



**TRIP REPORT NEPAL**

**27 SEPTEMBER – 27 OCTOBER 2024**

**4 weeks independent travel in the Terai, with a touch of red panda**

## INTRODUCTION

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### About me

My name is Wouter Pieters, a Belgian national currently living in France.

In 2022, after having been active in the zoo community as a vet and curator for almost 10 years, I decided to return to the private veterinary sector. It took me some time to adjust to this new life, but I eventually realized that I didn't need wildlife medicine to be happy, just ... wildlife. From then on, my wildlife travelling took a sharp increase, with this website and community as a constant source of inspiration and information.

I am interested in all creatures great and small, but my passion lies in hoofstock (antelopes more specifically) and primates. Subspecies sensitive from my past zoo career, and very much attracted to Africa and Asia, I have set my target on seeing and photographing all (read "as many as possible") Afro-Asian ungulate and primate species and sub-species.

### Why Nepal

Nepal has been on my radar for quite some time. I must have seen a documentary on Chitwan NP as a little boy, because I've been dreaming of visiting that place and seeing its majestic rhinos for as long as I can remember. The Lonely Planet Nepal 2013 edition collecting dust on my bookshelf is testimony of this long-lasting dream. Picking a destination from a long list is not always easy, but Nepal had a few strong points:

- 1 of only 2 countries to see greater one-horned rhinos
- Guaranteed sightings of red panda, something not many countries can claim
- A last stronghold for a few ungulate subspecies
- A country small enough to visit most wildlife areas in a single, affordable trip.

## ITINERARY

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The initial focus of the trip was the Terai, the evergreen and humid lowlands at the foot of the Himalayas. But during the planning phase, what started out as a 2-week trip eventually became a 4-week trip once we learned about the (guaranteed) red panda sightings in the eastern Nepal. We tried to squeeze in a visit to Langtang NP to see some Himalaya specialties, but we had to drop it from the final itinerary for logistical reasons. And my girlfriend/travel partner insisted on reserving some time to explore some of the culture Nepal has to offer ... not an unreasonable demand :p

Independent visits of the 5 national parks and reserves we visited are not possible, and visits are to be booked as part of all-included package deals. All packages were therefore booked in advance. Communication with all hotels and lodges was excellent.



Wouter Pieters

&

Laura Vielle

Nepal 2024 trip report: 4 weeks in the Terai, with a touch of red panda

date	activities	accommodation
27/09	Flight Paris CDG to Kathmandu	plane
28/09	afternoon arrival & relaxation	Hotel Black Diamond
30/09	Flight to Nepalgunj Visit of Blackbuck conservation area en-route to Bardiya NP	Bardia Eco Lodge
1-3/10	3 Full days Bardiya NP	
04/10	Morning drive Bardiya NP Afternoon return flight to Kathmandu	Hotel Ganesh Himal
5-8/10	4 full days Kathmandu Valley: visit to Nagarjun NP and cultural trips	
09/10	Bus ride to Koshi Tappu WR	Night bus
10-12/10	3 full days in Koshi Tappu WR	hotel Chintan Chatauri
13/10	Drive to Habre's Nest	Home stay
14-18/10	5 full days at Habre's Nest	
19/10	Morning walk Habre's nest, drive to airport and evening return flight to Kathmandu	Kathmandu Village House
20/10	Bus ride to Chitwan NP	Nana Jungle Resort
21-24/10	4 full days in Chitwan NP	
25/10	Bus ride to Kathmandu	Shechen Guesthouse
26/10	Flight Kathmandu to Delhi	Holiday Inn Delhi Airport
27/10	Flight Delhi to Paris CDG	



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## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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### Transport

There are no direct flights from Europe to Nepal and most easy connections are via India. We chose an Air India flight with a layover in Delhi.

Nepal is not a country where one easily rents a car for a self-drive holiday. What is indicated as a highway on a map is often nothing more than a two-lane road and depending on where you are, that road would either be hugging cliffs in the mountains or would be pot-holed and congested with an assortment of bikes, scooters, busses, sheep and cattle in the lowlands.

All transfers were done by public transport (taxi, bus or plane) or pick-up/drop-off was organized by the lodge.

Nepali domestic airlines do not have the best reputation for safety. A little research showed that Buddha Air and Yeti Airlines are the least unsafe airlines. Most accidents however happen in wintertime on high altitude airports. Our 3 domestic flights were lateral transfers between Kathmandu and lowland airports, so considered relatively “safe”.

### Visa

A Visa is necessary for most nationalities. As usual, make sure that your passport is valid for six months within arrival in Nepal. You can apply for a visa on arrival once you land, but it is easier to apply for an on-arrival Nepal visa online via the official website of the Nepal Immigration Department:

<https://nepaliport.immigration.gov.np/onlinevisa-mission/application>

Print your confirmation document and present it at the visa counter at the airport (you can't miss it) where you pay the fee of 50€ or 50\$. Afterwards you can proceed to the immigration desk for visa processing.

### Weather

The table below (taken from [wildlifeworldwide.com](http://wildlifeworldwide.com)) shows the dominant weather patterns for Nepal month by month. We picked October as this would be after the summer monsoon rains and before the spring heat in the lowlands. October is also considered an excellent time for red panda sightings with primarily clear skies and low risk of snow and rain.

We travelled in autumn, and during our 3 weeks in the lowlands (Terai region) we did not have a single drop of rain. Nepal did however suffer an extreme bout of late season downpours at the end of September, with associated floodings, landslides and damaged infrastructure. Especially the Kathmandu valley was hit hard and over 200 casualties were reported. We luckily missed this bad weather but would be confronted by the consequences of these floodings later on in our trip.

The Western Terai is considered the hottest place in Nepal and during our visit of Bardia NP we recorded temperatures of 36°C. Temperatures in the central Terai (Chitwan and Koshi Tappu) were more reasonable and lingered in the high twenties – low thirties.

The lowest temperatures were measured at Habre's Nest, located at 3000m altitude in the Eastern Himalayas. Daytime temperatures would go as high as 15°C but would drop to 5°C and lower at night. We had a single day with mild rain, but we would be on and off in the clouds.

Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
<b>Summer</b> The monsoon sweeps up into the Himalayas			<b>Autumn</b> Clear skies and pleasant temperatures			<b>Winter</b> Dry but cold with a dusting of snow on higher slopes			<b>Spring</b> Occasional showers and gradually mounting heat		
Monsoon season with frequent downpours			Many birds from the Himalayas winter in lowland Nepal			Dry season in Chitwan NP – best time to see wildlife			Rhododendrons in bloom		
									Sindur Jatra Festival – Nepali New Year		
									Middle and high altitude bird species breeding season		

## Budget

I chose to add prices in my report. This info is most of the time omitted from reports posted here, but it is such an important part of the trip. I just want to give a budget idea to those interested in wildlife watching in Nepal and travel independently.

- **FLIGHTS** We booked our international flight tickets well in advance via booking.com for the very reasonable price of 540€ pp. Domestic flights are in the price range of 100-120€ one way and vary only little between airline companies.
- **TAXI** Transport in Kathmandu and surrounding area is all done by taxi. Airport taxis operate at a fixed prepaid rate which may differ between day and nighttime. In any case, we paid 1000 NPR (+-7€) every time we arrived at the airport in the evening. There is a taxi app available, which we did not install. You need a native person for help since the taxi driver will call you to confirm the pick-up. We usually asked hotel or restaurant staff to organise a taxi for us, and they would secure us a correct price of 400-500 NPR. Expect to pay 50 to 100% more if you hail a taxi on the road yourself. Always negotiate and agree on the price before getting in.
- **BUS** On 3 occasions we took a bus for a long-distance transfer (200-500km), paying 15–20€ pp, all reservation were made by our lodges.
- **HOTELS** We stayed in different hotels every time we returned to Kathmandu in between our trips to the national parks. We chose budget places: the cheapest room we booked was 7€/pp/night, the most expensive was 18€/pp/night. As you can imagine, comfort differed according to the price but even for the cheapest room we had a hot shower, AC and clean bedlinen.
- **LODGES** At all 4 destinations we had booked an all-in package deal (full board and activities). Most lodges offer these packages, but we negotiated alterations to match our expectations. Lodges have been banned from inside all national parks in Nepal, but on the periphery of Bardiya NP and Chitwan NP there is ample choice of accommodation. For Koshi Tappu WR there are basically only 2 real options and for the red panda part of the trip there was just the one option. We chose the following lodges:
  - Bardia Eco Lodge (<http://www.bardiaecolodge.com/>) 500€/pp for 5D4N
  - Nana Jungle Resort Chitwan (<https://nanajungleresort.com/>) 850€/pp for 6D5N
  - Koshi Tappu Wildlife Camp (<https://www.koshitappu.com/>) 510€/pp for 5D4N
  - Habre's Nest (<https://habresnest.com/>) 1750€/pp for 7D6N

Ps: keep in mind that transfers are included in these days, so first and last day can't be counted as full days on site. Depending on your mode of transport, you can still enjoy some afternoon or morning activities on the day of arrival and departure.

## BLACKBUCK CONSERVATION AREA

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*Target species: southern blackbuck*

We arrived on a Sunday afternoon in Kathmandu and had a reservation for a hotel next to the airport (Hotel Black Diamond), for we had an early flight the next morning to the very West of Nepal. We had booked the Kathmandu-Nepalgunj flight with Yeti airlines, which takes around 50 minutes, and our airport pick-up was waiting for us at arrivals.

We had arranged for a small detour to visit the Blackbuck Conservation Area. In 1975 Nepal's blackbuck population was down to only 19 animals and in 2009 the reserve was created to protect this population. The numbers have since risen to over 300 animals, and 30 blackbucks have been translocated to Suklaphanta NP to create a second population.

You visit the reserve on foot, accompanied by a ranger. There is no outer fence, so farmers come in and out of the park to graze their cattle and domestic water buffalo. You basically follow a big loop and you can't miss the blackbuck. It doesn't look like the reserve is much visited by foreign tourists but the regular presence of farmers and the close protection from the rangers have pretty much habituated the animals to human presence. We must have seen over a hundred **blackbuck** in several big herds and small bachelor herds. No other wild mammals were seen, and some noteworthy birds were green bee-eaters and some unidentified parakeets.



## BARDIYA NATIONAL PARK

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*Target species: Western swamp deer, Terai sacred langur, Indian rhino, best place in Nepal for tiger*



After this stop over we continued our drive to Bardia Eco-lodge, our accommodation for the next 4 nights. The lodge is a short walking distance (600m) from the NP's entrance and is located on the bank of the Girwa River. The open dining area on the first floor of the main building overlooks this river, ideal for bird watching. We would have breakfast and dinner here every day, and a packed lunch was prepared for the day. Overlooking the river, we have seen **chital**, **rhesus macaques** and mugger crocodiles.

Our guide throughout our time in Bardiya, employed by the lodge, was Mahdou, and he was brilliant. He would go above and beyond to find us what we wanted to see, with great success despite the challenging conditions.

### Day 1

Our first day in Bardiya was a full day walking safari, and this is when I realised I had made a planning error. I had based the trip too much on the ideal weather and temperature conditions and had somehow completely overlooked the fact that after the summer monsoon, the grass would be super high. The villagers would only start cutting and burning the grass in December or January. So what normally would be short grasslands filled with herds of deer, was now a thick wall of tall elephant grass, hardly ideal for wildlife watching.



The start of our hike took us through the HQ and the ranger's village, and a large troop of **rhesus macaques** was spread out all over this compound. Also to be found on the HQ grounds were several captive animals: a gharial breeding centre, a blind rhino in a large paddock, elephants used by the rangers for patrolling (elephants are no longer used for tourist activities), and several smallish cages housing men-eating tigers.

Despite the tall grass, there were still opportunities to see wildlife: open spaces, sal forest (a forest type dominated by a single plant species, commonly known as Sal tree) and moist riverine forests along the watercourses. While following the roads, we saw several **chital** or **axis deer** herds and **rhesus macaque** troops, and 1 **northern red muntjac** crossing the road. When traversing the tall grass on foot, we saw many fresh tracks of tiger, elephant and rhino. I would be lying if I say I was comfortable all the time, some of those tracks were clearly made that same day and our line of sight was reduced to 1- or 2-meters max. We could literally be walking next to one of them without ever knowing, or even worse ... we could have bumped into one of them.



We enjoyed our first day in the park, but all in all our sightings of the day were limited. Luckily the birdlife was plentiful with several species of bee-eaters and kingfishers seen. Upon leaving the main gate we were surprised by a family of **Terai grey langurs** feeding in the trees and bamboo.

## Day 2



Day 2 in Bardiya was a full day jeep-safari. The langur family was still at the entrance gate and driving through the sal forests we would come across several mixed groups of **chital/langur** or **chital/macaque**. We witnessed firsthand the mutual advantages of these mixed species troops. Chital would react to primate alarm calls, and vice versa, effectively optimising their security system. And chital would benefit from the langurs dropping fresh leaves, normally out of their reach. At one point we parked the car for almost an hour in the forest. Another car had seen 2 leopards cross the road 10 minutes earlier and was waiting for them to make a reappearance. We would hear chital and langur alarm calls in the forest around us, but no more leopard sighting (and no other road to reposition the car).



My main target for Bardiya NP was the local sub-species of Barasingha, the western or wetland swamp deer. Mahdou said that you could normally see herds of 100+ when the grass was short, and he was surprised we hadn't seen any so far. I think he was also surprised somebody asked for swamp deer and not tiger. But he said he knew a place and would take us there. And he turned out to be a man of his word. We parked the car and got out for a short walk. After checking first if there was no rhino resting in a little swamp hidden from sight by some tall reeds (his reflex was greatly appreciated) we continued on foot to find a herd of **chital** slowly disappearing in the forest upon our arrival. But we identified at least 1.2 **swamp deer** among the axis deer. Not the best photo opportunity but good enough to distinguish the barasingha. Again, the plentiful birdlife made up for the relative lack of mammals.

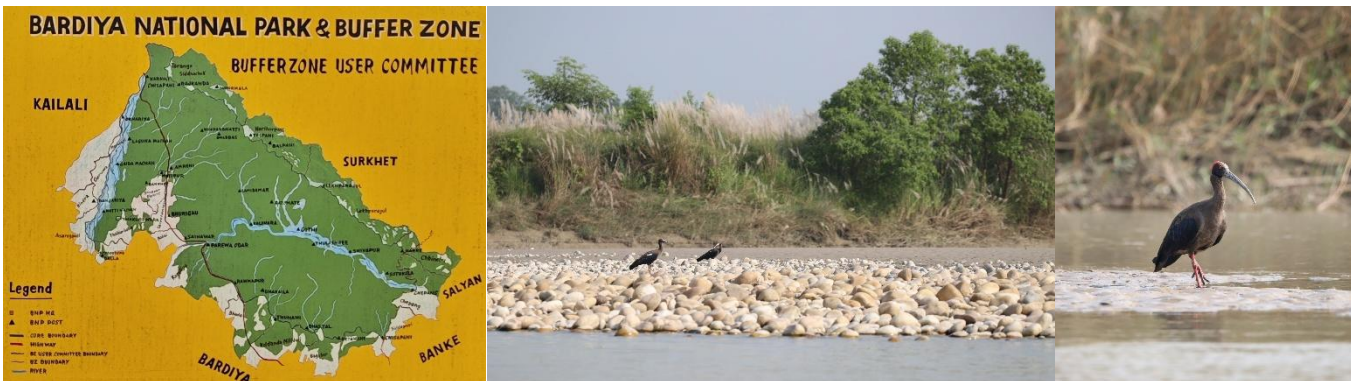
After a quiet uneventful lunch along a river, the PM drive was more productive. Although the classical barasingha fields were void of deer, much to Mahdou's surprise, we saw several **muntjac**, a large Bengal monitor lizard and we took our time to observe a large 100+ herd of **chital deer** mixed with **rhesus macaques** and **terai langurs**.



The highlight of the day however was a **Bengal tiger** sighting. The park has around 125 tigers, but sightings are not as frequent as the better known tiger reserves in India. We had therefore limited our expectations of seeing one. But when that afternoon we saw 2 cars parked on the side of the road, with everybody staring into the forest, we joined the short queue and eventually saw the back of a tiger resting in some bushes. Not much later he got up and walked away parallel to the road we were on, we could easily follow him with the car in reverse until he disappeared in the forest. This experience was testament to one of the strengths of this park. It is so little visited that most of the time we seemed to have the whole park and roads all to ourselves. Three cars at the same spot were the most we would see for our entire stay in the park.



### Day 3



Our 3<sup>rd</sup> Bardiya day was a full day rafting safari. We were taken by car to the northwest of the park, to the town of Chisapani on the Karnali River. We took the main public road that bisects the park in a North-South direction, with dense forest on both sides. We did manage to see a **wild boar** along the way. In Chisapani the boat was inflated and we went downstream on the Karnali River. The first hour downriver we were still outside the NP, but some noteworthy birds were osprey, red-headed vulture, Asian woolly-necked stork and red-naped ibis.



At one point we stopped for a tea break, and hardly 5 minutes later, a **Bengal tiger** stepped out of the papyrus, 200m away on the same riverbank, and sank down in the water to cool down. Coolest random tea break sighting

ever. We observed it for at least 30 minutes but he disappeared in the papyrus when we started manoeuvring for a better position.

We had our lunch break in a watch tower on the left riverbank, on the NP side. And during our break we heard loud noises, lots of yelling and firecrackers on the opposite side of the river. According to Mahdou an elephant must have crossed the river to raid the crops of the villages on the edge of the NP and was being chased by the villagers. We could see smoke on the horizon but no elephant.



After lunch we decided to leave the main river, as the wildlife sightings were scarce, and take a side river deeper into the park. The 2 boat drivers were not too keen with the idea of following a 10m wide canal with papyrus on both sides but were overruled by our guide. I can understand their hesitation because we saw traces of rhinos and elephants everywhere, heard large animals trashing away from the river through the papyrus several times and saw 3 **greater one-horned rhinos** in the river in quick succession. The first one was calmly crossing the shallow river and disappeared in the reeds, offering great pictures opportunities. But the second rhino encounter was slightly less serene. We turned a bend in the canal and bumped into a mother rhino and her calf in the water, less than 10m in front of us. They quickly rushed out of the water, but had they chosen the other riverbank to disappear in, they could easily have overrun our boat. This was enough to give in to our boat drivers and make our way back to the main river. We saw more **chital**, **langurs** and a female **hog deer** before making it back to the river and ended the boat trip with 1 mugger crocodile and 2 gharials.

## **Day 4**

The next morning, we were supposed to have a morning birding walk but given our 1<sup>st</sup> day experience with the tall grass we negotiated a drive instead. We saw the usual suspects: **axis deer**, **macaque**, **langurs** and **muntjac**. We went looking for the **barasingha** at the previous spot and saw 5 animals, in better conditions this time. We added 2 peacocks and 1 cobra to our list and ended with 1 lucky shot: a single male **swamp deer**, his body completely submerged in a swamp, chewing on some weeds ... the perfect shot.



After lunch it was time to say goodbye to the staff of the lodge, we were the only guests, so we had been pampered by them, and to Mahdou, our great guide. The rest of the day was pretty uneventful: drive to the airport, a 50-minute return flight to Kathmandu and a relaxing evening in the city.

## KATHMANDU VALLEY



*Target species: Western Assamese macaque, Nepal grey langur*

The next 4 days we spent in Kathmandu valley without a specific agenda, other than soaking in some of the culture. We stayed at Hotel Ganesh Himal, nothing special to say about the hotel: affordable but without much luxury. We visited Kathmandu Dubar Square, Patan Dubar Square, the monkey temple, and the open-air cremations at Pashupatinath temple. The last 2 locations are overrun by **rhesus macaques**, and not the wary version from the wild, but the stealing and harassing variant.



We used one day to visit Shivapuri Nagarjun NP, in the West of the valley, after having seen reports of Assamese macaques in the park. A day to mostly forget: the 4 km hike with a 700m altitude gain, half of which were stairs, made me realise my condition is no longer what it used to be. And the return trip was just torture and made me realise my right knee is no longer what it used to be. But the view over Kathmandu valley was breathtaking and we did see a troop of macaques, fleeing out of view at high speed in the trees, but good enough to ID them as **Assamese macaques**.



## KOSHI TAPPU WILDLIFE REFUGE

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*Target species: Indian wild water buffalo, Nilgai, Indian elephant, Ganges dolphin, fishing cat, jungle cat*

This part of the trip is where we encountered some setbacks. The logistics and accommodation were set up by “The Explore Nepal”, the organisation running the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Camp. This lodge is located right next to the reserve and has been described in previous trip reports. Note for future travellers, the resident fishing cat and jungle cats are no longer that reliable. They are still seen from time to time but nothing more.



One month before our trip we got an email saying the camp had been visited by elephants and much of the infrastructure had been destroyed. Reparations would take time and would not be finished before our arrival. We were given 3 options: cancel and accept a return of our deposit, postpone our stay to a later date, or accept alternative accommodation further away. Of course, only 1 option was viable for us, and we accepted the alternative accommodation. Unfortunately, this was not in the forest adjacent to the reserve (with potential small cat sightings) but a hotel in Itahari, an hour away from the reserve.

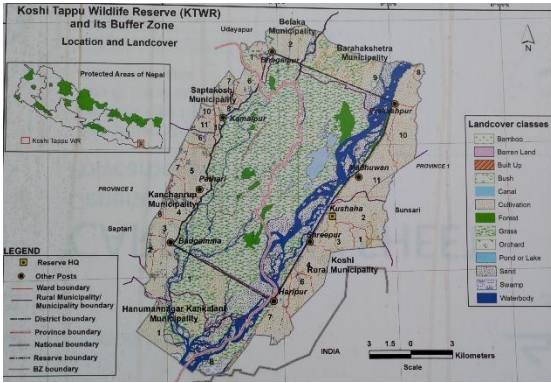
We ended up staying in Hotel Chintan Chautari. The food was ok, but it was located next to a disco so we could kiss our good night's rest goodbye. The 1-hour commute twice a day also did not help much to lift our mood. The 1 bonus to the hotel was a family of **Indian grey mongoose** passing through regularly.

We had asked the organisation to arrange the transfer for us. Since the bus drive would take over 10 hours, we had accepted the night bus option. What we did not realise was that Koshi Tappu is NOT at all a tourist destination, and no tourist busses go there, only local busses. They had reserved the 2 front seats for us, which would give us some more legroom, but this turned out to be more a curse than a blessing. Turns out local busses have no integrated media system and instead have strapped a TV and audio set in the front of the bus. You get the picture, right above our seats. For the whole night's ride, we had to endure Bollywood movies with the volume set to maximum so people in the back of the bus could hear it too. Every time I turned down the volume in the middle of the night, someone would come forward to increase it to maximum again ... aaargh.

Because of severe rainfall the past few days in the Kathmandu valley, several roads and bridges had been washed away. So instead of taking the direct road from the Eastern side of the valley, all traffic now had to leave from the Western side of the valley and make a big detour south of Kathmandu before heading east. This added 3 to 4 hours to our torture bus ride.

Luckily, the bus driver was instructed to drop us off in front of the hotel, and our guide Chakra was waiting for us there. We went straight to Koshi Tappu, but that first day is very blurry in our memories, we were so exhausted.

When the Koshi barrage was constructed on the Koshi river in the early 60's, it created a vast network of reed beds, islands, sand banks and freshwater marshes in the floodplain of the Koshi river. The area attracts large



numbers of resident and migrating birds, and the Koshi Tappu WR was established in 1976 to protect this important bird area, as well as Nepal's last remaining herd of wild water buffalo and other mammals.

There are 3 ways to explore the reserve: by boat, by car/on foot and from the barrage. The principal way to visit the reserve is basically driving up and down a road that runs parallel to the Koshi river, with regular perpendicular side roads going towards the river. Most of these side roads have a watch tower at the end on the riverbank, overlooking the reeds beds and many islands.

For 3 days we explored that main road and its many side roads and had stakeouts from the watch towers. We did not see any wild elephants, but we saw **wild water buffalo** every day in the swamps of the forest bordering the river. Other mammals seen were **rhesus macaques** and **hog deer** and 2 **Indian grey mongooses** at an army check point (they did not like the big cameras sticking out of the car). With the sun going down, **nilgai** and **golden jackal** were seen on every evening.



We made 2 trips to the Koshi barrage. The first time we did not see any dolphins and our guide learned from some locals they had not been seen since the recent heavy rains and the following high-water levels. The must have been looking for shelter in calmer waters. Shakra was so disappointed we didn't see the dolphins that he took us again the next day. This time we were luckier. We had to wait half an hour for our first sighting but then we saw at least 3 **Ganges dolphins** popping up a few seconds at a time for over an hour. Taking pictures was almost impossible as you would always be too late to direct your camera and in the end, we just enjoyed the show.



In between the mammal watching we also enjoyed the birdlife. It was still too early in the season for the migrating birds to arrive, but there was still plenty to see. Chakra is originally a bird guide, and he would enthusiastically shout out birds names. The diversity of wading birds was impressive, as was the passerine diversity (see birds list at the end of the report). Most notable birds were lesser adjutant, open-billed stork, grey hornbill, several parakeet and bee-eater species, black stork, brown hawk owl, jungle owlet, spotted owlet, cotton pygmy goose. We even saw swamp francolin, apparently a birding hottie for which people flock here to see.



On our last day we took a boat drive on the Koshi river. We did not see any new mammals, but we made stops on an island from time to time to go see a specific bird. At one point Shakra was in tears from shock. The recent flooding had destroyed the grassland on a specific island that was known as a breeding ground for Bengal florican, a critically endangered bustard species. All that was left was a barren waste field. Even an entire forested island had disappeared.

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## ILAM DISTRICT, HABRE'S NEST

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*Target species: Himalayan red panda, yellow-throated marten, brown goral*

Habre's Nest has already been described in detail in previous reports, but to summarize: it is a red panda conservation project with on-site accommodations for red panda dedicated eco-tourism in Nepal's Ilam district. It is located almost literally on the border with India and is a continuation of India's Singalila NP. The project was founded and is run by Indian native Shantanu Prasad, who also runs a similar project focused on fishing cat in Calcutta.



We must have drawn the short straw when it comes to luck for this trip, because we had a similar set back as in Koshi Tappu. While we were in Bardiya NP, we received a mail from Shantanu informing us part of his infrastructure had burned down. The kitchen and communal area were still intact, but the building with the 4

bedrooms was completely destroyed. We were offered the same 3 options: refund, reschedule or alternative accommodation. As the latter was our only viable option, we agreed to be relocated to the a nearby homestay, only 8km away. This turned out to be a 3/4-hour drive from Habre's Nest, on the most uncomfortable roads imaginable. A trip that would normally be a single two-way trip experience, was now a daily affair for us. It had a serious impact on our overall experience, as it limited our time in the field, and made night walks impossible. To give an example: the road towards Habre's Nest crosses the India-Nepal border at one point. While the driver can continue, foreign guests (who are asked in advance to organise an India Visa in case of any problems), need to exit the car and take a loop around the border to rejoin the car a few 100 meters further, but also a few 100 meters higher. The organisation finally negotiated free passage for us, but since our Indian Visa was not stamped at a port of entry, every time we had to go through the same ritual of discussing and negotiating our passage, even if every day it was with the same military officer. At one point the wanted to keep our passport for the duration of our stay and that was 1 bridge too far for me, they could have our copies but not the originals. My girlfriend thought I was crazy and was afraid of ending up in prison, but I stood my ground ... and won. So we ended up losing over 2 hours every day.



To resume with the report, we had arranged to be picked up from our hotel by Habre's nest team. They arrived already the evening before, in one of their signature cars, so departure the next morning for an 8-hour drive was very smooth. We followed the Terai lowland eastwards until we made a left turn into the hills leading to Ilam district. Meandering up the hill, I saw 2 primates in a bare tree. Too far away, too high up, and against a cloudy sky, I could not ID them. But after 15 minutes continuing up hill, we suddenly saw them again at eyelevel ... **Nepal grey langurs**, the fourth and final primate to be found in Nepal, bingo. Further up the road, we drove through the Darjeeling tea plantations.

We spent the next 5 days in the forests around the eco-lodge at 3000m altitude. Every day, trackers range out in the morning and afternoon looking for red pandas, while the guests wait at the lodge for the news of a sighting.



We've seen 4 **red pandas** in total, the first one right after getting out of the car on our first morning, less than 500m from the lodge in a tree above a trail. Our most challenging sighting was a panda sleeping high up in a tree, high up on a hill, a 5km hike away from the lodge. To get to a good viewing position, we had to negotiate a 45° angled, bamboo forested hill, with the ground covered in a thick layer of wet dead bamboo leaves. Climbing the hill was difficult, going down again was just outright dangerous.





In between sightings, we spent our time in the comfortable communal hall, reading or playing games. There is an on-site birding hide, with cool birds, but the bird variety doesn't change much over time. Notable birds were laughingthrushes, yuhinas, blue magpie, ... Supposedly a yellow-throated marten makes regular appearances, but he hadn't been seen for some weeks since construction was going on with the next door's neighbours. Other guests have seen martens cross the road that same week. We were free to explore the trails and roads around the lodge, as long as you didn't go too far as to be able to be found in case a panda was found. On two occasions we were out with a guide and found Satyr tragopans.



The only other mammals we saw were 2 fighting **Indian hares** on one of the return drives to our homestay and a **grey-headed giant flying squirrel** in brought day light. It didn't look like this was frequent sighting, because the guide who found it came back running to the lodge all excited, not knowing what it was but convinced it was worth showing to the guests. One afternoon we decided to try for brown goral at a monastery, a 1,5-hour drive's away. They are supposedly very reliable at that spot, but when we got there the whole mountain was shrouded in clouds.



The return trip after those 5 days was pretty straight forward. The Habre's nest team drove us back to the nearest airport at Bhadrapur, and a 50-minute flight later we were back in Kathmandu. The next day we would leave for our last leg of the trip, Chitwan NP.

## CHITWAN NATIONAL PARK

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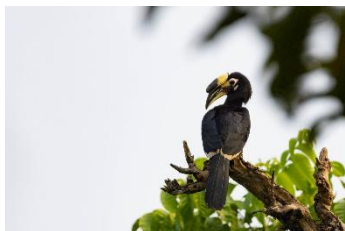
*Target species: Indian rhino, Indian elephant, sloth bear, gaur, Terai grey langur, hog deer, gharial*

We had booked a 5N4D package with Nana Jungle Resort. They had organised the bus transfer for us, leaving at Gongabu bus park at 7AM and drop-off at Danda bus stop at 2PM, where a driver was waiting for us to take us to the resort. A tourist bus this time, and the difference with the previous bus adventure was couldn't have been bigger.

Nana Jungle Resort is located in the western buffer zone of Chitwan, on the other side of the Naraya River that forms the Western border of the NP. The 30-minute drive from the bus stop in the town of Danda to the resort takes you through 20 km of dirty settlements and rice fields. Nothing indicates that you are approaching one of Asia's most renowned national parks. Even standing at the front gate of the resort you are still wondering if you are at the correct location, but once inside you're in a small paradise. The reception is truly welcoming, the bungalows are spacious and very luxurious compared to all our previous accommodations, and the food was splendid. Their on-ground watch tower looks out over the river into the NP, perfect for sundowner cocktails while surveying for rhinos.

### Day 1

Our first day was a bit of a disappointment. The planned afternoon canoe ride on the river was cancelled without any giving explanation, and instead we had a full day jungle walk in the community forest/buffer zone. On paper this might sound exciting but, in the end, you don't cover that much ground. The day started good with a troop of **rhesus macaques** the moment we entered the forest, but the rest of the morning turned into a birding experience with nice views of peacock, pied hornbills and black storks. We heard great hornbills calling but did not see them. Mammal wise we did not see much that day, other than a herd of **axis deer**. We did see leopard tracks at one of our river crossings though. Our first gharials and some pond turtles lifted the mood a bit but when the 2 towers within walking distance, with guaranteed rhino sightings according to the guide, where a bust with villagers cutting grass for their livestock we had had enough. Overheated, sore shoulders from carrying all our camera equipment, soaking wet from the several river crossings, and jealous of all the safari jeeps we encountered, we insisted on going back that afternoon and call it a day. Thank God the food, the shower and the bed were of great quality.



## Day 2



The second day couldn't be more different than the first day. The initial plan called for a birding day in the fields around the community, but the lodge did not object to our requests to change the plan. They had organised a car and at 6AM we left for a morning drive in the buffer zone. It was a very misty morning and within 5 minutes we heard macaque and ibis alarm calls. No predators to be found, but we heard something heavy entering the lake next to the road. Eventually a **greater one-horned rhino**

appeared out of the mist, half submerged in the water. We repositioned the car at the expected area where she would be exiting the swamp and got out of the car for some eyelevel pictures. But we must have spooked her somehow, maybe the sound of the cameras in the otherwise dead silent forest was, because the moment she appeared out of the trees, she turned towards us and mock charged us. She disappeared in trees again before reaching the car, but that was enough action for us to get back in the car as fast as we could.



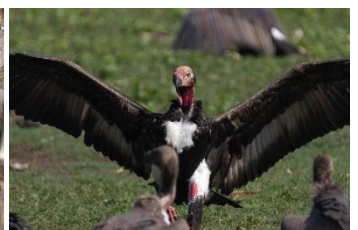
A short coffee break on the riverbank produced several gharial, 2 **northern red muntjac**, and some nice birds: black stork, open-billed stork, red-naped ibis, peacock, lesser adjutant, osprey and pied hornbill.



From that moment on, it started "raining rhinos", as my girlfriend put it so eloquently. We saw solitary males and family groups, rhinos of all ages grazing on open plains, resting in the water or browsing in the bushes. Half of the time they were so close, we couldn't even take decent pictures with our tele-lenses.



The rhino frenzy was only interrupted by another frenzy. We had booked a session at a hide overlooking a vulture restaurant. When we approached the site, the trees were all covered in vultures. Our guide laughed when we started taking pictures and urged us on, saying they were waiting for us. A little reluctantly we agreed, but all he said was "you'll see".



He did not exaggerate. As soon as we had settled in the bird hide, they pulled out a dead goat from a cage and dragged it into the open field. As if it were a silent starting signal, a few hundred vultures rose from the trees around us, descended on the carcass and picked it clean in less than 15 minutes. Over 99% of them were white-rumped vultures, and we also identified 1 Egyptian vulture, 2 red-headed vultures and 3 slender-billed vultures. The frenzy was completed with 2 **wild boars**, and an hour later the field was empty. IM-PRES-SIVE!!!



The rest of the morning was completed with more **rhino**, a herd of **axis deer** and **rhesus macaques**.

The afternoon was quieter, despite looking in all directions for leopard or bears, of which we saw many traces. A very satisfying day but surprised by the low density of deer in the buffer zone.

### **Day 3**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> day we entered Chitwan NP proper. We crossed the river by boat early in the morning and normally a car would have waited for us on the other side. But because of the high water level of some tributary to the Naraya River, again a result of the recent heavy rains, we had to walk the 15km to the car instead of the other way around. Our destination was the now abandoned Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge, to be reached at lunch time. Following the river, we saw many gharials and muggers, a big diversity of birds, several **chital** herds and our first **Terai grey langurs** of Chitwan.



We had one scary moment when we encountered a **rhino** in a small Sal Forest. He made it very clear he had seen us, but we did not see him, not even our guide. We had to pass the forest, no matter what, but did not dare approach the forest further. After 30 minutes the guide went into the forest to assess the situation ... by that time the rhino had probably already left 25 minutes ago. We arrived at the river without further issues and had another nice lunch on a riverbank, overlooking a family of **rhinos** in the water. Apart from many new birds, the PM drive produced 1 more **rhino**. That night we stayed in a homestay on the edge of the park and had the opportunity to help the family with the chores around their farm. Basic conditions, but a really nice experience.



## Day 4

Our 4<sup>th</sup> and final day was spent in the NP proper. A morning drive did not produce much new: a **muntjac**, a **wild boar** and some **chital**. The most exciting part was when we heard some commotion next to the road. We heard small mammals fighting, saw the tall grass move, but couldn't ID the animals, until 2 **crab-eating mongoose** dashed out and disappeared in opposite directions. The PM drive was more exciting with 3 more **rhinos** bathing in a swamp. But the cherry on the cake was watching a **sloth bear** for a prolonged period of time. The driver had stopped to chat with a colleague who was guiding 1 client on foot, when suddenly both guides turned their heads, told us to be quiet and stared into the forest. They saw the bear way before we did, obviously. He was making his way towards where we were, minding his business, foraging and eating. We could anticipate where he would exit the forest to cross the road, but again we had not anticipated being too close for our camera gear, so not the greatest pictures.



Our last activity in Chitwan was a ride in a dug-out canoe to the elephant breeding centre. Chained elephants is not our idea of enjoying wildlife, so we rushed through it. The free roaming male elephant that is often lingering around the centre was not around that day. Our destination was however a tower deeper in the forest where we would spend the night. We had many **chital** settling in for the night but nothing else. The night before they had 8 rhinos grazing below the tower. Guess we pulled the short straw again.



And that concluded our visit to Chitwan NP. I have to say, I was disappointed. Maybe my expectations were too high? I know it was not the best season for wildlife watching, but the low density of mammals in the core zones of the park, and the high numbers of vehicles, did not leave a high impression. Our visit to Bardiya NP was much more appreciated.

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## KATHMANDU

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We took the morning bus back to the capital at Sauraha, the gateway for Chitwan tourism. In the end we were happy we chose to stay at a lodge in the buffer zone, away from the hustle and bustle of Sauraha.

We had another afternoon and morning to spend on cultural stuff before taking our return flight home. We spent the night at the Shechen Guest House, on the grounds of the Buddhist Shechen monastery. As a goodbye gift, the guesthouse gardens were full of **northern palm squirrels**.



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## **STUFF WE MISSED**

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It's a pity we didn't make it to Langtang NP. Technically it would have been possible, but it would have been a rush job with hardly any time in the areas where the good stuff can be seen, like brown goral, Himalayan marmot, musk-deer, Himalayan tahr, Himalayan serow.

I am surprised not having seen sambar in any of the parks. It doesn't strike me as a rare species, but somehow we missed it. The tall elephant grass maybe? Another big miss was gaur. Chitwan NP is supposedly a good place for them, but obviously not guaranteed.

I did expect to see elephants though. I had promised elephants to my girlfriend and assured her we would see them in any of the 3 big Terai reserves, but nada.

Although my passion is ungulates and primates, I do love me some carnivores as well. We were lucky to see 2 tigers, something we had not hoped for. But I did think we would bump into any of the smaller cat species like fishing cat, leopard cat or jungle cat. Or

All in all, a very satisfactory trip with a nice mix of wildlife and culture.

## MAMMAL LIST: 23 species

Common name	Scientific name
<b>Old World Monkeys (Cercopithecidae)</b>	
Western Assamese Macaque	<i>Macaca assamensis pelops</i>
Indian rhesus Macaque	<i>Macaca mulatta mulatta</i>
Terai Sacred/grey Langur	<i>Semnopithecus hector</i>
Nepal Sacred/grey Langur	<i>Semnopithecus schistaceus</i>
<b>Hares and Rabbits (Leporidae)</b>	
Indian Hare	<i>Lepus nigricollis dayanus</i>
<b>Squirrels (Sciuridae)</b>	
Northern Palm Squirrel	<i>Funambulus pennantii</i>
Gray-headed Giant Flying Squirrel	<i>Petaurista caniceps</i>
<b>Red Pandas (Ailuridae)</b>	
Himalayan Red Panda	<i>Ailurus fulgens</i>
<b>Bears (Ursidae)</b>	
Indian Sloth Bear	<i>Melursus ursinus ursinus</i>
<b>Canids (Canidae)</b>	
Indian Golden Jackal	<i>Canis aureus indicus</i>
<b>Felids (Felidae)</b>	
Bengal Tiger	<i>Panthera tigris tigris</i>
<b>Mongoose (Herpestidae)</b>	
North Indian Gray Mongoose	<i>Urva edwardsii nyula</i>
Burmese Crab-eating Mongoose	<i>Urva urva urva</i>
<b>Rhinoceroses (Rhinocerotidae)</b>	
Greater One-horned Rhinoceros	<i>Rhinoceros unicornis</i>
<b>South Asian River Dolphins (Platanistidae)</b>	
Ganges River Dolphin	<i>Platanista gangetica</i>
<b>Bovids (Bovidae)</b>	
Southern Blackbuck	<i>Antilope cervicapra cervicapra</i>
Nilgai	<i>Boselaphus tragocamelus</i>
Asian Wild Buffalo	<i>Bubalus arnee arnee</i>
<b>Deer (Cervidae)</b>	
Indian Chital	<i>Axis axis axis</i>
Indian Hog Deer	<i>Axis porcinus porcinus</i>
Western Barasingha	<i>Rucervus duvaucelii duvaucelii</i>
Northern Red Muntjac	<i>Muntiacus vaginalis</i>
<b>Suids (Suidae)</b>	
Eurasian Wild Pig	<i>Sus scrofa cristatus</i>

## BIRD LIST: 138 species

Common name	Scientific name
<b>Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl (Anatidae)</b>	
Lesser Whistling-Duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>
Cotton Pygmy-Goose	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus coromandelianus</i>
<b>Pheasants, Grouse, and Allies (Phasianidae)</b>	
Hill Partridge	<i>Arborophila torqueola torqueola</i>
Satyr Tragopan	<i>Tragopan satyra</i>
Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>
Red Junglefowl	<i>Gallus gallus murghi</i>
Swamp Francolin	<i>Ortygornis gularis</i>
<b>Pigeons and Doves (Columbidae)</b>	
Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia (Feral Pigeon)</i>
Rufous Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis meena</i>
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Spotted Dove (Western)	<i>Spilopelia chinensis suratensis</i>
Asian Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica indica</i>
Yellow-footed Green-Pigeon (Grey-bellied)	<i>Treron phoenicopterus phoenicopterus</i>
<b>Cuckoos (Cuculidae)</b>	
Greater Coucal (Greater)	<i>Centropus sinensis sinensis</i>
Lesser Coucal	<i>Centropus bengalensis bengalensis</i>
Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamys scolopaceus scolopaceus</i>
<b>Nightjars and Allies (Caprimulgidae)</b>	
Grey Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus jotaka hazarae</i>
Indian Nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus asiaticus asiaticus</i>
<b>Treeswifts (Hemiprocnidae)</b>	
Crested Treeswift	<i>Hemiproctne coronata</i>
<b>Rails, Gallinules, and Coots (Rallidae)</b>	
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus chloropus</i>
White-breasted Waterhen	<i>Amaurornis phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>
<b>Plovers and Lapwings (Charadriidae)</b>	
Little Ringed Plover (dubius/jerdoni)	<i>Thinornis dubius jerdoni</i>
River Lapwing	<i>Vanellus duvaucelii</i>
Grey-headed Lapwing	<i>Vanellus cinereus</i>
Red-wattled Lapwing (White-necked)	<i>Vanellus indicus indicus</i>
<b>Jacanas (Jacanidae)</b>	
Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>
Bronze-winged Jacana	<i>Metopidius indicus</i>
<b>Pratincoles and Coursers (Glareolidae)</b>	
Small Pratincole	<i>Glareola lactea</i>
<b>Storks (Ciconiidae)</b>	
Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>
Asian Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus episcopus</i>
Lesser Adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>
<b>Anhingas (Anhingidae)</b>	
Oriental Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>
<b>Cormorants and Shags (Phalacrocoracidae)</b>	
Little Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo niger</i>
<b>Ibises and Spoonbills (Threskiornithidae)</b>	
Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>

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Red-naped Ibis	<i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>
<b>Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns (Ardeidae)</b>	
Black Bittern	<i>Botaurus flavicollis flavicollis</i>
Yellow Bittern	<i>Botaurus sinensis</i>
Black-crowned Night Heron (Eurasian)	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Little Egret (Western)	<i>Egretta garzetta garzetta</i>
Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>
Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>
Eastern Cattle-Egret	<i>Ardea coromanda</i>
Great White Egret (modesta)	<i>Ardea alba modesta</i>
Medium Egret	<i>Ardea intermedia</i>
Grey Heron (Grey)	<i>Ardea cinerea cinerea</i>
Purple Heron (Purple)	<i>Ardea purpurea manilensis</i>
<b>Osprey (Pandionidae)</b>	
Osprey (Eurasian)	<i>Pandion haliaetus haliaetus</i>
<b>Hawks, Eagles, and Kites (Accipitridae)</b>	
Black-winged Kite (Asian)	<i>Elanus caeruleus vociferus</i>
Egyptian Vulture	<i>Neophron percnopterus ginginianus</i>
Crested Honey-buzzard (Indomalayan)	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus ruficollis</i>
Red-headed Vulture	<i>Sarcogyps calvus</i>
White-rumped Vulture	<i>Gyps bengalensis</i>
Slender-billed Vulture	<i>Gyps tenuirostris</i>
Crested Serpent-Eagle (Crested)	<i>Spilornis cheela cheela</i>
Changeable Hawk-Eagle (Changeable)	<i>Nisaetus cirrhatus limnaeetus</i>
Shikra (Asian)	<i>Tachyspiza badia poliopsis</i>
Black Kite (Black)	<i>Milvus migrans govinda</i>
Grey-headed Fish-Eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus</i>
White-eyed Buzzard	<i>Butastur teesa</i>
Himalayan Buzzard	<i>Buteo refectus</i>
<b>Owls (Strigidae)</b>	
Indian Scops Owl	<i>Otus bakkamoena gangeticus</i>
Jungle Owlet	<i>Glaucidium radiatum radiatum</i>
Spotted Owlet	<i>Athene brama indica</i>
Brown Boobook	<i>Ninox scutulata lugubris</i>
<b>Hoopoes (Upupidae)</b>	
Common Hoopoe (Eurasian)	<i>Upupa epops [epops Group]</i>
<b>Hornbills (Bucerotidae)</b>	
Indian Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyroceros birostris</i>
Oriental Pied-Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros albirostris albirostris</i>
<b>Bee-eaters (Meropidae)</b>	
Blue-bearded Bee-eater	<i>Nyctyornis athertoni athertoni</i>
Asian Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis orientalis</i>
Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	<i>Merops leschenaulti leschenaulti</i>
<b>Kingfishers (Alcedinidae)</b>	
Common Kingfisher (Common)	<i>Alcedo atthis bengalensis</i>
Stork-billed Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis capensis capensis</i>
White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smymensis smymensis</i>
Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis leucomelanurus</i>
<b>Rollers (Coraciidae)</b>	
Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis benghalensis</i>
Dollarbird	<i>Eurystomus orientalis cyanocollis</i>
<b>Asian Barbets (Megalaimidae)</b>	
Blue-throated Barbet (Red-crowned)	<i>Psilopogon asiaticus asiaticus</i>
<b>Woodpeckers (Picidae)</b>	

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Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Yungipicus canicapillus mitchellii</i>
Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos macei macei</i>
Himalayan Flameback	<i>Dinopium shorii shorii</i>
Black-rumped Flameback	<i>Dinopium benghalense benghalense</i>
Scaly-bellied Woodpecker	<i>Picus squamatus squamatus</i>
Grey-headed Woodpecker (Black-naped)	<i>Picus canus hessei</i>
<b>Falcons and Caracaras (Falconidae)</b>	
Common Kestrel (Common)	<i>Falco tinnunculus interstinctus</i>
Peregrine Falcon (Eurasian)	<i>Falco peregrinus [peregrinus Group]</i>
<b>Old World Parrots (Psittaculidae)</b>	
Alexandrine Parakeet	<i>Psittacula eupatria nipalensis</i>
Ring-necked Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri borealis</i>
Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>
Vernal Hanging-Parrot	<i>Loriculus vernalis vernalis</i>
<b>Cuckooshrikes (Campephagidae)</b>	
Scarlet Minivet (Scarlet)	<i>Pericrocotus speciosus speciosus</i>
Black-headed Cuckooshrike	<i>Lalage melanoptera melanoptera</i>
<b>Old World Orioles (Oriolidae)</b>	
Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus xanthornus</i>
<b>Drongos (Dicruridae)</b>	
Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus albirictus</i>
Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus remifer tectirostris</i>
Hair-crested Drongo (Hair-crested)	<i>Dicrurus hottentottus hottentottus</i>
Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus grandis</i>
<b>Monarch Flycatchers (Monarchidae)</b>	
Indian Paradise-Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>
<b>Shrikes (Laniidae)</b>	
Brown Shrike (Brown)	<i>Lanius cristatus cristatus</i>
Bay-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius vittatus vittatus</i>
Long-tailed Shrike (tricolor/longicaudatus)	<i>Lanius schach tricolor</i>
<b>Crows, Jays, and Magpies (Corvidae)</b>	
Yellow-billed Blue-Magpie	<i>Urocissa flavirostris flavirostris</i>
Red-billed Blue-Magpie	<i>Urocissa erythroryncha occipitalis</i>
Rufous Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>
Grey Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta formosae himalayana</i>
House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
Large-billed Crow (Large-billed)	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos [macrorhynchos Group]</i>
<b>Larks (Alaudidae)</b>	
Bengal Bushlark	<i>Plocealauda assamica</i>
<b>Cupwings (Pnoepyidae)</b>	
Scaly-breasted Cupwing (Himalayan)	<i>Pnoepyga albiventer albiventer/pallidior</i>
<b>Swallows (Hirundinidae)</b>	
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Eastern Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>
<b>Bulbuls (Pycnonotidae)</b>	
Red-whiskered Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>
Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
<b>Leaf Warblers (Phylloscopidae)</b>	
Ashy-throated Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus maculipennis maculipennis</i>
<b>Bush Warblers and Allies (Cettiidae)</b>	
Chestnut-crowned Bush Warbler	<i>Cettia major</i>
<b>Parrotbills (Paradoxornithidae)</b>	
White-browed Fulvetta (White-throated)	<i>Fulvetta vinipectus vinipectus</i>
Black-throated Parrotbill (Orange-eared)	<i>Suthora nipalensis humii</i>

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<b>White-eyes, Yuhinas, and Allies (Zosteropidae)</b>	
Whiskered Yuhina	<i>Yuhina flavicollis flavicollis</i>
Indian White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus palpebrosus</i>
<b>Laughingthrushes and Allies (Leiothrichidae)</b>	
Scaly Laughingthrush	<i>Trochalopteron subunicolor subunicolor</i>
Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush (Grey-crowned)	<i>Trochalopteron erythrocephalum nigrimentum</i>
Jungle Babbler (Jungle)	<i>Argya striata [striata Group]</i>
Spotted Laughingthrush (Brown-cheeked)	<i>Ianthocincla ocellata ocellata</i>
<b>Kinglets (Regulidae)</b>	
Goldcrest (Asian)	<i>Regulus regulus sikkimensis</i>
<b>Starlings (Sturnidae)</b>	
Indian Pied Starling	<i>Gracupica contra contra</i>
Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis tristis</i>
Bank Myna	<i>Acridotheres ginginianus</i>
Jungle Myna (Yellow-eyed)	<i>Acridotheres fuscus fuscus</i>
<b>Old World Flycatchers (Muscicapidae)</b>	
Oriental Magpie-Robin (Oriental)	<i>Copsychus saularis [saularis Group]</i>
Blue Whistling-Thrush (Yellow-billed)	<i>Myophonus caeruleus temminckii</i>
Blue-fronted Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus frontalis</i>
Black Redstart (Eastern)	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros [ochruros Group]</i>
European Stonechat	<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>
Grey Bushchat	<i>Saxicola ferreus ferreus</i>
<b>Wagtails and Pipits (Motacillidae)</b>	
Western Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
White-browed Wagtail	<i>Motacilla maderaspatensis</i>
Water Pipit (Asian)	<i>Anthus spinoletta blakistoni</i>
<b>Finches, Euphonias, and Allies (Fringillidae)</b>	
Dark-breasted Rosefinch	<i>Procarduelis nipalensis nipalensis</i>