

# Tour Report

## India - Nagarhole's Tigers, Wild Dogs & Leopards

19 - 27 February 2024

Tiger



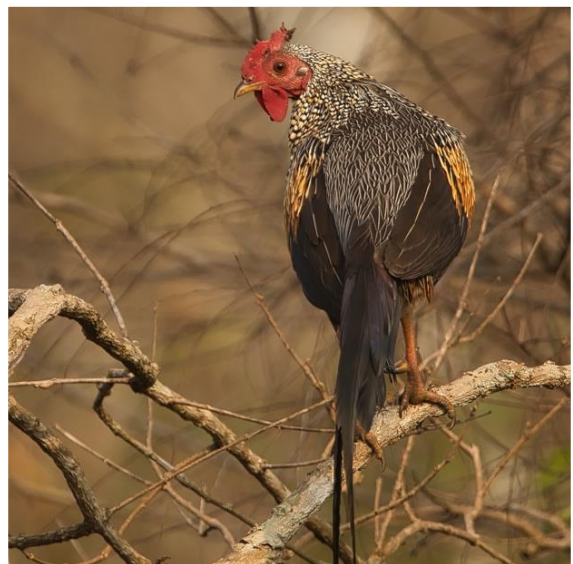
Malabar giant Squirrel



Indian wild dog



Grey jungle fowl



Compiled by Tour Leader, Narayana

## **Day 1: Bangalore Airport to Kabini River Lodge**

**Monday 19 February 2024**

All the guests arrived safely, and we started our drive to the hotel. Since it was early morning and a long journey, we were having a chat in between us until we reached the hotel. After breakfast, our journey towards Kabini began, and we got to see the beautiful rocky hills of Vulture Sanctuary, then straight to the Kabini River Lodge. After the check in, we took some time to rest before lunch because it was a long day and not much rest.

Our first game drive into the Nagarhole Tiger Reserve started at 3:15 pm and we were all excited and eager to explore the jungle. The very first thing which welcomed us was the sloth bear pugmarks, just at the beginning of the drive. Since it was our first drive, we wanted to enjoy and explore the jungle.

The drive was going smoothly, and we got to see many species of birds and some beautiful spotted deer resting along the safari tracks, a lot of langur were feeding and resting on the tree. We also got to see animals drinking water at the water holes in the jungle. After an hour, our driver-guide, Rajesh, said "Tiger, tiger, tiger" – exactly three times! Then, all of us got to see them because she was out in the open and under the tree. She was just sitting under the tree and resting. It was a little hot in the afternoon and harsh sunlight, no wonder she was not at all moving. We just halted there and kept watching her. More than just seeing the tiger, we were so lucky to spend time watching her behaviour. It looked like she had a good meal in the afternoon or in the morning and she was not ready to move at all. We could see her licking her paws, body, and legs, and she also yawned many times. The way she was behaving, I thought she would get up and move, but she didn't. It was so amazing to see her rolling and laying down on her back with all four legs up and coming back to the normal position.

After about 45 minutes, she finally decided to get up and move at a very slow speed. We turned our vehicle and started following her and she kept walking parallel to the safari track, then she finally crossed the road and kept walking towards the water body. She stopped to scent mark on a tree and then she went into the bush. The jungle welcomed us with so much excitement and joy, we all came back with smiley faces.

## **Day 2: Kabini National Park – Morning and Afternoon game drive.**

**Tuesday 20 February 2024**

It was a pleasant, misty morning at the beginning of the drive, the forest was looking so beautiful. We thought we will explore the jungle with a little hope. On the way, we started looking at the birds because the sun was just coming up and many species of birds, like starlings and bulbul, were very active to catch the first light and the emerging insects.

After sometime, we got to know that there was a leopard sighting in one of the areas. As we rushed to that area, we were struggling to see this big male leopard sitting on a big massive tree and we could only see the tail of it. With difficulty, we somehow got to see the leopard, and within a couple of minutes, the leopard decided to come down from the tree. Since it was a little away from the safari track, we got to see it moving from the tree. But we were all happy. We also decided to move towards the waterhole, and as we reached, there was a beautiful Indian paradise flycatcher dipping in the water. All of us got to see that, and then suddenly our eyes went close to the bush, and there this alpha-like wild dog, just came out of the bush and stood there for a second and disappeared into the bush again.

We just waited there for some time. Slowly, this one dog came out of the bush, went into the water and sat. As it was sitting, it drank a little water and ran inside the bush again. We also followed the dog and somehow, we could see the dog standing inside and feeding on something. Then it was confirmed that they had made a small spotted deer kill and fed on it. After some time, the dog decided to walk out, and when it came out of the bushes, there was a head of the deer stuck in the mouth of the dog, it was such an amazing and rare sighting to watch. The dog carried the head and walked for at least hundreds of metres, crossed the safari track and disappeared.

While coming back from the drive, we could also spot the beautiful giant squirrel feeding on a flower of the

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flame of the forest tree. On the same tree, a bright red woodpecker also came and started chiselling the bark, trying to find some insects and worms. It was such a delightful drive to end in the morning.

Our afternoon drive was a little slow when we started, but we got to see amazing elephant behaviour with the calf and how they were protecting it. We also got to see two stripe-necked mongoose. Their interaction was really beautiful, and we spent about almost 20 minutes there. Then, we were lucky to spot one of the uncommon birds endemic to Southern Indian landscape.

When we were coming out of the park, the jungle was becoming dark. We got to know that there was a tigress sitting in the open area. By the time we reached the spot, it was a little dark, but we got to see her. This was our second tiger sighting of the day.

### **Day 3: Kabini National Park – Morning and Afternoon game drive.**

**Wednesday 21 February 2024**

We started our drive at 6:00 am and the weather was absolutely beautiful and very pleasant. We started exploring the jungle and we got to spend some good time watching birds, then there was a huge tusker feeding on the grass very close to the Kabini reservoir area. We watched them for some time and then we went to the area where there was a wild dog sighting in the morning. We rushed to that area, and by the time we reached it, two of them were on the road smelling something. We enjoyed watching them and photographing them. Then, slowly, both of them went into the bush. Within a few minutes, two more came on the road and followed the others.

The afternoon was quite hot when we started the drive, and then later, it became much cooler. The cool breeze made the day pleasant. At the beginning of the drive, it was a little silent. As we reached one of the waterholes, some deer started giving calls, but it was not very strong. We waited for such a long time and left. We also heard that there was a tiger sighting in another place, but we couldn't get there in time. Successfully missed!

Then we decided to check a couple of waterholes and exit the park. As we approached one of the waterholes, there was a leopard drinking water. It heard our vehicle and tried to run, but it crouched in the Baran Lake area. All of us got excited and then became calm, the leopard also was comfortable enough to sit and not to run away. We also didn't make any noise, we wanted to watch him longer than seeing him as a glimpse. After a minute, he was relaxed and turned around and was lying down without any disturbance. We got to photograph him for a good five minutes, and then we could hear another vehicle approaching from afar, and the engine sound was quite loud. We knew that he would move away now, and all of us were ready to see him moving. As we expected, he quickly went into the lake bund and sat in between the small bamboo sapling. We got to see him for another couple of minutes and left the park!

### **Day 4: Kabini National Park – Morning and Afternoon game drive.**

**Thursday 22 February 2024**

Today, we took the B zone in the morning and wanted to explore the jungle and look for different things. As we were exploring the jungle, we got to see heard of gaur, and they were all sitting very close to the road, some of them got up and started feeding on the grass. We were also lucky to see the gaur using their Jacob's sense organ to smell something from the ground. It was a real treat to experience. After that, we were enjoying watching birds and other mammals, then came back to the lodge.

The afternoon drive was also very relaxed, and we got to see some elephants drinking water from the small pond. Also, one of the elephant came charging at us. It looked like they were not really comfortable with the people and vehicles. All of them were a little agitated. But somehow all came and drank water for some time and went back into the jungle. It was a really pleasant and relaxed drive and not just running behind the predators.

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**Day 5: Kabini National Park – Morning and Afternoon game drive.****Friday 23 February 2024**

It was a beautiful cold morning in Kabini. The whole park was active because there were so many alarm calls everywhere, but nothing came of the bushes. It was almost about the end of the morning safari time, and we thought we would try and check one of the areas of the park.

As we were driving around and cutting through the moist deciduous forest with little green patches of the forest, suddenly, I saw some white patches emerging from the bushes. And I was so sure that it was a tiger, and said it in a loud hushed tone, "Tiger! Tiger! Tiger!"

Then we stopped the vehicle and just wanted to make sure this was the female tiger we were looking at and not a young, shy animal. We realised that she was one of the boldest tigresses in this area, and she would not run away like any other Tiger. We repositioned the vehicle to make sure that all of us would get a good view, and she gave us a good time to photograph her.

As she came on the road, she kept looking back and not moving at all. Then it was confirmed that she was not comfortable and was looking for her cubs. We just waited for some time, watching her defecating and marking her territory all over. After a few minutes, a female cub came out of the bushes and started staring at us, then she relaxed and went close to one of the trees around and sat.

A minute later, there was another cub who was trying to come out of the bushes, but he was really shy! It took so much time to come out and walk on the road, as we were all absolutely quiet, he was kind of okay to come out and started walking comfortably. He went and joined his sister for some time. By this time, the mother came to the road, marked her territory and started walking towards us. Since we were all concentrating on the cubs, mother came very close to the car and we had to reverse and give her a good distance. Then both the cubs also came out on the road and started walking towards us and following their mother. All of them were quite comfortable with our vehicle. There was another vehicle approaching, and the sound was loud, both the cubs ran into the bushes and disappeared. Mother walked along the road a bit, and then she also went into the bush to join her cubs and she never came back again.

**Day 6: Kabini National Park – Morning and Afternoon Boat Safari.****Saturday 24 February 2024**

This morning also was a little misty in the park and cold. As we entered the park, we wanted to explore new areas of the park today. We went to an extreme corner of the tourism areas and tried, but nothing was moving. We were happy with watching birds this morning.

The afternoon drive started at 3:10 pm. We went straight to the area where there was a tiger sighting in the morning. After we reached the spot, we kept scanning the bushes along the reservoir but nothing was found. After some time, our driver, Anil, said, "Sir, please check with the binoculars. There is something sitting and it looks like a Tiger". Then we all looked, and there was a male tiger sitting in the bushes, which was absolutely camouflaged. All of us looked through our binoculars and somehow managed to spot the tiger. He was really huge and just resting under the shade. We waited for some time, but there was no chance of him coming out of the bushes because it was hot, and he is a little shy and he doesn't come out in front of the vehicles. Since it was getting a little dark, he also moved a bit more into the jungle, and we left the park.

**Day 7: Kabini National Park – Morning and Afternoon game drive.****Sunday 25 February 2024**

Today, we thought we would try and look for leopards and explore different areas. As we entered the park and checked a couple of waterholes, by then one of the vehicles saw a tiger moving inside the bushes. So, we also waited for a long time, but our long wait paid off. She walked out of the bushes, marking her territory all over and then made sure that there were no other predator movements. She walked straight to our vehicle and we had to reverse constantly. She kept walking without any agitation for at least 20 minutes. While walking, she kept marking her territory. A couple of times she just stopped walking and looked everywhere. Then, finally,

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she went close to the water, and we thought she would sit in the water, but she just walked and went into the bush. Somehow, we couldn't judge the behaviour of this female.

The afternoon drive to the riverside was beautiful. As we went towards the riverside, got to see some gaurs relaxing and sambar deer drinking water. We really enjoyed white-rumped vulture walking along the riverbank. But after waiting for an hour or so, we went towards the place where there was the movement of a tiger. We tried in many places, but nothing was happening. We got a message regarding the movement of the tiger and went straight there to see her. As we reached, this female was looking in the opposite direction and was not really calm or comfortable! The way she was moving and trying to sit and crouch, was evident to say this one is looking for hunt! Since it was getting dark and there was no time, we had to leave the spot.

**Day 8: Kabini National Park to Taj Yeshwantpur, Bangalore.**

**Monday 26 February 2024**

Today, we decided to look for sloth bear and the leopard, and go little away from the tigers area. As we went a little away from the buzz, we stopped at one of the water holes and started scanning the lake and the forest. Suddenly, our driver said, "Sir, tiger is sitting near the lake". I was looking all over behind the tree and everywhere but couldn't see at all, it took a minute to spot her because she was camouflaging herself so beautifully. Then all of us got to see, and we realised that she was on a hunt and she was trying to stalk the wild pigs and spotted deer close to her. She kept moving slowly and went behind the bushes to make sure that she was close enough to chase the animal. But somehow, the pigs and deer sensed something and ran away. It was a good 15-minute sighting, and we enjoyed it thoroughly. When she realised that she would not be able to make it, she just kept walking towards the bushes, and then she crossed one of the safari trails and disappeared into the jungle.

After that, we enjoyed watching birds and trying to look for bears and leopards, but didn't get to see one! However, we got to see the tracks of bears, and we knew that there were some moving around in the jungle.

**Day 9: Taj Yeshwantpur to the Airport.**

**Tuesday 27 February 2024**

We had an early morning wake-up call and had to leave the hotel to get to the airport. It was not an easy thing to say bye but, we can only say see you soon! And things have to move. We reached the airport and I said bye to everyone.

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# Checklist for Nagarhole's Tigers, Wild Dogs Leopards



	Name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
	<b>MAMMALS</b>								
1	Spotted deer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Asian elephant	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
3	Royal Bengal tiger	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Malabar giant squirrel	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Sambar deer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Barking deer/ Indian muntjac	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Southern plains grey langur	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Indian pipistrelle	✓		✓	✓			✓	
9	Indian leopard		✓	✓					
10	Wild dogs		✓	✓					
11	Wild pigs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	Strip-necked mongoose		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Bonnet macaque	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Smooth-coated otter			✓			✓	✓	
15	Flying fox			✓	✓	✓		✓	
16	Horseshoe bats			✓	✓	✓		✓	
17	Mouse deer				✓				

18	Ruddy mongoose				✓	✓		✓	
19	Grey mongoose				✓	✓	✓		
20	Gaur				✓	✓	✓	✓	
21	Three-striped palm squirrel				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

	Name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
	<b>BIRDS</b>								
1	Rock dove	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	
2	Black kite	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓
3	White-throated kingfisher	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Greater racket-tailed drongo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Indian peafowl	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Jungle babbler	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Little cormorant	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Grey junglefowl	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Green sandpiper	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
10	Medium egret	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
11	Black-headed ibis	✓		✓	✓				✓
12	Oriental magpie-robin	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Common myna	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Jungle myna	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	Grey wagtail	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	Black-hooded oriole	✓					✓		



17	Indian grey hornbill	✓						✓	✓
18	Common hawk-cuckoo	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
19	White-cheeked barbet	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
20	White-eyed buzzard	✓			✓			✓	
21	Coppersmith barbet	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
22	Brahminy starling		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
23	Indian paradise flycatcher		✓		✓				
24	Green bee-eater		✓		✓			✓	✓
25	Indian pond heron		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
26	Woolly-necked stork		✓		✓		✓	✓	
27	Crested serpent eagle	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	
28	White-naped woodpecker		✓					✓	
29	Common coot	✓							✓
30	Cattle egret	✓			✓				
31	Purple moorhen	✓							✓
32	Oriental scops owl	✓						✓	
33	Black-rumped flameback	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
34	Crested hawk eagle		✓	✓		✓			
35	Black drongo		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
36	Green imperial pigeon		✓	✓		✓			
37	Rufus treepie		✓		✓		✓	✓	
38	Red spurfowl		✓						
39	Indian roller		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
40	Brahminy kite		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

41	Red-rumped swallow		✓		✓			✓	✓
42	Red-wattled lapwing		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
43	White-bellied woodpecker		✓	✓	✓			✓	
44	Common hoopoe		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
45	Cinereous tit	✓				✓	✓		
46	Large-billed crow		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
47	Tickele's blue flycatcher	✓					✓	✓	✓
48	Red-vented bulbul	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
49	Malabar parakeet		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
50	Plum-headed parakeet		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
51	Tawny eagle		✓						
52	Wood sandpiper			✓					
53	Marsh sandpiper			✓					
54	Osprey			✓			✓	✓	
55	Grey heron			✓	✓		✓	✓	
56	Western reef egret			✓		✓	✓	✓	
57	Hanging parrot			✓					
58	Common woodshrike			✓					
59	Streaked-throated woodpecker			✓		✓	✓		
60	River tern			✓		✓	✓	✓	
61	Darter			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
62	Southern caucal			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
63	Red-naped ibis			✓			✓	✓	
64	Spot-billed duck			✓		✓	✓		✓

65	Asian openbill			✓				✓	
66	Lesser whistling duck			✓					
67	Spotted dove			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
68	Greenish warbler			✓			✓		✓
69	White-rumped shama			✓					
70	Bronze-winged jacana			✓	✓		✓	✓	
71	Greater flameback woodpecker				✓	✓	✓		
72	White-rumped munia				✓				
73	Indian scops owl				✓			✓	
74	Asian brown flycatcher				✓	✓	✓	✓	
75	Common lora				✓				
76	Small minivet				✓				
77	Lesser adjutant stork				✓	✓			
78	Blyth's reed warbler				✓				
79	Savana nightjar				✓				
80	House sparrow				✓			✓	
81	Common tailorbird				✓				
82	White-rumped vulture				✓			✓	
83	Indian vulture				✓				
84	Blue-faced malkoha				✓	✓	✓	✓	
85	Red-whiskered bulbul				✓			✓	✓
86	Grey-headed fish eagle					✓			
87	Great cormorant					✓		✓	
88	White-browed wagtail					✓	✓		



89	Paddyfield pipit					✓			
90	Yellow-footed green pigeon						✓		
91	Black stork						✓	✓	
92	Rose-ringed parakeet						✓		
93	Orange-headed ground thrush						✓		
94	Southern hill myna						✓		
95	Black-naped monarch						✓		
96	Purple sunbird						✓		
97	Little ringed plover						✓		
98	Red-headed vulture						✓		
99	Oriental honey-buzzard						✓		✓
100	Indian golden oriole						✓		
101	Eurasian collared dove							✓	
102	Mottled wood owl							✓	
103	Scarlet minivet							✓	
104	Ashy drongo							✓	
105	Pied kingfisher							✓	
106	White-bellied drongo							✓	
107	Golden-fronted leafbird							✓	
108	Grey-breasted prinia							✓	
109	Black-headed cuckooshrike							✓	
110	Large cuckooshrike							✓	
111	Bronzed drongo							✓	
112	House crow							✓	



113	Alexandrine parakeet								✓
114	Pied bushchat								✓
115	Red breasted flycatcher								✓
116	Chestnut shouldered petronia								✓
117	Booted eagle								✓
118	Tawny-bellied babbler								✓
119	Puff-throated babbler								✓

	Names	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
	<b>OTHER WILDLIFE</b>								
1	Spectacled cobra	✓							
2	Common Crow butterfly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Blue Tiger butterfly	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
4	Glad-eye bushbrown butterfly	✓					✓		
5	Flapshell terrapin		✓						
6	Tree frog	✓		✓					
7	House gecko	✓	✓			✓	✓		
8	Bengal monitor lizard		✓						
9	Hornet wasp		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
10	Psyche butterfly		✓	✓					
11	Asian weaver ant			✓			✓		
12	Giant African snail			✓	✓				
13	Common sergeant butterfly			✓					
14	Common emigrant butterfly			✓	✓				

15	Blue mormon butterfly			✓	✓			✓	
16	Common garden lizard			✓	✓			✓	
17	Jumping spider			✓				✓	
18	Wolf spider			✓					
19	Blind ants			✓					
20	Moth cocoon			✓					
21	Ant lion			✓					
22	Darner dragonfly				✓				
23	Lemon pansy butterfly				✓				
24	Great eggfly butterfly				✓				
25	Praying mantis				✓				
26	Carpenter beetle						✓	✓	
27	Thread waisted wasp							✓	
28	Possession ant								✓
29	Tunnel web spider								✓

