

Birding/Angling History/Culture
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WILD LIFE
Travel/Photography Vegetation/Flora
Vegetation/Flora Travel/Photography
Camping/Safari Birding/Angling



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... Destination in India

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Our People



Abbas A Zaidi

A young entrepreneur and a naturalist, Abbas is passionate about wildlife. While promoting tourism business in India, he relentlessly promotes wildlife and conservations in India. In past 10 years he has traveled major tiger reserves of India promoting conservation and wildlife tourism.

LIMRA Hospitality is a brain child of Abbas. With his 15 years of corporate travel expertise, driven by passion for wildlife, Abbas is committed to promote wildlife tourism in India.



Syed Fayaz

A National Award recipient filmmaker Fayaz is British Chevening Scholar. A natural conservationist, fayaz has produced advocacy films on environment and wildlife that have been instrumental in bringing legislations in India and provoked discourses internationally on wildlife situation in India.

He started his career with Television Today for their current affairs video magazine Newstrack. Fayaz has worked with major broadcasters and broadsheets like DD, BBC, Discovery, ITN, Channel 4 and The Sunday Times. His continues thrust on wildlife and conservation in India won him a place on the prestigious US State Department's IVLP - International Visitors Leadership Programme in 2007.



Santosh Kumar

Mr. Kumar comes with a 11 years experience in the field of operations under his belt. Having worked with reputed DMCs like Kuoni and Thomas Cook India, he specializes in administrative functions and strategic business development, inventive ways to contribute in growth of revenue, conceptualization and brand positioning. During his stint in the reputed hotels like Le Meridian and Park Plaza, Mr. Kumar has been instrumental in suggesting cost cutting measures without compromising on the quality delivered. He has also been an integral factor in comprehending client feedback and etching out a customized solution.

One of the core team members, Mr. Kumar gets his team building skills from being a cricketer at a regional level. Spearheading the administration and business development department at Limra Hospitality, Mr. Kumar ensures quick resolutions to client queries as well as smooth flow of information for the clients. He comes with an all round knowledge of operations contributing largely to creating SOPs and ensuring their implementation.



Ms. Sumbul Raza

Ms. Raza started her professional journey with GE Money Services India and has come a long way. With an experience of over 12 years out of which 6.5 years was with the Administration and 5.7 years in business development, Ms. Raza brings her marketing expertise to Limra Hospitality. Having successfully headed a team of Sales and Marketing and a considerable stint with Limra Hospitality handling the luxury portfolio, Ms. Raza has many accolades as a leader and is a creative visionary.

She credits her educational background upbringing for instilling self discipline and determination as qualities in her. She not just brings in her professional eruditions but also her personal learnings to Limra Hospitality which help her cater to the clients effectively. An alumni of the Symbiosis Institute of Management, Ms. Raza is an integral part of the Business Development team of Limra Hospitality.

Welcome To



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... Destination in India

A Division of Limra Hospitality Pvt. Ltd. is an upcoming Destination Management Hospitality company that intends to deliver leisure travel excursions to customers. Limra Hospitality intends to guide customers in selecting a trip(s) based on pre-defined vacation criteria. This analysis will be based on user profiles, set by the consumers, which includes preferences such as: Budget, Activities sought, Destination, and Time of Travel. A traveler will hence be able to select areas of interest based on their preferences and subsequently identify destinations to visit. The intention is to provide customers with access to exclusive travel destinations, service to fully appreciate destinations through information packages, not just sight-seeing, and access to special interest travel according to the group's/ individual's preferences.

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RANTHAMBHORE NATIONAL PARK

Standing out in stark contrast to the biological desert that Rajasthan has become, the Ranthambhore forest is like a balm, its soothing effect palpable the moment one enters the portals of the massive stone ramparts of the fabled Ranthambhore Fort. Constructed to protect kings... the battlements now defend another threatened monarch -the tiger.



HISTORY & CULTURE

The Ranthambhore Fort, occupied for years by Raja Hamir, has lent its name to the Tiger Reserve. A Hindu battlement, it has seen a series of Muslim rulers try unsuccessfully to lay siege to it, including Allaudin Khilji in 1301.

The army of the Moghul Emperor Akbar camped here (1558-1569) and the Akbar Namah records the menu that the generals were served when they had a meal under the famous banyan tree that visitors can still see at the base of the ramparts.

A walk up to the fort reveals legends in stone of brave warriors and tales of johar (ritual suicide) committed by more than a thousand women who mistakenly presumed their men folk had been vanquished by Khilji's forces.

Pilgrims still visit a Ganesh temple here with the same fervour as did their ancestors. The famous battis kambha chhatttri (32-pillar canopy) was built by Raja Hamir to mark the 32nd year of his father's reign, and stands as an example of filial devotion.

The park area itself was once the hunting preserve of the Maharajas of Jaipur and many tiger shoots took place here including an infamous visit in the early sixties when a tiger was set up to be shot by Queen Elizabeth II.

The Ranthambhore Park earned Sanctuary status in 1958 and when Project Tiger was launched in 1973, it really began to receive the protection it deserved. Placed under the care of the now-famous Fateh Singh Rathore, by the 80s the park had earned itself the distinction of being one of the world's best-known tiger forests.

The first real signs of ecological renewal were the scores of once-dry pools, streams and rivulets that began running full of water all year long. This helped native plants to re-establish themselves. A major side-benefit of Ranthambhore's return to health was the ground water recharge service performed by the forest, which helped restock wells in surrounding villages.

Villagers in the fort still believe that when the ramparts had to be built



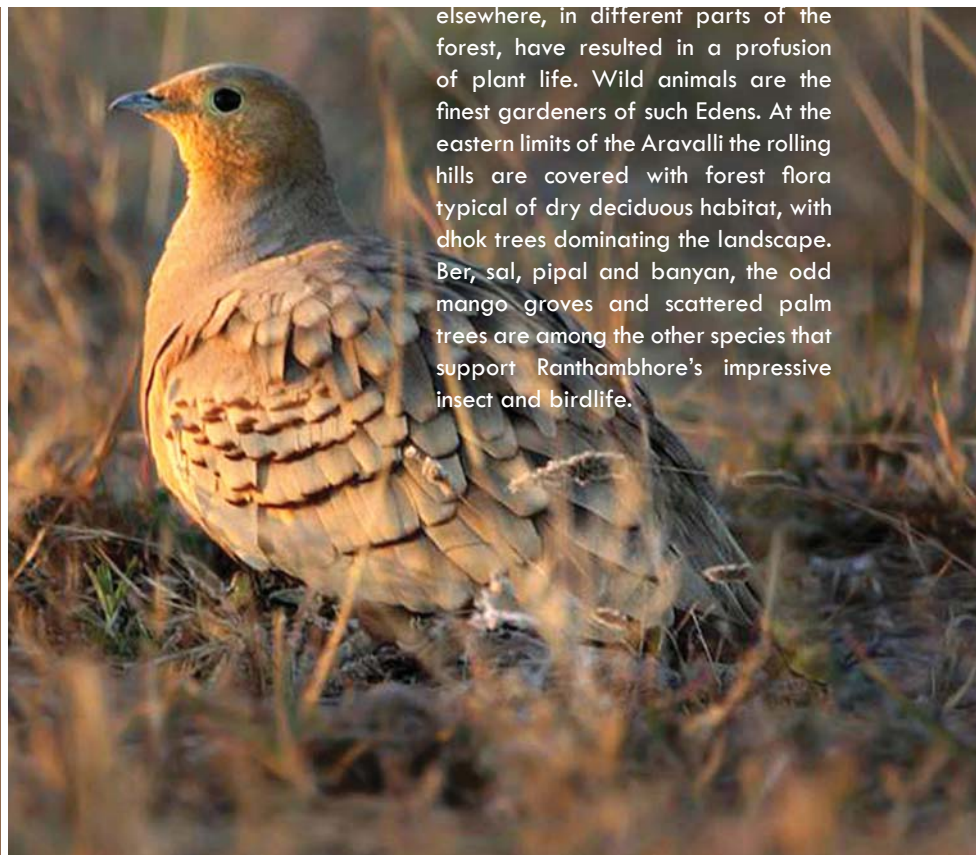
higher, the mortar was mixed using blood from brave and fallen warriors. The fact is that many who died on the walls were buried where they fell.

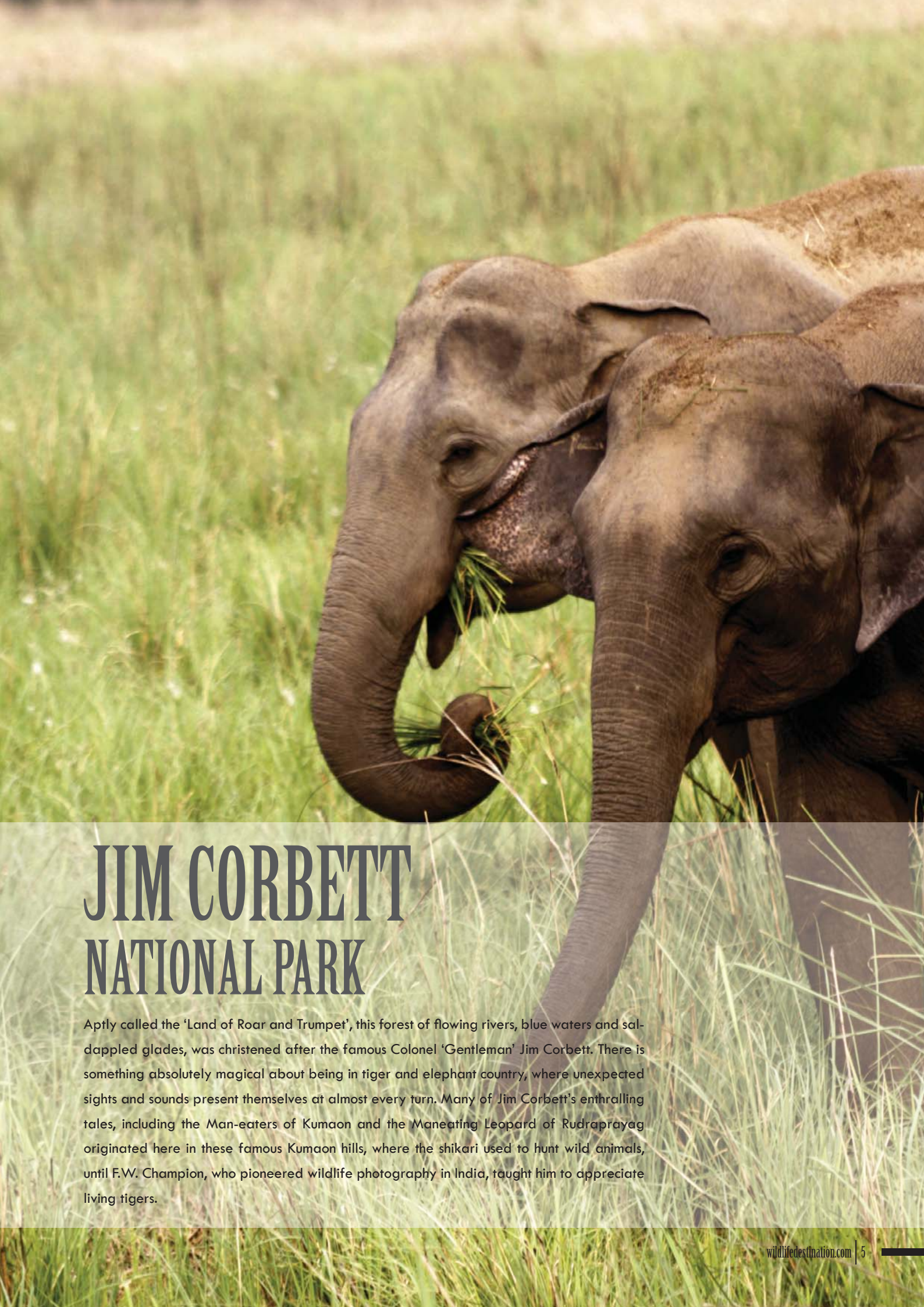
As a result of quarrying for stones to build up the ramparts, water collected in the resultant depression. Over the years this became a reliable source of water for defenders and the water is still potable. However, the priest at the temple scoffs at such possibilities. He says he knows different! According to him, Sita was thirsty when she

accompanied Lord Ram into the forest and he therefore shot an arrow into the ground from where water gushed out.

VEGETATION/FLORA

It is exactly because of the activities of the creatures of the park that Ranthambhore is so rich in natural wealth. Wild fruit seeds dropped by bats, sloth bear and birds and grass seeds caught on the coats of foraging mammals only to be deposited elsewhere, in different parts of the forest, have resulted in a profusion of plant life. Wild animals are the finest gardeners of such Edens. At the eastern limits of the Aravalli the rolling hills are covered with forest flora typical of dry deciduous habitat, with dhok trees dominating the landscape. Ber, sal, pipal and banyan, the odd mango groves and scattered palm trees are among the other species that support Ranthambhore's impressive insect and birdlife.



A photograph of two elephants in a lush green field. The elephant on the left is in the foreground, facing left, with its trunk curled and holding a bundle of green grass. The elephant on the right is slightly behind and to the right, also facing left. The background is a vast field of tall green grass under a bright sky.

JIM CORBETT NATIONAL PARK

Aptly called the 'Land of Roar and Trumpet', this forest of flowing rivers, blue waters and sal-dappled glades, was christened after the famous Colonel 'Gentleman' Jim Corbett. There is something absolutely magical about being in tiger and elephant country, where unexpected sights and sounds present themselves at almost every turn. Many of Jim Corbett's enthralling tales, including the Man-eaters of Kumaon and the Maneating Leopard of Rudraprayag originated here in these famous Kumaon hills, where the shikari used to hunt wild animals, until F.W. Champion, who pioneered wildlife photography in India, taught him to appreciate living tigers.

HISTORY & CULTURE

Eventually Gentleman Jim put his guns down in favour of the camera; and that is the example that all humans who venture into this magnificent Park must now emulate. India's first National Park, Corbett is ranked as one of the best-managed parks in the subcontinent. It also happens to be one of the last surviving stretches of untouched sub-Himalayan wildernesses. The park lies in the undulating Shiwalik ranges, distinct from the Himalaya in that they were formed from the products of massive erosion – sand, gravel and stones – of the Himalaya. In this part of the Kumaon hills, they melt into the Himalayan chain. Patlidun is an elevated, flat valley through which the picturesque Ramganga River, the only perennial source of water in the park, flows. Thus cradled in the foothills of the Himalaya, in the Pauri Garwal hills and Nainital, the forest spreads over an area of 520 sq. km., of which a

core area of 320 sq. km. is inviolate. The South Patlidun area ranges in elevation from 400m. to 1,210m. (the Kandla peak) and comprises a huge east-west valley through which three densely forested, parallel ridge systems run. Offshoot ridges go from north to south forming smaller valleys and these provide valuable and very secluded niches for wild animals to hunt and breed. The topography is varied with hilly areas, riverine habitat, marshes, deep ravines and flat plateaux. The Ramganga river enters from the northeast and flows through most of the park till it forms the Kalagarh reservoir created by a multipurpose hydroelectric dam, the

largest earthen dam in Asia. Corbett is the ultimate tiger haven, but because of its thick undergrowth and tall grass it is actually quite difficult to spot tigers. A plentiful prey base does, however, support a tiger population, variously estimated to range between 90 to 120. Visitors often report seeing the tiger on the main tar road between the Dhangari entrance gate and Dhikala. If you do not see one, pugmarks are a sure sign that they are around. Apart from the tiger, you could see as many as 50 different species of mammals. Leopards are often seen in the hilly areas and outskirts of the park, because the larger and more powerful tiger



dominates the prime areas. The jungle cat and the rare fishing cat frequent grassland and riverine areas.

VEGETATION/FLORA

Elephants are the dominant mammals of Corbett, but even these are dwarfed by the larger-than-life vistas. They can be seen bathing, drinking and feeding in the Ramganga River and its food-rich surrounds. Herds are seen as frequently as lone tusked. You could chance upon them in thick vegetation or watch them from a distance from machans built over salt licks and water holes throughout the park. Elephants once used to migrate out of the park, but the Ramganga reservoir has cut off one migratory route and some herds are now confined. Relatively easily visible are chital, sambar (the largest deer in Asia) and barking deer. Wildboar may suddenly cross the jungle road as you travel. Huge males wander in sounders with females accompanied by striped and marked piglets. If startled by your presence, the group often takes a moment or two from their foraging to regroup and make their getaway into the undergrowth almost in single file. Large male boars can be dangerous if cornered and have been known to fatally wound tigers in battle. Bharal, goral, Himalayan tahr and serow can be seen. In the Bijrani area chances of seeing sloth bear are excellent. Attracted by both termites and the sweet nectar of mahua flowers, the bears often

seem inebriated. Jackals come close to the Dhikala campus, where they seem to thrive on small rodents and mammals such as blacknaped hare that live in the grassy chaur. The call of the langur is one of Corbett's most distinctive sounds. Spread throughout the park, these monkeys can often be seen teamed up with barking deer and chital that have learned to feed on the fruit and leaves dropped by monkeys. The gharial and the mugger or marsh crocodile are both found in the Ramganga river. Tortoises and fresh water turtles are effective scavengers and can also be seen.

Corbett is a very important breeding

ground for Indian reptiles. The Indian python, viper, king cobra and krait—all poisonous—inhabit the park. Monitors and other lizards are amongst the 25 reptile species documented in the park. The tiger, wild dog, hog deer and Indian pangolin are rarely seen outside the National Park although they once roamed the entire terai region. The Himalayan black bear may sometimes be seen during bitter winters at Kandla, but they rarely descend to the lower slopes or valleys. Large packs of dhole or wild dog may be seen in the Bijrani area.



TADoba NATIONAL PARK

Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, located in the Chandrapur district of Maharashtra is the oldest national park in the state. It was declared a Project Tiger Reserve in 1993. Tadoba is bursting with life and animals like the tiger, leopard, sloth bear, hyaena, jackal, wild dog, blue bull and sambar inhabit the reserve. The park features thick teak forests and a beautiful lake. Scenic treks with interesting wildlife sightings are assured at Tadoba and it is rightly called 'The Jewel of Vidharba'. Tadoba National Park was christened after the local God Taru, who is worshipped as 'Tadoba'.



HISTORY & CULTURE

Legend holds that Taru was apparently a village chief who was killed in a mythological encounter with a tiger. A shrine dedicated to the God Taru exists even today beneath a huge tree, on the banks of the Tadoba Lake. The temple is frequented by adivasis, especially during the fair held every year in the Hindu month of Pusha, between December and January. Tadoba lies in the Moharli hills of the West Chandrapur Forest Division of Maharashtra. The terrain is hilly with a gradual slope from north to south. The altitude of the hills averages about 200-350 m. The Tadoba Lake is a 120 ha. water body located in the heart of the reserve. This lake is a perennial water source that the area depends on, especially during the dry summer months. Other wetland areas within the reserve include the Kolsa lake and Andhari river.

VEGETATION/FLORA

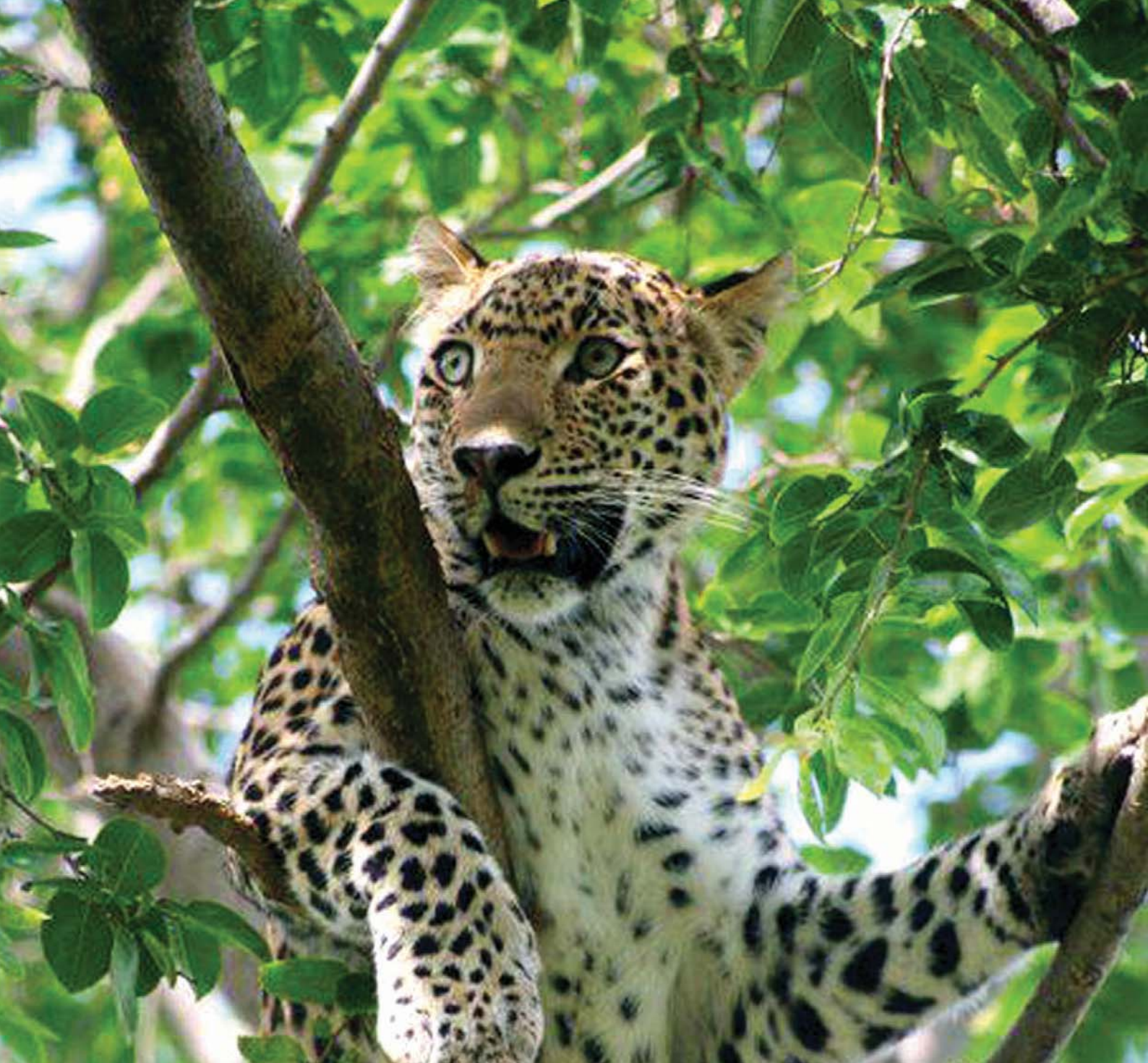
Thick forests are relieved by smooth meadows and deep valleys. Cliffs, talus and caves provide refuge for several animals. Tadoba is bursting with life. It houses several endangered species. The apex species of the reserve is the tiger *Panthera tigris*. The leopard *P. pardus* and the jungle cat *Felis chaus* are some of the other carnivores that share these forests. The jackal *Canis aureus*, hyaena *Hyaena hyaena*, Indian wild dog *Cuon alpinus*, civet cat, sloth bear *Melursus ursinus* may also be encountered. The reserve is also renowned for the gaur or wild ox *Bos gaurus*. Large herds of chital *Axis axis* and sambar *Cervus unicolor* may be seen. The sturdy nilgai *Boselaphus*



tragocamelus and the swift-footed four-horned antelope *Tetracerus quadricornis* are also residents of this reserve. The muntjac *Muntiacus muntjac*, chevrotain *Tragulus meminna*, common langur *Presbytis entellus*, flying squirrel and wild boar *Sus scrofa* also abound. Crocodiles *Crocodylus palustris* are another highlight of the reserve. The reptilian fauna includes thirteen recorded species including three species that are endangered, namely the Marsh Crocodile, Indian Python and the Common Indian Monitor. Terrapins, star tortoises, the cobra and Russel's

viper also occur in Tadoba. Tadoba is also an entomologist's paradise. 74 species of butterflies have been recorded including the pansies, monarch, mormons and swordtails. Two endangered species include the Danaid Egg Fly and the Great Egg Fly. Dragonflies, stick insects, jewel beetles and the praying mantis are other insects in the reserve. The signature spider, giant wood and red wood spiders are often seen in the monsoon and soon after. Some hunting spiders like the wolf spiders, crab spiders and lynx spiders are also common.





KANHA NATIONAL PARK

The Kanha Tiger Reserve is prime tigerland... the epitome of Kipling country with sal forests of sunlight and shadows, a myriad streams, rolling meadows and all the wildlife imaginable. Home to one of the world's most endangered deer - the hardground barasingha - this amazing National Park helped pioneer the advent of scientific conservation management in India. It is justifiably held out as one of Project Tiger's star success stories. Virtually everyone who visits Kanha comes away moved by its magnificent diversity. Most visitors return.

HISTORY & CULTURE

Kanha lies to the east of the Central Indian highlands (that stretch east-west across Madhya Pradesh) in the Maikal hills of the ancient Satpura mountain range. Its flat-topped hills (500 -1,000 m) support grassy meadows, or maidans. Well-watered valleys, rich with forests, ascend in steps from West to East. The river Sulkum, a tributary of the Banjar, flows through Kanha and is its principal source of water. The area teems with diverse wild animals typical of Indus-Ganges monsoon forests. The Banjar and Halon Valley forests form the western and eastern halves of Kanha. The low-lying Banjar Valley floods over in the rains leaving rich soils. The southern source of the mighty and now controversial Narmada River lies in the Maikal hills. There is every chance of seeing a tiger on early morning elephant rides, or from vehicles both in the morning or evening. Barasingha deer, star attraction of Kanha, often adorn their antlers with tufts of grass in the rutting season. They are not exactly easy to see, but sightings are possible. Once restricted to the Kanha meadows the deer can now be seen in other meadows as well. Mammals such as the leopard, jungle cat, sloth bear, wild dog (dhole) and the mongoose are usually encountered by sheer chance. Jackals are more frequently seen patrolling their turf, usually in search of fawns or other small prey. Gaurs prefer highlands

and the most reliable sightings are to be had in the Mukki range. Only the largest tigers will try to bring down a bull gaur. Chital deer can be seen in herds numbering hundreds. Wildboar, preyed upon by leopards and tigers, are common almost everywhere. Four-horned antelope or chausingha, blackbuck and nilgai can also be seen, but less frequently. The Hanuman langur and palm squirrels are ubiquitous. Some animals are difficult to sight. These include the hyena, blackbuck, chevrotain (mouse deer, only 300 cm. tall!), porcupines, sambar and barking deer (or muntjac), (found in small numbers). Pythons and cobras, though common, are difficult to spot.

VEGETATION/FLORA

As with other wildlife areas, early mornings are the most rewarding. Silent rounds on elephant back provide you with an incomparable feel of the forest, its smells and sounds. Tiger trackers locate elephants and the park authorities offer to take tourists to the spot when one is sighted. But in recent years this practice has come in for considerable criticism from conservationists and animal rights activists who rightly point to the cruelty and danger to the tiger, which is often kept away from water or food sources for hours by a phalanx of elephants. The tiger tends to stay quiet to conserve its energy during the day. But it patrols

its territory at dawn and dusk, which is when you stand the best chance to spot it from a vehicle. Tracking tigers on elephant back can be an exhilarating experience. One sets out early in the morning from Kisli, Kanha or Mukki to a flat nullah or a grassy glade. Pugmarks or drag marks of a kill, or langur and deer alarm calls provide clues to the whereabouts of the secretive cat. Anticipation is nine-tenths of the pleasure of being out in the forest and visitors very often come across such rare and delightful sights as a leopard striding across a road in broad daylight, or a monitor lizard or python basking in the early morning sun. Gaur, the world's largest ox, prefer to keep to hilly tracts watered by perennial springs. In the evenings they normally come out to graze in nearby meadows. Mukki, is probably the best area for gaur. Sambar, chausingha and nilgai also frequent the areas and sloth bear too. Birds like the Marsh Harrier are also found at these elevations. For a breathtaking view of the Kanha expanse and the Banjar Valley, a late afternoon drive out to Bahmnidadar (850 m.) makes for an unforgettable outing. The drive takes you through rich forests of haldu and dhaora, festooned by climbers and framed with clumps of giant bamboo. Leopards are frequently spotted on this track, as are barking deer, sambar and jungle fowl.



BANDHAVGARH NATIONAL PARK

Bandhavgarh is one of India's most picturesque Central Indian jungles. Bamboo clumps are an intrinsic feature of Bandhavgarh, as is the hilly terrain with its steep ridges, sal forests and grassy pastures. The impressive Bandhavgarh Fort stands out as an extant reminder of the ancient history of the region. Even today discoveries are being made amidst the crumbling ruins and ramparts of the fort that throw new light on battles fought and empires lost. No one who visits this incredible forest comes away unaffected by its heady brew of history and wild nature.



HISTORY & CULTURE

No one is really sure who built the Bandhavgarh Fort, which was constructed on a virtually unassailable plateau at an elevation of 800 m., though scores of myths about its origins continue to do the rounds. It is clear, however, that the area now encompassed by the park has seen settlements and civilisations come and go for millennia. Historians suggest that sandstone caves to the north of the Bandhavgarh Fort harbour Brahmi inscriptions dating back to the 1st Century B.C. One of these caves, called Bagdhalak, is embellished with the stripe patterns and pugmarks of the tiger (locals still venerate the cat and colourful tiger images can be seen at scores of tiger temples, perhaps their way of appeasing the awe-inspiring animal). Inscriptions attributed to King Bhimsen dating back to 300 AD have also been recorded from the fort walls.

The Chandela dynasty of Bundelkhand, most famous today for having built the Khajuraho temples (210 km. away) also ruled here for a while around the 12th century. Later, warrior clans fought and lost many battles for possession of the fort, until the Baghels made the Bandhavgarh Fort their capital in the 17th century. The house of Rewa, whose descendents still own the imposing fort, trace a direct lineage from the Baghel dynasty and the fort is still owned by the Rewa family. This is, in fact, the only private



property legally recognised within the National Park area and tourists can visit it after obtaining permission. Today the fort is, however, run down and has been ever since the capital was shifted to Rewa 120 km. away. Till a few decades ago it served as a hunting preserve for blue bloods, who took advantage of the fact that the forest had reclaimed much of its once well-manicured estate.

After Independence the privy purses were abolished and the territories of royals were taken over. Bandhavgarh became a part of Madhya Pradesh and was converted into a National Park in 1968. Hunting was officially stopped, new water holes constructed and grazing curbed. Tigers, pushed to the brink of extinction, found a new lease on life. The relatively small 105 sq. km. of protected area was extended to 449 sq. km. as late as 1986. Tigers benefited and

their numbers rose because young ones from new litters were able to carve prey-stocked territories for themselves.

The source of the Charanganga, a vital water source for the park, originates within the fort precincts. Here almost touching the ramparts, an imposing stone statue of a reclining Vishnu was carved around the 10th century. Called Sesh Saya, this water source was never disturbed or destroyed despite hundreds of years of wars and skirmishes, because people believed the Charanganga originated at the feet of Vishnu. This worship of forested water sources was once common across India. Such protection had widespread social support and was clearly more effective than the mere legal protection most reserves now enjoy.

It is believed that Lord Ram stopped here after vanquishing Ravana in Lanka and that it was Hanuman's monkey architects, who built the bridge to Lanka, that designed and constructed the Bandhavgarh Fort. Lakshman, Ram's obedient and dutiful brother, was gifted the fort, thus the name (Bandhav - brother; garh - fort). People of the area still worship Lakshman at a temple within the fort.





The white tigers of Rewa were taken from the wild and are justifiably famous worldwide. But no specimens have been seen in the wild in recent years. A well documented story reveals that Mohan, the first ever white tiger cub to be discovered, was accidentally found in the Bandhavgarh forest in 1951 and was kept as a pet by the then Maharaja. Vets confirmed that it was not an albino, but a rare recessive gene that had somehow surfaced. This one animal was the progenitor of all the cubs that now live in zoos in different parts of the globe and displayed to the public as a (very beautiful) freak of nature. Bandhavgarh aficionados, firmly believe that somewhere, somehow, yet another wild white tiger will emerge from the wilds of this forest.

VEGETATION/FLORA

The vegetation in Bandhavgarh can be classified as the Indus-Ganges Monsoon Forest type consisting mainly of semi-evergreen sal forest mixed with the lofty Terminalia and mixed bamboo species. Lagerstroemia, Boswellia, Pterocarpus and Madhuca enhance the floral richness. Over half the area has sal, saj, dhobin and saja. Bamboo and grassland called bahs are situated in the north, where Saccharum, Phragmites, Themeda and Heteropogon form the staple food base for herbivores. It is thought that swamp deer used to live here, but that they moved away with the gradual change in the habitat. Bamboos flowered gregariously in 1985 and this has led to a profusion

of dense new clumps, that can be seen together with the vestiges of old ones. Nallahs such as the Charan Ganga, Umara, Junad, Damnar and Bhadar crisscross the forest. Botanists would like to stop by and admire the ferns that dominate these wet areas, which also sport other typical moist evergreen species.





KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK

Kaziranga's ecosystems, comprising wetlands, alluvial grasslands, and wet tropical evergreen forests, literally burst with life. The phenomenon of annual flooding, which takes place when the Brahmaputra breaks its banks during each monsoon season, has been taking a vicious toll of wildlife in recent years of upstream deforestation... but flooding per se is not bad (75 per cent of the land is normally underwater) as it brings in life-giving alluvial silt, a key reason why Kaziranga is such a bio-rich habitat. Situated in Nagaon and Golaghat districts of Assam on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra, Kaziranga lies at the foot of the Mikir Hills that rise to a height of 1,220 m., some eight km. from Bokakhat.

HISTORY & CULTURE

The arterial National Highway No. 37 of Assam State forms the southern boundary of the 428 sq. km. park (proposals to double the area are pending). The Mora Diphlu, Bhengra and the Diphlu rivers also drain the park together with countless smaller streams that feed the many bheels (lakes) that dot the park. Tall dense grasslands, typical of the floodplains of the Brahmaputra, carpet almost half the park area and are interspersed with open forests. The streams and numerous small bheels that form when the floods recede constitute an interconnected riverine habitat. The hills have always offered refuge to the animals from floods, but in recent years human settlements have prevented such escape. Visitors who choose to explore all three of Kaziranga's distinctive habitats in the

Western, Central and Eastern Ranges can sample the flavour of this world-famous rhino refuge in a matter of two days. To really savour the wilderness, of course, you would be advised to stay longer. If you set off early in winter, a thin ground mist cloaks the grasslands. Through this mist, wild buffalo, rhinos, elephants and deer tend to appear and disappear like apparitions in a strange and exotic setting. Rhinos are generally seen alone, unless accompanied by calves. Occasionally, two males may be seen sparring. On rare occasions, however, you could conceivably see up to 30 rhinos in the open grasslands from the Dunga watchtower in the Central Range. Many visitors get to see lone bulls grazing a short distance from the main highway before even entering the park. Herds of wild buffalo can be approached quite close on elephant back, but they can also be observed at greater distances, through binoculars, from the tall watch towers built for wildlife viewing by the authorities. As a rule buffaloes are shy, especially in the presence of young ones and lone bulls can be positively



dangerous so it is not a good idea to try and walk at any time in the park. Elephants never used to stay all year round in Kaziranga, choosing to depart during the floods. But in recent years population pressures from the surrounding tribals settlements have disrupted elephant migration routes or 'corridors'. They can consequently be seen in the park for 12 months now. They tend to concentrate around the bheels, which offer food and water. Keep your distance from bulls and remember, that strong-looking female you see might just turn out to be a makha (tuskless male). Gaur too have had to adapt to human disturbance outside and are now a more common sight in the park. While this may sound good for tourism, it may prove to be quite disastrous for Kaziranga in the long run as over-grazing is a distinct possibility.

VEGETATION/FLORA

Water is an important constituent of the park with 29 per cent of the area covered by swamps, four per cent by rivers and eight per cent by miscellaneous water bodies. These wetlands are incredibly well-stocked larders that offer almost unlimited supplies of fish, insects and aqua flora, the foundation upon which Kaziranga's birds and animals exist. Watchtowers constructed at different vantage points in the park allow viewing animals at waterholes for extended spells when one can watch the animals with binoculars from a distance without disturbing them. The Central (Kohora) Range: Mihi, Kathpora, Dafflong, Borbeel, Bhaisamari are some of the particularly rich bheels here. Rich in birdlife, these wetlands are

among the most productive habitats around which to birdwatch. Eastern (Agartoli) Range: Driving along a small stream with a variety of semi evergreen trees forming a closed canopies along its banks, you could see elephants swimming across in herds, or a young one enjoying a dust bath. Rotting logs are favourite spots for turtle to sunbathe. Perhaps the most magnificent part of Kaziranga, roads from this particularly rich area lead to tall grass habitats and the sandy banks of the Brahmaputra. This is Bengal Florican country. Mihimukh is a particularly good wildlife area. Western (Bagori) Range: This range has a patch of semi evergreen forest near Baguri, Bimali and Haldibari and Dunga, Bimoli, Borbeel, Dafflong and Ramori.



A vibrant blue and orange bird, possibly a Red-breasted Flycatcher, is perched on a thin, dark branch. The bird has a bright blue head and back, with a reddish-brown breast and belly. It is facing left. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a natural habitat. The overall lighting is soft, creating a serene atmosphere.

BHARATPUR (KEOLADEO GHANA) BIRD SANCTUARY

In the nesting season the sound of birds can be so loud as to drown out human conversation! And the buzz of insects pervades the air, always. Grass grows out from the still waters of the many wetlands, together with lotus, duckweed, water fern and sedge - food for countless living things such as frogs, snails, mosquitoes, dragonflies, fish, water snakes and birds that collectively conspire to make the Keoladeo Ghana National Park in Bharatpur, Rajasthan, a World Heritage and Ramsar Site.

HISTORY & CULTURE

This is arguably one of the most unique bird habitats on the earth. Those who knew him confirm that Dr. Salim Ali, the grand old man of ornithology, was happiest here, in the midst of nature and the birds he lived to study and enjoy.

At one time hundreds of Siberian Cranes used to winter in the Ghana. Like white ghosts in the mist they were lured here from other near and far north Indian wetlands. The 'Sibes' used to arrive at the Ghana from their breeding grounds in Siberia, 6,400 km. away for decades, in search of reliable food sources, because all their summer supplies were snowed under.

In 1956 the area was finally declared a bird sanctuary, but shooting was only stopped in 1964. However, the Maharajah himself retained personal shooting rights all the way through to 1972, when the Wildlife (Protection) Act made it illegal. Bharatpur was declared a Ramsar site in October 1981. The area was declared a National Park in 1982 and a World Heritage Site in December 1985.

VEGETATION/FLORA

Ghana simply means "dense". It possibly refers to the forests that may have covered the present area once. The park lies 370 m. above sea level and constitutes wetland, woodland, swamp, scrub and pasture. Wetlands

comprise half the area, while the others occupy the rest.

The aquatic vegetation of the marshes is rich and provides a valuable food source for waterfowl. Plant species include water lilies the true lotus, duckweed, water fern, sedges and

lesser reed mace. Wild rice grows in parts, attracting birds.

The other vegetation is typical of a semi arid zone dominated by babul, ber, khejri, kadam and peepul. About 44,000 trees in this park are used for nesting.



A blackbuck with long, spiraling horns stands in a grassy field. The animal is facing slightly to the right, with its head turned towards the camera. The background is a soft, out-of-focus landscape with warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The text "VELAVADAR (BLACKBUCK) NATIONAL PARK" is overlaid on the lower half of the image in a large, bold, serif font.

VELAVADAR (BLACKBUCK) NATIONAL PARK

Velavadar is situated in the Bhal region of Saurashtra in Gujarat. It is a unique grassland ecosystem and perhaps the only tropical grasslands in India to be deemed a National Park. It is most renowned for its enchanting blackbuck population. The elegant blackbuck is endemic to India and Velavadar is one of its prime home territories. Wolves are the main predators of blackbuck in the park. It is highly recommended for any birdwatcher, with several birds like the Lesser Floricorn visiting the area. Besides,

HISTORY & CULTURE

Velavadar has also earned fame as the world's largest roosting site of the harrier. Velavadar National Park extends over an area of 35 sq. km. comprising mainly flat grasslands. The Park lies between two rivers, some distance away from the Gulf of Cambay. The fertile soils are believed to have arisen from the sea. More than 1,000 blackbuck exist on the open grasslands of Velavadar. These are shy and extremely graceful animals and the fastest of all Indian antelopes. The male has ringed horns spirally twisted into three or four turns; up to 70 cm. long. Females are light brown and usually lack horns. At the peak of the rutting season, it is common to see

one dominant male strutting around with gigantic horns. In six months, each female bears one fawn that remains

close to its mother for over a year, even as it joins the herd in roaming the grasslands. Wolves and jackals are prime predators in the park. Other mammals seen in Velavadar include the fox, jackal, jungle cat, wild pig, nilgai, the blacknaped hare and several rodents.

VEGETATION/FLORA

Blackbuck at Velavadar welcome tourists right at the gate. They may often be seen crisscrossing the park, sometimes even on the road. Herds of chital may also be seen in the grasslands. Wolves prefer the shrubs for lying and feeding. They mainly prey on the blackbuck, hare and other small animals. Wolves, although rare in India, may be seen prowling

about in Velavadar and they may also be seen drinking at water holes between dawn and dusk. The Lesser Florican, although a rare and shy bird, is relatively easy to spot at Velavadar and you may see several everyday without making much of an effort. On arrival, the males first mark their territories and soon commence their courtship display to attract the female. They jump vertically up to about two meters high and they can do this about 500 times in a day! The park staff even marks the territories with a pole, so you may see many males doing their high-jumps near their territory, even from the Tourist Lodge.





PERIYAR TIGER RESERVE

An azure blue lake. Blackened tree stumps protruding from the water like an army of ancient totems. The kaei...kaei...sound of the osprey carrying across the waters. And the green forest stretching away into the hills. Periyar, situated just 10 degrees above the equator, takes your breath away with images you are unlikely to witness anywhere else in India. Situated in the Cardamom Hill Ranges of Kerala's Idukki District, south of the Western Ghats, this fabulous tiger reserve sprawls across 777 sq. km. of biodiversity-rich forests out of which 350 sq. km. are protected as core, or undisturbed wilderness.

HISTORY & CULTURE

One of India's truly 'great escapes' the picturesque 26 sq. km many-fingered lake, a distinctive feature of the park that was created by the British in 1885 when they dammed the Periyar River, is a passport to the nether regions of the forest. Although more than 40 tigers hunt the forests, the chances of actually seeing one here are very low because the reclusive cat wisely prefers the more quiet interiors, away from the throb of boats and the chatter of humans. But there is probably no better place in India to watch the amazing family life of the Asiatic elephant. With plenty of food and water, these gentle giants have lived here for time immemorial. But danger now lurks around each corner. Poachers have so persistently infiltrated the forest that they have picked off almost all the truly large tusked, which accounts for the difficulty in sighting them today. The Kerala-Tamil Nadu interstate line from Kumily in the north, the

Ranni and Kakki Reserved Forests and the Kottayam Division forests defines the boundary of Periyar. Located in the Western Ghats, which are geologically believed to be among the oldest mountain chains in the world, Periyar has a most unique diversity of both terrain and vegetation. The reservoir, bounded by hills, is the central feature and is drained by the Periyar and Mullayar river systems. The Periyar River itself originates from deep within the near-virgin evergreen core area, 50 km. south of the sanctuary headquarters at Thekkady. It meets the Mullayar at Mullakudy, from where the lake starts. The river then runs on for some 244 km. before emptying into the Arabian Sea. The black stumps of old hard wood trees, some jutting out of the water and others submerged (it takes an expert boatman to avoid the stakes), are eerie reminders of a rainforest that was drowned because humans wanted abundant year-round supplies of water.

VEGETATION/FLORA

Although there are 59 species of mammals in Periyar, it is the elephants that dominate the landscape and are the most visible to visitors. There are an estimated 800 pachyderms in Periyar and they live in family groups led by a matriarch. Normal sightings are of herds with young feeding, hosing themselves down with mud or water, or simply swimming along the lakeshore. Young ones never stray too far from the adults as the threat from tigers to defenceless young is very real. Used to the sound and sight of boats, the elephants carry on with their usual routine, undisturbed by camera-wielding tourists. With their ancient migratory routes cut off by the reservoir, many elephants now swim to locate favoured food sources and the sight of these huge animals, fully submerged with only their trunks visible like periscopes, is one of the more unforgettable Periyar experiences. Sadly few really large tusked are seen today as most have been killed by poachers for the value of their ivory. Recently, even young tusked have been picked off to get at



their ivory, often less than a 100 cm. long. Clawless otters provide hours of entertainment for visitors. They swim and fish in the waters of the reservoir and can be seen bounding along the slippery, muddy shores, wet and shiny like playful pups. Low off the ground, their practice of standing on hind legs to look out for danger is an endearing habit and they are a favourite with photographers. Sounders of wild boar are easily spotted, rooting about the shores for tubers and succulent shoots. If you sit out at night near the forest rest houses, you are quite likely to see both porcupine and wild boar that come nosing around garbage dumps for something to eat. One animal that competes with the tiger for prey is the dhole, or wild dog. Though a number of tourists have reported seeing dholes, you must consider yourself particularly blessed if you return

having seen these magnificent dogs. These brown, bushy-tailed canines have an exceedingly well-organised pack life and their yips and whistles reverberate across the waters of the reservoir when they are out on a community hunt. Four different types of monkeys are found in Periyar. These are the highly threatened lion-tailed macaque, the bonnet macaque, the Nilgiri langur (ask to be shown one large troupe that seems to have taken up residence near the reception area) and the common langur (more easily seen towards the eastern parts of Periyar). By and large, because macaques prefer the interiors of the tree canopy, which is barely visible from the boat, they are difficult to spot in Periyar, even though their numbers are relatively large. Pythons and cobras are animals of the deep evergreen forest. Flying (they actually

only glide) lizards and snakes travel from tree to tree, the former with the aide of a flap between its extremities and the latter by flattening its body into a sail-like shape. The flying snake is a particularly beautiful reptile and is brilliantly coloured in yellow and black with crimsonish rosette-like patterns. Another aerial creature is the flying frog, which is able to glide thanks to extra webbing on its toes. The watercourses harbour at least 50 species of fish, including the golden mahseer.





GIR NATIONAL PARK

Scraggly, brown, dry and thorny. Gir, the last bastion of the Asiatic lion, is a beautiful but harsh teak dominated habitat in the Junagadh district in Kathiawar, Gujarat. Far from the stereotypical vision most people have of forests in the tropics, Gir is anything but 'lush'. It is, nevertheless, one of India's most precious and vital biodiversity vaults. A semi-arid wilderness emblazoned by rust, beige and the occasional scarlet, when the flame of the forest and silk cotton trees are in bloom, Gir brings to mind visions of distant Africa, despite the fact that it lacks the extensive grasslands of the Masai Mara.

HISTORY & CULTURE

Yet, something in these ecological circumstances proved to be just what the lions needed, for it is only here, in relatively small fragments of forests, supported by 'poor quality' teak, that one of the world's rarest large cat survives. Once distributed across Asia Minor and Arabia, in centuries gone by lions had colonised lands in India as far north as Saharanpur, Moradabad and Ludhiana, eastwards to Bihar and southwards to the Narmada valley. But a combination of habitat destruction and brutal horseback and machan hunting almost wiped the species off the face of the earth. The last lion to be killed in Gujarat was in 1870, but in Central India, where no one protected them the last one was shot in 1884. Forced into this tiny, forested western corner of the country, around 300 lions now share their fragile home with villagers, cattle and India's robust industrial ambitions. Located in southwest Saurashtra, the Gir forest extends across an area of 1,412 sq. km. and is clothed by a combination of grassland, scrub and forests of teak that grow on lateritic soils. An aerial view reveals low undulating hills rising from a height of 225 to 648 m., almost fully encircled by agricultural fields. What is left in Gir today, naturalists and historians point out, is the last remnant of native landscape within the Saurashtra peninsula. As many as seven significant rivers pass through Gir: the Hiran, Saraswati, Datardi, Shingoda, Machhundri, Ghodavadi

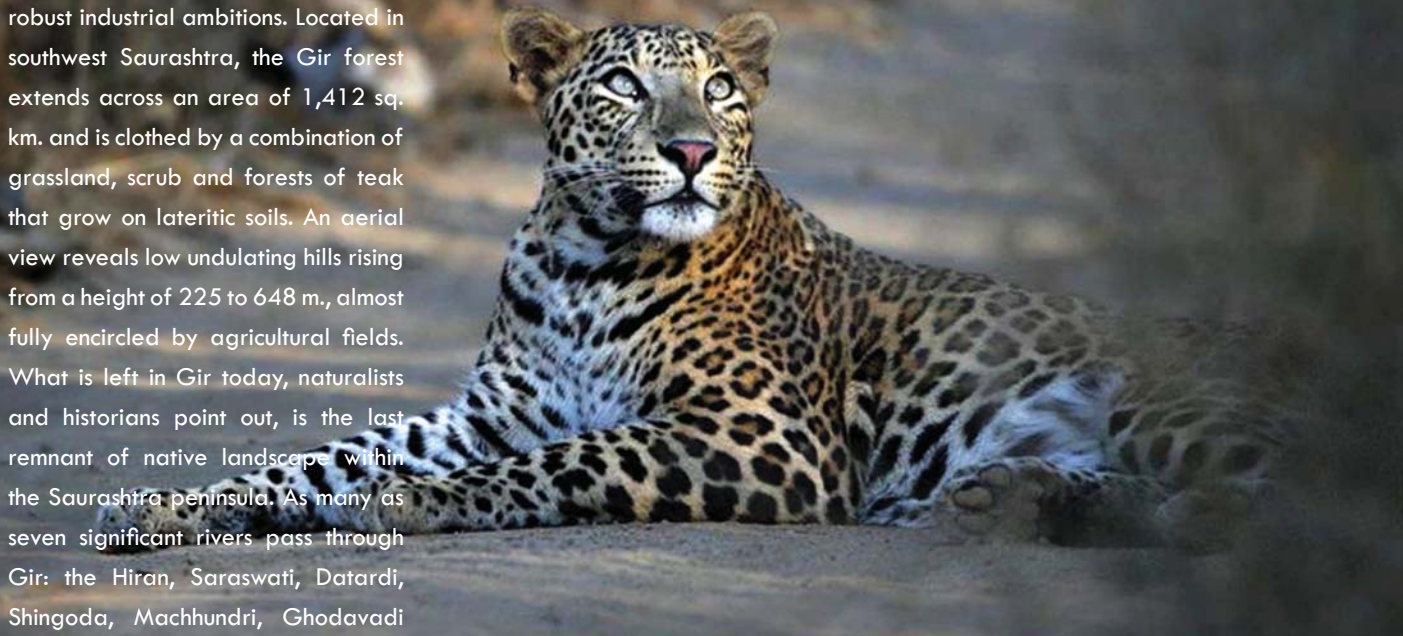
and Raval. The water from these rivers is key to the survival of the lions. This supply is also invariably the last source available to downstream human communities when their wells and streams run dry just prior to the arrival of the next life-giving monsoon. If you stay a couple of days you are

almost certainly going to see the lions. Slightly smaller in size than the African lion and with a smaller mane it is a shaggier creature with dense belly fringes and a distinctive belly fold. Sighting a large male in the wild is an impressive sight. Your best bet would be to step out early in the morning, when most lions, be they loners, pairs or prides, are out on patrol. Lions perceive little threat from humans and are therefore possible to see at fairly close quarters. If you decide to spend time in one of the Maldhari nesses you might just see lions in a very different light! These herders know their animals and do not generally hurt them, but they understandably keep watch and drive them away from their areas, fearing the loss of their valuable livestock. In recent years the population of wild ungulates has risen and therefore attacks on domestic stock has come down. As the day heats up, lions seem to prefer resting

particularly in October or November, which is their mating season.

VEGETATION/FLORA

Gir is also a great place to see leopards, or panthers as they are also called. Much smaller than lions, they are more agile, climb trees and therefore manage to keep out of the way of the heavier, more powerful cats. Sambar, chital (now abundant), nilgai (the largest Indian antelope), four horned antelope and chinkara are the deer prey species seen all over the park. Other prey species include langur and wild boar. Porcupine, hare and jackal are also found in Gir. Carnivores such as wildcats, jackals, foxes, hyaenas and ratels are found in the park, each occupying their own very special niche. There are 25 species of reptiles in Gir, the



under the shade of a banyan or other tree that offers real shade from the sun, or in the thick green vegetation of Carissa, or near a waterhole. They tend to hunt at dusk. Driving is not permitted at night, but if you sit out in the open you are very likely to hear the awesome roaring of males,

most visible of which are the marsh crocodile, which can be seen in the rivers and the Kamleshwar dam reservoir. Monitor lizards are also possible to see. Pythons, cobras, the fish-eating keelbacks and whipsnakes are some of the other snakes that inhabit the park.



PENCH TIGER RESERVE

Pench National Park is located on the boundary of Seoni and Chhindwara districts of Madhya Pradesh, close to Maharashtra's northern border. The reserve lies in the forest belt that extends to Balaghat in the east and Nagpur district to the south. The park is named after the Pench river and is contiguous with the forest on the southern side in Maharashtra that has been notified as the Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru National Park. It is the panoramic beauty of this region that has been described as early as the beginning of the 20th century by naturalists like Captain J. Forsyth in 'Highlands of Central India' and by Rudyard Kipling in the 'Jungle Book'.

HISTORY & CULTURE

The area is located in the lower, southern reaches of the Satpura ranges, around 580 m. above sea level. The terrain is undulating, covered with several small hills jutting out like sharp cones. Some hills rise steeply over 675 m. above sea level. Arjal Matta, Kalapahad, Chhindimatta and Kumbhadeo are some of the prominent hills in Seoni district. In Chhindwara district, there are hills extending upto Pulpideh village. These slope towards the Pench river and the land once again soars higher towards Totladoh. Most of the area is covered with sandy loam, which is especially fertile in the valleys and fairly so on the slopes. Red kankar and saline soils occur in some areas. Alluvial soils are found on the banks

of the Pench river and other streams and nalas that crisscross the area. The Pench River flows almost through the centre of the reserve from the north to the southwest. The river dries up towards the end of April, leaving behind a number of small pools locally called kasa or doh. Much of the low-lying area on either side of Pench have lands submerged by the Pench reservoir.

VEGETATION/FLORA

The forests are mainly Southern tropical dry deciduous and dry mixed deciduous forests.

Teak *Tectona grandis* dominates, comprising 25-50 per cent of the species. Moyan, Mahua, Mokha, Skiras, Tendu, Bijra, Garari etc.

are associates of teak. Dhaora *Anogeissus latifolia*, lenda/seja *Lageostroemia parviflora*, saja *Terminalia tomentosa*, salai *Boswellia serrata*, bija *Pterocarpus marsupium*, bhirra *Chloroxylon swietenia* and sirus *Albizia lebbek* are other trees. Bamboo occurs sparsely, restricted to some valleys. Chiltai, mahulbel and palas bhel are common climbers in areas along the river and large water sources. In Chhindwara, you would see weeds like chirota *Cassia tora* and gokharu *Xanthium strumarium* while in areas around Chedia, Alikatta, Tikari and Ambar village, *Lantana camara* predominates. *Parthenium* is found in submergence areas along the Pench river. *Heteropogon contortus*, *Digitaria ciliaris* and *Eulaliopsis binata* are common grasses.



KEY SPECIES

TIGER (PANTHERA TIGRIS)

Within the past century the tiger occurred from eastern Turkey and the Caspian Sea across Central Asia to the sea of Okhotsk, and south through the Indian subcontinent to Southeast Asia, Sumatra, Java and Bali. It is adapted to



a wide range of habitats, from tropical rainforest, evergreen forest and mangrove swamp to grassland, savanna and rocky country. The largest species of cat, the tiger is usually solitary and preys mainly on large mammals such as pigs, deer, antelope, buffalo, gaur and on occasion, humans. Tigers can swim long distances. Male territories overlap those of several females. The tiger now persists only in isolated pockets of its former range. Its decline has been caused by habitat loss, mainly to agriculture, logging, and malaria eradication programmes; overhunting (both legal and illegal) for sport, for skins, and for carcasses which are highly sought after for use in Asian traditional medicines; elimination of natural prey; and deliberate eradication programmes and persecution for fear of attacks on humans and domestic livestock – which have tended to increase as numbers of wild prey have dwindled. Of the eight subspecies of tiger, three (the Caspian tiger, the Bali tiger and the Javan tiger) are extinct and the remaining five are endangered. The Indian tiger is much better placed now thanks to Project Tiger, but still remains endangered and threatened by poachers. The tiger is protected by law in most range countries except Myanmar.

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SNOW LEOPARD OR OUNCE (UNCIA UNCIA)

The snow leopard is found in the high altitude mountain ranges of Central Asia from Afghanistan, Pakistan and the former Soviet Union in the west through northern India, Nepal and Bhutan to Mongolia and China. In summer it inhabits the arid alpine meadow region between the tree-line and permanent snow at elevations from 2,700 to 6,000



m, while in winter it may follow its prey down into the forests below 1,800 m. The snow leopard is solitary, crepuscular, and preys on mountain ungulates (hoofed animals) such as markhor, ibex, bharal and tahr, domestic stock, and smaller mammals such as hares and marmots. It is believed to be in decline in most regions due to uncontrolled hunting; increased use of alpine pastures by people and their livestock; and a reduction in natural prey. Although the snow leopard (around 500 being left in India) is legally protected, enforcement is difficult in the remote terrain it inhabits.



DHOLE OR INDIAN WILD DOG (CUON ALPINUS)

The dhole, red dog, or Indian wild dog is a fairly large (10-20 kg) pack-living canid found in thick scrub jungles and dense forests up to 3,000



m. The dhole preys mainly on medium-sized ungulates e.g. chital, wild boar and wild sheep, but rodents, reptiles, insects and berries are also devoured. It is a ferocious hunter. Its red coat varies in shade with the season and the localities. The population is in steep decline in most parts of India due to disease (virulent canine distemper and rabies) exacerbated by contact with domestic dogs; deforestation; depletion of natural prey; and poisoning by herders. Large sub-populations exist in protected areas in India, but populations outside are unlikely to survive.

SLOTH BEAR (MELURSUS URSINUS)

The sloth bear has long dark fur highlighted with white on the muzzle, the tips of the paws and in a V-shaped breast patch. It is nocturnal except in remote areas when it may be active on cooler days. At night it searches for fruits and insects and also takes



carrion. It is found throughout forested areas south of the Himalayas, in India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. It predominantly inhabits low elevations, its optimum habitat being the dry deciduous forests of central India. The species was common in most forested areas of India till the 1950s. Its eyesight and sense of hearing are poor, but its sense of smell is acute. It has a low reproductive and recruitment rate in the wild, and is therefore extremely vulnerable to hunting. Bear species are either killed for their gall bladder, or are used in street exhibitions.

MALAYAN SUN BEAR (HELARCTO SMALAYANUS)

The smallest bear in the world, an adult male Malayan sun bear is about



4 ft tall when standing on its hind legs and can weigh up to 64 kg. Despite its small size, the sun bear can be very dangerous. Named for the golden crescent, or "U" shaped golden patch on their chest, the sun bear is otherwise all black with smooth, short fur. It is increasingly a rare residents in southern China, Myanmar, Malaysia, Sumatra, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Borneo. The Malayan sun bear is a skillful climbers, aided by long sickle-shaped claws on all four feet. The extremely long claws — up to six inches — allow it to dig for honey, which its licks up using its long tongues. The bear is omnivorous. Its diet also includes fruits, insects, small mammals, and birds. The sun bear sometimes will damage coconut palm, banana, and cocoa plantations through foraging. It usually is a nocturnal creature. Smell is the sun bear's most important sense and its eyesight is not very good.



COMMON MONGOOSE (HERPESTES EDWARDSI)

The common mongoose has a tawny yellowish-grey look with a stripe on the side of its neck. It preys on snakes, and is even known to attack a venomous one like the cobra. Its plus



point is said to be its agility. It bristles its hair when excited and causes the snake to strike short of its body.

HANUMAN LANGUR (SEMNOPTHECUS ENTELLUS)

Commonly seen both in cities and villages, and forests, it is more arboreal than macaques. It is extremely agile on treetops and lives in peaceful,



relaxed and stable groups of around 20. It mixes freely with macaques during feeding time, but goes its own way after dusk. Its predator is the leopard (*Panthera pardus*).

BONNET MACAQUE (MACACA RADIATA)

This long-tailed macaque's bonnet does not quite cover its forehead,



and is more arboreal than the other macaques. Its tail is longer than its head and body together. They move in troops of 20-30 controlled by a group of highly dominant males. These pale-faced primates are found primarily in Peninsular India.

HOOLOCK GIBBON (BUNOPITHECUS HOOLOCK)

The only ape found in India, it stands erect at a little less than 90 cm. It is found in the hilly forests of



the Northeast. Each family lives separately, and they seldom form groups of more than six. Each family hunts within its own territory. Males are known to be content with single mates, and mothers are caring of their babies.

GOLDEN LANGUR (TRACHYPITHECUS GEED)

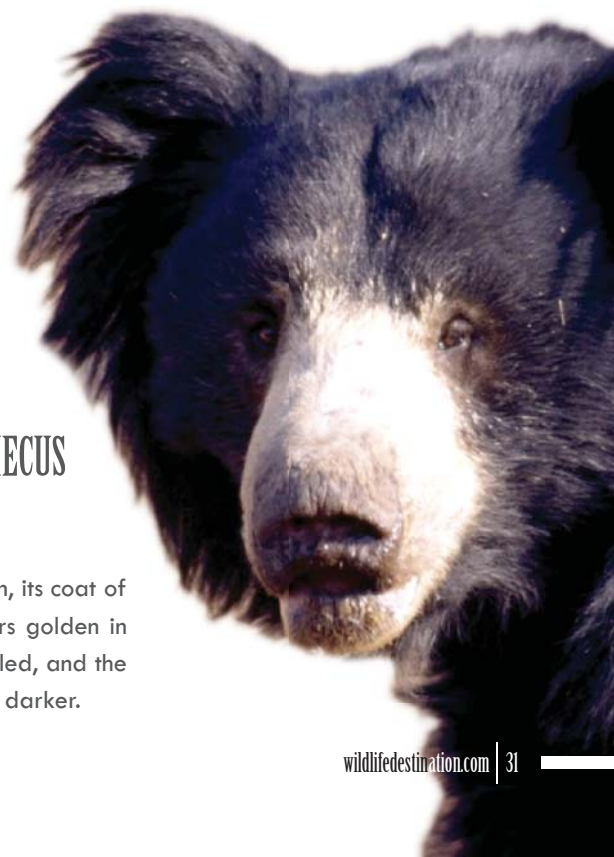
Usually found in troops of less than ten, its coat of a uniform deep cream colour appears golden in bright sunshine. Its tail is slightly tasselled, and the hair on the lanks is slightly longer and darker.

GAUR OR INDIAN BISON (BOS GAURUS)

The largest living bovine, the subspecies (*Bos gaurus gaurus*) found in India and Nepal is one of three species of the animal. The gaur is gregarious but shy. The group



structure is fluid and dynamic, which may be in the range of 2-16 animals, or more than 20 in rare cases. A large group usually consists of cows and few calves, 1-2 adult bulls, and subadults. Younger bulls may sometime join to form a bachelor herd. Old males are generally solitary in nature and only join the herds during the rut. Gaur prefers to browse in dry season and predominantly graze in the monsoon.



SPOTTED DEER OR CHITAL (AXIS AXIS)

The spotted deer is among the most widely distributed and common of the large wild mammals of the subcontinent. Its watchful and alert behaviour, seeking safety in numbers, coupled with a high rate of production



and ecological adaptability, has enabled it to attain its current safe status. A daily drink or two is essential and it is never found too far away from water. It is mostly seen in large herds of 30-50 females and a few stags. But, it is not uncommon to see large herds of bachelors numbering in grasslands. Despite being one of the favourite prey species of predators such as tigers and leopards and only giving birth to a single fawn at a time, its population is abundant.

BLACKBUCK OR INDIAN ANTELOPE (ANTELOPE CERVICAPRA)

The blackbuck is known for its colour combination and elegance, the matching proportions of its spiral horn and length to its body size. The male in its chocolateblack rutting pelage, strutting stiff-legged, with face upraised and horns swept back, is one such. Males have cork screw type of horns which develop in the second year. The full number of spirals grows



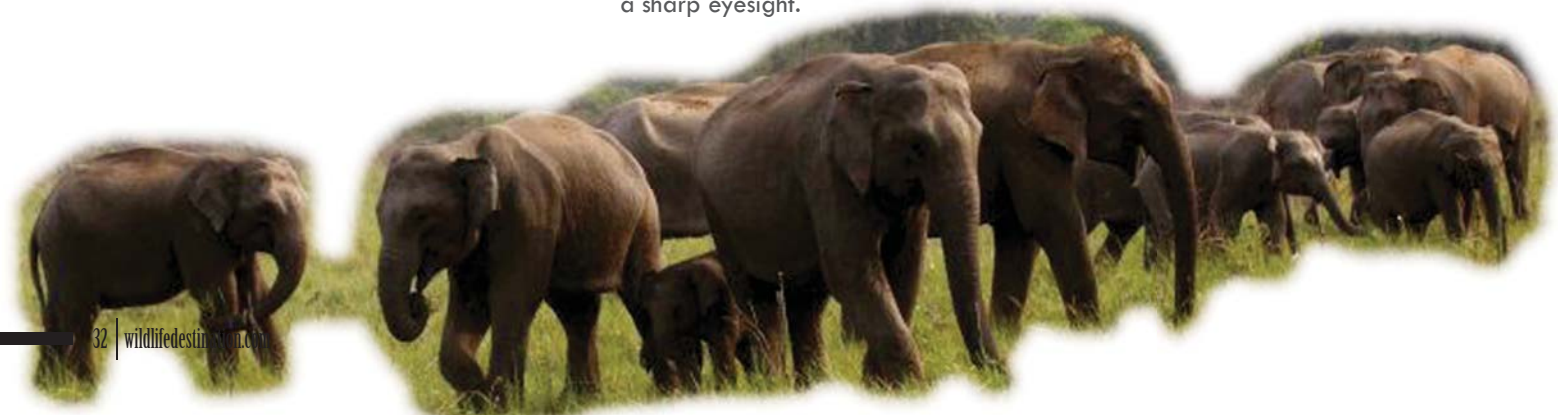
by third year. Females, usually, do not have horns. The blackbuck was earlier seen all over India except the Northeast. Now it is found in South India, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat and central India. It does not live in dense forests but prefers open plains. Earlier, these antelopes lived in large herds of 500 animals and so was restricted to open plains. Now, these are rarely seen in herds even of 20 members. These can run at more than 40 km/hr for long distances, and has a sharp eyesight.

RED PANDA (AILURUS FULGENS) OR LESSER PANDA

The red panda is medium-sized bear-like mammal (the average head-tail body length is 510- 635 mm with a thickrusty to deep chestnut coloured coat. The muzzle, eye patches and the fronts of the large pointed ears are white and there are broad white cheek patches. The tail is long and bushy with broad brown and ginger rings. The nose is black. It walks like a bear with forepaws pointed inwards. It has long white whiskers and an almost cat-like face. The claws are sharp and partly retractable. The broad teeth and strong jaw muscles, an adaptation to chewing bamboo, have resulted in a relatively large head. The lesser panda, which does



not weight more than 6.2 kg, tolerates colder temperatures than does the giant panda. It rests and shelters in trees and rock crevasses. It is active between dusk and dawn, sleeping in trees during the day. The adults are generally solitary, but sometimes travel in pairs or small family groups. Since the red panda has the digestive system of a carnivore it cannot digest wood fibre. It therefore has to eat large amounts of bamboo every day in order to survive.



ASIAN ELEPHANT (ELEPHAS MAXIMAS)

The Asian (or Indian) elephant is the largest terrestrial mammal in Asia, with a maximum shoulder height of 3.2 m. It is smaller than the African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*), with

variety of forest types; distribution is restricted by both the need for daily access to water, and by a likeness for feeding on grass. It tends to avoid large areas of closed-canopy forest. More than two thirds of the day it spends feeding on grasses, but large amounts of tree bark, roots, leaves and small stems are also

conditions. It has a poor eyesight, but keen sense of smell and sound. The elephant has been an integral part of the culture, religion and economy of the Asian peoples for at least 4000 years. It is a keystone biological species in the tropical forests of Asia. It is used throughout Southeast Asia as a domestic animal, and most captive elephants are trained as working animals. The ability to work in rugged country and to remove individual trees makes it valuable for forestry operations. An elephant is a true indicator of a habitat. What is good food for it is also food enough for the sambar (*Cervus unicolor*), the spotted deer or chital (*Axis axis*), and the barking deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*). Predators like the tiger (*Panthera tigris*) and the leopard or panther (*Panthera pardus*) do not lack far behind. The law of the jungle rules.



relatively smaller ears, and the head (not the shoulder) is the highest part of the body. Both elephants belong to the same order, Proboscidea, and family, Elephantidae, but separate genera. The Asian elephant has a single “finger” on the upper lip of the trunk, while the African elephant has a second on the lower tip. Only some male Asian elephants carry tusks; females have small tushes, which seldom show. But a significant number of adult males are tuskless, and the percentage of males carrying ivory varies by region (possibly reflecting the intensity of past ivory hunting), from only about 5 per cent in Sri Lanka to 90 per cent in south India. The Asian elephant is primarily a forest animal preferring a forested environment. It is found through a wide

eaten. Sexual maturity is reached at about 10 years of age, though males become sexually active much later. Usually, a single calf is born every 4-5 years after a gestation period of 22 months. Females can remain fertile till the ripe age of 55-60 years. Elephant society is matriarchal. The Asian elephant lives in herds based on breeding groups of 3-10 extending up to 40, mainly females and young. Herds form part of larger related groupings called clans. Mature males live alone or in small groups and have non permanent ties with the females. Different herds usually do not mix, but stray females and young males sometimes migrate from one herd to another. When fodder is scarce, large herds tend to break up into small parties and reunite under favourable



GREATER ONE-HORNED RHINOCEROS (RHINOCEROS UNICORNIS)

The greater one-horned or Indian rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) is one of the five species of rhinos found in the world. The black rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis*) and the white rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*) are found in Africa, while the lesser one-horned or Javan rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros*



sondaicus) and the Asian two-horned or Sumatran rhinoceros (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*) are found elsewhere in Asia. Both these Asian rhinos were once found in India — both became extinct in the early part of the 20th century. The Indian rhino was once found from Pakistan (as indicated by archaeological excavations in Mohenjodaro) all the way through India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar. Today, only 2,400 survive in India and Nepal. The population in India is estimated to be around 1,500. The other Asian rhinos are closer to extinction — Javan rhinos number less than 70 and Sumatran rhinos do not exceed 300 in number. Both African rhinos are better off. The black rhino numbers around 2,400 while the estimated population of the white rhino is a little more than 7,500. The

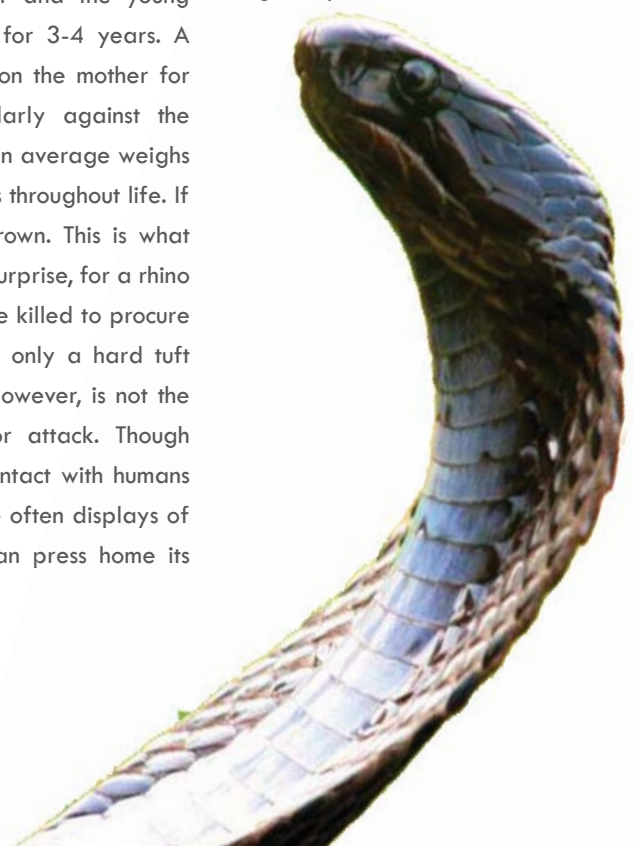
Indian rhino can be distinguished from the other rhinos by its large head, the highly developed neck skin folds and only two skin folds around its body. It is much larger (a male can reach a shoulder height of 1.85 m) and heavier (a male can weigh as much as 1,600-2,100 kg) than the other Asian rhinos. The Indian rhino prefers floodplain grasslands interspersed with marshes, swamps and lakes, while its African cousins are usually found in open savanna country. Both males and females have nasal horns measuring 20 cm on an average. The horns of the black rhino, on the other hand, can reach a length of 50 cm and that of the white rhino 60 cm. The rhino is solitary by nature, but may be seen occasionally to feed and wallow in scattered groups of 10. It is fond of water, and is known to wallow in muddy waters for hours at a stretch. This grass-eater restricts its movement to a tiny area, rarely exceeding 2 sq km. Males, however, often venture farther in search of mates. A male becomes sexually mature at seven years, and females three years earlier. Rhinos breed all through the year. A calf is born after about 16 months. The mother and the young one stay together for 3-4 years. A calf is dependant on the mother for protection, particularly against the tiger. The horn on an average weighs 720 gm, and grows throughout life. If lost, it can be regrown. This is what comes across as a surprise, for a rhino does not need to be killed to procure its horn, essentially only a hard tuft of hair. The horn, however, is not the chief instrument for attack. Though the rhino avoids contact with humans and its charges are often displays of threat, though it can press home its charge.

GANGETIC RIVER DOLPHIN (PLATANISTA GANGETICA)

Inhabits the Ganga, Brahmaputra, Karnaphuli and Meghna Rivers and their tributaries in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. It prefers deep water and migrates seasonally upstream as the water level rises. It feeds mainly on fish, shrimps and molluscs, relying heavily on echolocation and touch to find its prey due to its poor eyesight. Formerly abundant, it has now been reduced to 3,000-4,000 individuals in India. The species is threatened by pollution, dams, mining and directed and incidental catch. The dolphins of the Ganga system are now divided into small isolated subpopulations.

INDIAN COBRA (NAJA NAJA)

Usually timid, the cobra is fierce and aggressive when disturbed. When alarmed, it adopts the well-known pose with erect forebody and spread hood. This height is one-third its body length and forms an effective striking range. Its poison is neurotoxic.



INDIAN PYTHON (PYTHON MOLURUS)

The longest of this species recorded in India has been 5.85 m. It is found in open forests with rocky outcrops and



in the absence of forests it can be seen in rivers. A slow moving snake, it is known to feed on mammals, birds and reptiles. However, it prefers mammals and among stomach contents reported have been leopard, langur, jackal, peafowl, chital, etc. It rarely moves after a heavy meal since the hard parts (like bones and horns) of the prey can tear through its body wall.



MUGGER OR MARSH CROCODILE (CROCODYLUS PALUSTRIS)

The best known and widely distributed among the crocodilian species, it used to be seen widely in most Indian river systems and their streams, and lakes.



Ruthless and indiscriminate hunting for its skin, much sought after by the leather industry, has made it an endangered species. The mugger is resilient and its vitality can make life difficult for a hunter and may take a long time to kill. It hunts mostly in water, and can drag in, and drown any animal within its capacity to kill. Human-eating muggers are uncommon in India.

GHARIAL OR LONG-SNOURED CROCODILE (GAVIALIS GANGETICUS)

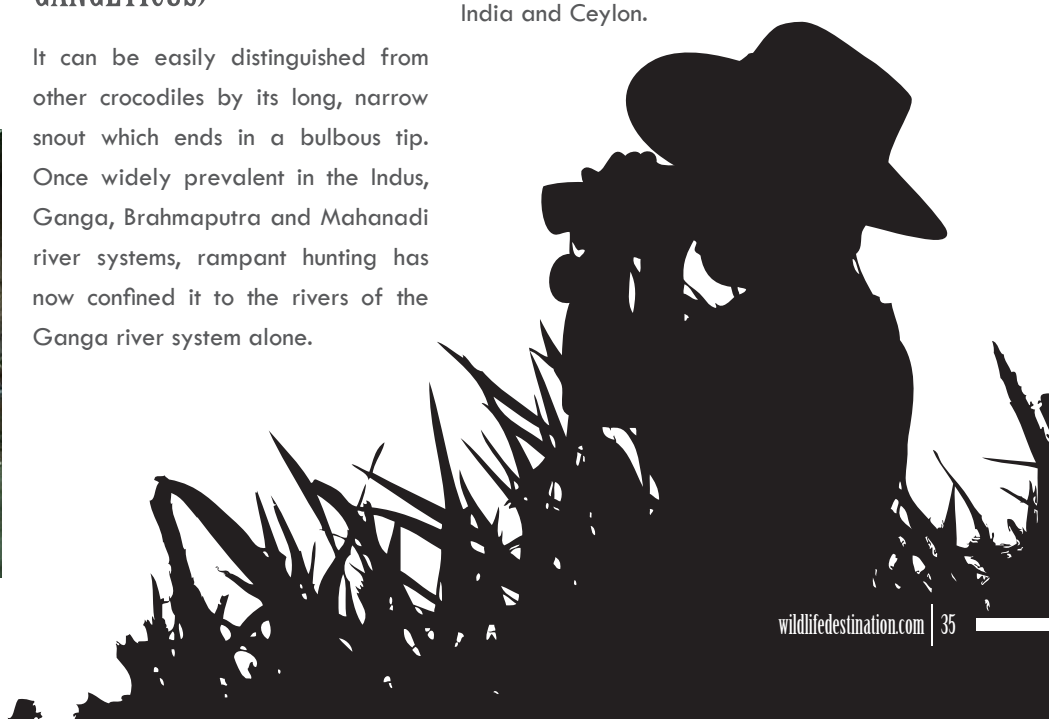
It can be easily distinguished from other crocodiles by its long, narrow snout which ends in a bulbous tip. Once widely prevalent in the Indus, Ganga, Brahmaputra and Mahanadi river systems, rampant hunting has now confined it to the rivers of the Ganga river system alone.

BLUE (OR INDIAN) PEAFOWL (PAVOCRISTATUS)

The Peafowl has been kept and reared in captivity for over 2000 years. Although no signs of domestication such as changes in shape or size have ever occurred, two or three mutations have developed. One mutation, known to occur frequently among



birds bred in captivity, is the White Indian Peafowl. Peafowl are ground feeding birds with moderately strong legs. Three strong toes face forwards and one backwards. While they nest on the ground, they prefer to roost in the trees. Their wing surface to bodyweight ration is not large and most species are incapable of long flights. Peafowl are native to southern India and Ceylon.



ANGLING IN INDIA

Lack of exploration is the main reason why most people are not aware about exciting conditions and angling opportunities available in India. Our team of sport fishing experts have explored and studied this region which has made it possible for us to identify and develop these unique locations.

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2. Our locations are in close proximity of the Water and the serenity of nature !
3. Our Guides are local residents of the area and possess knowledge about their surroundings which has been handed down to them by their forefathers. The stories

they have to tell make for some great entertainment and learning by the campfire.

4. The facilities offered at our lodges are clean and comfortable, providing all basic amenities required for a comfortable stay!
5. The destinations we offer in our tours are carefully checked & researched, our team will ensure that your stay & trip with us should of the highest standard in terms of angling & services.

6. We provide you comprehensive information before hand which clearly mentions the kind of arrangements & services you will be offered like fishing, guides, accommodation, car hire etc.

7. When choosing a site for fishing, always consider safety factors. Because fishing is practiced in a variety of environments, evaluate factors specific to safety in each environment.



Explore Wildlife Sounds of India

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Duration : 07 Nights & 08 Days
Destination : New Delhi-Jaipur-
Ranthambore-Agra-
New Delhi

A DEDICATED TIGER TOUR

Duration : 13 Nights & 14 Days
Destination : Mumbai-Tadoba-
Pench-Kanha-Bandhavgarh-
Panna-Khajuraho-Mumbai

ROAR OF JUNGLE

Duration : 13 Nights & 14 Days
Destination : New Delhi-Tadoba-
Pench-Kanha-Bandhavgarh-
Ranthambore-New Delhi

TEMPLE & TIGER TOUR

Duration : 10 Nights & 11 Days
Destination : New Delhi-
Varanasi-Khajuraho-Panna-
Bandhavgarh-Kanha-Jabalpur-
New Delhi

HEART OF JUNGLE

Duration : 13 Nights & 14 Days
Destination : New Delhi-Tadoba-
Pench-Kanha-Bandhavgarh-
Panna-Khajurho-Varanasi-
New Delhi

INDIA & NEPAL WILDLIFE

Duration : 10 Nights & 11 Days
Destination : New Delhi-Kathmandu-
Chitwan-Jaipur-Ranthambore-Agra-
New Delhi

WILD HERITAGE TOUR

Duration : 12 Nights & 13 Days
Destination : New Delhi-Agra-
Khajurho-Panna-Bandhavgarh-
Kanha-Pench-Nagpur-
New Delhi

STRIPES OF TIGER

Duration : 13 Nights & 14 Days
Destination : New Delhi-Tadoba-
Pench-Kanha-Bandhavgarh-
Panna-Khajuraho-New Delhi

EAGLE NEST BIRDING TOUR

Duration : 11 Nights & 12 Days
Destination : New Delhi-Kaziranga-
Nameri-Mandala Ridge-Sela Pass-
Dirang-Lamp Camp-Bompu-Nameri-
Guwahati-New Delhi

WILD ASSAM TOUR

Duration : 11 Nights & 12 Days
Destination : New Delhi-Guwahati-
Manas-Nameri-Kaziranga-Saikhowa-
Tinsukla-Miao-Namdapha-Dibrugarh

LAND OF TIGER

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Destination : New Delhi-
Ranthambore-Agra-Nagpur-
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