India - Northern

Birds & Tigers

Assam Extension



Bengal Tiger by Adam Riley

Home to over a billion people in arguably the world's richest cultural landscape, India is a country with no equal. This great nation boasts a staggering geographical diversity ranging from deserts and forests to tropical, palm-lined shores and snow-capped peaks. India is, of course, also famous for its rich avifauna and iconic mammalian megafauna, foremost of which is the regal Tiger. Our tour visits all the famous birding sites in the north central region of this amazing country and includes a visit to the fabled Ranthambhore National Park, the tiger reserve widely considered to be one of the best places to see this most magnificent of the world's big cats! Join us in this unforgettable celebration of India's incredible birds, iconic mammals, dramatic scenery, and kaleidoscope of cultures!

Nestled in north-eastern India in the formerly independent Assam, Kaziranga National Park is one of the most spectacular wildernesses in all of Asia. This area gains its fame as one of the last places on earth where the prehistoric Indian Rhinoceros can be found. In fact, game abounds in the watery meadows that make Kaziranga so aesthetically pleasing – no other site in Asia can match the vast herds of big mammals that occur here! We'll

search for Asian Elephant, Swamp Francolin, Pied Falconet and a plethora of other exciting birds and mammals that occur abundantly in this biologically diverse part of the natural world. To boot, we will also spend time exploring the riches of Manas National Park. This park boasts extensive grasslands and broad-leaved forests near the Bhutanese border, home to the endangered Bengal Florican, tricky Grey-lored Broadbill and an abundance of mammals.

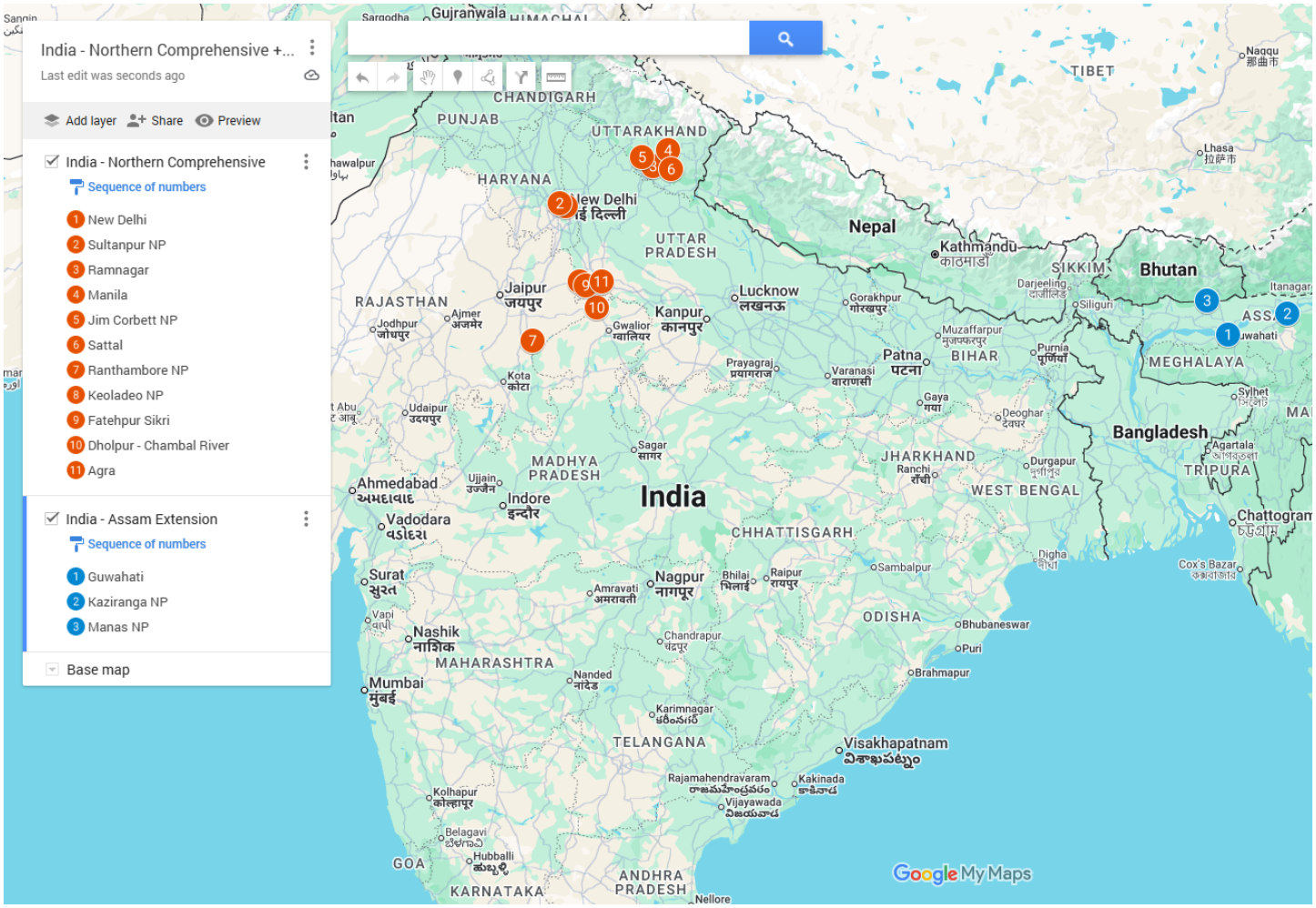
Itinerary & Map

Birds & Tigers

Day 1	**Arrival into New Delhi**
Day 2	**Sultanpur National Park**
Day 3	**New Delhi, train to Kathgodam, transfer to Kumaon foothills & Kosi River**
Day 4	**Kumaon foothills & Kosi River to Manila**
Day 5	**Manila**
Day 6	**Manila to Jim Corbett National Park**
Day 7	**Jim Corbett National Park**
Day 8	**Jim Corbett National Park to Sattal**
Day 9	**Sattal**
Day 10	**Sattal to Kathgodam, train to New Delhi**
Day 11	**New Delhi, train to Ranthambhore**
Days 12 & 13	**Ranthambhore National Park**
Day 14	**Ranthambhore National Park, transfer to Bharatpur**
Day 15	**Keoladeo National Park**
Day 16	**Bharatpur to Chambal River via Fatehpur Sikri**
Day 17	**Chambal to New Delhi via Taj Mahal & final departure**

Assam Extension

Day 1	**Arrival into New Delhi; flight to Guwahati**
Day 2	**(New Delhi, flight to Guwahati) Guwahati to Kaziranga National Park**
Day 3	**Kaziranga National Park**
Day 4	**Kaziranga National Park to Manas National Park**
Days 5 & 6	**Manas National Park**
Day 7	**Manas National Park to Guwahati & final departure**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Sequence of numbers
1 New Delhi
2 Sultanpur NP
3 Ramnagar
4 Manila
5 Jim Corbett NP
6 Sattal
7 Ranthambore NP
8 Keoladeo NP
9 Fatehpur Sikri
10 Dholpur - Chambal River
11 Agra
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Sequence of numbers
1 Guwahati
2 Kaziranga NP
3 Manas NP
Base map
India
Nepal
Bhutan
Bangladesh
TIBET
PUNJAB
CHANDIGARH
UTTARAKHAND
HARYANA
UTTAR PRADESH
RAJASTHAN
BIHAR
SIKKIM
MEGHALAYA
TRIPURA
WEST BENGAL
JHARKHAND
CHHATTISGARH
MADHYA PRADESH
ODISHA
MAHARASHTRA
TELANGANA
ANDHRA PRADESH
GOA
KARNATAKA
New Delhi
Jaipur
Kanpur
Lucknow
Kathmandu
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Birding sites in detail

Sultanpur National Park. Sultanpur National Park or Sultanpur Jheel, as it more commonly referred to, was proclaimed as a national park in 1991. It is located to the southwest of New Delhi in the state of Haryana. It offers an excellent introduction to Indian birding with over 300 species having been recorded here. We intend to spend the morning here, taking in Acacia woodland, the jheel itself, cultivated fields, pastures and semi-desert areas using the trail that circumnavigates the lake.



Red-billed Blue Magpie by Stuart Elsom

The water level of the jheel does vary from season to season and is largely dependent on the rainfall from the previous summer monsoon. We will scan the wetland and its fringes for species such as striking Painted and Black-necked Storks, Little and Indian Cormorants, Indian Pond Heron, Bar-headed Goose, Indian Spot-billed Duck, Gadwall, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Red-crested and Common Pochards, Ferruginous Duck, Grey-headed Swamphen, Red-naped Ibis and White-tailed Lapwing.

Exploring the woodland and scrubby areas may produce White-throated Kingfisher, Indian Robin, Red-vented Bulbul, Spotted Owlet, Ashy Prinia, Black Drongo, Black Redstart, Large Grey, and Jungle Babblers, Black-rumped Flameback, Red-breasted Flycatcher, Eurasian Hoopoe, Hume's Leaf Warbler and Purple Sunbird. With some luck we may find the scarce Sind Sparrow, Black-breasted Weaver, Red Avadavat, Eastern Orphean Warbler, Bluethroat and even Orange-headed Thrush. Raptors that we will be on the lookout for include Indian Spotted and Eastern Imperial Eagles, Western Marsh Harrier, and Western Osprey. We should also get excellent views of Nilgai (Blue Bull), while possibilities exist for Golden Jackal, Indian Fox, and Jungle Cat.



Red Avadavat by Adam Riley

Kumaon foothills & Kosi River. Clear mountain streams in this area support a selection of torrent specialists, notably the striking Crested Kingfisher, Plumbeous Water and stunning White-capped Redstarts, Grey Wagtail, and active Brown Dipper. Rock-lined riverbanks support small wintering populations of two highly desirable, but rare birds, the incredible Ibisbill and glamorous Wallcreeper; the former would be a lucky find while the latter is more regular.

The forests in this area are excellent for birding and may yield Great Hornbill, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Common Green Magpie, Black-chinned



Wallcreeper by Clayton Burne

Babbler and Great Slaty Woodpecker. Along the streams, we could find Spotted and Little Forktails, while the thickets and gullies hold Chestnut-headed Tesia and both Scaly-breasted and Nepal Cupwings, although we will have to have patience and a little luck to see these shy understory species.

We will then enjoy birding the scenic foothill forest along the Corbett National Park buffer zone, strolling a series of wooded back roads and forested trails in search of some delightful species, including Lineated and Brown-headed Barbets, Grey-capped Pygmy, Streak-throated, Grey-headed and Fulvous-breasted Woodpeckers, Golden-fronted Leafbird, outrageous Rufous Treepie, flocks of Red-breasted Parakeet, Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike – often associating with mixed flocks containing a host of bulbuls, such as Black-crested, Ashy and Red-whiskered, both Yellow-eyed and Tawny-bellied Babblers, the very attractive White-crested Laughingthrush, Slaty-blue and Snowy-browed Flycatchers, the stunning Rufous-bellied Niltava, Long-tailed Minivet often perched high in the treetops, White-throated Fantail, Lemon-rumped, Buff-barred and Whistler's Warblers, and the charismatic Velvet-fronted Nuthatch. With a dash of luck, we may even find the scarce Long-billed Thrush, an impressive and aptly named winter visitor from higher altitudes.



Collared Falconet by Clayton Burne

Manila. This rarely visited, picturesque high-altitude region has some exciting birding to look forward to. The surround high grasslands have become one of the most reliable sites for Cheer Pheasant, whilst nearby pine stands make for excellent Koklass Pheasants opportunities. Whilst searching out these two tricky, but very attractive species, we will no doubt come across many other sought-after species such as swirling flocks of Altai and Rufous-breasted Accentors, Yellow-browed Tit,

Eurasian Crag Martin, Striated Prinia, Himalayan Bluetail, Streaked Laughingthrush and Plain Mountain Finch. Our focus on the grasslands is likely to reveal Himalayan Goral, a remarkably sure-footed mountain goat.



Koklass Pheasant by Stu Elsom

Later, we will search the open coniferous and native broad-leaved forest where we may find Oriental Turtle Dove, Nepal House Martin, small flocks of Black-chinned Babbler, White-throated, Chestnut-crowned, White-crested, and Striated Laughingthrushes, the beautiful Rufous Sibia, Eurasian Jay, Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher, flighty Yellow-bellied Fantail, ubiquitous Grey Bush Chat, Green-backed Tit, Indian White-eye, Russet Sparrow and loose flocks of Yellow-breasted Greenfinch.

The forested ridges and scrub-filled gorges could produce Great and Blue-throated Barbets, Speckled Piculet, a host of woodpeckers, including Scaly-bellied, Himalayan, Rufous-bellied and Brown-fronted, both Mountain and Himalayan Bulbuls, Black-headed Jay, Buff-barred, Ashy-throated and Grey-hooded Warblers, Maroon Oriole, the secretive White-tailed Rubythroat, Himalayan Bluetail, the ubiquitous Blue Whistling Thrush, Black-throated and Tickell's Thrushes, Coal (Spot-winged) and Himalayan Black-lored Tits, Black-throated Bushtit, both Chestnut-bellied and White-tailed Nuthatches, Bar-tailed Treecreeper, Fire-breasted Flowerpecker, the stunning Scarlet Finch and often-elusive Pink-browed Rosefinch. The oak forests are also home to some new mammals, including Nepal Grey Langur and the voracious Yellow-throated Marten.

Raptors are commonly seen soaring along the steep ridges and we will watch for Bearded, the Huge Cinereous, Himalayan and Griffon Vultures as well as Himalayan Buzzard as they take to the thermals.



Ibisbill by Adam Riley

Jim Corbett National Park. From our comfortable lodge located in the buffer zone, we'll visit various sectors of the park's core in open safari vehicles. The park has several habitats, varying from sandy grasslands, rocky riverbeds (mostly dry outside of the monsoon season), and thick Sal and Teak Forests.

Kalij Pheasants are likely to scatter off the sandy tracks as we make our way through the park, where we'll be targeting the likes of Great and Oriental Pied Hornbills, Slaty-headed and Plum-headed Parakeets, Asian Woolly-necked and Black Storks, and a pile of woodpeckers such as Streak-throated and Fulvous-breasted Woodpeckers, Black-rumped, Himalayan, and Greater Flameback's.

More widespread species we can may come across are Oriental Honey Buzzard, Black and Crested Serpent Eagles, Alexandrine and Rose-ringed Parakeets, Collared Scops Owl, Brown Wood Owl, Jungle Owlet, Crested Treeswift, Crested, Pied, Stork-billed and White-throated Kingfishers, Blue-tailed and Asian Green Bee-eaters, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Black, White-bellied, Greater Racket-tailed and scarcer Lesser Racket-tailed Drongos, Rufous Treepie, Black-chinned, Yellow-eyed and Jungle Babblers, White-browed Fantail, Oriental Magpie Robin, Indian Roller, Pied Bush Chat, Red-billed Blue Magpie and White-rumped Shama.



Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch by Paul Varney

Mammals are plentiful in number, and we can expect to see Chital (White-spotted Deer), Northern Red Muntjac, endangered Hog Deer, Sambar, Wild Boar, Northern Plains Gray Langur and Rhesus Macaque. Bengal Tiger are also present in the park, but they are elusive here and only occasionally seen.

During the heat of the day, the park closes, and we'll head back to our lodge to enjoy lunch and some downtown. The lodge gardens and surrounds may turn up the commonly seen Egyptian Vulture, Blyth's Swift, Dusky Crag Martin, or Bank Myna. The pastoral farmlands often have a few White-rumped and Red-headed Vultures lurking, whilst Indian Roller, Common Tailorbird, Brown Rock Chat and Yellow-throated Sparrow abound.

Kosi River Barrage. A quick stop at this artificial lake often produces hundreds of Ruddy Shelduck, a smattering of Gadwall and Common Pochard as well as Streak-throated Swallows overhead.



Kalij Pheasant by Stu Elsom

Sattal. We'll take a train journey to Kathgodam (timber depot), in the Kumaon Himalaya foothills. From the train station, we will ascend to the hill town of Sattal (7 lakes). This popular tourist area is set in well-wooded hillsides surrounding seven lakes, which provide fantastic mid-altitude birding at around 1,500masl (4,500ft).



Displaying Indian Peafowl by David Hoddinott

We'll work our way along the main roads, taking opportune detours down various side roads as we find flocks. The surrounding habitat comprises fields, scrub and taller woodland which supports the likes of Mountain Hawk-Eagle, Kalij Pheasant, Slaty-headed Parakeet, Red-billed Blue Magpie, Grey Treepie, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler, Maroon Oriole, Greater Flameback, Slaty-blue Flycatcher, Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush, White-crested Laughingthrush, Golden Bush Robin, Rufous-breasted and Black-throated Accentors, Blue-fronted and Blue-capped Redstarts, Green-tailed and (Eastern) Crimson Sunbird, White-capped Bunting and Common Rosefinch.

Birding side roads and forest trails may also reveal Lesser Yellownape, Siberian Rubythroat, Grey-winged Blackbird, Blue-winged Minla, Black and Ashy Bulbuls, Himalayan Black-lored Tit, Common Green Magpie, Red-billed Leothrix, Speckled Piculet, Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher, Rufous Sibia, Whistler's Warbler and the cryptic Scaly-breasted Cupwing. With a bit of luck, we may find a day roosting Tawny Fish Owl, or Brown Dipper on the rivers and streams.



Grey-winged Blackbird by Clayton Burne

Time permitting, we may visit a hide where Rufous-throated Partridge occasionally visits, alongside Grey Treepie, Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush, Red-billed Leothrix, Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch and Kalij Pheasant.

Ranthambhore National Park. With our time in the Himalayas over, we switch our attention to the deciduous forests, woodlands, and lakes of the central plateau. A train ride will take us to the famous Ranthambhore National Park.

The tropical dry deciduous and thorn forest covers an area of more than 1,300km2 (500m2); needless to say, there is plenty of area to roam! Dominated by the 10th century Ranthambhore Fort which sits atop a plateau 700ft above the plains, this scenic reserve

contains high concentrations of herbivores such as Chital (Spotted Deer), Sambar and Wild Boar, and it is this abundance of prey species that supports one of the healthiest populations of Tiger anywhere on Earth. Locating these magnificent cats requires a combination of skill and patience – and, of course, a small dose of luck!



Plum-headed Parakeets by Adam Riley

We will use open-top jeeps and/or canter vans to explore the park in search of Tigers, watching for tell-tale signs such as pugmarks or scat in the road and listening for the alarm calls of Sambar, Chital, Southern Plains Grey Langurs and Indian Peafowl. With luck, these will lead us to a Tiger padding along a dusty track or sprawled out in the dappled sunlight of a bamboo thicket. Looking into the amber eyes of this, the largest of all the big cats, undoubtedly ranks as one of the world's ultimate wildlife experiences! In addition to Tigers and their favourite prey species, during our safari drives, we may also come across Ruddy Mongoose or even Jungle Cat, Leopard, and Sloth Bear.

Although our main reason for visiting Ranthambhore is to search for Tigers, the rich woods and meadows of this scenically stunning park also offer excellent birding and the valley floors support good numbers of Painted Spurfowl, Jungle and Rock Bush Quail, the uncommon White-naped Woodpecker, Indian Scops Owl, Yellow-footed Green Pigeon, Alexandrine and Plum-headed Parakeets, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Sirkeer Malkoha, Common Iora, White-bellied Drongo, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher (which can often be located by its sweet song given from dense bamboo patches), the active White-browed Fantail, Grey-breasted and Rufous-fronted Prinias and Yellow-throated Sparrow.



Rufous Treepie by Adam Riley

While in the area, we will also keep our eyes peeled for Indian Vulture, Pallid Harrier, Shikra, Bonelli's Eagle, and Crested Serpent Eagle.

We will also take the opportunity to bird around our lodge, which regularly produces the endemic Painted Sandgrouse, Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Indian Roller, Indian Stone-curlew, Brahminy Starling, Common Woodshrike and Ashy-crowned sparrow-Lark, whilst a good degree of luck is required to find Marshall's Iora.

Soorwal Lake. If time permits, we may visit this lake to search for a host of water associated birds that could include Dalmatian and Great White Pelicans, Spotted Redshank, Temminck's Stint, Common Ringed Plover, Indian Courser, Indian Stone-curlew,

Green Bee-eater, Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark, Indian Bush Lark, Moustached Warbler, Ashy and Yellow-bellied Prinias, Rosy Starling and the ever-popular Greater Painted-snipe.

Keoladeo National Park. We will base ourselves a few minutes from the entrance to the incredible Keoladeo National Park. Usually known simply as 'Bharatpur', the extensive series of shallow ponds were artificially created as a duck-shooting preserve by a former Maharaja of Bharatpur but is now a wetland sanctuary attracting thousands of wintering waterfowl, waders, cranes and raptors.

We'll explore the riches of this amazing reserve on foot and by bicycle rickshaw, following the network of raised dykes that criss-cross the labyrinth of ponds. Scanning through the waterbirds is usually our priority and we will likely be overwhelmed by the staggering numbers of species.



Painted Spurfowl by Adam Riley

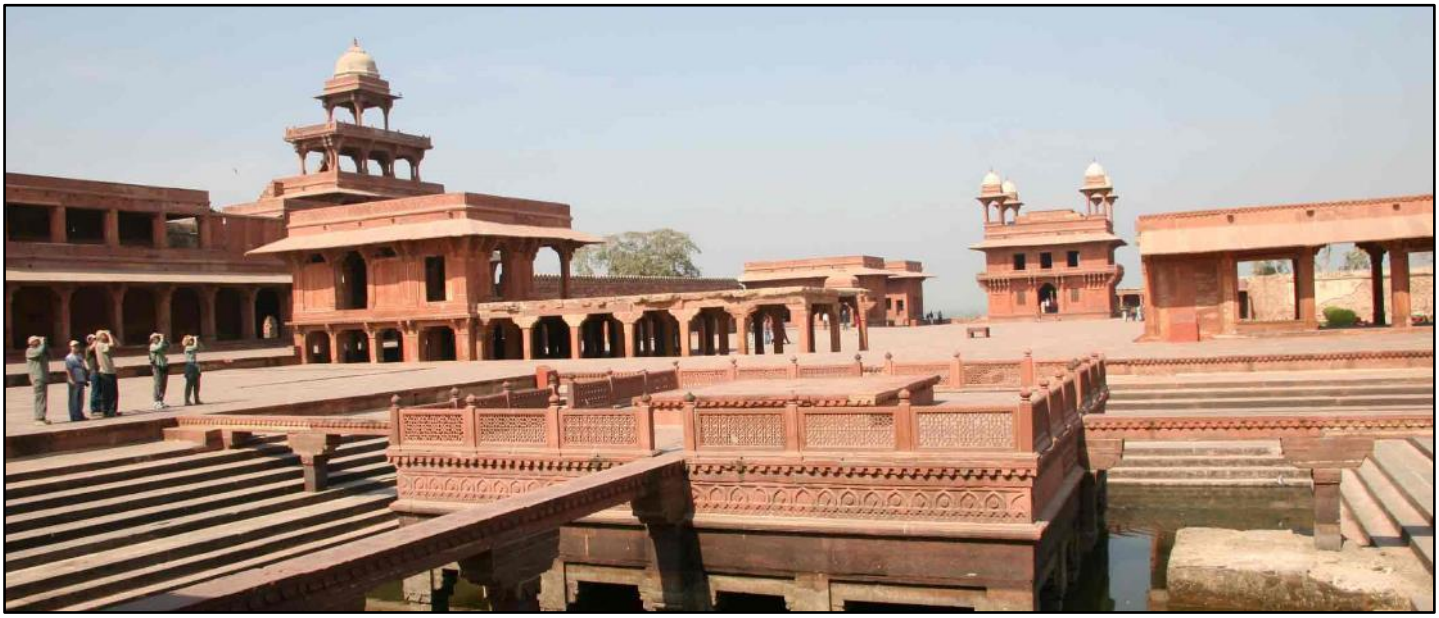
Possibilities include the beautiful Bar-headed Goose, whose migration sees them travelling from northern China over the high Himalayan Mountain ranges to winter here on the plains. Other species may include Garganey, Northern Pintail, Lesser Whistling, Indian Spot-billed and Ferruginous Ducks, Red-crested Pochard, Cotton Pygmy Goose, Common and Pied Kingfishers, Little and Indian Cormorants, Oriental Darter, Grey and Purple Herons, Great, Yellow-billed and Little Egrets, Black-crowned Night Heron, Painted, Woolly-necked and Black-necked Storks, Asian Openbill, Black-headed Ibis, Eurasian Spoonbill, Pheasant-tailed and Bronze-winged Jacanas, White-breasted Waterhen, Grey-headed Swamphen, Black Bittern and Black-winged Stilt. Regal and elegant Sarus Cranes are often heard calling before they are seen striding over the flooded grasslands.

The marshy edges attract a variety of migrant passerines, including the secretive Bluethroat, Blyth's Reed Warbler, Rosy Pipit, Western Yellow, Citrine and White-browed Wagtails, whilst Wire-tailed Swallows hawk insects overhead. Raptors are especially well represented at Bharatpur, with concentrations of large migrant eagles such as Eastern Imperial, Greater Spotted, Steppe and Indian Spotted being of special interest. Other raptors we may find include Western Marsh Harrier and Laggar Falcon.



Sarus Cranes by David Hoddinott

Extensive areas of arid Acacia dominated woodland and dry grasslands surround the ponds and we will be sure to explore this habitat for Black-rumped Flameback, Yellow-crowned Woodpecker, Indian Grey Hornbill, Greater Coucal, Brahminy Starling, the very uncommon and localised Marshall's Iora, White-eared Bulbul, Grey-headed Canary-flycatcher, Zitting Cisticola,



Fatehpur Sikri by Adam Riley

Purple Sunbird, Baya Weaver, and small flocks of Indian Silverbill. These Indian residents share their habitat during the winter months with a wide range of migrants from northern Asia, notably Red-breasted Flycatcher, the scarce Brooks's Leaf Warbler, skulking Siberian Rubythroat, Olive-backed Pipit and Isabelline Wheatear.

We will also search for the nocturnal residents at their day roosts, including Dusky Eagle-Owl, Spotted Owlet and Large-tailed Nightjar, while a visit to the plant nursery may produce a wintering Orange-headed, Scaly, or even Tickell's Thrush. Mammals we should see include groups of the huge Nilgai (Blue Bull), largest of all, Asian antelope, as well as Golden Jackal, Sambar, and the attractive Five Striped Palm Squirrel.

Reptiles such as the huge Flap-shelled Turtle are often seen sunbathing on dry land, Water Monitors patrol for prey items and Checkered Keelbacks are often seen sunbathing just above the water. If we are very lucky, we may even come across an Indian Rock Python sunning itself.

Fatehpur Sikri. The ancient city of Fatehpur Sikri is an amazingly well-preserved historical city constructed by Mughal emperor Akbar in 1570, which served as the empire's capital from 1571 until 1585. Though it took 15 years to build, it was abandoned after only 14 years because the water supply was unable to sustain the growing population. Today numerous notable imperial buildings and a fabulous mosque still stand, and a visit to Fatehpur Sikri is a truly memorable experience.



Bar-headed Goose by Adam Walleyn

Chambal River. We head towards the town of Dholpur on the Chambal River where we will take lunch before proceeding on a boat trip. Despite the presence of this majestic river, the area is surprisingly dry. We will focus our attentions on the river itself, searching for several river specialists. The endangered Indian Skimmer, one



Indian Skimmer by Adam Riley

of our main reasons for visiting this reliable site, can often be found on islands in the river together with Black-bellied and River Terns.

During our boat trip, we will do a lot of shoreline scanning and this could turn up other exciting species in the form of Ruddy Shelduck, Black Stork, Red-naped Ibis, Small Pratincole, Long-legged Buzzard, Laggar Falcon, Short-toed Snake Eagle, Bonelli's Eagle, River Lapwing, Pallas's Gull, Great Stone-curlew, Sand Lark, Desert Wheatear, and possibly even Indian Eagle-Owl roosting on the small cliff faces.

We will also be keeping a sharp eye out for one of the rarer inhabitants of this river, the unique Ganges River Dolphin that is confined largely to the Ganges and Brahmaputra Rivers and their tributaries. Another rare species we should encounter is the bizarre, long-snouted Gharial – one of the most localised and critically endangered crocodilians on the planet, together with Mugger Crocodile and Flap-shelled Turtle.

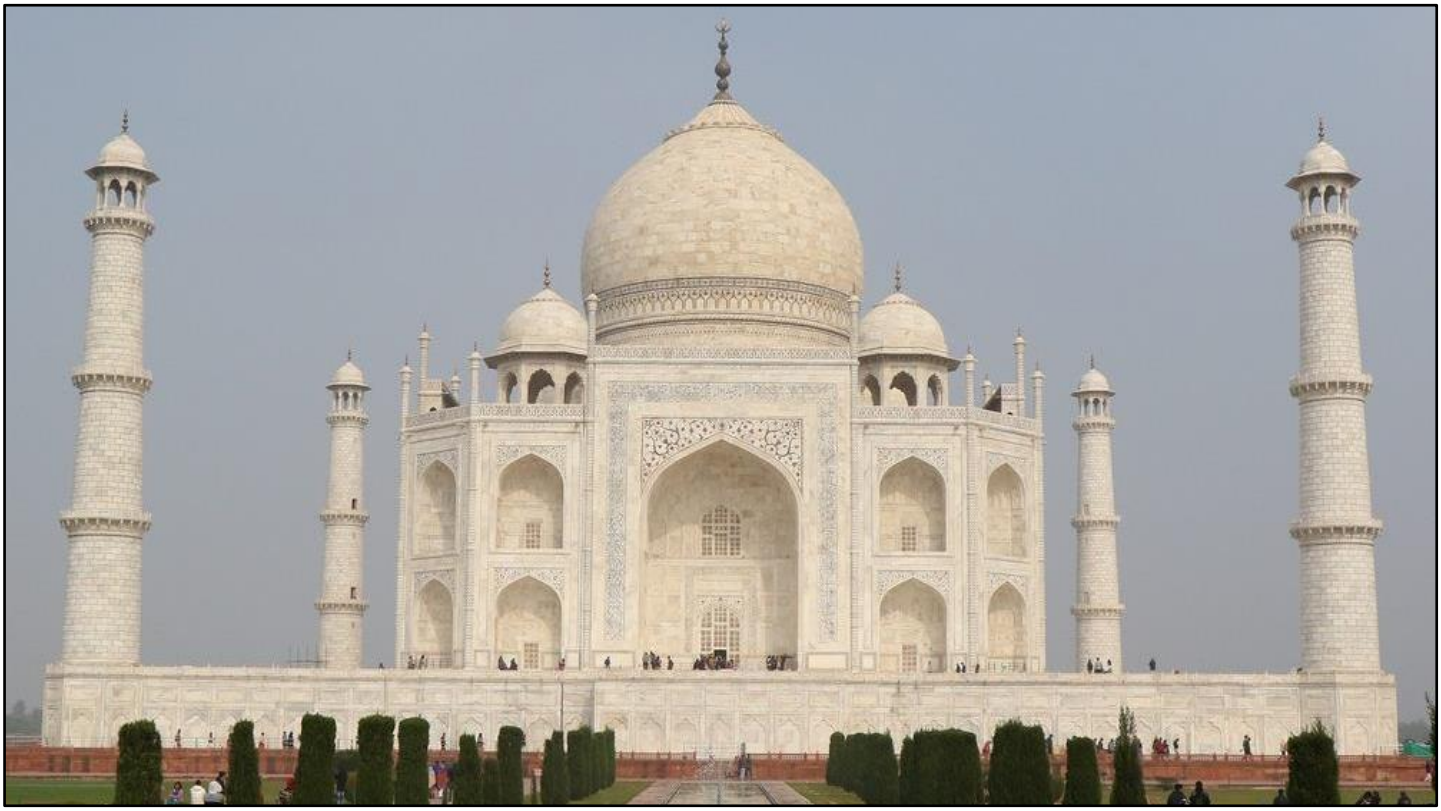
We may have some time to search the woodlands around our lodge grounds, which often hold wintering migrants such as Verditer Flycatcher and Booted and Sykes's Warblers, as well as Indian Flying Fox. At night we will take a short walk to look for Brown Hawk-Owl and even Common Palm Civet, which is often found in the trees around the lodge grounds.



Indian Courser by Clayton Burne

Dholpur area. Heading slightly west of the Dholpur, we'll spend an hour or two birding the grassy plains, interspersed with scrubby brush. This relatively newly discovered birding site has some very interesting species such as the endemic Sykes's Lark, as well as healthy populations of the normally scarce Indian Courser. Whilst walking and scanning the plains, we should find Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Egyptian Vulture, Desert, Isabelline and Variable Wheatears, Isabelline Shrike and Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark.

Agra & Taj Mahal. After a short, but exciting morning, we will head to Agra for the cultural highlight of the trip, the simply magnificent Taj



Taj Mahal by Daniel Danckwerts

Mahal, literally meaning “Crown of Palaces”. It is also a World Heritage Site and is famous for the elegance of its design, its extraordinary translucent white marble dome, its mathematical symmetry and the immense numbers of intricately carved and inlaid semi-precious stones that adorn its walls. Begun in 1632, tens of thousands of architects and labourers, and over a thousand elephants, toiled for more than 20 years to complete this breath-taking edifice, which was commissioned by the grief-stricken Shah Jahan after his third wife died during the birth of their 14th child. This is without a doubt one of India’s most iconic and impressive sites and should not be missed!

In Agra, we will also visit the fabled Agra Red Fort, located in the centre of the city and serving as a monumental reminder of the fascinating history of the region. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is more accurately a 94-acre walled city and was constructed in the 16th century. Exploring this architecturally spectacular complex is



Gharial by Adam Riley

fascinating and from here we will also enjoy further views of the shimmering marble Taj Mahal. In fact, Shah Jahan spent his final years here at the Agra Fort as a captive of his son Aurangzeb who deposed him. Shah Jahan apparently died here whilst imprisoned in a tower with a view of the Taj Mahal.

Whilst marvelling at these impressive historical sites, we will no doubt also keep an eye out for birds, and species that we may encounter include Brown Rock Chat and Dusky Crag Martin which call these buildings home, families of Spotted Owlets in the gardens, raptors (Egyptian Vultures are frequently seen around the Taj Mahal), and waterbirds on the holy Yamuna River, including the elegant River Lapwing.



Indian Rhinoceros by André Bernon

Guwahati. We will make a stop at the local refuse dump that attracts hundreds of regal Greater Adjutant, a rare and extremely localised bird throughout most of its limited range. Guwahati remains the best place on earth to see this stately, yet also very ugly stork, with smaller numbers of the more widespread Lesser Adjutant, Asian Openbill and Black-headed Ibis also being attracted to this site. Citrine and White Wagtails are usually around in good numbers, while Striated Grassbird and Plain and Yellow-bellied Prinias will be looked for in areas of rank grass.



Greater Adjutant by Glen Valentine

Kaziranga National Park. This exciting wilderness of marshes, open grassland, woodlands and forest, which is situated on the floodplain of the Brahmaputra River, will be the focus of our attention. A total of one-third of the entire world population of Indian Rhinoceros is located in Kaziranga and we will likely enjoy incredible sightings of these highly threatened beasts. The area is also home to many eye-catching and very special birds including the rare Bengal Florican,



Pied Falconet by Stephan Lorenz

which will be searched for in the long grass that covers huge areas of the reserve, though we will have to be lucky to see this extremely rare species!

This habitat also offers us the best shots at other high priority species such as the near-endemic Swamp Francolin, Baya, Streaked, Black-breasted and the extremely rare Finn's Weavers, as well as Chestnut-capped and Striated Babblers, Bengal Bush Lark, Rosy Pipit and Siberian and Himalayan Rubythroats. The critically endangered Greater Adjutant occurs alongside the Lesser Adjutant in wet areas, and we will keep our eyes peeled skywards for Pallas's and Grey-headed Fish Eagles. Western Marsh and Pied Harriers can be found quartering over the grassland areas, and the stately Black-necked Stork is still fairly numerous throughout the region.

Kaziranga's network of extensive wetlands is home to huge numbers of resident and migrant waterbirds, most notably the handsome Bar-headed Goose, Indian Spot-billed Duck, Cotton Pygmy Goose, Pheasant-tailed and Bronze-winged Jacanas and the splendid Stork-billed Kingfisher, among many other species. Woodland areas are the best place to search for a number of specials, including the huge Blue-bearded, Blue-tailed and stunning Chestnut-headed Bee-eaters, Green Imperial Pigeon, Black-winged Cuckooshrike, Large Woodshrike, Lineated, Blue-throated and Coppersmith Barbets, extravagant Green-billed Malkoha, four species of gorgeous parakeets (Rose-ringed, Alexandrine, Red-breasted and the scarce Blossom-headed) and a host of woodpeckers, which includes Streak-throated, Fulvous-breasted and Grey-capped Pygmy, as well as Greater and Black-rumped Flamebacks. We will also explore small patches of evergreen forest in the area where we hope to find numerous interesting species. These include the striking Asian Fairy Bluebird, Black-crested Bulbul and Great and Oriental Pied Hornbills. More secretive species include Puff-throated and Abbott's Babblers and White-rumped Shama. Other notable birds that we hope to see here are Yellow-footed Green Pigeon, Common Emerald



Maroon Oriole by Glen Valentine

Dove, Greater and Lesser Yellownapes, Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, Golden-fronted Leafbird, Streaked Spiderhunter and Crimson and Ruby-cheeked Sunbirds.

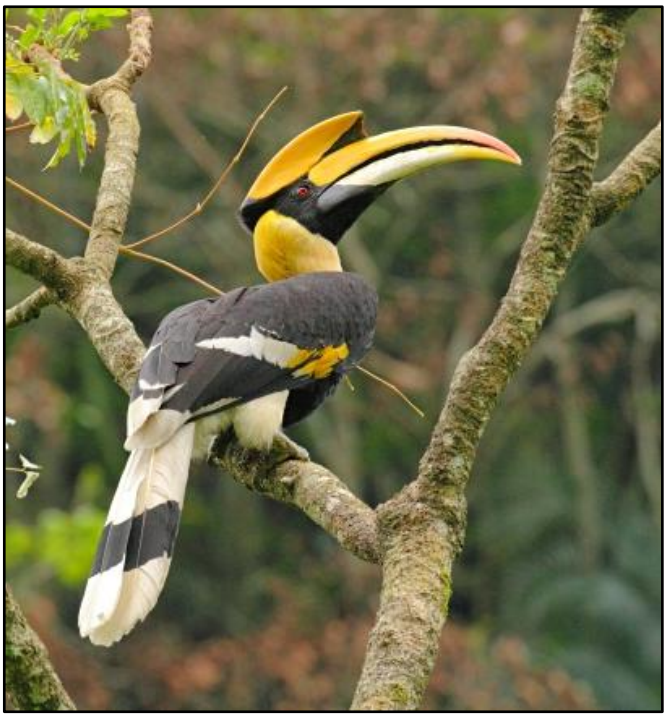


Bengal Florican by Paul Varney

Game viewing in the reserve is excellent and besides the Indian Rhinoceros, there are also plenty of wild Water Buffalo and Asian Elephant. Furthermore, Kaziranga is one of the reserves where Bengal Tiger still occurs in reasonable numbers; here they tend to favour areas where the grass is long and dense, which aids them in ambushing their main prey, the increasingly rare Barasingha (Swamp Deer) and Hog Deer. We will, however, be lucky to encounter one of these regal beasts. While in the forests we will also keep our eyes and ears open for Hoolock Gibbon, Capped Langur, Assam Macaque and Rhesus Monkey. Other mammal species we may find include Sambar and Wild Boar, all of which frequent the grassy, watery meadows in the reserve.

Manas National Park. Situated on the north bank of the Brahmaputra River, the park incorporates the Royal Manas National Park in Bhutan to the North, and the Manas Tiger Reserve to the West. Manas National Park is 500km^2 in size and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Common open country birds seen as we drive about may include Asian Openbill, Eastern Cattle Egret, Black-winged Kite, House and Eastern Jungle Crows, Red-wattled Lapwing, Spotted Dove, Yellow-footed Green Pigeon, Brown and Long-tailed Shrikes, Black Drongo, Ashy Woodswallow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, and Common, Jungle, Bank and Great Mynas.

During our time here, we'll explore the riches of this national park with its extensive bird and mammal list. In the grasslands, we will scan for one of the area's very special birds, the endangered Bengal Florican, occurring here in small numbers and regularly seen from one of the park's viewing towers. Other possible grassland birds we may see include Pied and Western Marsh Harriers, White-eyed Buzzard, the spectacular Indian Peafowl, Collared Falconet - from open perches adjoining the grasslands, Black and Swamp Francolins, Chestnut-capped and Jerdon's Babblers, Finn's Weaver, Bengal Bush Lark, Hodgson's Bush Chat, Red Avadavat, Scaly-breasted and White-rumped Munias, and both the scarce Bristled and Rufous-rumped Grassbirds. We will also be on the lookout for the rare Black-breasted Parrotbill, which has been seen on occasions in tall reedy vegetation adjoining seasonal pools in the area.



Maroon Oriole by Glen Valentine

In the surrounding woodlands and hillside forests we will search for the tricky Grey-lored Broadbill, Wreathed, Oriental Pied and Great Hornbills, Changeable and Rufous-bellied Hawk-Eagles, Black Eagle, Pied Falconet, Red-

necked Falcon (rare), Orange-breasted, Wedge-tailed, Pin-tailed and Ashy-headed Green Pigeons, Barred Cuckoo-Dove, Asian Koel, Green-billed Malkoha, Red-headed Trogon, Greater and Himalayan Flamebacks, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Blue-throated and Lineated Barbets, Long-tailed and Silver-breasted Broadbills, Crested Kingfisher, Assam, Greater Necklaced and Rufous-necked Laughinthrushes, Speckled Piculet, Sultan Tit, Slaty-backed Forktail, Indian Silverbill, Yellow-vented, Pale-billed and Scarlet-backed Flowerpeckers, Streaked Spiderhunter and Little and Chestnut-eared Buntings, while Scaly, Tickell's and Eye-browed Thrushes are winter visitors to these woodlands.

Mammals abound here and with luck we may see Indian Rhinoceros, Asian Elephant, Water Buffalo, Tiger and Clouded Leopard (although we will need a huge dose of good fortune to see these cats as they are very shy and scarce residents!), Sloth Bear, Jungle Cat, Assamese Macaque, Hoolock Gibbon, the scarce Golden Langur (at its only known site in India), Capped Langur, Gaur, Sambar, Chital, Swamp Deer, Wild Boar, Indian Otter and Black Giant Squirrel, while even the endangered Pygmy Hog is a possibility!

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Moderate to undemanding. Suitable for all birding / wildlife interest levels. India is an assault on the senses first time around, requiring a little tolerance to begin with.
Birding Ease		Undemanding. Most species provide good visuals in open conditions. Some forest edge, but true forest birding is limited.
Accommodation		Comfortable to very comfortable.
Walking / Trails		Mostly on gently undulating roads/lodge gardens. Bicycle rickshaws at Keoladeo NP.
Vehicles / Roads		Busses, trains, 4x4 & open safari vehicles. Variable to poor road conditions. Vehicles are manufactured to local requirements, so tend to be a squeeze/on the small size for Western foreigners.
Photography		Good to excellent. From vehicle & in lodge gardens.
Annoyances		Slow traffic, poor road conditions. Spicy food, strong smells of various types. Can be cold at altitude & on early morning safaris.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to lunch on day 17 of Birds & Tigers tour;
- All meals from dinner on day 1 to lunch on day 7 of the Assam extension;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour (including train transport);
- Boat excursion on the Chambal River;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions;
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Twin Rooms: Some of the hotels on this tour do not have a typical twin room setup (ie: 2x separate beds). It will thus be necessary to allocate single rooms to all guests wishing to share in twin rooms for these nights.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- Roads outside of Indian cities are poorly maintained, causing vehicles to travel very slowly. To make best use of our time, we use several train journeys to cut travel times and increase both comfort and safety. Our local agents, tour leaders and porters ensure that all your luggage is stowed aboard at embarkation, as well as taken off and transferred to our vehicles at disembarkation. The train rides are generally smooth, and relatively quiet, allowing you to process photos, update social media or simply to rest.
- Rest rooms on trains vary in cleanliness. Facilities are of the squat toilet type, typically little more than a cubicle with a hole in the carriage floor.

- **We no longer make use of any OVERNIGHT trains on our northern India tours.**
- It is important for the comfort of your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20 kg (44 lb) for check in luggage and 8 kg (+-18 lb) for hand luggage.
- This tour does not require a high level of fitness, but participants should be in good general health and reasonably fit as some of the birding will be done on foot and may require walking for several hours at a time.
- It is not permissible to leave the open safari vehicles within Corbett and Ranthambhore National Parks, except at designated sites.
- If you have any physical or medical limitations or conditions, please notify us in advance of departure.
- For much of this tour we will be far away from modern medical facilities.
- Accommodation throughout the trip is of a good standard, and the hotels and resorts that we make use of range from comfortable to rather luxurious. There is no camping on this trip.
- Overnight temperatures, particularly in the Himalayan foothills, can be quite cool and it is advisable to bring layered clothing for warmth and convenience.
- The open jeep tours can be very cold (especially in the mornings), please bring sufficient warm clothing, including gloves, scarf/buff and a beanie (woolly hat).

Arrival and Departure Details

The tour begins in New Delhi on day 1, and as this is scheduled as an arrival day; you are free to arrive at any time. The tour will conclude in the late afternoon in New Delhi on day 17.

The extension begins in New Delhi on day 1. Depending on flight schedules, we may depart Delhi for Guwahati on the evening of Day 1, or in the morning of Day 2. The tour will conclude at the Guwahati airport on the afternoon of day 7.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi (IATA: DEL) is the main port of entry for international flights into India. Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport, Guwahati (IATA: GAU) is the main port of departure for the extension.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.