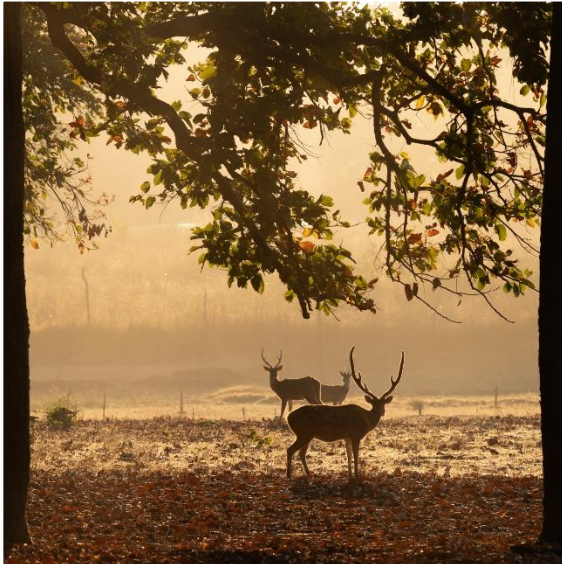


Tour Report Ultimate Tiger Safari 9 – 16 February 2025

Chital



Sloth bear



Tiger



Dhole



Compiled by Ashwin HP

Flying into Delhi I met the group on the 8th morning and briefed them on the tour. Later, all of them decided to do a day tour of Delhi. After arranging it for them, I left only to meet up with them the next morning where we flew from Delhi to Jabalpur and then drove to the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve. This day was quite long, so we rested when we arrived.

Sunday 9 February 2025

Day 1:

AM: Our first drive in Bandhavgarh was in the Tala zone. We started to do some birding as we entered and saw numerous amounts of birds: peregrine falcon, crested serpent eagle, Indian vulture, common kingfisher, stork billed kingfisher, black hooded oriole, Malabar pied hornbills. We also tried to track a female tigress who had walked on the track for a long time before heading into the forest. On top of this, we also saw jackal spotted deer, rhesus macaque, sambar deer, muntjac or barking deer and wild boar.

PM: This evening was also in Tala zone, where we were constantly on the track of a tiger which we later spotted and saw lying in the grass, right behind our jeep. We spent all of the evening with this sub-adult female. At one point she saw a spotted deer and made a half-hearted attempt to stalk her, only to be seen by the deer first. She then came onto the bank of a stream and sat there for a while before walking into the grass. We watched her appear and reappear as she made her way into the high grass. Some of today's other sightings included sambar, langur, jungle owlet and lesser adjutant stork before heading out of the park.

Monday 10 February 2025

Day 2:

AM: We moved into the Kithouli zone, where we saw sambar deer, spotted deer, wild boar and langur. We also saw several species of birds such as some jungle babblers, magpie robins, crested serpent eagles, and red jungle fowl. We also did try for the tiger but there were a lot of pugmarks everywhere. Unfortunately, we didn't see any big cats.

PM: This evening we were back in the Kithoulai zone and saw some sambar in the lake as we entered, along with some wild boar and spotted deers. We left them to go check on some alarm calls that we heard. When we were waiting for the calls we saw a big bull gaur walking out of the forest, heading straight at us. At this point, the calls were getting stronger so we left the gaur and headed to a stream which was almost dry except for a few places where there was some water. At the far side of the stream we saw a huge male drinking water. We had just arrived to watch him drink water and then he got up, looked towards us and walked away. Even from a distance, we could make out that he was humongous. With this exciting sighting we headed out of the park, en route we saw a brown fish owl, waiting at the water near the gate.

Tuesday 11 February 2025

Day 3:

AM: Today we were in the Magdhi zone, and tracking pugmark after pugmark. We didn't much result, but did see gaur, langur, sambar, and spotted deer. We did some birding while waiting for alarm calls and managed to see an Indian roller, an LA stork, a white-necked stork, a bronze-winged jacana and a spotted owlet. With not much luck we headed back for the morning.

PM: This evening we were in the Kithouli zone, there were alarm calls and pugmarks. We drove around in circles, two other cars had a sighting of a tiger crossing but we missed it completely. But we did see a golden jackal, langur, sambar and Indian vultures, before heading out of the park.

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Wednesday 12 February 2025

Day 4:

This was the last morning drive for us in Bandhavgarh, we entered into the Tala zone as this was the closest to the lodge. As we entered, we saw a female cross the tracks behind us and go into the high grass. From there we heard her calling and roaring. We waited for a while before the alarm calls faded and the roaring of the tigress did too. We then headed to see the idols of Lord Vishnu and Shiva inside the park. Just after we finished and headed back to the place where we had seen the tigress, alarm calls were still going off and a few cars were still waiting. We too waited alongside them and after a few minutes, we saw the tigress walking in between the grass before vanishing into the tall grass. At this time, we had to head out of the park. Today we also had to check out of our hotel and head to Kanha, reaching Singinawa Jungle Lodge by evening.

Thursday 13 February 2025

Day 5:

AM: This morning we were in the Kanha zone of Kanha National Park. We saw our first barashinga in the grassland or the meadows of Kanha. Along with this, we got some information on some tiger sightings, but by the time we reached the area we had missed it. So we drove back and saw spotted deer, Indian vultures and wild boars.

PM: Evening were in Mukki zone, where we saw the young female DJ9 who was on her evening walk. Although it was crowded, we did get a few good glimpses of the tiger during the evening. On our way back we saw some barashinga, sambar deer, and wild boar.

Friday 14 February 2025

Day 6:

AM: This morning we were again in the Mukki zone, there were some calls where DJ9 was seen the previous day, so we went on to investigate the area and again spotted her walking on the road, marking the area, before heading into the bush. We tried to see her again but could only hear alarm calls in the distance. Amidst all of this, we also saw some Indian vultures, white-backed vultures, barasingha and sambar.

PM: This evening we again tried looking for DJ9 the young tigress who was on the verge of taking her mother's territory. But despite driving towards the sound, we only saw pugmarks and heard alarm calls into the bushes. At one point we got information that she had moved into her mother's territory (DJ - the dominant female who was 13 years old). We quickly drove towards two water holes adjacent to each other, by then DJ9 was already coming out of the grass, marking her scent along the way and then came into full view. Although she was quite far, we could see her clearly. There were a lot of cars and dust. At this point, we lost interest, let her go, and headed back to the lodge for the evening.

Saturday 15 February 2025

Day 7:

AM: This morning we had decided to do our own thing rather than going through the dust and crowd of the jeeps. So we stayed back in another female territory called MB3. Waiting for her we listened to calls, tracked the calls got quite close, and spotted the tigress coming from the clutter of bushes towards the road. She then crossed the road right in front of our jeep. It was the closest sighting for us so far. It was also the quietest, just 3-4 jeeps. We then tried to track her for some more time, but she had other plans. We left her and roamed some of the zone seeing two wild dogs, a jungle cat with a rodent kill, lots of vultures, barasingha and more.

PM: Since we had such a good sighting of an adult female, we decided to try for a male in the evening. Along the way, we saw the wild dogs still roaming in the same area from the morning. Later in the evening, we got news of a large dominant male called Neelanala, we drove towards his area, just to see him going down a dry stream and vanishing under the bridge. We drove ahead and stopped a distance away. He took his time to reappear, but when he did it was just pure magic. A fully grown tiger following the jeeps, only two jeeps and the tiger. Absolute silence in the jungle to the point that you could hear his footsteps and crickets calling as it turned to dusk. We were with him for a good 40 minutes or more, before other jeeps made their way towards the site. That is when we decided to leave him and made our way back to the lodge.

Sunday 16 February 2025

Day 8:

This was our last morning in Kanha. We did try to see DJ9 again, hoping not to be in the crowd and dust. We waited in a few places anticipating her presence. We heard one alarm call and headed towards it. At this time DJ9 stepped out of the forest near one jeep ahead and then started walking in front of us. There were three to four jeeps but was still not bad. We followed her until she turned inside the forest and started marking and moving. We had a quiet breakfast this morning, headed back to the lodge and made our way to Raipur to catch our respective flights to Delhi and Bangalore.

Here I had to bid farewell to the group in Raipur and head to Bangalore.

Image credits to Maggie Jefferies

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Checklist for Ultimate Tiger Safari



	Species
	MAMMALS
1	Tiger
2	Sloth bear
3	Wild dog
5	Spotted deer
6	Samabr deer
7	Barasingha / Hard ground swamp deer
8	Wild boar
9	Northern plains langur
10	Rhesus Macaque
11	Gaur
12	Ruddy mongoose
13	Barking deer
14	Three striped palm squirrel
	BIRDS
1	Redjungle fowl
2	Pond heron
3	Great egret
4	Intermediate egret
5	Little egret
6	Cattle egret
7	Wood sandpiper
8	Common sandpiper
9	Green Sandpiper
10	Woolly necked stork

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11	Grey heron
12	Black headed ibis
13	Red naped ibis
14	Indian cormorant
15	Little cormorant
16	Great cormorant
17	Grey partridge
18	Jungle babbler
19	Red whiskered bulbul
20	Red vented bulbul
21	Magpie robin
22	White rumped shama
23	Asian brown flycatcher
24	Black drongo
25	Ashy drongo
26	Racket tailed drongo
27	Brown capped pygmy woodpecker
28	Yellow footed green pigeon
29	Spotted dove
30	Blue rock pigeon
31	Common myna
32	Jungle myna
33	Jungle crow
34	House crow
35	Golden oriole
36	Crested hawk eagle
37	Crested serpent eagle
38	Indian spotted eagle
39	Shikra
40	Tickells blue flycatcher
41	White breasted waterhen
42	Black shouldered kite
43	Black kite
44	Brahminy kite

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