and Leio De Souza.



Tiger (Cat Rayner)

INTRODUCTION

After the success of our first India mammal tour to Gujurat in 2015 we decided to extend the itinerary to include Tadoba-Andhari to give us an opportunity to look for a range of additional species such as Tiger, Dhole and Sloth Bear.

Although the trip was a success in that most of the target mammals were seen, sadly the endless Indian bureaucracy which caused daily delays to our entry to the parks, the exorbitant camera fees, up to £17 per three-hour drive in Velavadar, the unexpectedly large numbers of people in Tadoba and the fact that drivers and

guides in Gir and particularly Tadoba seem to think that you have to drive at every good mammal you see at high speed, all detracted from the enjoyment this time around.

Nevertheless we still managed to see 30 species of mammal including five sightings of Tiger, three sightings of Asiatic Lions, two distant and brief Sloth Bears, at least seven Jungle Cats and lots of Asiatic Wild Ass. However the highlights for some were probably:

- Great views of a solitary male Dhole for one of the vehicles on two consecutive evenings in Tadoba with another vehicle getting brief views of two individuals in a pack nearby.
- Three sightings of at least five Indian Grey Wolves including one audacious enough to steal part of a carcass from a Striped Hyaena den.
- Two Striped Hyaenas one of which ran alongside one of the vehicles in Little Rann of Kutch.

Although primarily a mammal trip with several keen birders on the tour we also saw or heard 273 species of birds (compared to 224 in 2015) including MacQueen's Bustard and hundreds of Demoiselle Cranes in Little Rann of Kutch; Jungle Bush Quail, Grey Junglefowl and Red Spurfowl in Tadoba; great views of six species of owl, Indian Eagle, Brown Fish, Short-eared and Indian Scops Owls along with Spotted and Jungle Owlets, and some great waders including Indian Courser, two White-tailed Plovers and 20+ Small Pratincoles. Sadly what would have been undoubted the bird of the trip, a Lesser Florican was only seen by Leio and the driver of the first vehicle in Velavadar.

Richard Webb 21 February 2017.



'On safari' (Dave Allen)

5th-8th February. Gir Forest National Park.

After a very early morning arrival in Ahmedabad on flights from Manchester and London, and a long wait for the luggage on the London flight, we finally all met up with Leio. After finding out that bizarrely we were only allowed to change £70 per passport holder into cash at the currency exchange deck we transferred to our coach for a seven-hour drive to Sasan Gir, our base for three nights in Gir Forest National Park.

A short breakfast stop on route produced a few birds including Indian Roller and a nice flock of Rosy (Rose-coloured) Starlings and as we approached Gir a couple of people saw our first **Asiatic Jackal** from the bus. We eventually arrived at Gir Birding Lodge around lunchtime. Some of the group birded the grounds of the lodge prior to lunch and as we waited for the jeeps for the afternoon game drive we had both **Five-striped Palm Squirrels** and **House (Black)** Rats near the reception.

Gir Forest is one of the largest tracts of dry deciduous forest in the world and covers approximately 1421 square kilometres, It was declared a forest park in 1965 and part of it became a national park in 1974. It is the last refuge of the endangered 'Asiatic' Lion, a distinctive sub-species most closely related to the lions of West Africa. Around 540 individuals currently occur in the park.

We spent the first afternoon, two full days and a final morning in three jeeps on six game drives in the park in search of 'Asiatic' Lion and other mammals. Gir is somewhat more restrictive than some Indian parks and we had to use the park's own jeeps and drivers, after we suffered the inevitable delays completing the bureaucratic registration process for each drive. The quality of our drivers and guides remains highly variable, some of the guides were very good and keen to find as much as possible, others less so. The drivers varied from would-be rally drivers (which was frustrating if you were in the dust in one of the jeeps following) to those with a greater appreciation for what we were trying to see. Each drive was allocated one of seven designated routes and we were not allowed to deviate from that route. In theory each drive should have lasted three hours but we were frequently delayed by the registration process and actually had less than the alloted time in the park which was particularly frustrating for the photographers paying £15 per drive for the privilege.

Mammals commonly encountered during the drives included **Spotted Deer**, **Sambar**, **Hanuman Langur** and **Five-striped Palm Squirrel** with one sighting of **Nilgai** and occasion sightings of **Wild Boar** and **Grey Mongoose**. Two **Asiatic Jackals** gave us prolonged views on the third afternoon drive.

The main purpose of visiting Gir is to look for the Asiatic sub-species of Lion, and for Leopards. Although Leopards proved elusive this year we did have three sightings of **Lions**. On the first morning drive we encountered two males wandering off through the bush although one had already disappeared before the third jeep arrived on the scene. On the second morning we encountered three lionesses but two quickly disappeared and the third was only partially visible after seemingly being pushed away from the road by some park rangers who then proceeded to light a small fire between us and where the lions were lying up. A male was heard roaring nearby. On the final afternoon drive we saw two more lions asleep near an artificial waterhole.

On the final morning drive Leio had a brief glimpse of a single lioness before it was inexplicably driven out of view from the road by a ranger on the motorbike. This was the second example of lions seemingly being moved away from the sight of visitors by park rangers and even more frustrating was our experience on the second afternoon when we heard about eight lions that had been found feeding on the carcass of a cow in a river valley outside the park, only a few hundred metres from where some of the group had been birding a few hours earlier. We quickly headed out of the park to try to see them only to be told that foreign tourists could not walk along the river to see them even though locals were walking down there all the time. It was as if the Gir Park Authorities don't want you to see lions.

We were told that the park authorities planned to push the lions back into the park that night which would have meant they passed within yards of our lodge and dinner was interrupted by a report that they were about to do so. This turned out to be the first of several false alarms but apparently they finally passed the hotel shortly after midnight by which time we were all dead to the world.



'Asiatic' Lion (Cat Rayner)

Birding in the park was reasonably productive with regular stops for Changeable Hawk Eagles, Crested Serpent Eagles and staked out Indian Scops Owl, Spotted Owlet and Indian Thicknee with a good range of other species as the supporting act. Marsh Mugger Crocodiles were also seen at one of the dams in the park.

After a late breakfast on the first morning some of the group went off to obtain a stamp in their passport to confirm that they were allowed to buy alcohol from a nearby lodge. I think some wanted the stamp as much as the alcohol! An ATM stop on the way back to the lodge produced the only Grey-headed Sea Eagle and the first Osprey of the trip. After breakfast on the first two mornings some of the group went birding around the lodge grounds where a good range of species including Red-breasted Flycatcher and Citrine Wagtails were seen. Some of the group also went down to the nearby river valley where the lions were found a few hours later on the first day. The birding here was very good with a good range of waterbirds including a fabulous pair of Greater Painted-snipe, an out-of-range Purple-rumped Sunbird, and our only Brahminy Kite of the trip.

We attempted one spotlighting session in the gounds of the lodge and did have a single **Indian (Black-naped) Hare** and Jungle Nightjar, while remaining alert to the fact that single lions had been seen in the grounds of the lodge on at least six nights in the previous six months.



Five-striped Palm Squirrel (Cat Rayner)

Spotted Deer (Cat Rayner)



Hanuman Langur (Cat Rayner)

Golden Jackal (Kenny Ross)

8th-10th February Velavadar National Park

After our final morning in Gir we headed off on a four-hour drive to Velavadar, with a short stop at a bridge over a river producing a good range of new birds for the trip list. We had a picnic lunch on route.

We arrived at Velavadar just after 1400 and checked into our accommodation, the superb Blackbuck Lodge. The lodge provided excellent accommodation and food, and a good range of wildlife including **Blackbuck**, **Nilgai**, **Wild Boar**, **Indian (Black-naped) Hare** and **Five-striped Palm Squirrel** within its grounds. Birding in the lodge grounds was also good with the pond in front of reception being particularly productive with Eastern Purple Swamphen, Indian Reed Warbler and a range of other species being seen here. An Indian Garden Lizard perching proudly on top of a mirror in the reception área was also a nice find.

Velavadar National Park covers 35 square kilometres of tropical grassland with a mixture of open savannah, áreas of thorn scrub and some extensive wetland áreas. Over the next two and a half days we completed five game drives in the park in two open back jeeps, a drive in our minibús to some farmland to the west of the lodge, a spotlighting sessión to the west of the lodge and a spotlighting walk around the lodge itself. Within the park we saw large numbers of **Blackbuck** (including a nice white leucistic female) along with good numbers of **Nilgai** (Blue Boar). **Wild Boar** were also commonly seen with up to 30 seen in a day.

Velavadar's main target species are Blackbuck, Striped Hyaena and Indian Grey Wolf. We were unsuccessful in our search for the hyaena and wolf on our first afternoon drive but compensation was provided in the form of at least one, and possibly two, **Jungle Cats**, strolling through the grasslands in the wetland section of the reserve.

The following morning drive was more successful with two **Indian Grey Wolves** being seen well, albeit briefly, at the park of a pool that we had been birding before they disappeared into the nearby scrub. Another **Jungle Cat** was also seen well. The afternoon drive produced a further **Jungle Cat** in the grassland section of the park but the post-dinner spotlighting walk in the lodge grounds was dissapointing with two **Indian (Black-naped) Hares** the only mammals seen under the bright glare of a full moon.

Blackbuck (Kenny Ross)



Indian Grey Wolf (Cat Rayner)

The second morning drive started frustratingly when the gate man turned up late and we were delayed by 20 minutes. Fortunately it turned out to be to our advantage. Having spent some time unsuccessfully staking out a Striped Hyaena den the first jeep was just driving off when their guide spotted an **Indian Grey Wolf** trotting across the grasslands towards the den. We headed back to join the second jeep and were able to watch the wolf as it headed across towards the hyaena den, grabbed part of a carcass and headed off across the grasslands. Moments later a **Striped Hyaena** emerged from the den and gave us prolonged views as it walked out across the grasslands. To add to the fun a distant **Indian Fox** appeared as we watched the hyaena departing. An excellent 20 minutes of mammal watching. The rest of the morning drive was not surprisingly quiet by comparison although another **Jungle Cat** was seen in the wetlands section and the afternoon drive produced another (distant) **Jungle Cat** in the grassland section of the park. An evening drive through cultivated áreas to the west of the park produced **Asiatic Jackal** and **Indian (Black-naped) Hare.**

Birding the área over two and a half days produced a good variety of species. Sadly what would have been the highlight, a rarely-seen Lesser Florican was only seen by Leio and the driver of the first jeep.

In addition the world famous harrier roost that normally holds 1,300-1,400 harriers of four species was largely deserted due to badly-timed management work which had disturbed the roost and caused most of the harriers to move elsewhere. Consequently we only saw small numbers of Pallid, Montagu's and Western Marsh Harriers.

Other species seen included Short-toed Eagles together with Lagger Falcon, and both Common and Rain Quail, while passerines included good numbers of Long-tailed, Isabelline and Bay-backed Shrikes and massive flocks of Greater Short-toed Larks alongside Rufous-tailed, Bimaculated, Sykes's and Crested Larks and Ashycrowned Finch-lark. Wetlands within the southern section of the park produced a wide variety of waterbirds including Common Cranes, waders including both Temmicks and Little Stints and good numbers of duck, while some pools to the west of the reserve produced our first Dalmatian Pelicans and Eurasian Spoonbills.

11th-13th February Little Rann of Kutch

With no game drive planned on the 11th we were out on the road by 0700 for the four-hour drive to Little Rann of Kutch. Driving north we passed endless small wetlands and flooded fields with numerous waterbirds and it makes you wonder what birds would be found here if people had the time to thoroughly check all the wetland habitat in the area.

We made a short stop for our only Black-headed Bunting of the trip before arriving at our first location an abbatoir where dead cattle attract a range of mongooses, eagles and vultures. Although many of the group found the site unappealing particularly as we had to walk some way to find our target species, feeding alongside hordes of dogs and locals pulling strips of meet from the rotting carcasses, we did manage to find the main target a **Small Indian Mongoose** that caught an unsuspecting Black Drongo in front of us. We also found both Indian and Egyptian Vultures, and Steppe Eagle among larger numbers of Black Kites. However after finding the mongoose we made a hasty retreat back to the coach.

We arrived at Rann Riders, our base for the next three nights, just in time for lunch.

The lodge itself and a small wetland opposite holds a good variety of birds, **Five-striped Palm Squirrels**, and we also saw Indian Bullfrog here. **A Small Indian Field Mouse** was regularly seen in the restaurant!

Little Rann of Kachchh (Kutch) is an extensión of the Great Rann to the north. Small salt-free islands of vegetated higher ground are the focus for the region's wildlife in an área of vast saline desert plains. Wild Ass Wildlife Sanctuary alone covers 4,950 square kilometres. The área also contains a number of impressive wetlands packed with birds.

The first afternoon found us in two jeeps heading out for the Bahana section of the Wild Ass Wildlife Sanctuary where we quickly found the first of at least 44 **Asiatic Wild Ass** seen that afternoon. Other mammals seen included a very obliging **Indian Fox**, and a somewhat less-obliging **Red (Desert) Fox** for one of the two jeeps. At dusk as we prepared for a spotlighting drive back to the lodge it was frustrating to find that one of the spotlights would not work in the jeeps so we had to drive back somewhat unsatisfactorily with only one spotlight in the leading jeep and the following jeep taking a bit of a dust bath while trying to remain close to the spotlight. We did manage to see **Wild Boar**, **Indian (Black-naped) Hare** and for some two young **Indian Grey Wolves** briefly. As we returned to the lodge some of us also managed to briefly see a **Jungle Cat** in a ditch near the lodge.

Asiatic Wild Ass (Cat Rayner)





Indian Fox (Cat Rayner)

The following morning saw us back out in the same área with one jeep first encountering a **Red (Desert) Fox** and then having sensational views of a **Striped Hyaena** alongside the vehicle. Sadly it had disappeared having leapt across a gully before the second jeep arrived. After the excitement of the hyaena the same vehicle had the frustration of a puncture. Other mammals seen included more **Asiatic Wild Ass** and **Nilgai**.



Striped Hyaena (Cat Rayner)

Bird wise the highlight was a MacQueen's Bustard, a species missed in 2015, although the 'hyaena jeep' also had a superb Rain Quail. Both jeeps encountered at least three Short-eared Owls, a number of Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse and a nice variety of waterbirds including our first Cotton Pygmy Geese.

The second afternoon found us out birding with the first stop being an unsuccessful search for Indian Courser although an unexpected **Small Indian Mongoose** crossing the road was more than adequate compensation. We then headed to a small lake with our first Ferruginous Duck of the trip before moving on to another much larger wetland where the highlight was the fabulous flock of over 1,000 Demoiselle Cranes coming into roost. The supporting cast included large numbers of pelicans, flamingoes and spoonbills with two White-tailed Plovers, 20+ Small Pratincoles and several Pallas's Gulls among the highlights. A **Wild Boar** walked within 15 metres of us as we stood admiring the cranes.

The final morning found us back out in the Wild Ass Sanctuary, but other than **Asiatic Wild Ass** and Short-eared Owls we saw very little so headed back to the wetland where we had spent the previous afternoons. Alongside most of the species seen the day before we found our first Spot-billed Pelican, Comb Duck and Greater and Lesser Sandplovers of the trip.

Late afternoon found us out on a successful search for Indian Coursers in nearby farmalnd and then an even better Indian Eagle Owl in a nearby quarry. We then headed off to a dried out wetland where an **Indian Fox** made a rapid getaway as we approached, One or possibly two more were seen while we spotlighted our way back out of the área later in the afternoon. Other mammals seen included 30+ **Nilgai** and a few **Wild Boar** while birds were represented by at least six Short-eared Owls and good numbers of harriers although the hoped for Sociable Plovers were absent this year. On our way back to the main road we had nice views off Sykes's Nightjar and brief views of a presumed **Small Indian Field Mouse.** We tried to re-find the Jungle Cat near the lodge but only found a domestic moggie instead.



Red (Desert) Fox (Kenny Ross)

Rain Quail (Kenny Ross)

14th-18th February Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve.

Unluckily for us the 14th was largely a travelling day with an early 0500 start from the lodge for the transfer back to Ahmedabad for the flight to Nagpur via a three-hour stopover in Mumbai. On arrival in Nagpur we transferred to our coach for the three-hour transfer to our lodge, Irai, just outside Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra state. The highlight of the drive was a **Jungle Cat** that crossed the road quickly in front of the coach. We arrived at the lodge in time for a latish dinner.

Over the following four days we completed eight game drives in the reserve in three jeeps. For the first four drives the group remained together but for the final four drives the jeeps split up with mixed results.

We had chosen Tadoba because as recently as early 2015 it had been posible to complete a drive seeing no more than six of seven other vehicles. Sadly with changes to access to the other tiger reserves and the massive increase in the number of lodges around the reserve this is no longer the case and on one occasion there were almost thirty cars and three large buses at one tiger sighting! Not exactly what we had expected or hoped for. In addition the drivers and guides are not really experienced at dealing with hardcore mammal enthusiasts with proper optical equipment and are more accustomed to working with the mass tourist market wanting to photograph tigers and other mammals with their phones and pocket cameras, Consequently they try to rush towards every mammal that appears on the road with the inevitable result that they immediately disappear and trying to get them to slow down and/or stop often drove Leio, myself and the clients to distraction.

Additional frustration was the seemingly inevitable 15-minute delay in processing our permits each afternoon while we waited in the early afternoon heat, and the rally driving of the drivers/guides desparate to be at the gates before 1800 each evening to avoid being fined. All-in-all Tadoba was a frustrating experience but we still managed to see most of our target mammals even if some of the views could have been better.

Common mammals in the park included **Spotted** and **Sambar Deers**, **Wild Boar** and **Hanuman Langur** while less common species encountered included **Nilgai**, **Indian Muntjac**, **Ruddy** and **Grey Mongooses**, **Fivestriped** and **Three-striped Palm Squirrels**, a couple of **South Indian Tree Shrews** and **Indian Black-naped Hares**.

Among the scarcer species the highlight for one of the jeeps was prolonged views of a female **Four-horned Antelope** at one of the waterholes in the reserve buffer zone on the final afternoon, but the regular encounters

with the impressive **Indian Gaur** were always appreciated particularly when a herd drank at one of the waterholes with an impressive male **Tiger** in the water at the back of the waterhole as a backdrop!





Indian Gaur (Cat Rayner)

Wild Boar (Cat Rayner)

However our main targets in the park were Tiger, Sloth Bear, Dhole and Leopard. Leopards proved elusive both here and at Gir this year and the closest we got was an individual which was seen in the grounds of our lodge at Tadoba on both the evening we arrived and again the following evening. A stakeout by myself with CB radio at the ready, while everyone else had dinner on the third night unfortunately drew a blank.

Fortunately **Tigers** were more obliging. On the first morning drive a large male appeared at the back of a waterhole and proceeded to lie in the water for almost half an hour before it disappeared back into cover with one of our jeeps having views of it dragging a carcass deeper into cover. The following morning one of our jeeps had brief views of two cubs crossing a track, their mother having already crossed ahead of them, before all three jeeps saw the first day's male at a waterhole close to where it had been seen the previous morning. That afternoon while the male had dissapeared a female had amazingly chosen to lie up in the shade on an island at the same waterhole. Finally a male was seen by two of the vehicles crossing one of the jeep tracks on the final morning although sadly this individual demonstrated the folly of the approach of the drivers. Several vehicles were patiently waiting for it as it had been seen by another jeep about 15 minutes earlier. When it walked out onto the track no more than 30-40 metres ahead the first two jeeps rushed forward blocking the view of everyone behind them and flushing the tiger. Marvellous!



Tiger (Cat Rayner)

We had high hopes of good views of **Sloth Bear** as Tadoba is one of the best reserves in India to see them, and when we had distant views of one on the road in the buffer zone the first evening and were able to see it briefly at closer range in dense bamboo we thought we would achieve our aim. Sadly for whatever reason we only had one further brief sighting of one, spotted by Roger, on a side track in the buffer zone the following evening although an exceptionally large **Wild Boar** did briefly cause excitement in two of the jeeps on the final afternoon in the park!

Dhole provided slightly more obliging although only two of the three jeeps scored. Having narrowly missed a pack of Dhole hunting on the third morning one of the jeeps came across a lone male on the road through the buffer zone that evening and had great views of it along the road. Another jeep saw a couple of individuals at the back of a pack that had crossed the same road nearer the gate a few minutes later. Amazingly the first jeep encountered the same male the following evening and had prolonged views but despite trying to track down Cat and Kenny were frustratingly unable to do so but their efforts were appreciated.



Dhole (Richard Webb)

The birding in the park was good with gamebirds taking centre stage with many smart Grey Junglefowl, Indian Peacock, Red Spurfowl, Jungle Bush-quail and Barred Buttinquail all being seen. Owls were also well represented with a stunning Brown Fish Owl, several Jungle Owlets, a single Spotted Owlet just outside the park, and Indian Scops Owl all being seen. Other highlights included Greater Racket-tailed Drongos, White-naped Woodpecker and Greater and Lesser Goldenback and several roosting Savanna Nightjars. Savanna Nightjars were also seen back in the grounds of the lodge where Indian Nightjar was also seen and Brown Hawk Owl was heard. A visit to an área of grassland outside the main forest área produced a nice flock of Red Avadavat.



Grey Junglefowl (Kenny Ross)

Reptiles and amphibians seen included several Marsh Mugger Crocodiles and an Indian Rat Snake and back at the lodge we found Indian Bullfrog and Indian Tree Frog. The grounds of the lodge and the adjacent lake produced some interesting birding but the star performers at the lodge were the presumed **Small Indian Field Mouse** which left tooth marks on bars of soap in several of the tents and even stole the soap on some occasions. Interestingly the lodge were using soap as bait in mouse traps in the tents? Most remarkable was one particularly clever individual which was brazen enough to emerge during the day and somehow managed to remove the lid on a tube of Pringles by gnawing around the edge without tipping the tube over! An amazing feat!

On the 18th after a final dinner at the lodge we transferred back to Nagpur where most of the group headed home or their flight back home via Doha while the rest of us headed to an airport hotel, our Air India flight home being back via Delhi the following morning.

MAMMALS

Hanuman Langur Semnopithecus entellus Common in Gir and Tadoba with one also seen at Velavadar.

Indian GaurBos gaurus

Up to 11 seen in Tadoba on all four days including some very nice close range encounters.

Indian Muntjac Muntiacus muntjac Up to two seen on all four days in Tadoba.

Sambar

Cervus unicolor

Seen on all five drives in Gir with up to eight per drive. Common in Tadoba where seen on all eight drives.

Spotted Deer

Axis axis

Common in Gir and Tadoba.

Nilgai

Boselaphus tragocamelus

A solitary female in Gir, common in Velavadar, a máximum of 30+ on drives in Little Rann of Kutch. Seen twice in Tadoba, a single animal on one occasion,

two on the other.

Blackbuck

Antelpoe cervicapra

Abundant in Velavadar including a nice leucistic female.

Four-horned Antelope (Chousingha)

Tetracerus quadricornis

Prolonged views of a single female at a waterhole in the buffer zone for one of the vehicles on the final afternoon in Tadoba.

Asiatic (Indian) Wild Ass

Equus onager

Common with up to 44 per day in Little Rann of Kutch.

Wild Boar Sus scrofa Up to four per day in Gir, 30+ per day in Velavadar, seven per day in Little Rann of Kutch and 10 per day in Tadoba.

Sloth Bear

Melursus ursinus

In Tadoba one individual was seen crossing the buffer zone road distantly on the first evening and then briefly and poorly in thick bamboo close to the road. The following evening another was seen briefly along a side track off of the buffer zone road.

Jackal (Golden Jackal)

Canis aureus

Two seen on route to Gir, a pair in Gir itself and a single seen and others heard outside the park itself at Velavadar.

Dhole

Canis alpinus

In Tadoba one of the vehicles had great views of a solitary male along the road in the buffer views shortly before dusk on the third evening and saw the same individual in the same place the following vehicle. The second vehicle saw two individuals at the back of a pack that also crossed the buffer zone road on the third evening.

Indian Grey Wolf

Canis indica

Recently split by many authorities but not currently by IUCN. Two seen on our first morning in the wetland área at Velavadar, another the following morning scavenging part of a carcass from the entrance of a hyaena den in the grassland section of the road, and two young animals while spotlighting our way back to our lodge in Little Rann of Kutch.

Indian Fox

Vulpes bengalensis

One seen distantly in Velavadar while we were watching a Striped Hyaena. A total of at least three seen at two sites in Little Rann of Kutch, two during the day including one that posed for us for over 15 minutes, and one or two while spotlighting.

Red (Desert) Fox

Vulpes vulpes

One seen on two drives in Little Rann of Kutch.

Striped Hyaena Hyaena hyaena In Velavadar one emerged from its den shortly after it was raided by an Indian Grey Wolf, and strode off across the grasslands. In Little Rann of Kutch one of the vehicles had exceptional views of one tearing across the desert in front of the vehicle.

Asiatic Lion Panthera leo

In Gir two males on the first morning drive, three females on the second morning drive with a male roaring nearby, and two asleep near a waterhole on the third afternoon drive. Leio also saw a single individual on our final morning.

Tiger

In Tadoba a large male on the first morning at the back of a waterhole proceeded to lie in the water for almost half an hour before it disappeared back into cover where it dragged a carcass deeper into cover. The following morning one jeep had brief views of two three-month old cubs crossing a track, and all three jeeps saw the first day's male at a waterhole close to where it had been seen the previous morning. That afternoon a female was seen lying up in the shade on an island at the same waterhole. Finally a male was seen by two of the vehicles crossing one of the jeep tracks on the final morning.

Jungle Cat Felis chaus

Three sightings, probably two individuals in the southern wetlands section at Velavadar with a further three sightings in the northern grassland section. A single briefly in a ditch near our lodge in Little Rann of Kutch and a seventh crossing the road in front of the minibús on the drive to our lodge at Tadoba.

Grey MongooseHerpestes edwardsii

A total of six seen on three drives in Gir, a single seen on route to Little Rann of Kutch and three singles on the final day in Tadoba.

Small Indian Mongoose Herpestes javanicus

A single catching a drongo at the slaughterhouse on route from Velavadar to Little Rann of Kutch and another in Little Rann of Kutch the following day.

Ruddy Mongoose Herpestes smithii

A total of four singles on three drives in Tadoba incluing one approaching a waterhole until it noticed the large male Tiger lying nearby.

Indian (Black-naped) Hare Lepus nigricollis

Singles twice seen in Gir including the grounds of the lodge, and up to four per day on all three days at Velavadar where present in the grounds of Blackbuck Lodge. Two in Little Rann of Kutch and two at Tadoba including one in the grounds of our lodge.

South Indian Tree Shrew *Anathana elliatii*

Singles seen on two drives in Tadoba.

Five-striped Palm Squirrel Funambulus pennantii

Common 10+ per day at Gir including around the feeders by the reception at our lodge, small numbers daily around Blackbuck Lodge and common at our lodge in Little Rann of Kutch. Small numbers at Tadoba including at least two around our lodge.

Three-striped Palm Squirrel Funambulus palmarum

1-2 on three days at Tadoba, normally in the buffer zone of the park.

Small Indian Field Mouse Mus booduga

Seen around our lodge in Rann Riders (including the restaurant) and another seen on a spotlighting sesión in Little Rann of Kutch. Presumably this species stealing soap in several of the tents at Tadoba where one individual even managed to remove the lid on a tube of Pringles by gnawing around the edge without tipping the tube over!

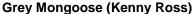
House (Black) Rat Rattus rattus

Two around the feeders at our lodge in Gir on most days.

Two seen by Michael at our lodge in Gir.

Indian Flying Fox Pteropus giganteus







Sambar (Kenny Ross)

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

Indian Garden Lizard
Calotes versicolor

A nice individual posing on top of a mirror in the reception in Blackbuck Lodge.

Bengal Monitor Lizard Varanus bengalensis One crossed the road near our lodge at Tadoba.

Gecko sp

Several scattered individuals.

Indian Rat Snake
Ptyas mucosa

One Tadoba.

Common Bronzeback Tree Snake Dendrelaphis tristis One seen by Cat at Blackbuck Lodge.

Indian Bullfrog Hoplobatrachus tigerinus

Seen at our lodges in Little Rann of Kutch and at Tadoba.

Indian Tree Frog
Polypedates maculatus

Several around a pool at our lodge at Tadoba.

Indian Flapshell Turtle Lissemys punctata

Found at wetlands in Gir, Velavadar, Little Rann of Kutch and Tadoba.

Marsh Mugger Crocodile Crocodylus palustris Up to three seen on six days in Gir and Tadoba.

BIRDS

Key

G	Seen at Gir Forest.
	J = journey from Ahmedabad to Gir only.
V	Seen at Velavadar National Park, Blackbuck Lodge and in surrounding farmland.
	J = only seen on journey from Gir to Velavadar.
LK	Little Rann of Kachchh including Wild Ass Wildlife Sanctuary, Rann Riders, wetlands near Rann Riders, Nava
	Palau and the slaughter house on route from Velavadar.
	J = species only seen on journey and/or at slaughter house.
Т	Tadoba including journeys to and from the airport.
	J = seen on journey only.
L/H	Leader or Heard only.

			Gir	Velavadar	Lt. Rann	Tadoba
1	Little Grebe	Tachybaptus ruficollis		Х	Х	
2	Spot-billed Pelican	Pelecanus philippensis			X	
3	Dalmatian Pelican	Pelecanus crispus		х	X	
4	Great White Pelican	Pelecanus onocrotalus			X	
5	Indian Shag	Phalacrocorax fuscicollis			X	
6	Great Cormorant	Phalacrocorax carbo		J		
7	Little Cormorant	Phalacrocorax niger	Х	x	X	X
8	Oriental Darter	Anhinga melanogaster	X		X	X
9	Western Reef Egret	Egretta gularis	Х		X	
10	Little Egret	Egretta garzetta	Х	Х	Х	Х
11	Great Egret	Egretta alba	Х	Х	X	Х
12	Intermediate Egret	Egretta intermedia	Х		Х	Х
13	Eastern Cattle Egret	Bubulcus coromandus	Х	x	X	X
14	Grey Heron	Ardea cinerea	X	x	X	X
15	Purple Heron	Ardea purpurea		х	X	Х
16	Indian Pond-heron	Ardeola grayii	Х	x	X	Х
17	Black-crowned Night-heron	Nycticorax nycticorax		J	X	
18	Striated Heron	Butorides striata	Х			
19	Asian Openbill	Anastomus oscitans	Х		X	Х
20	Woolly-necked Stork	Ciconia episcopus	X		X	
21	Painted Stork	Mycteria leucocephala	Х	x	X	
22	Black Stork	Ciconia nigra				Х
23	Glossy Ibis	Plegadis falcinellus	X		X	X
24	Black-headed Ibis	Threskiornis melanocephalus	Х	J	X	X
25	Eurasian Spoonbill	Platalea leucorodia		Х	Х	
26	Indian Black Ibis	Pseudibis papilosa	Х	Х	X	Х
27	Lesser Adjutant	Leptoptilos javanicus				Х
28	Lesser Flamingo	Phoeniconaias minor			Х	
29	Greater Flamingo	Phoenicopterus roseus			Х	
30	Greylag Goose	Anser anser			Х	
31	Lesser Whistling-duck	Dendrocygna javanica				Х
32	Ruddy Shelduck	Tadorna ferruginea		Х	Х	
33	Comb Duck	Sarkidiornis melanotos			Х	
34	Common Teal	Anas crecca		Х	Х	

			Gir	Velavadar	Lt. Rann	Tadoba
35	Gadwall	Anas strepera			Х	
36	Eurasian Wigeon	Anas penelope			Х	
37	Northern Shoveler	Anas clypeata		Х	Х	
38	Northern Pintail	Anas acuta		Х	Х	
39	Indian Spot-billed Duck	Anas poecilorhyncha	Х	х	Х	Х
40	Mallard	Anas platyrhynchos		х		
41	Tufted duck	Aythya fuligula			Х	
42	Ferruginous Duck	Aythya nyroca			X	
43	Common Pochard	Aythya ferina			Х	
44	Cotton Pygmy Goose	Nettapus coromandelianus			X	X
45	Black-shouldered Kite	Elanus caeruleus	Х	Х	X	X
46	Brahminy Kite	Haliastur indus	Х			
47	Black Kite	Milvus migrans	J		Х	Х
48	Shikra	Accipiter badius	Х	Х	Х	Х
49	Long-legged Buzzard	Buteo rufinus			Х	
50	Steppe Buzzard	Buteo buteo	Х			
51	Oriental Honey-buzzard	Pernis ptilorhyncus	Х			Х
52	White-eyed Buzzard	Butastur teesa	Х	Х	Х	Х
53	Crested Serpent Eagle	Spilornis cheela	Х			X
54	Short-toed Eagle	Circaetus gallicus		Х		
55	Booted Eagle	Hieraaetus pennatus	J	Х		
56	Changeable Hawk Eagle	Spizaetus cirrhatus	Х			X
57	Indian Spotted Eagle	Aquila hastata		Х	X	
58	Steppe Eagle	Aquila nipalensis			Х	
59	Eastern Imperial Eagle	Aquila heliaca			X	
60	Osprey	Pandion haliaetus	Х			
61	Grey-headed Fish-eagle	Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus	Х			
62	Indian Vulture	Gyps indicus	Х		J	
63	Egyptian Vulture	Neophron percnopterus			J	
64	Red-headed Vulture	Aegypius calvus	Х			
65	Montagu's Harrier	Circus pygargus		X		
66	Pallid Harrier	Circus macrourus		X	X	
67	Western Marsh Harrier	Circus aeruginosus		X	Х	
68	Common Kestrel	Falco tinnunculus		X	Х	
69	Peregrine	Falco peregrinus				X
70	Laggar Falcon	Falco jugger		X		
71	Grey Francolin	Francolinus pondicerianus	Х	X	Х	X
72	Painted Francolin	Francolinus pictus				Н
73	Common Quail	Coturnix coturnix		X		
74	Rain Quail	Coturnix coromandelica		X	Х	
75	Jungle Bush-quail	Perdicula asiatica				X
76	Barred Buttonquail	Turnix suscitator				Х
77	Small Buttonquail	Turnix sylvaticus	Х			
78	Red Spurfowl	Galloperdix spadicea				X
79	Grey Junglefowl	Gallus sonneratii				X
80	Indian Peafowl	Pavo cristatus	Х		X	X

			Gir	Velavadar	Lt. Rann	Tadoba
81	Common Crane	Grus grus		Х	Х	
82	Demoiselle Crane	Grus virgo			Х	
83	Lesser Florican	Sypheotides indicus		L		
84	MacQueen's Bustard	Chlamydotis undulata			Х	
85	White-breasted Waterhen	Amaurornis phoenicurus	Х		Х	Х
86	Eastern Purple Swamphen	Porphyrio poliocephalus		х	Х	Х
87	Common Moorhen	Gallinula chloropus		Х	Х	
88	Eurasian Coot	Fulica atra	Х	X	Х	
89	Greater Painted-snipe	Rostratula benghalensis	Х			
90	Pied Avocet	Recurvirostra avosetta			Х	
91	Black-winged Stilt	Himantopus himantopus	Х	Х	Х	Х
92	Bronze-winged Jacana	Metopidius indicus				Х
93	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	Hydrophasianus chirurgus			Х	
94	Small Pratincole	Glareola lactea			Х	
95	Indian Courser	Cursorius coromandelicus			Х	
96	Great Thick-knee	Esacus recurvirostris	Х			
97	Indian Stone-curlew	Burhinus indicus	Х			Х
98	Red-wattled Lapwing	Vanellus indicus	Х	Х	Х	Х
99	White-tailed Lapwing	Vanellus leucurus			Х	
100	Greater Sand Plover	Charadrius leschenaultii			Х	
101	Lesser Sand Plover	Charadrius mongolus			Х	
102	Little Ringed Plover	Charadrius dubius		Х	Х	
103	Ringed Plover	Charadrius hiaticula		J		
104	Kentish Plover	Charadrius alexandrinus		Х		
105	Eurasian Curlew	Numenius arquata		Х		
106	Black-tailed Godwit	Limosa limosa		Х	Х	
107	Common Greenshank	Tringa nebularia	Х	Х	Х	Х
108	Wood Sandpiper	Tringa glareola	Х	X	Х	
109	Green Sandpiper	Tringa ochropus	Х	Х	Х	
110	Common Sandpiper	Actitis hypoleucos	Х	Х	Х	
111	Marsh Sandpiper	Tringa stagnatilis		Х	Х	
112	Common Redshank	Tringa totanus			Х	
113	Spotted Redshank	Tringa erythropus			Х	
114	Ruff	Philomachus pugnax			Х	
115	Temminck's Stint	Calidris temminckii		Х	Х	
116	Little Stint	Calidris minuta		Х	Х	
117	Common Snipe	Gallinago gallinago			Х	
118	Pallas's Gull	Larus ichthyaetus			Х	
119	Brown-headed Gull	Larus brunnicephalus			Х	
120	Black-headed Gull	Larus ridibundus			Х	
121	River Tern	Sterna aurantia	Х	Х	Х	
122	Whiskered Tern	Chlidonias hybrida			Х	
123	Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse	Pterocles exustus			Х	
124	Painted Sandgrouse	Pterocles indicus	Х			
125	Rock Pigeon	Columba livia	Х	Х	Х	Х
126	Laughing Dove	Streptopelia senegalensis	Х	Х	Х	Х

			Gir	Velavadar	Lt. Rann	Tadoba
127	Red Collared-dove	Streptopelia tranquebarica		Х	Х	Х
128	Spotted Dove	Streptopelia chinensis	Х	Х	Х	Х
129	Eurasian Collared-dove	Streptopelia decaocto	J	Х	Х	Х
130	Yellow-footed Green-pigeon	Treron phoenicopterus	Х			Х
131	Plum-headed Parakeet	Psittacula cyanocephala	Х			Х
132	Rose-ringed Parakeet	Psittacula krameri	Х	Х	Х	Х
133	Alexandrine Parakeet	Psittacula eupatria				Х
134	Asian Koel	Eudynamys scolopaceus	Х	Х	Х	Х
135	Southern Coucal	Centropus parroti	X	Х	Х	Х
136	Brown Fish-owl	Ketupa zeylonensis				X
137	Indian Eagle-owl	Bubo bengalensis			X	
138	Short-eared Owl	Asio flammeus			X	
139	Brown Hawk Owl	Ninox scutulata				Н
140	Indian Scops-owl	Otus bakkamoena	Х			Х
141	Jungle Owlet	Glaucidium radiatum				Х
142	Spotted Owlet	Athene brama	Х			Х
143	Sykes's Nightjar	Caprimulgus mahrattensis		Х	Х	
144	Jungle Nightjar	Caprimulgus indicus	Х			
145	Indian Nightjar	Caprimulgus asiaticus				Х
146	Savanna Nightjar	Caprimulgus affinis				X
147	Crested Treeswift	Hemiprocne coronata		Х		Х
148	Asian Palm-swift	Cypsiurus balasiensis	Х			Х
149	Little Swift	Apus affinis	Х	Х		
150	Pacific Swift	Apus pacificus				J
151	Indian Roller	Coracias benghalensis	J	Х	Х	Х
152	Common Hoopoe	<i>Uрира е. ерор</i>	Х	Х	Х	Х
153	Stork-billed Kingfisher	Halcyon capensis				Х
154	White-throated Kingfisher	Halcyon smyrnensis	Х	Х	Х	Х
155	Lesser Pied Kingfisher	Ceryle rudis	Х	Х	Х	Х
156	Common Kingfisher	Alcedo atthis	Х	Х	Х	Х
157	Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	Merops persicus		J		
158	Little Green Bee-eater	Merops orientalis	Х	Х	Х	Х
159	Indian Grey Hornbill	Ocyceros birostris				Х
160	Coppersmith Barbet	Megalaima haemacephala	Х			Х
161	Brown-headed Barbet	Megalama zeylanica				Х
162	Eurasian Wryneck	Jynx torquilla				Х
163	Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	Dendrocopos nanus	Х			
164	Yellow-crowned Woodpecker	Dendrocopos mahrattensis	Х			
165	White-naped Woodpecker	Chrysocolaptes festivus				Х
166	Greater Goldenback	Chrysocolaptes lucidus				Х
167	Lesser Goldenback	Dinopium benghalense				Х
168	Singing Bushlark	Mirafra cantillans				Х
169	Oriental Skylark	Mirafra erythroptera		Х		
170	Crested Lark	Alauda gulgula		Х	Х	
171	Sykes's Lark	Galerida cristata		Х		
172	Ashy-crowned Finch-lark	Galerida deva	Х	Х	Х	Х
173	Black-crowned Finch-lark	Eremopterix griseus			L	

			Gir	Velavadar	Lt. Rann	Tadoba
174	Bimaculated Lark	Eremopterix nigriceps		х	Х	
175	Rufous-tailed Lark	Alaemon alaudipes		х	Х	
176	Greater Short-toed Lark	Calandrella brachydactyla		х	Х	
177	Sand Martin	Riparia riparia		х	Х	
178	Dusky Crag-martin	Ptyonoprogne concolor	Х	х		
179	Streak-throated Swallow	Hirundo fluvicola	Х			Х
180	Barn Swallow	Hirundo rustica	Х	х	Х	Х
181	Red-rumped Swallow	Hirundo daurica	Х			Х
182	Wire-tailed Swallow	Hirundo smithii	Х	х	X	X
183	Yellow Wagtail	Motacilla flava	Х	Х	X	X
184	Grey Wagtail	Motacilla cinerea	Х			X
185	Citrine Wagtail	Motacilla citreola	Х	X	Х	
186	White Wagtail	Motacilla alba	Х	Х	X	X
187	White-browed Wagtail	Motacilla maderaspatensis	Х			
188	Tree Pipit	Anthus trivalis	Х	Х	Х	Х
189	Paddyfield Pipit	Anthus rufulus	J	Х	Х	Х
190	Tawny Pipit	Anthus campestris		Х	Х	
191	Long-billed Pipit	Anthus similis		X	X	X
192	Common Woodshrike	Tephrodornis pondicerianus	Х			X
193	Large Cuckooshrike	Coracina macei	Х			
194	Small Minivet	Pericrocotus cinnamomeus	Х			X
195	Scarlet Minivet	Pericrocotus speciosus				X
196	Red-vented Bulbul	Pycnonotus cafer	Х		Х	X
197	White-eared Bulbul	Pycnonotus leucotis		Х	X	
198	Common Iora	Aegithina tiphia	Х			
199	Orange-fronted Leafbird	Chloropsis aurifrons				X
200	Long-tailed Shrike	Lanius schach	Х	Х	X	X
201	Southern Grey Shrike	Lanius meridionalis			X	
202	Isabelline Shrike	Lanius isabellinus		Х	Х	X
203	Bay-backed Shrike	Lanius vittatus	Х	Х	X	X
204	Black-naped Blue Monarch	Hypothymis azurea				X
205	Asian Paradise Flycatcher	Terpsiphone paradisi	Х			
206	White-browed Fantail	Rhipidura aureola	Х			
207	White-throated Fantail	Rhipidura albicollis				Х
208	Orange-headed Thrush	Zoothera citrina				Х
209	Tickell's Thrush	Turdus unicolor				Х
210	Bluethroat	Luscinia svecica			Х	
211	Oriental Magpie-robin	Copsychus saularis	Х	Х	Х	Х
212	Indian Robin	Saxicoloides fulicatus	Х	Х	Х	Х
213	Black Redstart	Phoenicurus ochruros	Х	Х		Х
214	Isabelline Wheatear	Oenanthe isabellina			Х	
215	Desert Wheatear	Oenanthe deserti		Х	Х	
216	Variable Wheatear	Oenanthe picata			Х	
217	Pied Bushchat	Saxicola caprata			Х	Х
218	Siberian Stonechat	Saxicola maurus	Х	Х	Х	Х
219	Asian Brown Flycatcher	Muscicapa dauurica	Х			

			Gir	Velavadar	Lt. Rann	Tadoba
220	Red-breasted Flycatcher	Ficedula parva	Х	Х	Х	
221	Taiga Flycatcher	Ficedula albicilla	Х			Х
222	Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	Cyornis tickelliae	Х			Х
223	Tawny-bellied Babbler	Dumetia hyperythra				Х
224	Common Babbler	Turdoides caudata		Х	Х	
225	Large Grey Babbler	Turdoides malcolmi	L			Х
226	Jungle Babbler	Turdoides striata	Х			Х
227	Zitting Cisticola	Cisticola juncidis		Х		Х
228	Ashy Prinia	Prinia socialis	Х			X
229	Grey-breasted Prinia	Prinia hodgsonii	Х			
230	Jungle Prinia	Prinia sylvatica		Х		X
231	Plain Prinia	Prinia inornata		X	X	X
232	Indian Reed-warbler	Acrocephalus brunnescens		Х		
233	Blyth's Reed Warbler	Acrocephalus dumetorum	Х			
234	Moustached Warbler	Acrocephalus melanopogon	Х			
235	Syke's Warbler	Hippolais rama	X	Х	X	X
236	Common Tailorbird	Orthotomus sutorius	Х		X	X
237	Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher	Culicicapa ceylonensis	Х			
238	Common Chiffchaff	Phylloscopus collybita	X		X	
239	Greenish Warbler	Phylloscopus trochiloides	Х	Х	X	X
240	Hume's Leaf-warbler	Phylloscopus humei	X			
241	Eastern Orphean Warbler	Sylvia crassirostris		Х		
242	Asian Desert Warbler	Sylvia nana			X	
243	Lesser Whitethroat	Sylvia curruca	Х	Х	X	X
244	Great Tit	Parus major	Х			X
245	Thick-billed Flowerpecker	Dicaeum agile	Х			
246	Oriental White-eye	Zosterops palpebrosus	Х			
247	Purple Sunbird	Cinnyris asiaticus	Х	Х	X	X
248	Purple-rumped Sunbird	Leptocoma zeylonica	Х			X
249	Black-headed Bunting	Emberiza melanocephala			J	
250	Red-headed Bunting	Emberiza bruniceps				X
251	Red Avadavat	Amandava amandava				X
252	Black-headed Munia	Lonchura malacca				X
253	White-rumped Munia	Lonchura striata	Х			Х
254	Indian Silverbill	Euodice malabarica	Х	Х	X	
255	Scaly-breasted Munia	Lonchura punctulata	Х	Х		
256	House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	Х	Х	Х	Х
257	Yellow-throated Sparrow	Petronia xanthocollis	Х	Х	Х	Х
258	Streaked Weaver	Ploceus manyar		Х		
259	Black-breasted Weaver	Ploceus benghalensis		Х	J	
260	Black-hooded Oriole	Oriolus xanthornus				Х
261	Black Drongo	Dicrurus macrocercus	Х	Х	Х	X
262	Ashy Drongo	Dicrurus leucocephaeus				Х
263	White-bellied Drongo	Dicrurus caerulescens				Х
264	Gtr Racket-tailed Drongo	Dicrurus paradiseus				Х

			Gir	Velavadar	Lt. Rann	Tadoba
265	Asian Pied Starling	Gracupica contra				X
266	Brahminy Starling	Temenuchus pagodarum	Х		Х	Х
267	Rosy Starling	Sturnus roseus	J		X	
268	Bank Myna	Acridotheres ginginianus				J
269	Common Myna	Acridotheres tristis	Х	X	X	X
270	Jungle Myna	Acridotheres fuscus			L	
271	House Crow	Corvus splendens	Х	X	X	X
272	Indian Jungle Crow	Corvus culminatus	Х	Х	X	Х
273	Rufous Treepie	Dendrocitta vagabunda	Х			Х

Brown Fish Owl (Cat Rayner)

Short-eared Owl (Cat Rayner_









Indian Eagle Owl (Kenny Ross)

Spotted Owlet (Cat Rayner)

Demoiselle Cranes (Kenny Ross)







Savanna Nightjar (Kenny Ross)

Sykes's Nightjar (Cat Rayner)