

Tour Report

India – Nagarhole's Tiger, Leopard & Wild Dogs

24 April – 1 May 2023

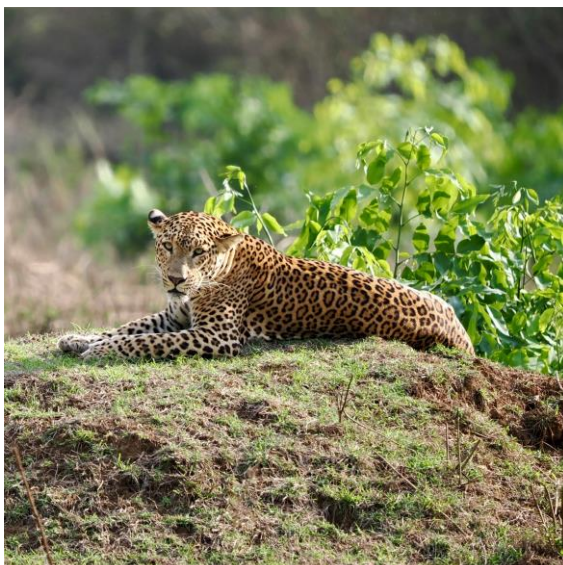
Tiger



Asiatic wild dog



Leopard



Elephant



Compiled by Ashwin HP

Images by Veronica Mackinnon & Julie Chalmers

Day 1: Monday 24 April 2023

The flight arrived on time today, so I met the group on time, and we had a nice breakfast at the Taj Hotel right opposite the airport. Then we got on the road for the 5-6-hour drive towards Kabini. We had to reach the lodge by 13:00 in order to go out for our first afternoon drive.

On reaching the lodge at Kabini we checked in and met up for lunch, where I briefed everyone about the lodge, our game drives and the meals. Later we boarded the Jeep for our first evening drive in the national park.

Half a hour into the drive it started raining - a proper downpour! Just before the rains started we heard the roaring of a young subadult tiger calling for its mother. After the rain subsided we caught tantalising glimpses of a tiger moving through the bushes, but it wasn't very clear and couldn't really be counted as a sighting - so we returned to the lodge for the rest of the evening.

Day 2: Tuesday 25 April 2023

This morning was quite slow as it rained yesterday evening and also during the night. There wasn't much in the way of movement, but we saw sambar, langur, some spotted deer and some nice birds, before heading back to the lodge.

This evening we were in Zone B on the backwaters of the Kabini River, watching elephants, birds, spotted deer and langurs when we got word of a pack of wild dogs with their young pups. By the time we reached the spot it had started raining, but we spent a lot of time watching the dogs playing with their young ones in the rain. Even once the rains subsided they continued playing and putting up quite a show for us. Eventually they tired and they started to rest one after the other. We moved on and later headed back to the lodge.

Day 3: Wednesday 26 April 2023

This morning was quite dull and gloomy as it had rained last evening, so we didn't get to see much. Once again it was largely sightings of lot of langur, smabar, gaur and peacocks.

It seemed like it was just going to rain all day. The afternoon drive started with gloomy weather and it rained from time to time, but we did manage to see a lot of elephants moving through the forest. We spent a long time watching a herd of elephants enjoying a swim in a big waterhole, which was probably the highlight of the evening before we headed back to the lodge.

Day 4: Thursday 27 April 2023

This morning it was pleasant and bright, although there still wasn't much movement. We roamed throughout the whole of Zone A, but everything was very still and quiet. We did however see some elephants, langur and spotted deer. It was almost time for us to leave the park, but I had a gut feeling that there was still something to come, so we took a risk and did another circuit of a waterhole. As predicted we stumbled upon the resident male tiger know as "Cut Lip", which was later changed to "Lord Cut Lip". Initially we saw spotted deer running helter skelter and stopped to watch them, and there right in front of us, was Lord Cu Lip marking his territory. It was an amazing sight, but in a matter of minutes he vanished into the bushes. We had to rush back to the gate to get out.

We were in Zone B this evening and it hadn't rained the whole day so were hoping to get some more sightings for the evening. We moved towards the Old MM road to see if we could catch a glimpse of any of the tigresses moving in that area. But halfway through we got a call from a friend saying there was a cat sitting out near the powerlines. We had to rush, but since we were closeby we got there just in time to see a beautiful male leopard sitting on top of a mound sunning himself. Moments after we arrived he started to move away from

the mound and head into the bushes, but he was in perfect condition. We moved away as soon as he vanished, and soon we were watching a bull elephant feeding on a small tree, when we got word again of the leopard crossing the road. We dashed to get another glimpse of him but after waiting for a long time, we decided to move on so as not to be in a crowd of cars. We made our way to the backwater area just in time for the sunset and watched elephants until it was time to head out.

Day 5: Friday 28 April 2023

It rained cats and dogs last night, so it was a pretty misty morning when we entered the park. The going was slow and wasn't much to see; after an hour or more we did come across some langur, sambar and gaur but apart from this we didn't see much.

This evening we were heading to Zone B, when we saw herds of elephant on the banks, and later some gaur browsing. Later still we got wind of a female leopard up in a tree which we spent more than an hour watching. She was very relaxed and spent most of the time asleep, but after some time she got up to change position then slept a bit more. At one point she got up stretched, then moved to a lower branch where she wasn't visible to the cars. Eventually she got down from the tree and headed off out of our view. We went around the backwaters to see the sunset at the viewpoint before heading out of the park.

Day 6: Saturday 29 April 2023

The morning was nice and bright as it had rained all night, so we were hoping the sunlight would bring more animals out and about. In anticipation we headed towards a waterhole which was in the territory of the tiger known as Lady Magge and her two young cubs. On the way we were listening for any alarm calls, when we heard spotted deer alarm calls off to our right. A few minutes later one of the group spotted Lord Cut Lip crossing ahead of us on the road where we were waiting. We rushed just in time to see him cross the road and move into the bushes. We quickly reversed to catch him on the other side where there was an exit for him to move into the core area. We got a really good look at him this time as he walked straight up to our car, then crossed and made his way into the core.

We continued on our way towards the waterhole where there was already a jeep whose occupants were watching the mother and cubs trying to come out. We were in the right place at just the right time to see them emerge from the bushes and come towards the waterhole. By then many vehicles had moved in to see the family of tigers, so we moved out of the crowd to stay away from the mass of jeeps, and watched from a distance so we didn't trouble the mother and her cubs much. She put on a show with one cub, as the second one was too scared to move because of the line of Jeeps. They moved back and forth a couple of times, trying to get the second cub to move with them. When it didn't, Lady Magge just walked out onto the bund of the waterhole and disappeared over to the other side, however the first cub kept calling for its sibling for a long time and went back into the bushes. By then it was time to head back, we made our way back to the lodge still buzzing with the morning sightings.

Sadly it rained for the rest of the day, even during our afternoon drive. We did go out in the rain but saw only elephants, gaur and spotted deer grazing on the banks. We got a message about a leopard up in a tree, but it was still pouring when we arrived at the spot. Nevertheless we spent a while watching the cat happily sleeping up in the tree while it was pouring. Then we made our way back when it was time.

Day 7: Saturday 30 April 2023

After a raining evening yesterday we hoped that this would bring out sloth bears, however they evaded us on this occasion. We did however see a bull elephant, a Draco and lots of birds before we headed back to the lodge.

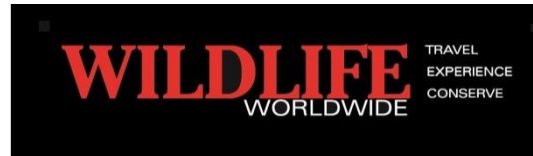
We continued our search for sloth bear this evening too, as it rained quite a lot on the drive, we saw a nice herd of elephants which we followed for a while – it's always fun watching elephants in the rain. Moving on we received news of the Temple tigress, hearing that she had crossed the main road and was walking towards the Temple Tank. We positioned ourselves away from the tank and waited. After around 20 minutes or more we heard spotted deer alarm calls, which confirmed her movement. About five minutes later we saw the tigress appear two jeeps ahead of us, so we maintained our position as we got a nice view of her walking into the forest for 10-15 minutes or so before we headed back for the evening. Sadly the sloth evaded us yet again.

Day 8: Monday 1 May 2023

This morning was our last drive in the park, and we were in Zone B. Two animals had still eluded us: the sloth bear and we wanted a closer look at dhole (wild dogs), so we decided to try and spot both. Within 10 minutes of entering the park we stumbled on a pack of nine wild dogs walking toward us in the misty morning light. We stopped and followed the dogs for sometime, then we drove ahead and waited for them to come to us. We saw two of the scouts from the pack making their way in a hurry after a male spotted deer. Five minutes later we heard the last screams of the spotted deer. During this time the remainder of the pack was slowly making its way towards us; there were five adults and four pups who were at least 10–11 months old, and the adults were leading them towards the kill. The entire pack also played in the puddles of rainwater on the road - a wonderful sight to see. We spent quite a lot of time with these dogs.

We had to leave them and go towards the back waters area for one last visit, where we stumbled upon another pack of wild dogs busily engaged in scent marking. Minutes after we reached them, they vanished into a small gully. We tried to see them from the opposite side, but without any luck, so we were puzzled as to where they might have gone. We searched for them all the way to the backwaters too, but there was still no sign of them anywhere. We made our way back to where we had seen them, and at first they eluded us, however a few minutes later we spotted them emerging from the gully towards the opposite side. All the dogs had a something or other in their mouth - they had made a kill of spotted deer fawn, which they had already stripped to its bare bones; just a few remaining parts were being ripped and torn apart. With this sighting we headed back to the lodge where, after breakfast we bade goodbye to the lodge staff and got on the road to Bangalore for our last night. Five hours later we arrived at the hotel and had an early dinner, as everyone in the group had a very early morning flight back home. Another successful tour completed!

Checklist



	Common Name
	MAMMALS
1	Tiger
2	Leopard
3	Wild dog
4	Sloth bear
5	Spotted deer
6	Sambar deer
7	Barking deer
8	Elephant
9	Gaur
10	Malabar giant squirell
11	Three-striped palm squirell
12	Wild boar
13	Black-footed langur
14	Ruddy mongoose
15	Striped-necked mongoose
	BIRDS
1	Grey jungle fowl
2	Red spurfowl
3	Indian peafowl
4	Lesser whistling duck
5	Cotton pygmy goose
6	Spot-billed duck
7	Common teal



8	Little grebe
9	Painted stork
10	Woolly-necked stork
11	Open-billed stork
12	Black-headed ibis
13	Red-naped ibis
14	Glossy ibis
15	Eurasian spoonbill
16	Indian pond heron
17	Grey heron
18	Purple heron
19	Cattle egret
20	Great egret
21	Intermediate egret
22	Little egret
23	Darter
24	Little cormorant
25	Indian cormorant
26	Great cormorant
27	Black kite
28	Brahminy kite
29	Black-winged kite
30	Osprey
31	Grey-headed fish eagle
32	Oriental honey buzzard
33	Indian vulture
34	White-rumped vulture
35	Crested serpent eagle
36	Shikra

37	White-eyed buzzard
38	Indian spotted eagle
39	Crested hawk eagle
40	White-breasted water hen
41	Purple swamphen
42	Common moorhen
43	Bronze-winged jacana
44	Black-winged stilt
45	Red-wattled lapwing
46	Yellow-wattled lapwing
47	Little ringed plover
48	Green sandpiper
49	Wood sandpiper
50	Common sandpiper
51	Small pranticole
52	River tern
53	Little tern
54	Whiskered tern
55	Common pigeon
56	Green imperial pigeon
57	Oriental turtle dove
58	Eursian collared dove
59	Spotted dove
60	Yellow-footed green pigeon
61	Alexandrine parakeet
62	Rose-ringed parakeet
63	Plum-headed parakeet
64	Malabar parakeet
65	Common hawk cuckoo

66	Indian cuckoo
67	Asian koel
68	Blue-faced malkoha
69	Greater coucal
70	Brown fish owl
71	Jungle owlet
72	Mottled wood owl
73	Crested tree swift
74	Alpine swift
75	Hoopoe
76	Indian roller
77	White-throated kingfisher
78	Common kingfisher
79	Green bee-eater
80	Chestnut headed bee-eater
81	Indian grey hornbill
82	Oriental pied hornbill
83	White-cheeked barbet
84	Coppersmith barbet
85	Rufous woodpecker
86	White-bellied woodpecker
87	Streak throated woodpecker
88	Lesser goldenbacked
89	Greater goldenbacked
90	Malabar woodshrike
91	Ashy woodswallow
92	Large cuckoo shrike
93	Common iora
94	Small minivet

95	Orange minivet
96	Long-tailed shrike
97	Brown shrike
98	Greater racket-tailed drongo
99	Black drongo
100	Bronze drongo
101	Indian golden oriole
102	Asian paradise flycatcher
103	White browed fantail
104	Black naped monarch
105	Rufous treepie
106	House crow
107	Indian jungle crow
108	Great tit
109	Dusky crag martin
110	Barn swallow
111	Red-rumped swallow
112	Jerdon's bush lark
113	Oriental skylark
114	Red-whiskered bulbul
115	Red-vented bulbul
116	Jungle babbler
117	Oriental white eye
118	Indian nuthatch
119	Lesser hill myna
120	Common myna
121	Jungle myna
122	Chestnut-tailed starling
123	Blyth's starling

124	Brahminy starling
125	Orange-headed thrush
126	Indian blackbird
127	White rumped shama
128	Oriental magpie robin
129	Asian brown flycatcher
130	Tickell's blue flycatcher
131	Jeron's leaf bird
132	House sparrow
133	White-rumped munia
134	Yellow wagtail
135	White-browed wagtail