

Tour Report Nagarhole Photo Safari 21 - 30 April 2024

Tiger



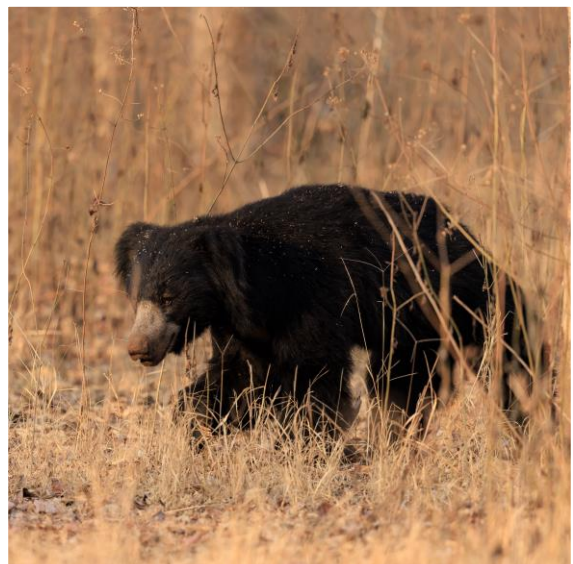
Smooth-coated otter



Leopard



Sloth bear



Compiled by Bret Charman

Day 1:**Sunday 21 April 2024**

London Heathrow to Bangalore

Today, we had an afternoon flight from London Heathrow direct to Bangalore with British Airways. I met most of the group in the departure lounge as we waited to board the flight. We pushed back on time and we were soon on our way for a week in India.

Day 2:**Monday 22 April 2024**

Bangalore to Kabini River Lodge – Safari in Nagarhole National Park

We arrived in the newly refurbished terminal at Bangalore Kempegowda International Airport on time and made our way through to immigration. Some of the group managed to proceed through to baggage reclaim remarkably fast, while a few were held up in much slower queues. All our luggage arrived and we were soon through to arrivals where we were met by our guide for the week, Varun.

Arriving so early in the morning, we made the short journey to a Taj hotel. Here we were able to enjoy a relaxed breakfast, getting to know one another over a veritable feast. Doing our best to avoid the morning rush hour, we weren't in a particular hurry to carry on with our journey, but once everybody was ready, we set off for Kabini River Lodge.

The drive takes around 4.5 hours. With the new and improved highways, we made good progress and the majority of the group managed to catch up on some sleep. We arrived at Kabini River Lodge and were able to drop our bags in our rooms, refresh a little and then meet up for lunch in the open-air dining area. We were able to enjoy a fantastic first meal, before planning to head out on our first game drive in the afternoon.

We all met up by the vehicle, and were ready to head out into the park. Driving the short distance to the park entrance, we passed through the farmers' fields and local villages. We were soon assigned our safari area – Zone A on this occasion – and were suddenly in an entirely different world. The forest in Nagarhole can be thick in places, but the density of predators is remarkable and certainly a big draw for wildlife photographers and naturalists alike. Entering Zone A, we immediately saw our first chital and grey langurs right by the road. Continuing on a little further, we couldn't believe our luck. A tigress was bathing in the first waterhole that we stopped at. Unfortunately she was just finishing her relaxing dip and we only got to spend a few minutes before she disappeared into the surrounding forest.



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The chital deer all alarmed as the tiger seemed to melt away in the tangle of branches. As we continued on, we were treated to our first views of wild Asian elephants (one of the big highlights of any visit to Nagarhole), another family of langurs and a myriad of different bird species. Jungle mynas were busy feeding on the forest floor, with grey jungle fowl scraping through the leaf litter and greater flamebacks working their way round the tall tree trunks.

We were treated to an exceptional first drive. Other notable highlights included crested-serpent eagle, streak-throated woodpecker, a troop of bonnet macaques and remarkably, a second tiger. This was a second female, laying on the edge of some thick scrub around 100 yards away. It wasn't a quality photographic opportunity (much like the first), but was a fantastic start to our time in Nagarhole.

The perfect first drive in many ways had to come to an end and soon we found ourselves back on the main road to the lodge. Arriving just as the light was fading, we had time to freshen up before meeting at the bar and then on to dinner. The meals at Nagarhole are always a buffet, but the quality and variety of food is exceptional. There is never any need to go hungry here. After a long day of travel and an early start, we retired to our rooms for a very well-deserved rest.

Day 3:

Tuesday 23 April 2024

Nagarhole National Park

For our first morning we agree to meet early to ensure we could be the first into the park. We all met in the dining area at 5.30am for tea and biscuits as a couple of wood owls called from the trees overhead. This morning we were assigned Zone B, which is not so reliable for tigers, but it can be surprisingly rewarding so we were filled with anticipation for what lay in store.

The birdlife seemed particularly active this morning. White-throated kingfisher, rufouse treepie and hoopoe were a few of the new species for us. Chital and langur were busy feeding on the forest floor – a sure sign that no predator was in the immediate vicinity. Suddenly, one of the group pointed out a large lump on the left side of the road. Sloth bear! Feeding on a termite mound, it seemed unaware of our presence and carried on going about its business unperturbed. Sitting in near silence, a group of wild board moved through the trees behind, while an oriental magpie robin flitted in the branches above.



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What an incredible sighting we were treated to as the bear meandered through the trees and out onto the open track in front of us. To make it even better, by this point, we had the bear all to ourselves. After such an incredible encounter (arguably the best sloth bear encounter I've ever had), we decided to leave the bear in peace. The next notable encounter was with a grey mongoose (rarely seen in this part of the world) and it paused for a little while, allowing the group some great photos.



Other wild delights for the group were a cluster of Malabar giant squirrels. These handsome, and surprisingly large squirrels, were feeding on some fruits high in a tree and were happy to sit and pose as the group photographed away. We'd been rewarded for all our hard work with some great images, but also good light to go with it.

As the mornings start to heat up, the mammal life often starts to disappear, but there are always plenty of opportunities to enjoy the exotic birdlife. A few notable species included

imperial pigeon, Indian grey hornbill, black-headed oriole, blue-faced malkoha, plumb-headed parakeet and white-bellied woodpecker.

With the day heating up, our vehicle wound its way to the shores of Kabini reservoir where we enjoyed views of a whole new raft of species including little cormorant, black-winged stilt, Malabar pied hornbill and oriental darter. We also enjoyed our first view of barking deer and there was a lovely family of elephants too.

Returning to the lodge mid-morning, we agreed to meet up for lunch with some downtime beforehand. Lunch was, as one would expect from southern India, another feast of local cuisine – multiple aromas wafted through the air as the buffet was spread out before us.

We agreed to meet early for our afternoon game drive, once again this should mean we would be the first in the park. Nagarhole is quiet compared to parks in other parts of India, but it still pays to explore early on, maximizing our chances of finding big cats at waterholes. This afternoon we were to head into Zone A once again, hoping for some more big cat action and hopefully some more rewarding photographic encounters. Zone A delivered almost immediately, once again, but not for a big cat. This time we were able to enjoy a fabulous distant view of a mother elephant and her calf splashing and playing in the waterhole where we saw the tiger the day before. They really were making the most of this opportunity and we tried our best to capture the moment, but the light was still a little harsh. Not far along the road, we came across a handsome peacock posing on a branch and continued to check waterbodies, hoping to find one of the resident striped felids.

When enjoying a safari in Indian parks, it differs quite a bit from a trip to Africa as you normally locate a predator by sound. With that in mind, we would periodically stop and turn off the engine, hoping to catch the sound of a langur, chital or sambar alarm call on the breeze. Despite our best efforts, we were unable to hear any sign of a big cat. It wasn't until word reached us about a tigress at a waterhole that our fortune changed.

Upon arriving at the waterhole, there were already several vehicles in attendance. Therefore, it was immediately apparent that the tiger was still there. We slowly approached and found her lounging in the relative comfort of the water. She put on quite a show as she relaxed in the murky pool, yawning and changing her position. We were in the perfect spot to capture a whole raft of imagery. The group were

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grinning from ear-to-ear after such a fabulous first couple of days.



With time starting to get away from us, we were thinking of making our way out of the park. Suddenly, the tigress was up and walking up the bank. Within only a few moments she was clear of the waterhole and slinking off into the forest after putting on quite a show. The ease at which a tiger moves out of sight is always something to behold. And so, with another fabulous day coming to an end, we made our way toward the exit. There was one last wild delight in store for us though, as a herd of elephants with a newborn calf made a brief appearance. With the light fading, we had to leave them be and make our way back to the lodge.

At the bar we all talked about the day's superb sightings. Feeling suitably 'rehydrated', we ambled down to the restaurant for dinner.

Day 4:
Nagarhole National Park

Wednesday 24 April 2024

The weather today was very different – a heavy mist blanketed the landscape. The low cloud made for quite an ethereal feel to the forest. All was still, except for the chatter of birds and the rustle of life in the undergrowth. Zone B was our 'hunting' ground this morning and the first mammal was a ruddy mongoose. In fact, we had two ruddy mongoose sightings, but alas they are not the easiest species to photograph. The avian highlight this morning was definitely a crested-serpent eagle which posed perfectly for us on a low branch, allowing fantastic photographic opportunities.



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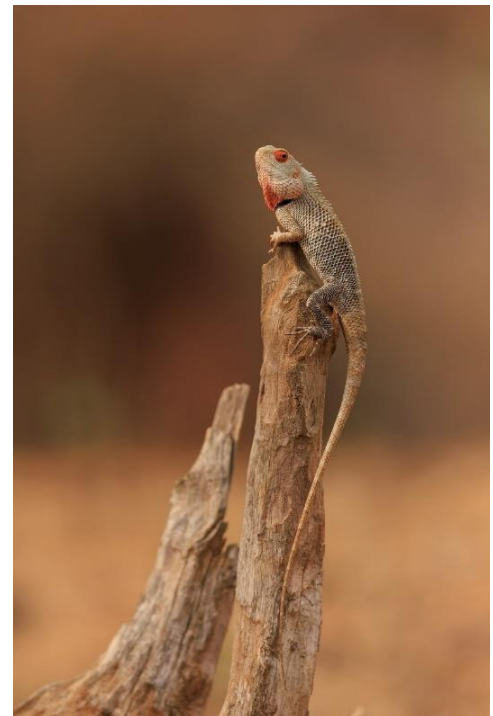
Our main focus this morning was trying to find the Asiatic wild dogs (dhole), which had so far been proving to be particularly elusive. So after no luck with any tigers or leopards, we headed across the main road and back towards the backwaters of Kabini. On the way we saw a barking deer as it darted across the road, a displaying peacock (which stopped displaying as soon as we were in the right place to photograph it), Malabar parakeets and a beautiful orange-headed thrush.

Arriving at the open grasslands on the edge of the backwaters, we clocked the dhole down in a depression. There was a large wild boar wallowing in the mud and the dogs were taking a keen interest in this potential prey. The boar realised that it was safe as long as it stayed put and eventually the dogs grew bored and headed off through the forest on the other side of the clearing. We headed round to see if we could work out where they were heading, bumping into a large tusker up on the hill. As we descended down to where we hoped the dogs would be, we caught a glimpse of them disappearing into a deep gulley before they well and truly disappeared.

And so, realizing that the dogs were now out of reach, we reluctantly started to make our way out of the park. We had a lovely interlude as giant squirrel was posing right by the road upside down on the trunk of a tree, and we came across another tusker feeding on the edge of the forest. It wasn't long before we were alighting our safari vehicle and heading to our rooms for a bit of down time before lunch.

This afternoon we returned to Zone B once again. Our plan was to give the big cat search a rest and focus on some of the other wildlife of the park. There was, we hoped, a chance the wild dogs may make another appearance and it would be great if they were (a lot) closer.

We started off by seeing a raft of bird species – the park is fabulous for bird watching – before bumping into a herd of gaur. Driving slowly through the forest, Varun pointed out a stunning garden lizard which was basking in the evening sun. The lizard stayed motionless for an incredible amount of time, perfectly posing on the end of a branch protruding from a tree trunk resting on the ground. The group were able to gorge on this miniature delight, capturing plentiful images and coming away with something a little different from the previous days' highlights.



We drove down to the edge of the reservoir once again where another herd of gaur were busy grazing with several youngsters. Positioning the vehicle in just the right spot, the herd walked directly past us, and we were rewarded with excellent photographic opportunities of these large bovids and their young. It is always a real honour to get close to these huge mammals. They can be quite tricky to find in open areas, but on this occasion we hit the jackpot.



There is always so much to see in this stunning corner of Karnataka. We were spoiled with exquisite views of an Indian roller, while grey langur and chital were all around. A couple of new species for this afternoon included a red-headed vulture and some painted storks in the distance. With the light fading, it was time to retreat back to Kabini for another excellent dinner and a good night's rest.

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Day 5:

Thursday 25 April 2024

Nagarhole National Park

We awoke to another misty morning and it was even thicker as we entered the park. There was some movement on the edge of the trees, off to one side of the track, and there was a red-headed vulture feeding on a chital carcass. It looked like it had been a kill from the night, but there was no sign of any cat lingering nearby. A stripe-necked mongoose made an appearance (our first of the trip), but didn't linger for too long.

It was, for the most part, a quieter morning. However, these are often the most magical times in the forests of Nagarhole as you become even more aware of the magnificent sounds that are all around. There weren't even any alarm calls, and so we reveled in the sounds of the dawn chorus instead. A jungle owlet made an appearance, but it was a very tricky sighting and the photography was nigh on impossible.

Approaching a large body of water, chital alarm calls rang through the surrounding trees. Varun spotted a tiger on the edge of the water. We drove around the other side of the waterhole, hoping to get an unobstructed view. It was a long, long way away, but it was apparent that it was a huge male tiger. It was not a photographic opportunity, but it was lovely to see him. There was news that the tigress we saw on our first drive was visible, but by the time we got there she was just heading off.

All in all, it wasn't a great morning for photography. However, we definitely put in the effort and saw an awful lot of fabulous wildlife. Sometimes a quieter drive is actually more rewarding as you get to slow down and just appreciate everything that is going on around you. The temperature started to build, so we made our way back to the lodge for a spot of down time before lunch and a slightly different afternoon excursion – a boat trip on the Kabini Reservoir.



Any trip out on the water is a surefire way to see an abundance of waterbirds and today did not disappoint. We were blown away by the diversity and the proximity we were able to get. Species included oriental darter, Indian pond heron, Asian openbill, river tern, great egret, red-naped ibis, woolly-necked stork, osprey and grey-headed fish eagle . This is just a taster of what we saw and photographed in the few hours we were out on the water. Further along the waterway, there were

several families of elephants enjoying the fresh grass, while another herd were bathing and drinking. We were lucky enough to get closer to the family and capture some lovely images as they enjoyed the cooling relief of the water. It's always hard to do the elephants justice, photographically speaking, but to spend such a prolonged period with them is always a real treat.

For many of the group, one of the big hopes was that we may see otters from the boat. Luckily, we saw some pretty early on, but unfortunately they were not overly cooperative. After the elephants though, we were privileged enough to have an otter come right past the boat, taking a much closer look, before climbing out of the water and working along the open shoreline.

As the otter headed away from us, a troop of bonnet macaques worked their way along the banks of the backwaters searching for food. There is an old temple here and the sun was setting diagonally behind the macaques which made for some nice imagery.



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We started to make our way back up the waterways toward the lodge when the chital started to alarm call on the Bandipur side of reservoir. The boat skipper suddenly shouted "Tiger!", and there it was. A large male tiger walking nonchalantly along the tree-line with around a hundred chital watching on. This was an entirely unexpected bonus and, of course, it was most welcome. The tiger disappeared as quickly as it had emerged from the forest. Despite our patience and best efforts, it didn't reappear and so we headed for home and a nice cold drink from the bar.

Day 6:
Nagarhole National Park

Friday 26 April 2024

The same weather pattern continued today as we awoke to another misty morning. Having spoken with Varun, we decided it was time to focus some time on trying to find a leopard. Nagarhole has built up quite a reputation for the more secretive of India's big cats, but they had so far eluded us on this safari. We were determined to put an end to this and so we focused our efforts on a particular area of Zone B.

With the mist hanging over the forest, it was very quiet once again on the mammal front. There were birds galore, with both common and jungle myna, oriental magpie robin and jungle crow all making an appearance. As we stopped to listen for any alarm calls, a stripe-necked mongoose trotted by for our best views yet. We had ground to cover and didn't linger for long. A young sambar was stripping a tree of its barks, while the birds continued to delight.

Descending down to the backwaters of Kabini, we checked each and every tree, desperately trying to find this elusive leopard. We sat at the bottom of the hill, listening for any alarm calls. Allowing plenty of time for any sounds or signs of life, we were soon surrounded by a herd of chital deer. They were relaxed and so we decided to move on back up the hill. Suddenly, Varun stopped the vehicle. There, only 30 yards away, was a leopard. Sat in the bough of a tree we had only driven past 10 minutes before, she was completely relaxed in her chosen spot. It seemed as if she thought we had gone past and it was therefore time to enjoy a snooze in the safety of this tree. She didn't bargain for us coming back the same way. Not at all bothered by our presence, she relaxed in the branches before turning around and settling back down on the opposite branch.



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As you can see, she was completely relaxed in our presence. As tiredness seemingly took hold, her legs drooped over the branches, soon followed by her head. The leopard was fast asleep only 30 yards away from where we sat. The timing couldn't have been better and despite the lingering mist, the group were able to capture some absolutely stunning imagery of this absolutely beautiful cat.



Having enjoyed a siesta, she descended down the tree and disappeared into the thick scrub. There was no need for us to linger, we already had the best views and the images to show for it. What's more, for the first ten minutes or so, there wasn't another vehicle in sight.

And so, we moved on in search of the park's other wildlife. Wild boar, bonnet macaque, Asian elephant and Malabar giant squirrel soon followed, while a jungle crow with a dead rodent put on quite a show for us. The birdlife is ever present and we had more views of red-headed vulture, green imperial pigeon and Indian roller, just to name a few. The mist had now burned off and the heat was starting to build once again. This was a good indicator that it was time to head back to Kabini for breakfast and a rest before lunch.

This afternoon was a hot one and we were assigned Zone A once again. Realistically, Zone A is the preferred choice if you are interested in tiger. With such a good sighting of the leopard this morning, the group really didn't mind what we saw. Our drive started off with a very low Malabar giant squirrel and a white-throated kingfisher on the adjacent tree. We were treated to some distant views of a Malabar trogon, a bird that is common but notoriously hard to see here, before another sighting of a stripe-necked mongoose. We passed a family group of langurs huddled around another of the parks small active temples. Continuing down the hill to the largest waterhole in Zone A, there again was the large male tiger. He was in exactly the same spot as the day before, which meant it was impossible to get anything other than a 'pixel' tiger.

It was a relatively quiet afternoon, until we had heard of leopard on a kill back toward the exit. Unfortunately, by the time we got there, the leopard had disappeared into the undergrowth and the light was stopping. So as not to disturb the leopard any further, we decided to leave it be and head out of the park.

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What a fabulous day in Nagarhole once again. It really is hard to beat this magical part of India.

Day 7:
Nagarhole National Park

Saturday 27 April 2024

After such a fabulous encounter with the leopard yesterday, we were just looking forward to what Nagarhole might have in store for us today. Making our way back to where the leopard had made a kill last night, we passed a number of common birds. Red-headed vultures were already on the carcass, but there was no sign of the leopard. Once again, worried about disturbing the leopard, we decided to move on and started to systematically work our way through the forest, periodically stopping as we listened out for alarm calls.

Except for a troop of langurs whooping high in the canopy, with their calls ringing out across the forest, all was quiet in the park this morning. We parked the vehicle in a quiet area, high above a dry river bed, just hoping that something would appear. Instead, we had to make do with the magical bird song that filled the cooler morning air – not a bad way to spend your time in an Indian forest.

Unbelievably, we had another sighting of a Malabar trogon (two in one trip is exceptionally lucky). This one was a male in his prime. His plumage was magnificent, but he just didn't want to cooperate. We were never able to get him facing the right direction, showing off his vibrance, and so we had to make do with some distant rear views instead. The rest of the drive remained quieter than the other days. As we were heading out of the park, a large tusker decided to make an appearance. It's easy to take these forest giants for granted in Nagarhole. However, in the majority of Indian tiger reserves, wild elephants are no longer even present.

You could tell it was time to head back to the lodge. The temperature was already rising and the bird song was now fading away. We arrived back and headed straight to breakfast, before once again retiring to our rooms for a little down time.

This afternoon we were assigned Zone B. It was hot and the sun was fierce. We started off by heading down along the backwaters, hoping that maybe the wild dogs would make another appearance. Instead, our first notable sighting were some tuskers and family herds down by the water, while a few langurs kept watch in the trees overhead. A little further along the track, there was also a troop of bonnet macaques with two youngsters having a real scrap. They were only playing, but the battle was rather fierce. With the light still quite harsh, and being behind them, it wasn't the easiest action to photograph. It is though, always good practice and fun to try and capture these moments.



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We continued up into the forest area of Zone B where we came across a beautiful monitor lizard patrolling the forest floor. It was the first one we had seen and we were treated to exceptional views as it worked its way through the leaf litter by the vehicle.

The next stop was for a stripe-necked mongoose. This was arguably the best sighting we had enjoyed so far. It was searching for food in the soil by the edge of a small waterhole just off of the main road. It was turning over the soil in search of grubs and other invertebrates, seemingly oblivious to our presence. As we sat there

watching the mongoose, we had heard that a tiger had been seen up the road and so we headed off hoping we may catch another glimpse of our striped quarry.

As we arrived, down to the side of the road, a tiger was resting in a shallow pool by an old dam. There were already a few vehicles and we weren't able to get into a great spot, but it was fabulous to see her. Suddenly, she rose to her feet and determinedly walked into the forest. It was apparent she was on a mission and she walked without a care in the world.

We realised that she was unlikely to return. We made our way out of the park and drove the short distance back to Kabini River Lodge. There was another opportunity to freshen up and enjoy a cold drink before dinner and good night's sleep.

Day 8:
Nagarhole National Park

Sunday 28 April 2024

Today was our last full day in Nagarhole and Varun was determined to try and get Zone A on both drives. This would maximise our chances of seeing and hopefully photographing big cats. We were the first to leave the lodge and upon arrival at the gates, we were indeed allocated Zone A. The morning started off with the usual suspects. Chital are almost ever-present in Nagarhole, while grey junglefowl seem to litter the forest floor. Sambar and grey langurs provided further interest, while a whole host of bird species were always flitting in the branches above and on the forest floor below. There had a been tiger sighting by a waterhole and so we sat there waiting to see if she would reappear. We were treated to some lovely chital as they stood nervously on the edge of the tree-line. The tigress had to be close by, we just had to wait. Suddenly, the tiger appeared up the hill (near some beautiful ruined temples), but by the time we got there, she was already starting to move away.

As she worked her way down the hill toward the thick scrub, an area we thought she had left her mature cubs, we decided to move on and allow her to go about her business. We carried on through the forest on this beautiful morning, finding a handsome peacock posing on a tree trunk. In fact, this peacock (we assumed it was the same individual) had been on the exact same branch only a few days before.

The rest of the morning drive was mainly about the birds as we saw our first pheasant-tailed jacana, as well as oriental honey



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buzzard, streak-throated kingfisher, white-bellied woodpecker, Indian nuthatch and orange-headed thrush. The plan was to try again in Zone A this afternoon and see whether we could get a better sighting of the tigress. We returned to Kabini and enjoyed another hearty breakfast – agreeing to meet up again after lunch for our final afternoon safari.

We ensured we left early, as per usual, and were the first vehicle at the gates. Zone A was allocated to us once again and we set off in search of whatever Nagarhole threw our way. We followed the winding tracks through the forest, down to dry creeks and up through forest-clad rolling hills. Chital, grey langur and bonnet macaque were the first mammals to show themselves, while blue-faced malkoha, white-throated kingfisher and Indian roller were the avian delights on offer.

Driving in a large loop, heading back toward where we had left the tiger this morning, we stumbled upon a family of elephants going down to a waterhole to drink and bathe. We watched as they reveled in the water, splashing and using their trunk to spray water and mud over their backs. Sitting with the elephants in near silence, a distant chital alarm could be heard on the wind. We drove to investigate, and settled by the waterhole where we had seen the tigress bathing at the start of the week.

Varun highlighted that our best chance for a quality tiger sighting was to sit at the waterhole and wait. There was a higher chance that the big cat would come back to this spot and we could be rewarded with some exceptional photography opportunities. Photographic rewards typically come to those who are prepared to wait for things which unfold. And so we waited.

A white-throated kingfisher dived down from a high branch, snatching tiny morsels from the water, before a changeable hawk-eagle swooped to the water's edge to quench its thirst.



Watching on with delight, the raptor started off by sitting on the ground nervously, before flapping its wings and braving the danger of drinking. It was fabulous to photograph the bird on the ground as its reflection was visible in the relatively calm surface of the water.

The group were engrossed in photographing this wonderful behaviour – we were perfectly placed – when suddenly the chital deer started to alarm. The calls were close. Really close. Turning to back to Varun and Saddiq, they were both staring in the direction of the startled deer. They were hidden from view, down an embankment behind the

waterhole. At this point we suggested that the clients stopped focusing on the hawk-eagle, and instead set up their cameras on a specific point where we thought the tiger would appear.

It seemed like an eternity. The sense of anticipation was palpable. At any moment the tiger could appear, or just as easily it could wander off in a different direction. The alarm calls grew even more intense before silence descended upon this patch of the park. All the group's cameras were primed (bar one member of the group who was still transfixed on the changeable hawk-eagle) and we ready for the first sign of movement. "Tiger!" – there she was. First her head appeared over the bank and soon she was walking without a care in world along the ridgeline up above the waterhole. What a spectacular sight. Our vehicle couldn't have been better placed and the photography was exceptional. The light was behind us, illuminating the tigress. You could see every little detail. Her whiskers glowed, while the striped coat seemed to shine in the warm afternoon sun.

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It was a dream-like sighting as she then descended down the bank and it looked like she was going to drink from the water. Alerting the group to the chance of a possible reflection, she changed her mind and decided to reverse into the water instead. Once settled she periodically drank, before she eventually decided to go for a little swim.



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What a remarkable final afternoon drive. Varun's expertise and knowledge, plus the group's patience was finally rewarded with one of the very best tiger sightings you could wish for. It was a fabulous sighting and as more vehicles arrived, just as she was heading back to the forest, we decided to take our leave.

Just around the corner we came across a family of elephants with a newborn calf. This youngster was the smallest we had seen yet. We took the decision to leave them alone as they can often get stressed when they have such small calves with them. Before we knew it, we were back at the gate and leaving the park. The group were elated with our encounter – it was a moment that will stick with us for many years to come.

Arriving back at the lodge, we had time to shower and freshen up before a drink at the bar and another delicious meal in the restaurant.

Day 8:

Monday 29 April 2024

Nagarhole National Park to Bangalore

This morning we had one last opportunity to enjoy a game drive in the park. We were assigned Zone B on this still and misty morning. As we reached the park's interior, the mist mysteriously vanished. There was no particular plan in place this morning, we would simply work our way through the zone and see what we could find. Much of the morning was filled with an incredible diversity of birds. We enjoyed some fabulous views of species which had so far managed to only allow us brief views or had eluded us completely. A greater coucal fed on the remnants of a wasp nest, plucking the grubs from the paper cells, while a blue-bearded bee-eater came tantalisingly close, while never truly posing for us. The mammals that made an appearance were the usual suspects. Chital, sambar, stripe-necked mongoose, grey langur, Malabar giant squirrel and some nervous elephants ensured we had plenty of larger species to enjoy.

It was a quieter morning than most, but nonetheless it was a wonderful way to enjoy the park for the last time. With a long drive ahead, we made our way back to the lodge a little early. It meant we could enjoy a breakfast without the crowds and give us time to grab our bags, pay our bills and climb aboard our bus back to Bangalore.

Leaving promptly, we were soon on our way, winding through rural Karnataka, before arriving in the historic city of Mysore. We stopped briefly at the spectacular palace, allowing the group to capture a few images, before continuing on with our journey to Bangalore.

We arrived in Bangalore just as the traffic had started to build, but were soon in the comfort of the hotel where we made arrangements for dinner and headed to our rooms for the chance to shower and relax. We enjoyed a fabulous last meal together, heading to bed early as we had a very early start the next day.

Day 9:

Tuesday 30 April 2024

Bangalore to London Heathrow

We had a very early start today with a morning flight back to London from Bangalore. The bus picked us up and whisked us to the airport. Upon arrival, there was already a long queue for check-in and after a long time waiting, we were able to head through security. The flight departed on time and we enjoyed a smooth flight back to London Heathrow. I said goodbye to the group after disembarking, before I continued through connections to catch my onward flight.

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Checklist for Nagarhole Photo Safari



	Common Name	Scientific Name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9
	BIRDS										
1	Grey jungle fowl	<i>Gallus sonneratii</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Indian peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Lesser whistling duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>			✓		✓	✓		✓	
4	Painted stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>				✓	✓	✓			✓
5	Asian openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>					✓				
6	Woolly-necked stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>					✓				
7	Black-headed ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>				✓	✓				✓
8	Red-naped ibis	<i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>					✓				
9	Glossy ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>					✓				
10	Eurasian spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>					✓				
11	Indian pond heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>					✓	✓			✓
12	Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>					✓				✓
13	Purple heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>					✓				
14	Cattle egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>		✓		✓		✓			✓
15	Great egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>				✓	✓				✓
16	Intermediate egret	<i>Ardea intermedia</i>			✓		✓			✓	
17	Little egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>					✓				
18	Oriental darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>			✓	✓	✓				
19	Little cormorant	<i>Microcarbo niger</i>			✓		✓				
20	Great cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>					✓				
21	Black kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>		✓							✓
22	Brahminy kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>			✓		✓				
23	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>			✓		✓				
24	Grey-headed fish eagle	<i>Haliaeetus ichhyaetus</i>					✓				
25	Oriental honey buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>					✓			✓	

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26	Red-headed vulture	<i>Sarcogyps calvus</i>				✓	✓	✓			
27	Crested serpent eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>		✓		✓					
28	Changeable hawk eagle	<i>Nisaetus cirrhatus</i>			✓					✓	
29	Pheasant-tailed jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>								✓	
30	Red-wattled lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
31	Common greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>					✓				
32	Wood sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>					✓				
33	Green sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>						✓			
34	Black-winged stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>			✓						
35	River tern	<i>Sterna aurantia</i>					✓				
36	Rock dove	<i>Columba livia</i>			✓				✓		
37	Nilgiri wood pigeon	<i>Columba elphinstonii</i>									
38	Green imperial pigeon	<i>Ducula aenea</i>			✓	✓		✓			
39	Spotted dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
40	Laughing dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>		✓	✓						
41	Yellow-footed green pigeon	<i>Treron phonyceptaurus</i>									✓
42	Plum-headed parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>			✓						✓
43	Malabar parakeet	<i>Psittacula columboides</i>		H		✓	H	H	✓	H	✓
44	Blue-faced malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus viridirostris</i>			✓			✓		✓	
45	Southern coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>			✓						✓
46	Jungle owlet	<i>Glaucidium radiatum</i>					✓				
47	Mottled wood owl	<i>Strix ocellata</i>				H					
48	Common hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
49	Indian roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
50	Malabar trogon	<i>Harpactes fasciatus</i>						✓	✓		
51	White-throated kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
52	Common kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>							✓		
53	Pied kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>					✓				
54	Green bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>			✓		✓				
55	Blue-tailed bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>									✓
56	Indian grey hornbill	<i>Ocyroceros birostris</i>			✓						✓
57	Malabar pied hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros coronatus</i>						✓			
58	White-bellied woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus javensis</i>			✓		✓			✓	
59	Streak-throated woodpecker	<i>Picus xanthopygaeus</i>		✓						✓	
60	Common goldenback	<i>Dinopium javanense</i>							✓		

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61	Lesser goldenback	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>				✓	✓	✓		✓	
62	Greater goldenback	<i>Chrysocolaptes guttacristatus</i>		✓					✓	✓	
63	Large cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina macei</i>					✓				
64	Greater racket-tailed drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
65	Black drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>							✓		
66	Black-hooded oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>			✓						✓
67	Asian paradise flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>						✓			
68	Rufous treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>			✓	✓				✓	✓
69	Indian jungle crow	<i>Corvus culminatus</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
70	Red-rumped swallow	<i>Cecropis daurica</i>								✓	✓
71	Ashy wood swallow	<i>Artamus fuscus</i>					✓				
72	Singing bushlark	<i>Mirafra cantillans</i>									✓
73	Red-whiskered bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus jocosus</i>						✓	✓		
74	Jungle babbler	<i>Turdoides striata</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
75	Indian nuthatch	<i>Sitta castanea</i>								✓	
76	Lesser hill myna	<i>Gracula indica</i>							✓		
77	Jungle myna	<i>Acridotheres fuscus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
78	Common myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
79	Brahminy starling	<i>Sturnia pagodarum</i>							✓		
80	Rosy starling	<i>Pastor roseus</i>									
81	Orange-headed thrush	<i>Geokichla citrina</i>				✓		✓	✓	✓	
82	Oriental magpie robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	MAMMALS										
1	Indian leopard	<i>Panthera pardus fusca</i>						✓			
2	Royal Bengal tiger	<i>Panthera tigris tigris</i>		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	
3	Asiatic wild dogs (dhole)	<i>Cuon alpinus</i>				✓					
4	Sloth bear	<i>Melursus ursinus</i>			✓						
5	Spotted deer (chital)	<i>Axis axis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Sambar deer	<i>Rusa unicolor</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Gaur	<i>Bos gaurus</i>		✓		✓	✓		✓		
8	Indian muntjac	<i>Muntiacus muntjak</i>			✓	✓	✓				
9	Asian elephant	<i>Elephas maximus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Wild boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
11	Malabar giant squirrel	<i>Ratufa indica</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

12	Three striped palm squirrel	<i>Funambulus palmarum</i>				✓		✓			
13	Indian grey mongoose	<i>Herpestes edwardsii</i>			✓						
14	Ruddy mongoose	<i>Urva smithii</i>				✓		✓			
15	Stripe-necked mongoose	<i>Herpestes vitticollis</i>					✓	✓	✓		✓
16	Smooth coated otter	<i>Lutrogale perspicillata</i>					✓				
17	Northern plains grey langur	<i>Semnopithecus entellus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
18	Bonnet macaque	<i>Macaca radiata</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓