

# Northern India

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*24<sup>th</sup> October - 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2008*

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## Introduction

This trip report covers a family holiday with my wife, Michelle, and our two boys Tom (11) and Sam (9). The main purpose of the trip was to celebrate my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday whilst seeing Tiger, something I had long wanted to do.

Autumn is not the best time for birding in northern India, but both Tom (a keen birder) and I spent considerable time in the field, clocking up just shy of two-hundred birds. We would have liked to have spent longer than the short time available (perhaps doing a boat trip on the River Chambal for Indian Skimmer), but Tom had just started a new school and we were reluctant to spend much longer than was available in the week long half-term.

The arrangements were taken care of by Nature Safari India whose organisational skills were second to none. As well as taking care of the internal flight and hotel bookings, they also supplied both drivers and guides for both nature and sightseeing.

## Itinerary

**24/10** Arrive New Delhi after overnight flight from Heathrow; birding at Tughlaqabad Fort  
**25/10** Okhra dam; drive to and birding at Bharatpur  
**26/10** Bharatpur, Agra and overnight train to Katni  
**27/10** Drive from Katni to Bandhavgarh followed by safari  
**28/10** Safaris at Bandhavgarh  
**29/10** Safaris at Bandhavgarh  
**30/10** Drive to Kanha followed by safari  
**31/10** Safaris at Kanha  
**01/11** Safari at Kanha then drive to Nagpur followed by flight to New Delhi  
**02/11** Sultanpur wetlands followed by flight from New Delhi to Heathrow

## Literature

*Birds of Northern India*, Grimmett and Inskipp, 2003.

*Indian Wildlife*, Insight Guides, 2007.

*India*, Dorling Kindersley Eyewitness Travel, 2008

## Contacts

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## Daily account

### Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October

Arrived at Indira Gandhi International late morning and were met by Nature Safari India's Manjeet and our driver for the next few days, Vinod. Despite the short distance involved it took us about 45 minutes to reach our (rather luxurious) hotel, Jaypee, due to the volume of traffic caused by the forthcoming Diwali celebrations. After sorting out the paperwork and finances with Manjeet and a quick freshen up, myself and Tom were ready to go birding, whilst Michelle and Sam went on a pre-arranged guided tour of Delhi (which was apparently very good.)

Again, due to the traffic, it took another 45 minutes to travel the short distance to Tughlaqabad Fort and the time when we arrived was approaching 3pm. Tom slept for much of the way, not missing much apart from more **Black Kites**, **Feral Pigeons**, **Ring-necked Parakeets**, **House Crows**, and **Common Mynas**. Outside the fort we saw the first of many **Rhesus Macaques** followed by a **Tailorbird**. Inside, Tom was slightly overwhelmed by the variety of new birds immediately on offer: **House Swift**, **Red-wattled Lapwing**, **Laughing Dove**, **Little Green Bee-eater**, **Red-vented Bulbul**, **Red-whiskered Bulbul**, **Black Drongo**, **Shikra**, and **Brown-throated Sand Martin** all in the first few minutes. Amongst this lot were a few birds new for the both of us, namely **Rock Chat**, **Indian Robin**, **Brahminy Starling**, and **Common Babbler**, as well as more familiar species such as **Cattle Egret**, **Lesser Whitethroat**, **Hoopoe**, **Sand Martin**, and **Barn Swallow**.

Further searching before dusk produced **Grey Francolin**, **Ashy Prinia**, **Purple Sunbird**, **Long-billed Pipit**, **Plain Prinia**, **Large-billed Crow**, **Black-headed Munia**, and **Hill Myna**. I also found what I first thought to be brightly coloured House Sparrows, but Anil, our guide, suggested they may be **Sind Sparrows**. Sure enough, on closer views, the slightly different head pattern of the males and the complete yellowish-horn coloured bills of the females became obvious.

We also saw many of the ubiquitous **Five-striped Palm Squirrels** and I saw a **Bay-backed Shrike**, whilst Tom found **Long-tailed Shrike**. We then drove back to the hotel (Tom fell asleep again!) where we met with Michelle and Sam, and after a showering and dinner fell in to a deep sleep.

### Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> October

Up early at 5am where we checked-out of our hotel and went to Okhla where I was hoping to see White-tailed Stonechat. Unfortunately we failed, not having much time to spare as we needed to begin our six hour drive to Bharatpur. Anil wasn't available to help, but we still managed to see a good number of birds. In the hour that we had, we added to our list **Shoveler**, **Gadwall**, **Lesser Whistling-duck**, **Great White Egret**, **Indian Pond Heron**, **Pied Kingfisher**, **Spot-billed Duck**, **Asian Pied Starling**, **Greater Coucal**, **Blyth's Reed Warbler** (Tom had missed ticking this a few weeks earlier in Norfolk when he failed to get views!), **Pied Bushchat**, **Indian Cormorant**, **Great Cormorant**, **Oriental Darter**, **Tawny Pipit**, **Red Avadavat**, **Purple Heron**, **Yellow-eyed Babbler**, **Black-headed Ibis**, **Oriental White-eye**, **Large Grey Babbler**, **Scaly-breasted Munia**, **White-breasted Kingfisher**, **Collared Dove**, **Yellow-footed**

**Green Pigeon, Besra, Zitting Cisticola, and Large Grey Babbler.** Several **Common Mongooses** were also seen.

We then began our long journey south, it seeming to take an age to get out of Delhi's suburbs and we all fell asleep, awaking somewhere in the countryside. During our journey we made a few road-side stops at suitable looking ponds, adding water birds such as **Little Grebe, Coot, Moorhen, Common Sandpiper, Little Cormorant, Red-crested Pochard, Painted Stork, Comb Duck, Marsh Sandpiper, Black-necked Grebe, Black-tailed Godwit, Ruff, Redshank, Glossy Ibis, Gull-billed Tern, and Grey Heron.** Also noted, mostly in flight whilst driving, were **Black-shouldered Kite, Lesser Adjutant, Woolly-necked Stork, and Painted Stork.** However, the best sighting of the drive was of a pair of **Sarus Cranes.** Myself and Tom had both seen these the previous year in Australia, but had had poor views whilst they flew in to roost at dusk, so it was good to see them properly. We had been tipped off about the site the day before by Anil, though I'm not at all sure we were in the place suggested.

It was mid-afternoon by the time we checked in to our (again luxurious) hotel, the Bagh at Bharatpur. After a quick freshen-up, and a look at the **Rufous Treeepies** around the hotel, myself and Tom left the others to relax, whilst we took the short drive to Keoladeo Ghana National Park. Before any birds, we first noticed a couple of new mammals: **Golden Jackal** and **Nilgai Antelope.** But it is birds for which Bharatpur is famous for and we soon found a good number whilst birding by Rickshaw! The **Painted Stork** colony was spectacular and amongst them were colonies of various herons and storks, including our first **Intermediate Egrets** and roosting **Black-crowned Night Herons** as well as a colony of juvenile **Asian Openbills.** Around the edge of the lakes were **White-breasted Waterhens** and **Pheasant-tailed Jacanas,** whilst **White-breasted Kingfishers** and **Common Kingfishers** fished, and **Hobbys** hawked above.

At Bharatpur we were guided by Jagdish, and fortunately he knew where owls were roosting. We were able to see a spectacular **Dusky Eagle-owl** as well as a less exciting **Spotted Owlet** and a pair of **Collared Scops-owls.** Other new birds added before it got too dark were **Brown-headed Barbet, Black-rumped Flameback, Jungle Babbler, and Greater Coucal.** A **Sambar Deer** was also seen before Tom saw his first genuine **Peacock!**

Back at the hotel we enjoyed our first of many curries washed down with Kingfisher beer, whilst a **Spotted Owlet** hunted outside.

## Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> October

Myself and Tom were out birding at in the park at dawn, this time on foot. The first new bird of the day was a **Crested Serpent-eagle** which we watched for a moment or two before it left its roost. We then went searching for ground-roosting **Large-tailed Nightjars** and one was soon found by Jagdish. Other new birds were then quickly added: a pair of Asian Koels, a male Red-breasted Flycatcher, a flyby Black Bittern and a tree of *phylosc's* that included **Greenish Warbler,** and a *tristis* **Chiffchaff.** **House Sparrow** was next, with **Yellow-napped Woodpecker, Bronze-winged Jacana, and Pied Cuckoo** to follow. We then headed to a spot where **Jungle Nightjars** roost in the trees before moving to a good place to raptor-watch. On the way we saw **Indian Roller** as well as a large **Rat Snake.**

Raptor watching produced a single **Greater-spotted Eagle** and a **Marsh Harrier** and with time running out decided to head back. Upon leaving we saw several more **Golden Jackals** before a flurry of raptors. As well as more **Hobbies** and **Shikras**, an **Oriental Honey Buzzard** drifted past, followed by good views of another new raptor, which after some deliberation was identified as **Changeable Hawk-eagle**.

We then left the park and after a quick lunch set off for Agra, about two hours away. The journey was fairly uneventful stopping only briefly to let Tom look at his first ever **Egyptian Vulture**.



A couple of hours were spent visiting the spectacular Taj Mahal, followed by a quick look around the town and the outside of the Red Fort, before we headed for our overnight train to Katni. Somehow despite the hustle, bustle, and general chaos of an Indian railway station, we managed to get all four of us as well as our luggage successfully onto the train and in to our compartment. Here I opened a few cards and a miniature bottle of whisky and, despite the cramped rather dirty surroundings, celebrated my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday!

### Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October

The train was about an hour late arriving at Katni but again, by some miracle, we all managed to get off at the right place. Rather worryingly, there was no driver to meet us. However a phone call or two later and we were on the road in a makeshift taxi, our luggage being taken by another tour party who had kindly helped us out. Tiger Den lodge, about two hours away was our destination. Along the way we saw the first of many **Langur Monkeys** and at the halfway point we swapped cars and driver and were reunited with our luggage.

Tiger Den was certainly to everyone's liking and we spent a few hours relaxing in the grounds and walking in to the village before our afternoon safari. **Jungle Babblers** were nesting on the lawn, but not a lot else was seen in the heat of the day. Just before 3pm we met our guide, Jagat, and set off on our short-drive to the park gates. I'd heard that **Mottled Wood Owls** were sometimes seen roosting by the park entrance, and Jagat was able to put us on one.

The opening of the park gates heralds the start of a jeep grand-prix, with drivers jostling for position, and squeezing through gaps that aren't there. We raced fairly quickly at the start but then I asked our driver to slow up so we could look at a few birds and other wildlife.

**Spotted Deer** were numerous and a few **Painted Spurfowl** were seen as well as an **Indian Vulture**. We also completed our Parakeet list by adding **Alexandrine Parakeet**, and **Plum-headed Parakeet** to our list. We then heard news that a mother and two **Tiger**



cubs had been seen nearby, so we hastily set off in pursuit. A few nervous moments later and all four of us managed brief glimpses before our guide and driver decided it would be better to drive a short distance to where there was a drinking pool. This turned out to be an excellent decision. We were late arriving at the original scene and there were already many jeeps ahead of us getting better views. At the drinking pool however there was only one other jeep, and

as predicted, after a patient wait we were rewarded with excellent views of all three individuals.

After the tigers departed we needed to head back to the park gates, but on the way had time for **Coppersmith Barbet**, **Spotted Dove**, and **Orange-headed Ground-thrush**. Celebrations followed around the outside fire with several Kingfisher beers!

## Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> October

Our early morning safari started at a fast pace as we needed to race to the central point in the park to register for an elephant safari, the “Tiger Show”. The same family of **Tigers** had been spotted at more or less the same place and a short ride on an Indian Elephant would hopefully enable us to have close views. After registering we had about an hour’s wait at the central point so I had a walk around to see what I could see. **Racquet-tailed Drongo** and the very distinctive race of **Peregrine** or Shaheen had been seen on the drive but I didn’t manage to add anything to this apart from a flyover Minivet and a **Hume’s Warbler**.

At our allotted time we climbed on to our elephant and had great views of the same Tigers again. We then needed to leave the park, but on the way saw a flock of Vultures that included **Red-headed Vulture**.

After lunch at the lodge I sat around enjoying a beer by a clump of bamboo and saw three new birds pop out in the space of a minute: **Tawny-bellied Babbler**, **White-browed Fantail**, and **Tickell’s Blue-flycatcher**.

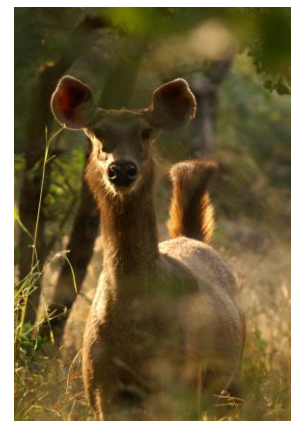
For our afternoon Safari we decided that we would give the Tigers a miss and take a slow drive around another part of the park to look for birds. We added quite a few new ones, including: **Long-legged Buzzard**, **White-eyed Buzzard**, **Great Tit**, **Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch**, **Crested Treeswift**, **Blue-winged Leafbird**, **Red Junglefowl**, **Large Cuckooshrike**, **Black-headed Oriole**, **White-bellied Drongo**, **Black-naped Monarch**, **Common Stonechat**, **Olive-backed Pipit**, and **Common Sandpiper**.

## Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> October



Again at the park gates before dawn but we decided not to try for the “Tiger Show” because of the amount of time it takes to register and the fact that we would be going for the same three Tigers of which we had already had superb views. In the event, it was a wise choice as none were seen anyway. Instead we took a slow drive around, stopping at various points and mainly concentrating on birds. Birding is not easy from the back of a jeep, but a stop at a watering hole produced a

reasonable tally. A flock of about fifteen **Oriental White-eyes** were drinking and, among a large number of other birds already seen, were a couple of **Common Ioras**, several **Grey-breasted Prinias**, a **Grey Wagtail** and two **Dusky Warblers**. A probable Brooke’s Leaf-warbler was also seen; a new bird for me, but which couldn’t be conclusively separated from the numerous **Hume’s Warblers**.





We also took a drive, especially for Sam, to where the Elephants were looked after. Three elephants were seen, including a baby and slightly elder sibling. The mother was rather temperamental and we needed to make a hasty retreat as it became rather dangerous.

**Wire-tailed Swallows** and **Dusky Crag Martins** were the only additions to the list that morning, but it was a relaxed, enjoyable morning all the same. Later, during our midday break, Tom caught butterflies in the lodge's garden and spotted a flock of distant circling vultures, one of which was probably White-rumped Vulture.

We decided to make our afternoon safari our last at Bandhavgarh (we could have chosen to do another one in the morning but would have been too late for the afternoon Kanha one.) Again we decided to give Tiger watching a miss (there were no easy ones available anyway) and instead head for higher ground at Bandhavgarh Fort. Although it cost us around \$100USD to do, we decided to do it anyway as it would present a change of scenery, a visit to the fort and temple, a chance to walk around, and a chance of **Malabar Hornbill** (of which we saw a good number.) We'd only just left the park gates (and joined in the grand-prix despite the lack of urgency) when two **Brown Fish-owls** flew across the track and perched nearby, being mobbed by a pair of **Grey-headed Canary Flycatchers**. After leaving them, we got a few minutes further when, completely fortuitously, a different female **Tiger** walked out of the forest. She was slightly injured and we watched her as she limped along and settled out of view in a reed-bed.



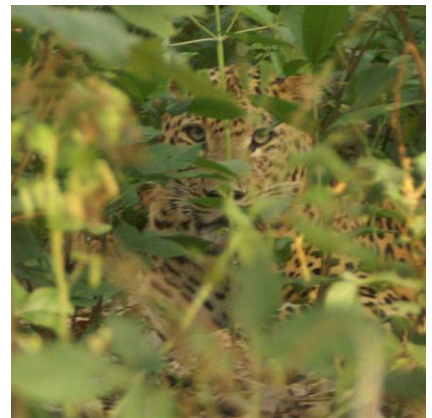
Eventually, after stopping for a **Common Woodshrike**, views of the park, and close views of **Indian Vultures** we arrived at the fort. We were blessed by a holy man, but he didn't bless us with any new birds during our walk-about. It needed to be curtailed as a female Tiger was apparently close by in the area and we need to return to our jeeps; a later group saw it a few minutes after we left. Our final drive back added a possible Tree Pipit and a **Stork-billed Kingfisher** before we said goodbye to our guide and driver.

### Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> October

After an early breakfast we were on the road by 5am for the long-drive to Kanha. **Oriental Turtle-doves** were seen in large numbers as well as a **Golden Jackal**. A stop at the Katni-Agra railway crossing also allowed Tom to catch up with **Bay-backed Shrike** which he had so far missed.

Arriving at Chitvan lodge in Kanha for lunch, we freshened up and had a walk around the grounds. Chitvan has embraced real eco-tourism and grows all its own produce and employs local villagers. Michelle really enjoyed a tour of the allotments, being a keen allotment owner herself.

The short afternoon Safari with our guide Khan got off to a great start as we soon stumbled upon a **Leopard**. We all had excellent views before it was scared off by the crowd that arrived a few minutes later. We also managed to add **Indian Cuckoo** and **Paddyfield Pipit** to our bird list.



In the evening we watched a tribal dance laid on for us and the rest of the guests. We couldn't help but laugh as, at the very moment Khan told us about the primitive ways of the Bagat tribe, and about how they shunned western ways and western medicine etc., one of the tribe pulled out a mobile phone! Anyway, we enjoyed the dance and the food that followed rivalled everything we had been used to.



### Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October

The next day we decided to take a slow drive on the long (six hour) morning safari and see what we stumbled upon. Kanha is very different from Bandhavgarh. Whilst the former offers a better chance seeing Tiger (being something of a Tiger twitch), Kanha requires a lot more effort and patience. They are both very different experiences and we are very glad we did both. The

morning added a good number of new birds: **Brown Shrike, Golden Oriole, Eurasian Cuckoo, Asian Paradise Flycatcher, Golden-fronted Leafbird, White-rumped Vulture, Black Stork**, and a possible Jungle Prinia. Amongst the usual mammals was the very rare **Barasingha**, a subspecies of Swamp Deer, as well as **Nilgai Antelope** which, having not been to Bharatpur, Michelle and Sam had not yet seen.

During our lunchtime break, Michelle took an Indian massage and, along with Tom (a keen cook as well as birder), looked around the herb garden. We then went on our much shorter afternoon safari. This produced very little until the very exciting climax. **Monkey** and **Chital** alarm calls were heard near dusk and, although late, we decided to wait to see what happened. It was quite fascinating watching the very nervous deer looking at something we could not see, but after a tense wait a female **Tiger** revealed herself by walking across the path. We were allowed excellent views for several minutes before she headed in to the forest and we sped to the gates.

The evening at the lodge produced close views of a **Jungle Owlet** that responded well to call-back.

### Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> November



We headed to higher ground for our shortened morning safari (our evening flight from Nagpur to Delhi had been moved forward to early, rather than late, evening.) At the top we had great views as well as a chance to walk about. **Jungle Prinia, Pale Flowerpecker**, a probable Blyth's Pipit, and **Small Minivet** were added to our list. On the drive down, we were extremely fortunate to stumble upon yet another **Tiger**. We watched this one, another female, as she walked along the road - only just ahead of us - for at least twenty minutes. Eventually she took a side track (which was quite fortunate really as she was blocking our path and we were now very late) and headed in to the forest; great, prolonged views, of yet another Tiger on our last safari. **Alpine Swifts** (found by Sam) were circling above, and, after

a quick glance, we raced for the lodge.

A quick brunch and we were on the road for a six hour drive to Nagpur. A fairly uneventful journey, though an **Indian Fox** was seen running across the road close to the park entrance. Arriving in Delhi we met again with Manjeet and Vinod who took us to our original hotel. We stayed up late for once and enjoyed our last evening in India.

## Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> November

After just a few hours sleep, myself and Tom were on the road for a dawn start at Sultanpur, an area of wetland about two hours from central Delhi. The birding was good, but we had little time. New birds we managed to clock-up included **Indian Silverbill**, a female **Bluethroat**, **Teal**, **Pintail**, **Isabeline Shrike** (race *isabellinus*), and what I'm convinced was **Montagu's Harrier** (although Anil disagreed stating it to be Hen Harrier.)

However, disappointingly, the dryer areas around the reserve had been taken over for agricultural and habitation use and produced none of the hoped for Indian Coursers. However, upon leaving the reserve, a guide - looking for business - said he knew where to find Indian Courser. Although we needed to be back for our flight, we raced for the site (about 2km past the park entrance going away from Delhi, on the first right-hand turning.) From the car I called what I assumed were the birds, but they turned out to be **Yellow-wattled Lapwings**. **Crested Larks** and a **Southern Grey Shrike** were also in the field. The next field down however, held a single and eventually four **Indian Coursers**; our last new bird of the trip. Dropping the guide back at the park gates with some rupees for his trouble, we sped as quickly as we could to the airport (about an hour away) where we met with Michelle and Sam for our flight home.

## Systematic Lists

### Birds

**Grey Francolin** – common outside of dense forest with a maximum of about thirty seen at Bharatpur.

**Painted Spurfowl** – seen daily in small numbers at Bandhavgarh.

**Red Junglefowl** – small numbers at Bandhavgarh and Kanha.

**Indian Peafowl** – seen daily apart from the first day.

**Lesser Whistling-duck** – reasonably common.

**Comb Duck** – reasonably common.

**Gadwall** – five on 25<sup>th</sup> and one on 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Spot-billed Duck** – two on the evening of the 8<sup>th</sup> at Bharatpur and eight there the following morning; also six at Sultanpur.

**Cotton Pygmy-goose** – About thirty at Bharatpur on 9<sup>th</sup> and a similar number at Sultanpur.

**Common Teal** – three at Sultanpur.

**Northern Pintail** – Several amongst the Shoveler at Sultanpur.



**Northern Shoveler** – over 2000 at Sultanpur.

**Red-crested Pochard** – two at a wetland south of Delhi.

**Tufted Duck** – a pair in flight at Bharatpur on 26<sup>th</sup> were the only birds seen.

**Yellow-crowned Woodpecker** – two at Bharatpur.

**Black-rumped Flameback** – fairly common.

**Brown-headed Barbet** – three on the 25<sup>th</sup> and then eight the following day at Bharatpur; several heard at Kanha.

**Coppersmith Barbet** – one at Bandhavgarh on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Indian Grey Hornbill** – seen daily apart from the first day.

**Malabar Pied Hornbill** – Seven at Bandhavgarh fort.

**Common Hoopoe** – fairly common.

**Indian Roller** – fairly common.

**Wryneck** – one heard at Sultanpur.

**Common Kingfisher** – fairly common.

**Stork-billed Kingfisher** – one at Bandhavgarh on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**White-throated Kingfisher** – seen daily apart from the first day.

**Pied Kingfisher** – singles at Okra and Bharatpur.

**Green Bee-eater** – common (seen daily.)

**Blue-bearded Bee-eater** – two at Bandhavgarh on 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Asian Koel** – five at Bharatpur on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Greater Coucal** – common.

**Alexandrine Parakeet** – seen most days.

**Rose-ringed Parakeet** – very common (seen daily in large numbers.)

**Plum-headed Parakeet** – seen most days at Bandhavgarh and Kanha.

**Alpine Swift** – three at Kanha.

**House Swift** – seen most days, often in very large flocks.

**Crested Treeswift** – nineteen at Bandhavgarh on 28<sup>th</sup> and five the following day.

**Collared Scops Owl** – a pair seen roosting on both days at Bharatpur and a single bird often seen roosting at Kanha.

**Dusky Eagle Owl** – a roosting bird on both days at Bharatpur.

**Brown Fish Owl** – two at Bandhavgarh on 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Mottled Wood Owl** – seen daily at the gates of Bandhavgarh.

**Jungle Owlet** – one on evening of 31<sup>st</sup> at Kanha.

**Spotted Owlet** – a pair roosting at Bharatpur, and one seen in the evening at the hotel there; also two seen at Kanha on 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Jungle Nightjar** – a roosting bird at Bharatpur.

**Large-tailed Nightjar** – a roosting bird early morning at Bharatpur.

**Rock Pigeon** – common outside of jungle.

**Oriental Turtle Dove** – not seen until leaving Bandhavgarh, but common from then on further south.

**Laughing Dove** – seen daily.

**Spotted Dove** – reasonably common at Bandhavgarh and Kanha.

**Eurasian Collared Dove** – common.

**Yellow-footed Green Pigeon** – about eighty birds at Okhra and then half that number the following day at Bharatpur as well as a few sightings at Kanha.

**Sarus Crane** – two on wetland south of Delhi on 25<sup>th</sup> and a single at Bharatpur the following day, as well as a pair seen by Tom on 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**White-breasted Waterhen** – common at Bharatpur.

**Purple Swamphen** – common in suitable habitat.

**Common Moorhen** – common in suitable habitat.

**Common Coot** – common in suitable habitat though less so than the above species.

**Black-tailed Godwit** – about sixty on a wetland near Bharatpur.

**Common Redshank** – one at the above wetland.

**Marsh Sandpiper** – two on a wetland south of Delhi.

**Common Sandpiper** – a single at the above wetland, and a single at Bandhavgarh.

**Ruff** – about fifty at a wetland near Bharatpur.

**Pheasant-tailed Jacana** – several on both days at Bharatpur.

**Bronze-winged Jacana** – about twenty at Bharatpur on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Black-winged Stilt** – flocks of around fifty at and near to Bharatpur.

**Yellow-wattled Lapwing** – three in field near Sultanpur.

**Red-wattled Lapwing** – common.

**Indian Courser** – four in field near Sultanpur.

**Black-headed Gull?** – one, or possibly Brown-headed distantly at Sultanpur.

**Gull-billed Tern** – a single bird seen flying around wetland south of Delhi.

**Black-shouldered Kite** – fairly common.

**Black Kite** – numerous away from forest, particularly near habitation; *lineatus*.

**Egyptian Vulture** – a total of seven birds seen at various locations.

**White-rumped Vulture** – two possible at Bandhavgarh on 29<sup>th</sup> followed by good views of four birds at Kanha on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Indian Vulture** – reasonably easy to see at Bandhavgarh.

**Red-headed Vulture** – singles at Bandhavgarh on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Crested Serpent-Eagle** – fairly common.

**Eurasian Marsh Harrier** – singles at Bharatpur and Sultanpur.

**Montagu's Harrier** – a ringtail at Sultanpur

**Shikra** – seven sightings in total.

**Besra** – four sightings in total.

**Oriental Honey Buzzard** – singles at Bharatpur and Kanha, as well as four birds leaving a roost at Sultanpur.

**White-eyed Buzzard** – two at Bandhavgarh on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Long-legged Buzzard** – a single at Bandhavgarh on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Greater Spotted Eagle** – one at Bharatpur.

**Changeable Hawk Eagle** – one in flight whilst leaving Bharatpur, and a perched bird at Bandhavgarh on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Kestrel** – singles on 24<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Eurasian Hobby** – five birds in total at Bharatpur and Bandhavgarh.

**Peregrine Falcon** – a total of four birds seen at Bandhavgarh.

**Little Grebe** – sixteen birds in total.

**Oriental Darter** – a maximum of about thirty seen at Bharatpur.

**Little Cormorant** – fairly common.

**Indian Cormorant** – three at Okhra.

**Great Cormorant** – common at Bharatpur.

**Little Egret** – fairly common.

**Grey Heron** – fairly common.

**Purple Heron** – fairly common, more numerous than Grey Heron.

**Great Egret** – fairly common

**Intermediate Egret** – a few birds were identified amongst Great White Egrets at Bharatpur, though this species may have been the commonest large Egret.

**Cattle Egret** – very common, though not seen on first day.

**Indian Pond Heron** – common.

**Black-crowned Night Heron** – about fifteen birds leaving roost at Bharatpur on first evening and about forty over hotel, presumably returning, early the following morning.

**Black Bittern** – one in flight at Bharatpur.

**Glossy Ibis** – common in and around Bharatpur.

**Black-headed Ibis** – reasonable numbers around Delhi and Bharatpur.

**Black Ibis** – five on last evening from Tiger Den.

**Eurasian Spoonbill** – one in breeding plumage at Bharatpur on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Painted Stork** – common at Bharatpur and Sultanpur.

**Asian Openbill** – thirteen birds in total, mostly at Bharatpur.

**Woolly-necked Stork** – four at Bharatpur and the same number at Bandhavgarh.

**Black Stork** – a single at Kanha on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Lesser Adjutant** – four birds in total (near Delhi, Bandhavgarh, and Kanha.)

**Blue-winged Leafbird** – one seen at Bandhavgarh on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Golden-fronted Leafbird** – singles at Kanha on 31<sup>st</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Rufous-tailed Shrike** – one *isabellinus* race bird at Sultanpur.

**Brown Shrike** – a single at Kanha on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Bay-backed Shrike** – four birds in total (Tughlaqabad, near Bandhavgarh, and Sultanpur.)

**Long-tailed Shrike** – five birds in total (Tughlaqabad, Bharatpur, and Bandhavgarh.)

**Southern Grey Shrike** – one in fields near Sultanpur.



**Rufous Treepie** – fairly common.

**House Crow** –seen on most days (scarce in forested areas.)

**Large-billed Crow** – common, seen daily.

**Eurasian Golden Oriole** – one at Kanha on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Black-hooded Oriole** – fourteen birds seen in total at Bandhavgarh and Kanha.

**Large Cuckooshrike** – eleven birds seen in total at Bandhavgarh and Kanha.

**Small Minivet** – on at Kanha on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**White-browed Fantail** – singles on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> at Bandhavgarh.

**Black Drongo** – common, seen daily.

**White-bellied Drongo** – common at Bandhavgarh and Kanha.

**Greater Racket-tailed Drongo** – common at Bandhavgarh and particularly at Kanha.

**Black-naped Monarch** – singles seen on four occasions at Bandhavgarh and Kanha.

**Asian Paradise-flycatcher** – one rufous bird at Kanha on 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Common Iora** – reasonably common at Bandhavgarh and Kanha.

**Common Woodshrike** – one at Bandhavgarh on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Orange-headed Thrush** – three birds at Bandhavgarh.

**Red-breasted Flycatcher** – fairly common; an immature male at Kanha on 31<sup>st</sup> was *albicilla*, Red-throated Flycatcher.

**Tickell's Blue Flycatcher** – several birds at Bandhavgarh and Kanha.

**Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher** – singles at Bandhavgarh and Kanha (plus one heard at Bharatpur.)

**Bluethroat** – one female at Sultanpur.

**Oriental Magpie Robin** – common.

**Indian Robin** – common.

**Black Redstart** – common, seen most days, birds of the distinctive *rufiventris* race.

**Common Stonechat** – Siberian-type birds common and seen most days.

**Pied Bushchat** – common, seen most days.

**Brown Rock-chat** – common at the Delhi sites, but not seen elsewhere.

**Brahminy Starling** – fairly common outside of forested habitat.

**Asian Pied Starling** – reasonably easy to find, but smaller numbers around national parks (just two seen at Bandhavgarh.)

**Common Myna** – common to abundant, though absent on some days (when in national parks.)

**Bank Myna** – common, though less so than the above species.

**Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch** – one at Bandhavgarh on 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Great Tit** – only seen in Bandhavgarh (four birds in total.)

**Plain Martin** – a flock of around 200 at Tughlaqabad Fort, and a small flock the following day; probably overlooked amongst very large flocks of *hirrundines*.

**Dusky Crag Martin** – four at Bandhavgarh Fort on 29<sup>th</sup>, and several noted whilst waiting at the airport on the last day.

**Barn Swallow** – huge flocks sometimes seen, though not recorded daily.

**Wire-tailed Swallow** – recorded in small numbers at Bandhavgarh and Sultanpur.

**Red-rumped Swallow?** – one probable at Tughlaqabad Fort was the only bird recorded.

**Streak-throated Swallow?** – one probable at Tughlaqabad Fort was the only bird recorded.

**Red-whiskered Bulbul** – common.

**Red-vented Bulbul** – the commonest of the two Bulbuls.

**Grey-breasted Prinia** – seven birds noted in total at Bandhavgarh and Kanha.

**Jungle Prinia** – a single bird on the last drive at Kanha.

**Ashy Prinia** – fairly common.

**Plain Prinia** – fairly common.

**Zitting Cisticola** – common at Okhra, and a few birds seen elsewhere.

**Oriental White-eye** – common

**Zitting Cisticola** – fairly common in the right habitat.

**Common Tailorbird** – common

**Lesser Whitethroat** – abundant at Okhra, Bharatpur and Sultanpur, less common or absent in dryer forest areas.

**Blyth's Reed Warbler** – common at Okhra, Bharatpur and Sultanpur.

**Chiffchaff** – a total of five *tristis* birds seen.

**Dusky Warbler** – two at Bandhavgarh on 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Brooks Leaf Warbler?** – a possible at Bandhavgarh on 29<sup>th</sup> but views were too short to separate it from the next species.

**Hume's Warbler** – very common at Bandhavgarh and Kanha.

**Greenish Warbler** – fairly common at Bharatpur and a few at Bandhavgarh.

**Tawny-bellied Babbler** – fairly common at Bandhavgarh but probably overlooked at Kanha as none seen? Also one was probably seen at Sultanpur.

**Yellow-eyed Babbler** – brief views of two at Bharatpur.

**Common Babbler** – common away from forested areas.

**Large Grey Babbler** – three at Okhra, then a larger flock of nineteen birds at Sultanpur.

**Jungle Babbler** – not seen on the first and last day, but generally very common.

**Ashy-crowned Sparrow Lark?** – four birds seen whilst driving were almost certainly this species.

**Crested Lark** – four in fields north of Sultanpur.

**Pale-billed Flowerpecker** – one on high ground at Kanha.

**Purple Sunbird** – fairly common.

**House Sparrow** – six birds seen in total.

**Sind Sparrow** – a flock of about twenty birds at Tughlaqabad Fort.

**Chestnut-shouldered Petronia** – fairly common.

**White Wagtail** – only four birds seen, probably all *personata*.

**Grey Wagtail** – only three birds seen (Bandhavgarh and Kanha.)

**Paddyfield Pipit** – large roosts at Kanha, but not seen elsewhere.

**Tawny Pipit** – eight birds in the evening at Bharatpur.

**Blyth's Pipit?** – a probable at Kanha on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Long-billed Pipit** – singles at Tughlaqabad Fort and Sultanpur.

**Tree Pipit** – three birds seen in total at Bandhavgarh.

**Olive-backed Pipit** – fairly common at Bandhavgarh and Kanha.

**Red Avadavat** – four at Bharatpur on 25<sup>th</sup> and three at Sultanpur.

**Indian Silverbill** – three at Sultanpur.

**Scaly-breasted Munia** – singles at Bharatpur and Kanha.

**Black-headed Munia** – two females at Tughlaqabad Fort.

## Mammals

**Indian Hare** – one seen by Tom as it was chased by a Golden Jackal.

**Five-striped Palm Squirrel** – abundant outside of Bandhavgarh (where not seen) and Kanha (only a few seen.)

**Tiger** – a female with two cubs at Bandhavgarh on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>; a female on 29<sup>th</sup>; females on 31<sup>st</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> at Kanha.

**Leopard** – one at Kanha on 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Common Mongoose** – five seen in total at Okhra, Bharatpur, and Kanha.

**Bengal Fox** – one running across the road near to Kanha on 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Golden Jackal** – a total of thirteen at Bharatpur and one whilst leaving Bandhavgarh.

**Langur Monkey** – common in Bandhavgarh and Kanha.

**Rhesus Macaque** – common in cities, scarce in forested areas.

**Wild Boar** – Indian Wild Boar (*cristatus*) seen at Tughlaqabad Fort, Bharatpur, Bandhavgarh, and Kanha.

**Spotted Deer** – very common at Bandhavgarh and Kanha.

**Swamp Deer** – small herds of the endangered subspecies *Barasingha* seen at Kanha (27 in total.)

**Sambar Deer** – fairly easy to find at Bharatpur, Bandhavgarh, and Kanha.

**Indian Muntjac** – one at Kanha.

**Guar** – views of two males and a juvenile at Kanha on 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Nilgai Antelope** – fairly easy to find at Bharatpur and Kanha.

**Indian Flying Fox** – a colony in the town of Mandla (between Bandhavgarh and Kanha.)

## Butterflies

**Lime Butterfly**

**Common Emigrant**

**Common Grass Yellow**

**Common Gull**

**Common Evening Brown**

**Baronet**

**Common Sailor**

**Common Tiger**



**Common Indian Crow**

**Great Eggfly**

**Common Rose / Common Mormon**

**Mottled Emigrant**

**Other**

**Bengal Monitor Lizard?** – two at Bharatpur on 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Rat Snake** – one at Bharatpur on 26<sup>th</sup> and one the following day at Bandhavgarh.

**Green Whip-snake** – one at Bandhavgarh on 27<sup>th</sup>