



Natural Selections

BIRDING, WILDLIFE, AND PHOTO TOURS



Bengal Tiger

India Scouting Trip

19 Nights/20 Days | February 1 to 20, 2020

Home to Bengal Tigers, Indian Leopards, and over 1,300 bird species, India is considered a mega-biodiverse country. On this tour we'll visit some of the best birding and wildlife sites in Northern India, and will not only expect to encounter a third of this vast continent's 1,300+ bird species, but will also have the chance for wonderful mammals such as Tiger, Leopard, and Sloth Bear. We will visit some world-famous sites such as Ranthambore and perhaps the best birding area in India, Koleadeo National Park. This tour will also allow us to explore amazing, historical forts and cities, with local guides who know the nature and history of every site. The final few days will be spent in the Someshwara Wildlife Sanctuary in the Western Ghats of Karnataka state accompanied by researchers working with King Cobras and with luck, we may lay eyes on this most regal and famous of all reptiles.

Tour Overview

Day 1: Arrive Indira Gandhi International Airport (DEL), transfer to hotel
Day 2: Sultanpur National Park
Day 3, 4: Varawal Leopard Camp
Day 5: Varawal to Jodpur
Day 6: Jodpur to Jaipur
Day 7: Jaipur and Nahargarh Biological Park
Day 8: Jaipur to Ranthambore National Park
Day 9: Ranthambore National Park
Day 10: Ranthambore National Park
Day 11: Ranthambore to Bharatpur
Day 12, 13: Keoladeo National Park
Day 14: Keoladeo to Agra to Chambal
Day 15: Chambal to Delhi
Day 16: Flight to Mangalore
Day 17, 18, 19: Someshwara wildlife sanctuary and Kudremukh National park
Day 20: Flight to Mumbai

19 Night/20 Day Itinerary

Day 1, Arrival:

We will arrive on our international flights to Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi. Here we'll be picked up at the airport and taken to the Vasant Continental Hotel/Home. We will all meet in the restaurant for dinner.

Meals: Dinner

Lodging at Vasant Continental Hotel

Day 2, Sultanpur National Park:

Today at Sultanpur National Park we will be birding in a mix of wetlands and woodlands. In the wetland areas we have the chance of seeing Black-necked and Painted Stork, Asian Openbill, Glossy and Indian Black Ibis, a variety of ducks and shorebirds, White-throated Kingfisher and Hoopoe. In the wooded areas we should find Spotted Owlet, Black-rumped Flameback, Common Woodshrike and Red-breasted Flycatcher.

Brown Fish Owl



Open areas are frequented by Black-winged Kite, Bay-backed and Long-tailed Shrikes, Pied Bushchat, Indian Roller, Green Bee-eater, Purple Sunbird, Tawny Pipit and Ashy Sparrowlark. Sind Sparrow is a special bird of the area, being a recent colonist from further west, and we will make a particular effort to locate it. Further special species that we have a chance of finding include Indian Courser, Indian Thick-knee, Verditer Flycatcher and Brook's Leaf Warbler. We may also encounter Nilgai, the largest antelope in India. In the afternoon there will be an optional city tour. Those not wanting the city tour will continue birding for the rest of the day.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Lodging at Vasant Continental Hotel

Days 3 & 4, Varawal Leopard Camp:

Today we fly to Jodhpur and drive

to Bera and Varawal Leopard Camp. This luxurious tented camp will be our base for the next 3 days. Every morning and afternoon we will venture out on Leopard Safaris. As well as the Leopards, there will be plenty of birds to see as well. We will also visit Jawai Dam where we can see Greater Flamingo, Common Crane, Temminck's Stint, River Tern, Pied Kingfisher, Asian Openbill, Bar-headed Goose and much more. In the evenings we may see Indian Eagle Owl as it heads out to hunt.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Lodging at Varawal Leopard Camp

Day 5, Leopard Safari and transfer to Rajasthan. Jodpur:

Today we will have a final early morning Leopard Safari. Following breakfast, we will drive to Jodpur, the second largest city in the state of Rajasthan. Jodpur is known as the blue city as many of the city's buildings are painted in a sky-blue color. Towering 410 meters over the city is Mehrangarh Fort, an impressive fort built around 1459 and the only Indian fort to have an elevator installed. We will have an afternoon tour of the fort, led by a local guide with extensive knowledge of the fort and the city of Jodpur. We will be spending the night at the Marugarh Hotel/Ratan Villas.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Lodging at Marugarh Hotel/Ratan Villas

Day 6, Train to Jaipur:

This morning we will catch an early morning train to Jaipur and check in to the Radisson/Trident Hotel. We will have an afternoon tour of Jaipur which is known as the



Sarus Cranes

Pink City and is the capital city of the state of Rajasthan. Once again we will have a local guide take us to some of the sites around this historic city.

**Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Radisson/Trident Hotel**

Day 7, Nahargarh Biological Park:

In the morning we will be birding at Nahargarh Biological Park and afternoon birding around Jaipur. Some of the species possible today are Indian Scops Owl, Black-rumped Flameback, Rufous Treepie, Black Redstart, Purple Sunbird, White-breasted Waterhen and Whitethroated Kingfisher. In the PM we will visit the Amber Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the famous Hill Forts of Rajasthan.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Radisson/Trident Hotel*

Day 8, Ranthambore National Park:

Following breakfast we will drive to Ranthambore and check into Swai Villas. Ranthambore National Park, due to its varied terrain and abundance of water bodies, has an excellent population of birds, both resident and migrant. In total, a list of 272 species has been documented here. We will also have our first afternoon safari.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Swai Villas*

Day 9, Ranthambore Tigers:

We have two days with morning and afternoon drives into the heart of Ranthambore as we go in search of Tiger and other mammals. Our priority will be to have a sighting of a Tiger, but there are many other animals present with Spotted and Sambar Deer, Wild Boar, Nilgai, Leopard, Sloth Bear and Hyena all possible. Ranthambore is excellent for birds with Painted Spurfowl, Jungle

Bush Quail, Brown Crake, Brown Fish Owl, Stork-billed Kingfisher, White-naped Woodpecker, Tickell's Blue and Taiga Flycatcher, Crested and White-capped Bunting among a wide range of possibilities. Outside the park we will spend time exploring arid areas for Painted Sandgrouse, Variable Wheatear, Southern Grey Shrike, and more.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Swai Villas*

Day 10, Ranthambore to Soorwal Lake:

This morning will be devoted to game viewing at Ranthambore. In the afternoon we will continue with birding at Soorwal Lake. Here we will expect to see Northern Pintail, Pied Avocet, Demoiselle Crane, Black-headed Gull, Asian Openbill, Dalmation Pelican, Brown Crake, Spotted Redshank, Pallas's Gull, Dunlin, Kentish Plover, Green Sandpiper and much more.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Swai Villas*

Day 11, Ranthambore to Bharatpur:

After a final Tiger Safari in Ranthambore, we will transfer to Bharatpur and check into the Bagh Hotel. Bharatpur is one of the best birding regions in India and will be our base for the next three nights.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Bagh Hotel*

Days 12 and 13, Keoladeo National Park:

We have two full days to explore the world famous Keoladeo National Park where the abundance of birdlife, in this oasis amongst a sea of surrounding agricultural lands, is simply breathtaking. The extensive flooded areas support huge flocks of wildfowl with the more interesting species including Garganey, Ferruginous and Knob-billed Duck, Cotton Pygmy Goose and Bar-headed Goose. Pheasant-tailed and Bronze-winged Jacanas, Grey-headed Swamphens also paddle in the shallow water along with the much larger Blacknecked, Woolly-necked and Painted Storks and magnificent Sarus Cranes. A selection of waders should include White-tailed and Red-wattled Lapwing, Green and Wood Sandpiper and others. Dusky Eagle-owl is a particular speciality here, but Brown Hawk-owl can sometimes be found at their daytime roosts as well, with Large-tailed and Jungle the most likely to be seen. The area is a magnet for birds of prey and eagles are particularly well represented. We can expect Steppe, Eastern Imperial and Greater Spotted and perhaps we will also see Booted, Short-toed Eagles. Other raptors include Shikra and Marsh Harrier. In the more wooded parts of the park we will hope to find Yellow-crowned and Brown-capped Pygmy



Blue-cheeked Bee Eater

Woodpecker, Indian Golden Oriole, thrushes such as Tickell's, Black-throated and the stunning Orange-headed. If we are lucky we may encounter the often tricky to find Marshall's Lora. A nice selection of common warblers includes Siberian Chiffchaff, Blyth's Reed, Greenish and Hume's, and with luck we may also see Smoky, Dusky, and Sykes's. Further possibilities among a long list of other commoner species we should find are Blackcrowned Night-heron, Striated and Purple Herons, Indian Cormorant, Oriental Darter, Eurasian Spoonbill, Streak-throated and Wire-tailed Swallow, Bluethroat, Olive-backed Pipit and much more.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Bagh Hotel*

Day 14, Agra to Fathpur Sikri:

Today we will head to Agra. On the way we will visit the Fathpur Sikri,

built during the second half of the 16th century by the Emperor Akbar. Fatehpur Sikri (the City of Victory) was the capital of the Mughal Empire for only some 10 years. After our arrival in Agra, we will visit the Taj Mahal. An immense mausoleum of white marble, built in Agra between 1631 and 1648 by order of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his favorite wife, the Taj Mahal is the jewel of Muslim art in India and one of the universally admired masterpieces of the world's heritage. After our visit we will drive to Chambal and transfer to Chambal Safari Lodge, where we can bird around the grounds in the late afternoon.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Chambal Safari Lodge*

Day 15, Chambal River, return to Delhi:

This morning we'll enjoy a boat ride

along the magnificent Chambal River; a delightfully relaxing way to enjoy some fantastic birds. We will be particularly keen to locate the sought-after Indian Skimmer which is regularly seen during these trips. We also have excellent chances to see both Black-bellied and River Terns, Great Thick-knee, Small Pratincole and a variety of wildfowl and shorebirds. Other species regularly seen on these trips include Long-legged Buzzard, Bonelli's Eagle, Western Osprey, Pallas's Gull and more. We should also find Mugger Crocodile and Gharial and with luck we may perhaps also catch a sighting of the rare Ganges River Dolphin. Following lunch, we will drive to Delhi and check in to our hotel Vasant Continental/Home.

*Lodging at Vasant Continental Hotel
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

Day 16, Transfer to Agumbe, King Cobras:

Today we'll depart for the airport in

time for flight at 7:35 AM to arrive at 1:30 PM and drive to Agumbe and the Forest Rest House (Basic accommodation). The afternoon will be for relaxing.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Forest Rest House*

Day 17, 18 & 19, King Cobras:

Agumbe is located near Udipi town approximately 60kms/1 hour drive in the western ghat range and close to Someshwara Wildlife Sanctuary and Kudremukh National Park. This location is famous for King Cobra and our time here will be devoted to finding this animal, while enjoying the birds and other wildlife along the way. Cobra sightings however, are subject to one's luck. There is a research institute called Agumbe Rainforest Research Station (ARRS) very close to this village that is actively involved in studying of various subjects of nature including King Cobra. They will help search and should have few of these majestic creatures in their

vicinity for study purpose.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Forest Rest House*

Day 20:

We'll have the morning for one last try at King Cobra, and will make a late afternoon transfer to airport in time for 6:00 PM flight to Mumbai. We should arrive Mumbai at 7:45 PM and from there make our connecting flights to home.

Included in this Itinerary

Price includes accommodations and meals, guide and entrance fees to parks, AC chair car, train tickets, sharing Gypsy for Tiger Safari, assistance on arrival & departure and all tours.

Not Included

Personal items such as alcoholic beverages, gift shop, laundry, etc. are not included.

Travel insurance

We highly recommend purchasing travel insurance. In the event that you need to cancel your trip due to medical or other reasons, this insurance will protect you.

Indian Leopard



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