Bhutan & India

Assam Extension



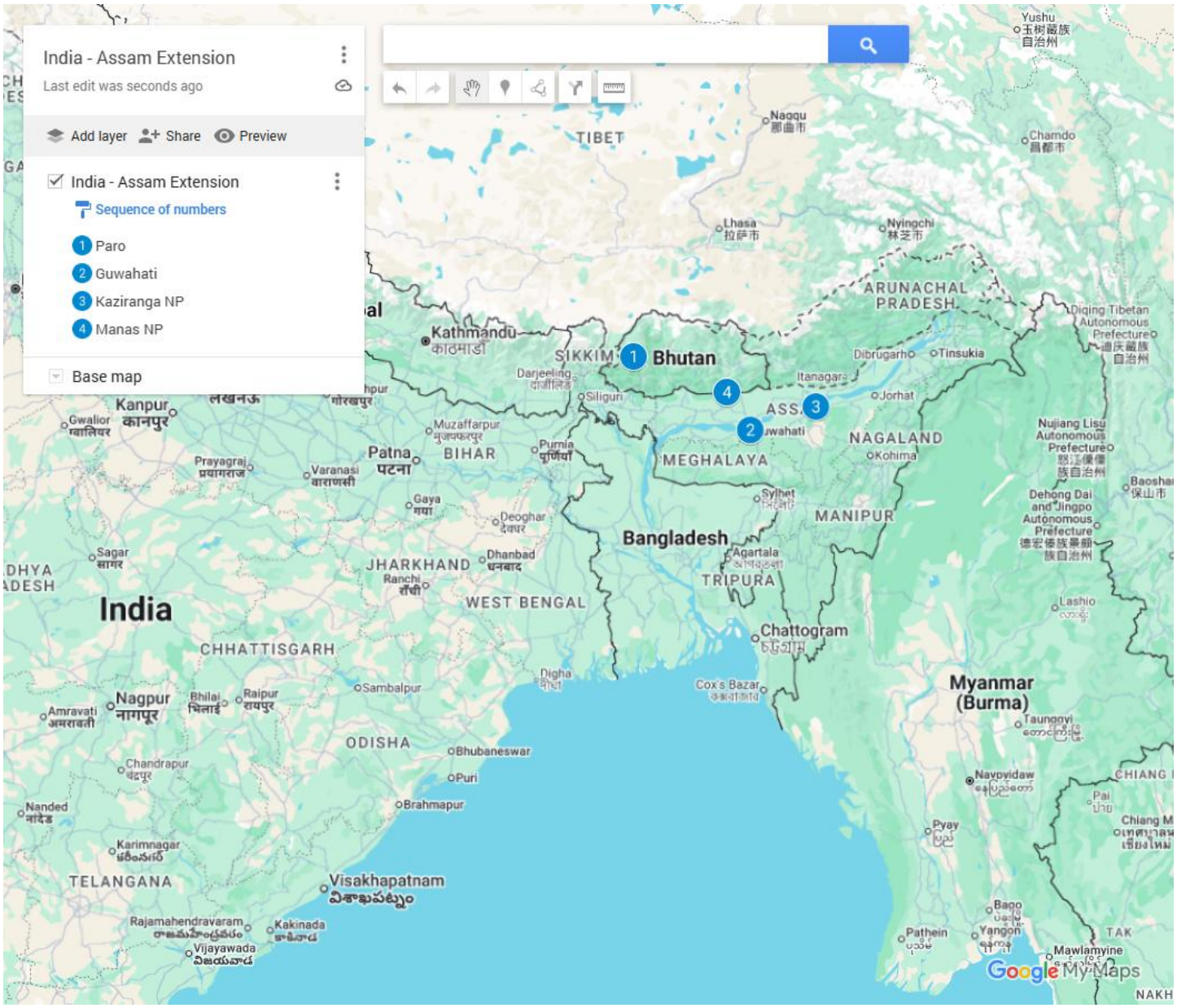
Indian Rhinoceros by André Bernon

Our Assam extension begins in Guwahati and takes in Kaziranga and Manas National Parks. Kaziranga is famed for its Indian Rhinoceros and exceptional concentrations of large mammals, as well as species such as Grey-headed and Pallas's Fish Eagles, Swamp Francolin, Slender-billed Vulture, Blossom-headed Parakeet, Pied Falconet, and Western Hoolock Gibbon.

At Manas National Park, near the Bhutanese border, extensive grasslands and broad-leaved forests support a rich assemblage of rare and localized species including Bengal Florican, Grey-lored Broadbill, Pied Harrier, Rufous-necked Laughingthrush, Pale-chinned Flycatcher, Black-backed Forktail, Great Hornbill, and large mammals such as Gaur. The extension concludes with a return to Guwahati for final departure.

Assam Extension

Day 1	**Paro (Bhutan); flight to Guwahati (India)**
Day 2	**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**



Birding sites in detail

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.



Swamp Francolin 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, 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.



Greater Adjutant by Glen Valentine

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



Pied Falconet by Stephan Lorenz

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



Great Hornbill by Glen Valentine

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.

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 in the Kokilabari area just adjacent to the extreme eastern edge of the national park. Other possible grassland birds we may see include Pied, Hen and Eastern Marsh Harriers, White-eyed Buzzard, the spectacular Indian Peafowl, Collared Falconet - from open perches adjoining the grasslands, Black and Swamp Francolins, Chestnut-capped and Striated Babblers, Bengal Bush Lark, Scaly-breasted and White-rumped Munias, wintering Crested, Little and Chestnut-eared Buntings and Golden-headed Cisticola. We'll also spend some time searching for the area's rarer and more elusive grassland species, most of which are exceedingly localised, endangered and extremely elusive and we'd have to consider ourselves immensely fortunate to encounter any one or more of Slender-billed and Jerdon's Babblers, Finn's Weaver, Indian Grassbird and Black-breasted Parrotbill.



Bengal Florican by Glen Valentine

In the surrounding woodlands and forest we will search for the range-restricted Grey-lored Broadbill with Manas seemingly the best locaility globally for this otherwise scarce and elusive species. Other interesting and potentially new species we hope to encounter while working our way through this bird-rich habitat include Wreathed, Oriental Pied and Great Hornbills, Changeable Hawk-Eagle, Crested Goshawk, Orange-breasted and Pin-tailed Green Pigeons, Barred Cuckoo-Dove, Asian Koel, Green-billed Malkoha, Red-headed Trogon, Greater Flameback, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Blue-eared Barbet, Rufous-necked Laughingthrush, Speckled Piculet, Sultan Tit, Slaty-backed and Black-backed Forktails, Yellow-vented, Plain and Scarlet-backed Flowerpeckers, Streaked Spiderhunter, Large Woodshrike, Maroon Oriole, Pale-chinned Flycatcher, Orange-bellied and Golden-fronted Leafbirds, Grey-bellied Tesia, Yellow-vented and Tickell's Leaf Warblers, Pin-striped Tit-Babbler, White-throated Bulbul, Black-winged and Oriental Cuckooshrikes and Asian Fairy-bluebird.



Grey-lored Broadbill by Glen Valentine

There are also reasonable numbers of mammals in Manas and we can expect to encounter many of the same species that

occur in Kaziranga, although at a fraction of the density. However, the impressive Gaur (Indian Bisson) is one particularly noteworthy mammal that we will be on the lookout for and hope to encounter during our time in this beautiful and wildlife-rich reserve.

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Undemanding. Suitable for most birding / wildlife interest levels & most mobility capabilities. India is an assault on the senses first time around, requiring a little tolerance to begin with.
Birding Ease		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.
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/roadside.
Annoyances		Slow traffic, poor road conditions. Spicy food, strong smells of various types. Can be cold on early morning safaris.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

This tour is made available through our Tailor-made tours department. To explore this offering further for pricing, precise day to day itinerary, inclusions & exclusions, or to tailor the tour to your personal requirements, please contact our Tailor-made team on tailormade@rockjumper.com

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.

- **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.

- 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 vehicle in parks with potentially dangerous animals, 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), do ensure you bring sufficient warm clothing, including gloves, scarf/buff and a beanie (woolly hat).

Arrival and Departure Details

The extension will depart from Paro on day 1. Depending on flight schedules, we may fly via New Delhi, or possibly overnight in New Delhi before flying to Guwahati. The tour will conclude at Guwahati Internation 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.

Paro International Airport, Paro, Bhutan (IATA: PBH) is the main port of entry and Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport, Guwahati, India (IATA: GAU) is the main port of departure for the extension. Both these airports regularly connect through Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi, India (IATA: DEL).

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.