

## Tour Report

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

19 - 28 March 2023

Tiger



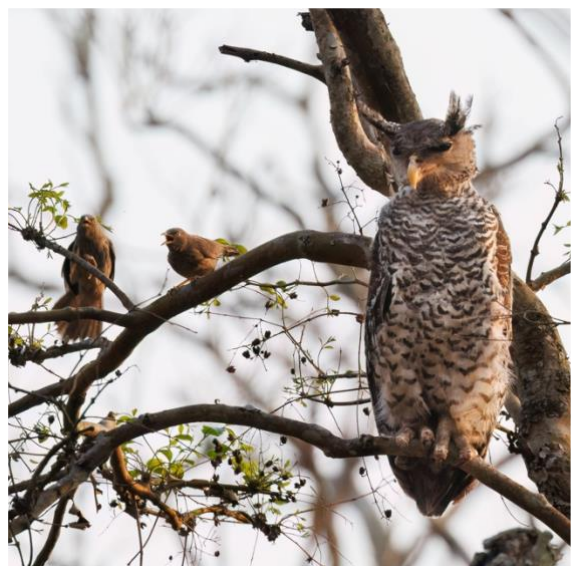
Indian elephant



Indian wild dog



Spot-bellied eagle owl



Compiled by Chris Breen

## Day 1: Depart London

Sunday 19 March 2023

Four of our small group of six flew from the UK today, one couple departed yesterday to get 24 hours ahead of any possible jet-lag.

## Day 2: Arrive Bengaluru

Monday 20 March 2023

Whilst the flight was delayed by about an hour and three-quarters we seemed to make up time quite well and only arrived an hour or so late in Bengaluru. The sizeable airport looks as though it has rarely been used, and is light, spacious and airy. Someone was waiting to meet us after we had collected our bags and at 07:00 we left the airport, and we were driven into town to the Taj Hotel (arriving at 07:40) where we met our fellow travellers and had a delicious breakfast. It consisted of pretty much everything you can possibly imagine from cereals and breads to omelettes, beautifully fresh fruit and even curry. But the most notable thing for breakfast was a large honeycomb dripping with honey!

At 09:00, breakfast complete, we jumped back in the mini-bus and headed south-west, out of the city and in the direction of Kabini River Lodge. As we left the city, we passed some large rocky outcrops (which looked curiously out of place). There were black and Brahminy kites, black-headed ibis and a couple of possible glossy ibis. We arrived in Mysore at 11:00 where we stopped for a quick comfort break and then headed for Kabini.

The lack of sleep was catching up with us and heads were nodding as we travelled west. It was beginning to feel a little more remote as we went – not that it ever feels truly 'remote' in India, but we had at least got shot of the big city and we were heading into more rural countryside. There was lots of beautifully cultivated land, fewer cars, smaller roads, and lots of birds (some that we were struggling to identify!), which included egrets, herons and darters. And of course, there were herders in the road with their small collections of goats and cattle.

We arrived at Kabini at just after 13:00, almost exactly four hours after leaving the Taj Hotel in Bengaluru. We were greeted by Ashwin, our guide for the week ahead who told us a little about the lodge and then showed us to our rooms. There was no time to relax though as lunch was already underway, so we dropped our bags and headed to the dining room for lunch.

There was a tremendous spread of food available from a whole range of salads to a lovely selection of curries. For most of us, lunch was a fairly short affair as we needed to unpack and then, after a brief moment to 'catch breath' we were meeting again at 14:45 for our first game-drive.

Dutifully on time (most of the group at least!), Ashwin then introduced us to our driver Sadiq. Ashwin and Sadiq have worked together for a long time and clearly make a great team. It was 10 minutes or so through the nearby village, to the park gate, and once there, Sadiq needed to go through some formalities with the parks team in order for us to be granted access. Soon we were on our way – anything and everything was interesting of course!

There were plenty of spotted deer (chital) to look at and we saw the almost ubiquitous western grey macaques, as well as bonnet macaques. The light was excellent, and we spent a lot of time looking at them foraging and playing in the trees. It seems





that the young bonnet macaques have a much harder time than their western grey counterparts as they are left by their parents to forage alone from a very early age.



As our drive continued Ashwin told us about various aspects of the park while also pointing out everything that we were seeing – sambar deer being one of them. As the drive progressed, we saw a most wonderful, and colourful Malabar giant squirrel and then two male gaur – the largest of all the Indian buffalo-type species. They are quite simply vast. They look like the size of a small car, and the two we saw were having a ‘face-off’ – to be honest it appeared to be a fairly ‘mild’ one and consisted of them walking fairly close to one another, not looking at each other and (I suppose) trying to look bigger and

better than the other – it looked almost ritualistic and passed without the locking of horns and without incident.

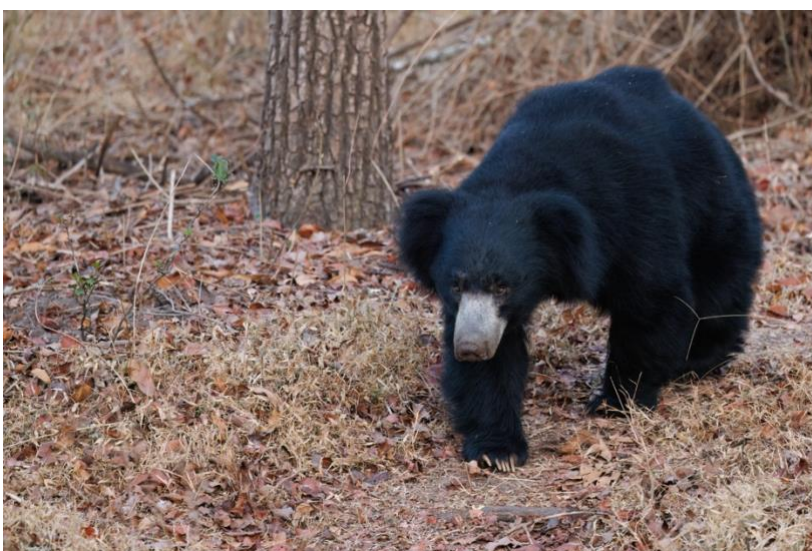
Our final sighting as we were heading back to the exit of the park was of more gaur – but this time there were ten of them. It appeared to be a small family group with a dominant male, some females and some sub-adults.

From the exit of the park to the lodge is about a 10-minute drive and once back, there was time for a shower and a beer before dinner.

### Day 3: Kabini National Park

Tuesday 21 March 2023

We were up at around 05:30 to be at our game-viewing vehicle by 05:45 in order to be in the park by 06:00 – despite the darkness and a relative chill in the air, we were all there, ready and raring to go! The park has a main road running through it which is only open between 06:00 and 18:00, so when we arrived there was already a queue of vehicles to get in though they were mainly small trucks.



Once in, Sadiq had to speak to the park officials about the formalities of our drive but 10 minutes or so later we were off. It was still almost dark.

It wasn't long before the light came up and we were deep in the park looking at a huge male elephant with big (and slightly twisted) tusks as he sauntered through the forest. We left him after a short while as Ashwin wanted us to pick up some new species. Wild boar was one of them which was shortly followed by a shout of “sloth bear” – and there on our left-hand side was a huge sloth bear making its way along a

forest path to the road. It crossed right behind our vehicle and then scurried off into the scrubland. An outstanding sighting and for most of the group it was a first.

We went towards the boundary of the park, and while we were looking at it. Next up was a black-naped hare and then a fairly distant wild boar coming out of the forest. Then we had muntjac as we were driving towards the perimeter of the park and then as we reached the fence line a pair of Asian wild dogs – with their rusty-coloured coat and big black bushy tails. In fact they looked to be hunting and disappeared beyond the fence to go hunting in the nearby farmland.

Coppersmith barbet, rose-ringed parakeet and yellow-footed green pigeon were next and then a fabulous sighting in the early morning sunlight of red jungle fowl – the most beautiful ‘chickens’ of them all.

Ashwin and Sadiq had got wind of a possible nearby tiger, so we stopped the vehicle and just waited and listened – whilst eating the biscuits that Ashwin had brought along and the delicious lady finger bananas. We waited for a while, but whilst we could hear some alarm calls, there was no tiger to be seen ... so we headed for the park gate and returned to the lodge for breakfast. Another beautiful spread that (of course!) included curry for anyone who wanted it, but also omelettes and sausages, toast and jam, tea and coffee.

There was plenty of time to relax, write up notes and look through images before lunch and then all too soon, it was time to get back in the vehicle and head back to the park for our afternoon excursion.

If this morning hadn’t been good enough, this afternoon was the icing on the cake.

As we waited for park formalities to be completed a Brahminy kite soared overhead and as we made our way onto the game-viewing tracks we came across a sambar deer wallowing in a cooling muddy puddle. We stopped at another waterhole a bit further on as there was some wonderful green bee-eater activity with them going in and out of their sandy ground nests, and then we had to dash as there was word that a tigress had been seen fairly close by.

We went straight away, and despite waiting for an extended period of time, there was no sign of the tiger. We left that ‘possible’ sighting as a leopard had been seen nearby. The light was superb, the leopard seemed very calm and relaxed and after drinking, got up and turned towards us before walking round the pool and climbing up the bank and out of sight. The first cat of the trip.

The light seemed to be improving by the minute and at just gone 18:00 we had a fleeting glimpse of a distant tiger lying by the side of a large waterhole. Thankfully everyone managed to see it, despite there being a complicated mixture of trees in the way. It was by no means the best sighting of the day, but it was the taste of things to come and got us excited about when we would see another tiger.



It was way past 18:30 when we left the park, the sky was reddening as the sun was setting and we arrived back at camp full of the joys of our first full day in Kabini National Park. Leopard, tiger, wild dog, sloth bear, elephant ... could the days get any better?



After freshening up we met in the bar for a beer – the bottles of Kingfisher arrived during the day much to everyone’s delight – then it was dinner and an earlyish night. Tomorrow awaits.

#### Day 4: Kabini National Park

Wednesday 22 March 2023

Up before dawn, we were once again in the vehicle and rumbling the short distance towards the park by 06:00 in the pitch dark. Once in, it wasn’t long before the sun came up and we had the first mammals in sight – spotted deer, wild boar and sambar - it is far too early for the grey langurs to get up and out of bed! In the early morning light, we also had an excellent sighting of a pair of stripe-necked mongooses foraging.

Much of our morning was spent just sitting and watching, less driving around today, and it was tremendous for birding (amongst other things) – jungle owlet, Malabar pied hornbill, red wattled lapwing, plum-headed parakeet and Indian nuthatch were among the delights of the drive. We also managed to see three-striped palm squirrel and some very fresh sloth bear tracks.

We then took a different route to the ones we have taken on our other safaris and went up hill and down through beautiful woodland until the view opened up to a vast grassy plain and the Kabini River. Osprey, grey-headed fish eagle, yellow wagtail, little ringed plover were all visible, but the stars of the show were a family of three smooth river otters fishing and playing on the causeway.



Back at camp we had breakfast which we followed with a nature walk (led by Ashwin) around the perimeter of camp. Butterflies, spiders, trees and all of the small stuff kept us entertained for at least an hour.

We boarded our safari vehicle this afternoon on the dot of 14:45 and went into the park ... and once again with high hopes of seeing wonderful things. We weren’t disappointed! As was the case this morning, wild boar showed themselves early on – this time it was five of them – and whilst we were watching them we also saw a green sandpiper and a rather beautiful bronzed drongo. Further along the track we stopped to watch a family of langurs drinking. We paused at the waterhole for some time and as we watched and waited spotted deer came along to drink too ... perhaps 15 or 20.

Then Ashwin and Sadiq heard a couple of alarm calls, so we swiftly headed in their direction, chatting to one or two of the other drivers and guides as we went. There had been a tiger cub seen walking across a nearby road, so the suspicion was that its sibling and its mother were close-by and that they were heading for a drink

at the nearest waterhole. We made a beeline for the waterhole. Needless to say, we weren't the only ones there, and there was a keen sense of anticipation.



We were positioned perfectly for the tiger to appear – but only if it appeared on a particular track. Another alarm call, then silence, then another alarm call, and then Ashwin whispered, “there she is, coming straight towards us”. She had walked through the forest come up a sandy bank and walked directly along the path towards us, before descending to the watery pool about 25 metres from our vehicle. She walked straight in, drinking as she walked and lay in the cooling water. We were mesmerised. She was flicking her tail, shaking her head a

little and lapping at the water in front of her. She did a half roll and then sat up twitching her ears, we could see one of the 3-month old cubs near the top of the bank peering over to look at its mum, and then the cub disappeared – but mum kept listening out for the cubs.

She was in front of us for nearly 10 minutes - and it was 10 glorious, never to be repeated, minutes of utter happiness.

We toasted her and the cubs with a glass of beer before dinner and all left for an early night wondering what tomorrow might bring.

## Day 5: Kabini National Park

Thursday 23 March 2023

After our incredible sighting yesterday afternoon, this morning had a very different feel to it. Over the past few days (and perhaps yesterday in particular) we have had some really spectacular sightings – sloth bear, leopard and tiger – so this morning things felt a little more relaxed.

Today curiously, the first animal of note in the park was neither spotted deer or wild boar, but gaur. The light was still very low but there was a handful of them by the side of the road shortly after we entered the park, so we stopped to look at them. We weren't sure if the light was going to be good enough for photography but there was some very interesting behaviour, so we waited and watched for a while. Firstly, we watched a large bull foraging, and then we realised the two, slightly younger, males that we had initially thought were foraging, were in fact having a 'face off'. It consisted of more than just staring at each other or walking alongside one another, but they were dropping their heads and butting their horns. It was interesting to watch and in fact went on for 10 or 15 minutes. Neither were fully grown adults, so it was most likely play fighting.

Next up was a very obliging wild boar that didn't run away as soon as we got near to it and stopped to take some pictures. It had attendant common mynas that were picking up insects as the boar disturbed them, one then jumped on its back and foraged there.

Whilst we didn't see tiger (or any predator for that matter) this morning, it was a thoroughly enjoyable morning. We sat and listened to the sounds and signs of the jungle – the deep bellowing call of the langur, the warning call of spotted deer that will not only give away the tiger's location, but will enable you

to determine what direction it is moving in. Of course, much of our game-viewing time was also spent discussing the whereabouts of the tigers with other drivers and guides.

We looked at tiger pug marks and heard the near continuous call of the common hawk cuckoo, listened to white-cheeked barbet and common kingfisher, and looked at little cormorant, chestnut-tailed starling, common kingfisher and a circling Indian spotted eagle ... all whilst keeping an ear and an eye open for predators.

All too soon it was time to leave, and we were back in camp for breakfast by 10:00.

This afternoon we stopped at the bridge along the road we've called 'Gravestone Road' - because of the grey stone markers that stand at regular intervals along the way looking very much like miniature gravestones - to see a very nice group of spotted deer and sambar drinking. Whilst we were with them we could hear some rustling in the leaves and we saw a medium-sized monitor lizard scratching in the undergrowth. Very close by was a tiny baby hare that was hiding in full sight in the middle of the road. When he saw us he very slightly lifted himself up from the ground and with chameleon-like backward and forward movements silently walked the short distance to the leaf litter on the side of the road. There were green imperial pigeons in the bushes behind.

We had heard that there were elephants down at the water's edge so we headed there - instead we found spotted deer and a grey-headed fish eagle. After a few minutes we turned back as Ashwin had heard that there may be a cat close by. Perfectly relaxed, and perfectly placed, though a little distant we found a leopard lying in a tree, one front paw hanging down the side of the bough, both back paws hanging down the same side, using his tail for balance, with his chin resting on one of his paws.

Filled with the sight of a leopard and with a little time left before we needed to leave the park, we decided to go back to the river to Sunset Point as we were in the golden hour of light and the elephants might be there. Sure enough, there were plenty of elephants there, using their highly adapted trunks to lift the grasses and grass roots, shake the dust off and then eat. A fairly labour-intensive way of eating.



"Tiger". We all stopped and looked at the tiger that had emerged from the woodland behind the ele's and was pacing in his 'King of the Jungle' way down to the water's edge for a drink. Elephants, tiger, spotted deer and a fabulous sunset - we weren't sure which of them was the best!

Ashwin told us that this was a male tiger known as the

'Wandering Male'. They don't know where he has come from, but they assume it is from Bandipur National Park on the other side of the river - but he is causing trouble apparently and isn't too keen on vehicles.



Drinking complete, he moved off and Ashwin asked if we like to loop around the area to position ourselves in the best place to see him when he went back into the woodland. We all wanted to do it, but it was a bit of a risk because (with no off-road driving) we had to re-trace our steps and get to where he looked as though he was going – and it was going to take us three or four minutes to get there. We set off, pushed for time as we were nearing the time when we were supposed to have left the park, and arrived where we thought Wandering Male would appear... and a few minutes later he did.

He paced across the crackling dried leaves (but they barely crackled), through the grass and between the trees, and lay down staring at us. It was a classic Indian jungle scene. His mood seemed to be 'agitated'. He got up and began pacing back through the grass flicking his tail constantly. He went behind a mound out of view and then reappeared, turned towards us, and with his ears back he snarled first, then put his head down, his ears back and charged towards us. He growled a loud, rib-rumbling growl that echoed through the forest, and then changed direction, turning away from us panting loudly and walked back into the trees.



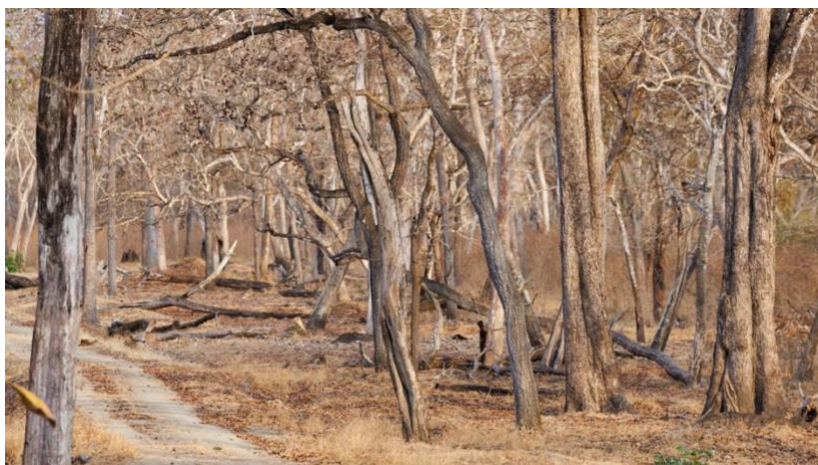
We knew who was boss – the Wandering Male had made his never-to-be-forgotten mark on all of us.

With a sense of euphoria and wonder, we returned to camp. What a way to end the day's wildlife viewing.

## Day 6: Kabini National Park

Friday 24 March 2023

After our excitement of yesterday afternoon, this morning's drive was a more sedate affair.



In fact, we had the most fabulous morning of seeing absolutely nothing out of the ordinary! No tigers, no leopards, no elephants, gaur or sambar deer, but it was fantastic. We spent almost all of the morning sat in one spot, listening to calls.

We had been slowly driving past one of the lagoons when Ashwin heard the 'sawing' call of a leopard. It was obviously not very far away, but we couldn't see it, so we stopped and



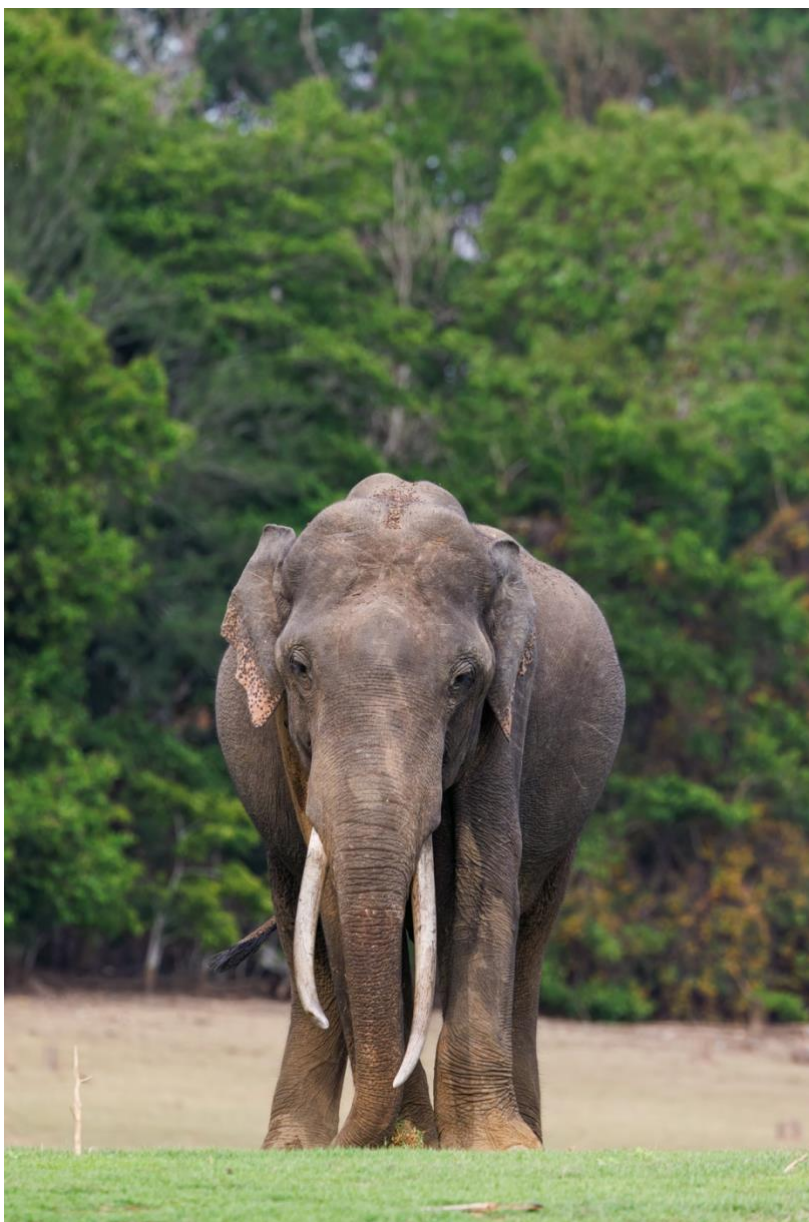
listened. As we listened, we heard spotted deer calling some distance away, but in a different direction. So, we stayed put. Listening.

We never saw the leopard – it didn't emerge from wherever it was calling, and we don't know what the spotted deer were calling for (they had probably seen a tiger), but it was the most wonderful morning of peace and tranquility. It was a little bit like being in a hide, even though we weren't in a hide.

In the time that we didn't see the leopard we identified large-billed crow, plum-headed parrot, grey-breasted prinia, pied bushchat, white-bellied woodpecker, chestnut-headed bee-eater, lesser whistling duck, great tit, red-wattled lapwing and bronze-winged jacana amongst other things. We heard woodpeckers drumming and listening to the deeply resonating call of the grey langur. And, when it was finally time to switch the engine on and leave, we felt as though we had got to know this tiny patch of the beautiful woodland that makes up much of the park, a little bit better.

We had a wonderful afternoon – it was completely different to all of the others we've had. We ambled down to the jetty at 15:00 and boarded a small boat and headed off along the river's edge to the national park – a boat ride of around 20 minutes or so. Ospreys, cormorants, fish eagles and Brahminy kites were scattered along the way together with river terns and, what turned out to be, little terns.

Whilst there were no feline predators this afternoon, we did have a truly gigantic crocodile that we watched for a while together with a tremendous number of water birds including little-ringed plover, Kentish plover and a couple of the sandpipers. However, there were two real stars of the show – the pair of otters that we watched as one of them devoured a fish, and the pair of elephants (one of which crossed the river). We watched as a mid-aged female walked along the riverbank looking for somewhere to cross to where the other ele's were. She hesitated a little at first and as she paused another (similarly aged) female on the other bank began calling and trumpeting as she walked to the point her friend was going to arrive on the island. The elephant



that was crossing heard the commotion and walked straight into the water, right up to her eye line (with her trunk up as a snorkel). She walked directly through the river to where the excited female was waiting. They touched trunks, obviously communicated and after a short while standing on the bank together, they walked off together. The female that had walked through the river was clearly coming into season and we think that

perhaps the other female – probably related – was excited by the concept. It was utterly heart-warming to witness.

## Day 7: Kabini National Park

Saturday 25 March 2023

There was a slight mist in the air this morning as we entered the park which created a ‘first day of the world’ atmosphere and the sounds of the forest seemed to have more of an echo to them.

As we drove along one of the tracks and came to a crossroads Sadiq stopped and we all looked up and down the tracks to see what might be out and about. “Wild dog on the right” called Ashwin. In the distance, but on the road, we could see a pair of wild dogs trotting in our direction. Two became three as another one appeared from the bush, and three became five as another two came out of the woodland – all trotting down the road in the direction of our vehicle. Every now and then they would veer off to the left, or right and stop to sniff the air and listen for



what might be around. They were obviously aware of us, but not slight concerned by our presence and as they approached us they slowed down. The first of the dogs then laid down, the second came over to it and they nuzzled, and then laid completely flat, nuzzled some more and then rolled over each other for a few seconds, the other dogs did the same and they all rolled over each other. Then, after a few minutes of rolling, nuzzling and (what looked like) yawning, they were up and off again.

There were no spotted deer in sight – the first time we’ve been into the park and not seen lots of them – but they clearly knew the dogs were around and were on a mission.

We went ahead of the dogs by a couple of hundred metres and stopped again, waiting for them to approach and pass us which they did, but watching them intently it was clear that the stopping, nuzzling and rolling behaviour was a continuous form of bonding – perhaps when they’re hunting. We reached one of the lagoons and the disappeared down a path towards it and we thought they were going to drink, but a couple of them were sniffing the trees as they got closer, one almost stretching up to smell something higher up the trunk. Looking through binoculars we could see a large lump on the right-hand side of the tree which turned out to be a brown fish owl youngster. One of the dogs got very close to it and it spread its wings to make itself look bigger. It obviously worked as the dogs turned and went away.

It was a truly magical encounter that lasted nearly 40 minutes. We had had our fill of the dogs, and whilst we could have stayed with them a lot longer, it was time for us to move on and see what else we could see. And what a decision that was...

10 minutes later one of the other safari vehicles was stopped on a track and we came in behind it. To our left was a huge male leopard lying on the forest floor. It was massive – a huge head and big thick neck, its coat was in absolutely perfect condition, the rosettes set off beautifully against the golden background. Ashwin thought this was almost certainly the leopard we had heard calling yesterday morning. We sat quietly watching the leopard, listening to the calls around us – grey langur, coppersmith barbet, a drumming





woodpecker, and the omnipresent call of the hawk cuckoo. The leopard suddenly became very alert and got up, stretched and turned into the forest where another leopard (a female) had appeared. There was a significant size difference between them. As the two of them walked off together we could hear them gently padding across the dried leaves.

From here we went to one of the waterholes where Ashwin had heard there was a tiger. It was the tigress we had seen a couple of days ago. We only had a brief sighting – but we all

saw it – as by now, it was time to leave the park and head back to the lodge.

That was it – The Triple Crown in a single drive. Wild dog, leopard (both male and female) and a tiger. What a drive!

This afternoon's drive was all about raptors (though we did catch a distant glimpse of our male leopard), and some specials ones at that. The young brown fish owl we saw first thing this morning appeared to have made its way back to the nest which was a hollow high up in the tree – and we could just make out that there was one or two more owls there as well.

We stopped to establish what was causing a 3-striped palm squirrel to make a continuous high pitched alarm call when we saw a crested serpent eagle swoop down and catch something. Our assumption was that it caught the squirrel as the alarm call stopped straight away. The eagle dropped his quarry though unfortunately, a despite foraging in the bush where it fell, he was unable to retrieve it.

Our final raptor caused a sensation when it flew from tree to tree with almost every bird in the forest shouting at it as loudly as possible. It was a huge and imperial looking spot-bellied eagle owl, and it was being mobbed by babblers, drongo and bulbuls. It seemed completely oblivious to them!

All in all, another outstanding day.

## Day 8: Kabini National Park

Sunday 26 March 2023

It was a quieter morning this morning, but no less lovely for it. We had decided that this morning we would return to the area where we had seen the leopard pair yesterday morning, and where some of the other vehicles had also got brief glimpses of them yesterday afternoon.

We had been exploring for 15 minutes or so when in the misty light we noticed a family group of wild boar – three young and two adults – and watched for a few minutes while the adults mated. We carried on our way and spotted some interesting birds including orange-headed thrush, streak-throated woodpecker and Blythe's starling. We also spent a bit of time overlooking a rocky stream where, in a remarkably tranquil scene we watched some gaur come down to drink and then cross the stream. There were other interesting things to see there including common sandpiper, common kingfisher (can any kingfisher with such amazing colours really be referred to as 'common?'), and of course jungle babblers.

It was only towards the end of our drive that we saw the leopards, and it wasn't really photographable as they were quite hidden in the bush, but it was a lovely sighting. We heard the langurs' warning call and waited to see if there was any movement but there was nothing obvious. A longer wait was necessary as the langurs were becoming increasingly animated which suggested that a leopard was on the move. With a bit of patience (and a good eye from Ashwin) we saw the male asleep on a low bough of a fallen tree, well camouflaged in the bush. Not the best sighting, but lovely to see. A few more minutes and more agitated calls from the langurs suggested there was another leopard on the move, and sure enough it was the small female that we saw yesterday morning. She approached the fallen tree, walked up it, greeted the male and displaced him so that she could lie in the spot that he had been in. Clearly not wanting to move off completely, he moved to an adjacent fallen bough. They both looked very relaxed and rested.



It was time to return to the lodge for breakfast.

Well, there's no other way of putting it, but this afternoon's drive was a slow one. But then that sometimes happen when you are on a bit of a mission and for one reason or another you aren't successful in your quest. Having said that, of 13 excursions that we've had so far, this was the only one that would fall into that category!

As we were driving from the lodge to the park (a journey of no more than 10 minutes at the very most) Ashwin received a call to say that Blackie (the black panther) had been seen in the park by one of the 'watchers' (the parks team that are stationed around the outskirts of the park to ensure that there are no accidental fires creeping in during the dry season). Word spread pretty quickly, and all of the vehicles were on the lookout. But ... no one saw Blackie this afternoon.

We cruised around various roads near where it was reported that he'd been seen, but without any luck, but of course looking in every nook and cranny. We stopped at a waterhole at 17:30ish as the light was turning to that peachy early evening light and began looking at some of the birds around us. We also took time to watch a beautiful bull elephant – a big tusker – that was feeding on the greenery near the waterhole.

I asked Ashwin for the identification of a dove – red feet and a rather pinkish breast (it was of course a spotted dove) – and he then said, "Oh Chris, take a direct line with your binoculars to the ground and tell me what you think." I did, and as my binoculars reached the ground I was greeted by an orange and creamy-coloured body with black stripes. Tiger. Completely unexpected, and only as a result of taking in some of the wonderful birds in the area.

Although it was an obscured view of the tiger, it was 'our tiger', no one else saw it, and we spent the next hour or so with it ... also looking at some of the lovely birds nearby that included blue rock pigeon, crested-serpent eagle, Brahminy starling (what a beautiful starling that is!) and long-tailed shrike.

As we left the park (a little later than planned) all of the coloured lights had come on in the village for a local festival. It seemed a most fitting way to return to camp after our final afternoon's game-drive.



## Day 9: Kabini National Park

Monday 27 March 2023

We were all eager this morning – as we have been very morning of course – as this morning’s drive was to be our last in the park on this trip. As we drove through the village on the way to the park gate we were ‘serenaded’ by music that was still being broadcast through the speakers, and sparkling lights that lined the road, from last night’s village festival.

Into the park, formalities over and we were off to see what we could find. “Tiger, tiger, tiger” was the rather urgent call from Sadiq at almost exactly 06:30 (we’d been in the park all of 20 minutes). The tiger was unmissable, lying in the middle of the dusty road in a lightly wooded stretch of the park. After a few minutes she got up and wandered off into the bush, quite unconcerned by us.

Keen to establish whether yesterday’s rumour of the panther was just that or something more concrete we scoured the area where the panther was known to roam but to no avail.

We enjoyed looking at jungle owlet, white-rumped shama, lesser golden-backed woodpecker and all of the usual range of birds and then headed off to the open area of water. We stopped en-route as there were a few vehicles gathered and there had apparently been a group of wild dogs passing through. They had attacked, but (unfortunately) not killed a large male spotted deer. Most of its rump had been eaten but somehow, incredibly perhaps, it was still standing – it wasn’t a pleasant sight and one which was unlikely to last for long since the dogs must have been fairly nearby. If it wasn’t the dogs that would take it, it would be a leopard or a tiger – in any case, it would probably come as welcome relief.

On then to the water where we saw grey-headed fish eagle, great and little egret, grey heron, darter, red-mantled and black-headed ibis, and both wild board and spotted deer. Then sadly it was time to leave the park and head back to camp – but not before seeing both make a female of the most colourful birds in the park ... orange minivet. We gathered for a group photo and then went into breakfast, got our bags together and left camp at 11:15 heading for Mysore and then Bengaluru. As with the outward journey it was around four hours to reach our hotel in Bengaluru.

We met for a drink at the bar and dined as early as we could in order to get to an early night in preparation for our early start tomorrow.

## Day 10: Departure day

Tuesday 28 March 2023

Today we were up and off to the airport by 03:00. Incredibly in this huge city, the roads were already busy as we left the hotel. 40 minutes later at we were at the airport. We checked-in, cleared customs and immigration and were boarded and on our way by 07:00 arriving back into the UK at lunchtime after a truly outstanding wildlife experience in one of India’s most treasured wildlife areas.

# Checklist for Nagarhole's Tigers, Wild Dogs Leopards



Based on Birds of the Indian Subcontinent by Grimmett, Inskipp & Inskipp

	Common Name	Scientific Name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
	<b>BIRDS</b>									
	<b>Pheasants, Partridges &amp; Quails</b>									
1	Grey Jungle Fowl	<i>Gallus sonneratii</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<b>Whistling Ducks &amp; Geese</b>									
3	Lesser Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>					✓			✓
	<b>Dabbling Ducks</b>									
4	Indian Spot-billed Duck	<i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i>					✓			
	<b>Storks</b>									
5	Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>			✓	✓	✓			
6	Woolly-necked stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>			✓	✓	✓			
	<b>Flamingos, Ibises &amp; Spoonbill</b>									
7	Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>	✓				✓	✓	✓	
8	Red-naped Ibis	<i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>	✓	✓						
9	Eurasian Spoonbill	<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>					✓			
	<b>Hérons</b>									
10	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
11	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>					✓			✓
12	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	✓							
	<b>Egrets</b>									
13	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	✓							





	Common Name	Scientific Name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
14	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	Intermediate Egret	<i>Ardea intermedia</i>					✓			
16	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>					✓			
	<b>Darters and Cormorants</b>									
17	Darter	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i>			✓	✓	✓			
18	Little Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo niger</i>		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
19	Indian Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i>					✓			
20	Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>			✓		✓			
	<b>Falconets and Kestrels</b>									
21	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	✓							
	<b>Baza and Kites</b>									
22	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	✓					✓		✓
23	Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓			
	<b>Osprey</b>									
24	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>		✓	✓		✓			✓
	<b>Fish Eagle, Black Eagle &amp; Honey Buzzard</b>									
25	Lesser Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus humilis</i>								
26	Grey-headed Fish Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus ichthyaeus</i>			✓	✓	✓			✓
27	Oriental Honey Buzzard	<i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i>					✓			
	<b>Vultures</b>									
28	White-rumped Vulture	<i>Gyps bengalensis</i>			✓	✓				
29	Indian Vulture	<i>Gyps indicus</i>	✓		✓	✓				
30	Red-headed Vulture	<i>Sarcogyps calvus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			
	<b>Snake &amp; Serpent Eagles</b>									
31	Crested Serpent Eagle	<i>Spilornis cheela</i>		✓	✓		✓			
	<b>Accipiters</b>									

	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Day 6</b>	<b>Day 7</b>	<b>Day 8</b>
32	Crested Goshawk	<i>Accipiter trivirgatus</i>		✓						
	<b>Buzzards</b>									
33	White-eyed Buzzard	<i>Butastur teesa</i>		✓	✓	✓				
	<b>Eagles</b>									
34	Indian Spotted Eagle	<i>Aquila hastata</i>		✓	✓		✓	✓		
35	Crested Hawk Eagle	<i>Nisaetus cirrhatus</i>		✓			✓	✓		
	<b>Gallinules &amp; Coots</b>									
36	Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>								✓
	<b>Thick-knees &amp; Jacanas</b>									
37	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>					✓			
38	Bronze-winged Jacana	<i>Metopidius indicus</i>					✓			
	<b>Lapwings &amp; Plovers</b>									
39	Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
40	Little-ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>		✓			✓			
41	Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrinus</i>					✓			
	<b>Sandpipers</b>									
42	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>					✓			
43	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	
44	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>					✓		✓	
45	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>					✓			
	<b>Terns</b>									
46	River Tern	<i>Sterna aurantia</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓			
47	Little Tern	<i>Sternula albifrons</i>					✓			
48	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>					✓			
	<b>Doves &amp; Pigeons</b>									
49	Green Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula aenea</i>				✓			✓	

	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Day 6</b>	<b>Day 7</b>	<b>Day 8</b>
50	Mountain Imperial Pigeon	<i>Ducula badia</i>								
51	Spotted Dove	<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>		✓			✓		✓	✓
52	Laughing Dove	<i>Spilopelia senegalensis</i>		✓						
53	Yellow-footed Green Pigeon	<i>Treron phonyceptaurus</i>		✓						
	<b>Parrots &amp; Parakeets</b>									
54	Vernal Hanging Parrot	<i>Loriculus vernalis</i>				✓				
55	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>		✓	✓					
56	Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>			✓		✓			
	<b>Cuckoos, Malkohas &amp; Coucals</b>									
57	Common Hawk Cuckoo	<i>Hierococyx varius</i>	✓	✓						
58	Blue-faced Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus viridirostris</i>		✓			✓			
59	Southern Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis</i>		✓						
60	Lesser Coucal	<i>Centropus bengalensis</i>							✓	
	<b>Owls &amp; Owlets</b>									
61	Jungle Owlet	<i>Glaucidium radiatum</i>			✓					✓
62	Spot-bellied Eagle Owl	<i>Bubo nipalensis</i>						✓		
63	Brown Fish Owl	<i>Ketupa zeylonensis</i>						✓	✓	
64	Mottled Wood Owl	<i>Strix ocellata</i>				✓				
	<b>Swifts &amp; Treeswifts</b>									
65	Asian Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>				✓				
66	Crested Tree Swift	<i>Hemiprocne coronata</i>		✓						
67	Little Swift	<i>Apus affinis</i>				✓				
	<b>Hoopoe, Trogons &amp; Roller</b>									
68	Common Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
69	Indian Roller	<i>Coracias benghalensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<b>Kingfishers</b>									



	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Day 6</b>	<b>Day 7</b>	<b>Day 8</b>
70	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
71	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>		✓		✓			✓	
72	Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>					✓			
	<b>Bee-eater</b>									
73	Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
74	Blue-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>					✓			
75	Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	<i>Merops leschenaulti</i>					✓			✓
	<b>Hornbills</b>									
76	Malabar Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyrceros griseus</i>			✓					
77	Indian Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyrceros birostris</i>		✓	✓			✓	✓	
78	Malabar Pied Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros coronatus</i>			✓					
	<b>Barbet</b>									
79	White-cheeked Barbet	<i>Psilopogon viridis</i>		✓		✓			✓	✓
80	Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Psilopogon haemacephalus</i>	✓	✓						
	<b>Woodpeckers</b>									
81	Heart-spotted Woodpecker	<i>Hemicircus canente</i>			✓		✓			
82	Rufous Woodpecker	<i>Micropternus brachyurus</i>		✓	✓					
83	White-bellied Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus javensis</i>			✓		✓		✓	
84	Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Picooides nanus</i>		✓	✓					
85	Streak-throated Woodpecker	<i>Picus xanthopygaeus</i>	✓						✓	
86	Lesser Goldenback	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>	✓	✓	✓					
87	Greater Goldenback	<i>Chrysocolaptes guttacristatus</i>							✓	✓
	<b>Woodshrikes &amp; Woodswallow</b>									
88	Malabar Woodshrike	<i>Tephrodornis sylvicola</i>		✓						
89	Ashy Wood Swallow	<i>Artamus fuscus</i>							✓	
	<b>Cuckooshrikes &amp; Allies</b>									

	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Day 6</b>	<b>Day 7</b>	<b>Day 8</b>
90	Large Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina macei</i>	✓	✓						✓
	<b>Iora</b>									
91	Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>			✓					
	<b>Minivet</b>									
92	Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓				
93	Orange Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>			✓					✓
	<b>Shrike</b>									
94	Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>			✓			✓		
95	Long-tailed Shrike	<i>Lanius schach</i>		✓					✓	
	<b>Drongos</b>									
96	Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
97	Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
98	Ashy Drongo	<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>		✓						
99	Bronze Drongo	<i>Dicrurus aeneus</i>			✓					
	<b>Fantails, Paradise Flycatcher &amp; Monarch</b>									
100	Asian Paradise Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>		✓				✓		
	<b>Treepie &amp; Crows</b>									
101	Rufous Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>	✓	✓				✓	✓	
102	Indian Jungle Crow	<i>Corvus culminatus</i>	✓	✓					✓	
103	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
	<b>Tits</b>									
104	Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		✓			✓	✓	✓	
	<b>Martins &amp; Swallows</b>									
105	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>					✓			
	<b>Bulbuls</b>									
106	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>		✓				✓		

	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Day 6</b>	<b>Day 7</b>	<b>Day 8</b>
	<b>Prinias, Cisticolas &amp; Allies</b>									
107	Grey-breasted Prinia	<i>Prinia hodgsonii</i>					✓			
108	Ashy Prinia	<i>Prinia socialis</i>		✓						
	<b>Babblers</b>									
109	Jungle Babbler	<i>Turdoides striata</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<b>Nuthatch</b>									
110	Indian Nuthatch	<i>Sitta castanea</i>			✓		✓		✓	
111	Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>			✓		✓	✓		
	<b>Starlings &amp; Mynas</b>									
112	Lesser Hill Myna	<i>Gracula indica</i>						✓		
113	Jungle Myna	<i>Acridotheres fuscus</i>	✓							
114	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
115	Chestnut-tailed Starling	<i>Sturnia malabarica</i>			✓				✓	
116	Blyth's Starling	<i>Sturnia blythii</i>			✓					
117	Brahminy Starling	<i>Sturnia pagodarum</i>	✓	✓	✓				✓	
	<b>Thrushes, Robins &amp; Bushchats</b>									
118	Indian Blackbird	<i>Turdus simillimus</i>							✓	
119	Oriental Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>					✓		✓	✓
120	Pied Bushchat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>					✓			
	<b>Flycatchers</b>									
121	Asian Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa latirostris</i>	✓	✓						
122	Tickell's Blue Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis tickelliae</i>	✓		✓			✓		
	<b>Leafbird</b>									
123	Golden-fronted Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>		✓	✓					
	<b>Flowerpecker</b>									
124	Nilgiri Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum concolor</i>							✓	



	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8
	<b>Sparrows &amp; weavers</b>									
<b>125</b>	Chestnut-shouldered Petronia	<i>Gymnoris xanthocollis</i>		✓						
	<b>Wagtails</b>									
<b>126</b>	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>			✓		✓	✓		
<b>127</b>	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		✓					✓	
	<b>Pipits</b>									
<b>128</b>	Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>			✓					

	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Day 6</b>	<b>Day 7</b>	<b>Day 8</b>
	<b>MAMMALS</b>									
1	Indian leopard	<i>Panthera pardus fusca</i>		✓		✓		✓	✓	
2	Bengal tiger	<i>Panthera tigris tigris</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
3	Asiatic wild dogs	<i>Cuon alpinus</i>		✓				✓		
4	Sloth bear	<i>Melursus ursinus</i>		✓						
5	Spotted deer	<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	Five striped palm squirrel	<i>Funambulus pennantii</i>		✓						
14	Indian hare / black naped hare	<i>Lepus nigricollis</i>		✓	✓	✓				
15	Ruddy mongoose	<i>Urva smithii</i>						✓	✓	
16	Stripe-necked mongoose	<i>Herpestes vitticollis</i>			✓	✓	✓	✓		
17	Smooth coated otter	<i>Lutrogale perspicillata</i>			✓		✓			
18	Grey langur	<i>Semnopithecus entellus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
19	Bonnet macaque	<i>Macaca radiata</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓