

INDIA – KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK

19-29 APRIL 2018

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The amazing Great Hornbill

After the last year trip to central India, in 2018 I wanted to visit another wonderful Indian place for mammal watching: Kaziranga National Park in the state of Assam. Having not too many days for holidays, I preferred to spend a lot of time in this Park, visiting all ranges, and not to waste time in long road transfers. I added a day at Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary for primates. The last two days were spent in Delhi for archeological sightings and bazaars of this incredible megalopolis.

In Kaziranga I stayed at Diphlu River lodge (www.diphfluriverlodge.com), a much recommended place, with extremely friendly staff and very skilled guides, even for birding. With them I was able to experience every possible corner of Kaziranga. The National Park, divided in 4 ranges (far-western, western, central and eastern), is world famous as one of the best places for mammalian megafauna outside Africa, and it's true: **Greater One-horned Rhinoceros**, **Asian Elephant**, **Asiatic Wild Buffalo** and **Swamp Deer** (Barasingha) are easy to see in good numbers, allowing long and close encounters. The **One-horned Rhinoceros** was a real delight: they are so common that is easy to forget his rarity and endangered status. In the forested areas it was a pleasure to

admire a very tame family of **Hoolock Gibbons** eating fruits, plus **Capped Langurs** and a **Malayan Giant Squirrel**.

In the rivers and channels **Smooth-coated Otters** were not uncommon. A **Jungle Cat** was seen one evening in the lodge grounds and, finally, a short boat trip in the Brahmaputra River delivered wonderful views of at least 5 different playful **Ganges River Dolphins**, some breaching out of water. Tiger is shy and never easy in Kaziranga, due to the high grass (so high that even Elephants can hide in this green sea). During my stay other people had a distant and brief view. In Hollongapar Sanctuary the stars were the acrobatic Gibbons, and I found a troop of **Pig-tailed Macaques**.

But the best encounter was with an honorary mammal: the huge and incredible **Great Hornbill**, seen on two different nests, giving extremely close views of males coming and feeding the females locked inside the tree cavity! Such a huge, grotesque, colorful and impressive bird is a real must-see!



A Rhino male just before wallowing

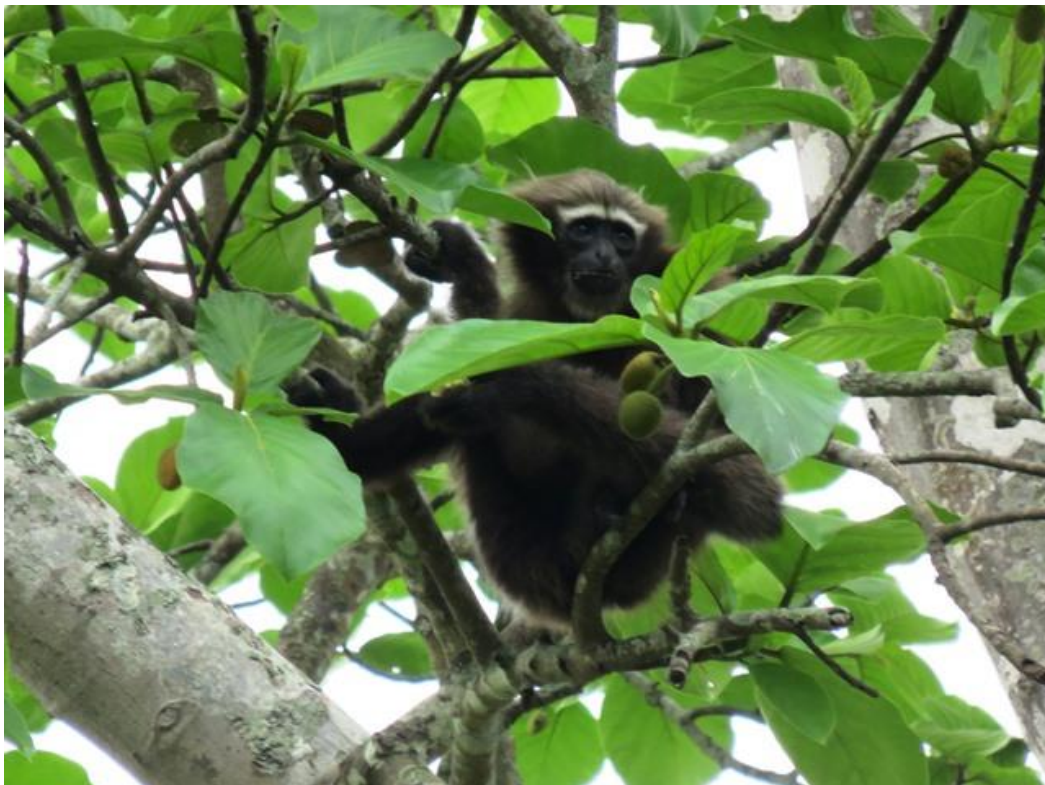
The complete list:

1. HOOLOCK GIBBON - A family of 3 plus an infant in Kaziranga; an acrobatic male with female at Hollongapar Sanctuary)
2. RHESUS MACAQUE – Common in villages
3. ASSAMESE MACAQUE – A small troop roadside, and a solitary male seen from the lodge
4. PIG-TAILED MACAQUE – A troop at Hollongapar Sanctuary

5. GOLDEN LANGUR – Some at Peacock Island, near Guwahti.
6. CAPPED LANGUR – Groups in Kaziranga and Hollongapar Sanctuary
7. INDIAN MUNTJAC – Common in Kaziranga
8. HOG DEER – The most frequent deer in Kaziranga
9. SAMBAR DEER – Quite rare, only 3 sightings
10. SWAMP DEER (Barasingha) – A rich colored deer, not very common but easy to see in central and western ranges
11. ASIATIC WILD BUFFALO – Herds in every range, the horn of adult males are impressive!
12. WILD BOAR – Widespread and common
13. ASIAN ELEPHANT – Seen on every game drive, including a herd of 16 crossing the track in front of us, and a big tusker during the last afternoon!
14. ONE-HORNED RHINOCEROS – Very common! Males, females alone or with a baby, youngsters. To see an adult male wallowing in the mud just a couple of meters from us was a real pleasure!
15. JUNGLE CAT – One comes in the lodge grounds on some evenings
16. SMOOTH-COATED OTTER – 3 in the eastern range, and a playful group of 11 in a remote corner of central range.
17. INDIAN GREY MONGOOSE – One near Guwahati and one in Delhi Qutb Minar Archeological area
18. MALAYAN GIANT SQUIRREL – A singleton in Kaziranga far-western range and another in Hollongapar Gibbon Sanctuary
19. FIVE-STRIPED PALM SQUIRREL – Qutb Minar Archelological area in Delhi
20. HIMALAYAN STRIPED SQUIRREL – The most common squirrel of Kaziranga
21. HOARY-BELLIED SQUIRREL – One in the lodge, and others in the National Park
22. GANGES RIVER DOLPHIN – At least 5 different individual, including a mother with young, in Brahmaputra river during a dedicated short boat trip.

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GREAT HORNBILL - 2 males visiting two nests in the central range, and another singing male.





India is incredible: a such crowded place with such amazing fauna. A real wonder in our planet!

P.s: Sorry for my bad English!