

Tour Report India's Wild South 28 January – 6 February 2025

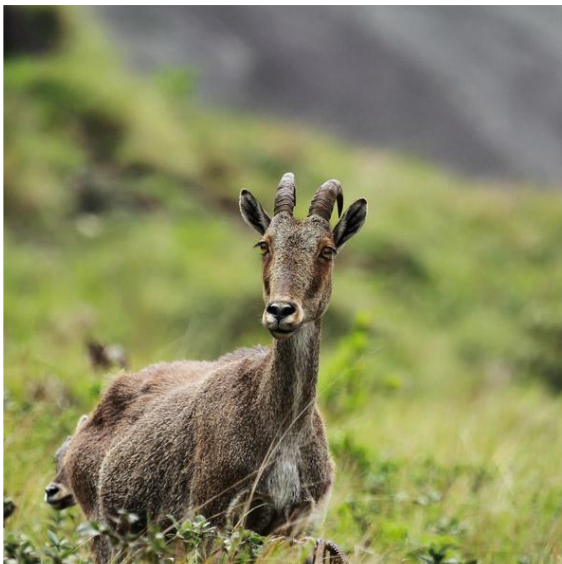
Elephant



Leopard



Nilgiri tahr



Tiger



Compiled by Ashwin HP

We arrived early at Bangalore Airport to collect the guests and picked up three, before meeting the rest at the hotel. 40 minutes later we met with the rest of the group. After breakfast, we made our way towards Kabini and reached Kabini River Lodge well before time and had an hour's rest before lunch and our afternoon safari.

After lunch, we were ready for our first-afternoon drive in Kabini.

Tuesday 28 January 2025

Day 1:

PM Drive: The afternoon drive got us a lot of birds and mammals. We saw a lot of spotted deer, sambar, black-footed langur, striped-necked mongoose, a mother and a cub leopard and birds like white-throated kingfisher, Asian paradise flycatcher, crested hawk eagle and an osprey.

Wednesday 29 January 2025

Day 2:

AM Drive: The morning drive is always a good time to try for a sloth bear, which we spotted as one of the first things entering the park. Along with it, we saw some spotted deer, sambar deer and langur.

PM drive: The afternoon was quiet with spotted deer, wild boar and birds like crested serpent eagle, black kite, painted stork, and Tickell blue flycatcher.

Thursday 30 January 2025

Day 3:

AM Drive: This morning was also a quiet one with lots of sambar deer, spotted deer, wild boar, langur, Malabar giant squirrel and birds like golden oriole, racket-tailed drongo.

PM Drive: This afternoon we saw a tiger walking out of the bush, right next to our jeep. It sat down for almost half an hour, the magge female tigress sat with her back to us and then walked into the bushes. Later that evening we spotted a leopard in a tree.

Along with all this, we saw bonnet macaque, sambar, elephants and birds like a lesser adjutant stork and white-rumped shama.

Friday 31 January 2025

Day 4:

AM Drive: We started off with a big male leopard making a move. We found him multiple times and eventually left him to look for other animals. We spotted birds such as black-naped monarchs, honey buzzards and more. While returning, we stumbled on the same male leopard who was trying to settle a score with another smaller male. We could hear them growling, marking territory and scent marking. They were getting closer and closer and we were at a nailbiting distance as they could start fighting at any minute. At this time another jeep arrived and the two of them went into the bushes only to return to growling all over again. We had exhausted our morning safari time and had to get out of the park. With a heavy heart, we had to leave the leopards not knowing what the outcome was.

After our morning drive, it was time to check out and head to our next destination - Fringe Ford. It was around a two to three-hour drive from Kabini to Fringe Ford. We reached our destination by 1 pm and after another 40 minutes, we were driven by two jeeps down a road that was much too small for our vehicle. Driving through tea gardens and forests, we reached Fringe Ford in time for lunch.

A wonderful Kerala cuisine awaited us for lunch.

After lunch, we decided to go for an evening walk to see birds and other animals.

PM Walk: We saw a lot of things just walking around the lodge during the evening, including a bonnet macaque and black eagles locking talons and cartwheeling their way down into the canopy of trees. We also saw Bonelli's eagle, Malabar giant squirrel and Indian nuthatch. Later in the evening, we went out looking for flying squirrels which we saw going from tree to tree.

Saturday 1 February 2025

Day 5:

AM: This morning we had planned to walk from the lodge to the waterfall. Along the way, we saw a black eagle, yellow yellow-browed bulbul, a fairy blue bird, a Malabar trogon, a Malabar giant squirrel, a bonnet macaque, a blue-capped rock thrush, brown-cheeked fulvetta, a orange minivet and a Malabar wood shrike.

PM: This evening we walked around the lodge and saw a lot of birds including a fairy bluebird, yellow-browed bulbul, Indian nuthatch, and ruby-throated bulbul, we also saw a couple of Malabar giant squirrels.

Night Walk: After dark again we went out to see flying squirrels and saw a few of them gliding in as silhouettes against the evening orange sky, it was just magical to witness, later on, we spotted a few of them using torch light.

Sunday 2 February 2025

Day 6:

AM: Birding around the lodge & travel day

This morning we had a long day ahead of us as we had to travel to Coimbatore, but before that, we had time to do some birding at the lodge, and then breakfast. We checked out early and were dropped off at our minibus by jeeps. Then were on our way, en route to Ooty we picked up our packed lunch and drove to Doddabetta the second-highest peak in south India, where we had our packed lunch and saw birds like, Malabar hornbill, black-chinned laughing thrush, Indian blackbird, oriental white eye part from the birds we also saw Nilgiri langur and bonnet macaque.

We reached our hotel by 7 pm.

Monday 3 February 2025

Day 7:

AM: After breakfast at the hotel we started later than usual, as it was a long travelling day, so we drove from Coimbatore to Valparai reaching by lunch time also birding along the way and trying to spot other animals along the way.

PM: Driving around Valparai to look for elephants, gaur and other animals.

Tuesday 4 February 2025

Day 8:

AM: We drove to the Hairpin bends to look for the Nilgiri thar, which we didn't find so we came back empty-handed, en route we spent a lot of time with the lion-tailed macaque, before heading back to the lodge for

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lunch.

PM: For the afternoon we drove to a closer location for Nilagiri Langur and lion-tailed macaque which we found as soon as we reached our location. For the evening we spent the whole evening with the troops and returned just about dusk to the lodge.

Monday 5 February 2025

Day 9:

AM: We still hadn't seen the Nilgiri tahr, so we headed back to the hairpin bends to spot one. The first try to scan resulted in no sighting, so we drove down the ghat to keep looking. In the process, I spotted a flock of Great hornbills which were having a ball of a time, flying around, hopping, there could have been a good eight to ten individuals both male and female. We spent an hour or more watching their aerial display. Along with this, we saw some chestnut-headed bee-eaters, common iora, ruby-throated bulbul and other birds. We drove back to look for the Thar, scanning the mountainside from a vantage point, I found one single goat, on a rocky slope grazing and moving, was quite hard to show our guests but slowly one after the other they saw it. After a successful morning, we drove back to the lodge.

PM: For the afternoon we went to a viewpoint, due to elephant movement it was closed, but we saw a couple of ruddy mongoose, gaur and some birds around after which we came back to the lodge at dusk.

Tuesday 11 February 2025

Day 10:

AM: We had to check out early with some packed breakfast as we had a long drive to catch our flight to Kochi and then to Bangalore. I on the other hand had to bid goodbye to the group at Bangalore Airport, after handing them over to our representative.

Since no images were provided by the tour leader or participants, stock images have been used on the front cover.

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Checklist for India's Wild South



Species	
MAMMALS	
1	Tiger
2	Leopard
3	Sloth bear
4	Spotted deer
5	Samabr deer
6	Wild boar
7	Black footed langur
8	Nilagiri langur
9	Bonnet macaque
10	Liontailed macaque
11	Elephant
12	Gaur
13	Malabar giant squirrel
14	Large brown flying squirrel
15	Nilagiri thar
16	Striped necked mongoose
17	Ruddy mongoose
18	Barking deer
19	Three striped palm squirrel
20	Jungle palm squirrel
21	Small indian civet
BIRDS	
1	Grey jungle fowl
2	Pond heron
3	Great egret

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4	Intermediate egret
5	Little egret
6	Cattle egret
7	River tern
8	Green shank
9	Wood sandpiper
10	Common sandpiper
11	Common snipe
12	Green Sandpiper
13	Painted stork
14	Woolly necked stork
15	Open billed stork
16	Grey heron
17	Black headed ibis
18	Red naped ibis
19	Purple swamphen
20	Indian cormorant
21	Little cormorant
22	Great cormorant
23	Oriental darter
24	Grey jungle fowl
25	Grey partridge
26	Jungle babbler
27	Rufous babbler
28	Yellow billed babbler
29	Red whiskered bulbul
30	Red vented bulbul
31	Magpie robin
32	White rumped shama
33	Asian brown flycatcher
34	Black drongo
35	Ashy drongo
36	Racket tailed drongo
37	Greater flameback
38	Lesser flame back

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39	White bellied woodpecker
40	Brown capped pygmy woodpecker
41	Streak throated woodpecker
42	Yellow footed green pigeon
43	Green imperial pigeon
44	Spotted dove
45	Blue rock pigeon
46	Common myna
47	Jungle myna
48	Brahminy myna
49	Chestnut tailed starling
50	Blyth's starling
51	Jungle crow
52	House crow
53	Golden oriole
54	Common woodshrike
55	Malabar pied hornbill
56	Indian grey hornbill
57	Crested hawk eagle
58	Crested serpent eagle
59	Grey headed fish eagle
60	Osprey
61	Greater spotted eagle
62	Shikra
63	Malabar trogon
64	Lesser hill myna
65	Tickells blue flycatcher
66	White breasted waterhen
67	Black shouldered kite
68	Black kite
69	Brahminy kite
70	Black chinned laughing thrush
71	Nilagiri wood pigeon
72	Great hornbill
73	Malabr Pied hornbill

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74	Malabar hornbill
75	Rufous babbler
76	Nilagiri flycatcher
77	Oriental white eye
78	Kerala laughing thrush
79	Malabar whistling thrush
80	Orange headed thrush

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