Indian Wildlife Spectacular Photography Tour Report 2025

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Our India tour Tigers & Wildlife spectacular 2025 was a complete success.

The trip was very varied and productive, with numerous photographic highlights.

Our group was generally interested in nature and animals. We therefore kept a list of the mammals, birds and reptiles we saw. We came up with an astonishing 33 species of mammals, 186 species of birds and 10 species of reptiles.

We travelled through very different habitats. First we explored the Chambal River, then the Indian jungle in the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, the desert of the Little Rann of Kutch and finally the grasslands of Velavadar.

Photographic highlights included encounters with tigers, sloth bears, wild dogs, gharials, wild asses, bengal foxes with cubs and a wolf with prey. Couple that with the first Jungle Cat kittens we've ever seen on a Wild Images tour in India and the whole experience left our group mesmerised.

Taj Mahal

Our tour started early in the morning in Delhi. From there we travelled to Agra to visit the famous Taj Mahal. Even on a trip focused on wildlife photography, you can't go past one of the seven wonders of the world. We learned a lot about the history of this mausoleum, which was made of white marble with artistically inlaid precious stones. The Mughal Shah Jahan had the Taj Mahal built as the tomb of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal. We could also see the first animals in the surrounding park: Rhesus Macaques, Five-striped Palm Squirrels, Rose-ringed Parakeets, Black Kites and Egyptian Vultures could be observed.

Chambal River

The journey continued to the Chambal River. The Chambal is one of the last clean large rivers in India. There we took two trips on a small boat. This river is a habitat for numerous endangered animals that are rarely found elsewhere.

On this tour we were lucky enough to see the endangered Ganges River Dolphin several times. Like all river dolphins, this one is mainly threatened by water pollution. It is very difficult to photograph these dolphins. They only surface very briefly and then dive down again for a few minutes to surface elsewhere to breathe again.

The strange-looking gharials, also critically endangered, can be found here. These crocodiles have a long slender snout, the males have a thickening at the tip of the snout which is reminiscent of the Indian earthen pot ghara. This is how the name gharial is derived. We found several individuals that allowed us to approach within photo distance.

There is also a second crocodile species, the Mugger Crocodile or Marsh Crocodile. This reptile has a broad snout and is the more dangerous of the two species.

Furthermore we saw the large Indian Softshell Turtles, Indian Tent Turtles and the critically endangered Red-crowned Roofed Turtle.

There were also numerous ornithological highlights along the river. We saw and photographed Indian Skimmers, Black-bellied Terns, Great Thick-knees (or Great Stone-curlews) and Lesser Pratincoles as well as many other species. We were blessed to see the skimmers and the thick-knees breeding on this tour also.

In between river cruises we all enjoyed exploring the grounds of our beautiful lodge. Here we could see the Common Palm Civet climbing in the trees at night. We also photographed birds, including the Common Hawk-cuckoo, Coppersmith Barbet, Spotted Owlet and Orange-headed Thrush.

One afternoon we visited the nearby village Holipura. We were able to explore some historic buildings and village life, but, on the wildlife front, a Spottet Owlet was our main highlight here. We spent the evening at the temples of Bateshwar with a coffee or tea overlooking the river at sunset, a great atmosphere.

Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve

We spent the longest part of the tour in the Indian jungles of the beautiful Tadoba Andhari Reserve where we searched for the animals known from Kipling's famous "Jungle Book". Tadoba is a deciduous forest that includes woodlands of teak trees and groves of bamboo. There are several lakes and waterholes. We had Shaheen as our local guide and she did an excellent job. Our lodge was fabulous. The standard of the lodge was so good that we could even eat ice cream for dessert – a great relief from the heat of this time of year in India. We had the same skilled drivers for all of our safaris, which is always a big advantage over the lottery of changing drivers that is so common elsewhere in India.

We saw an incredible 33 tigers in total, including 16 individuals. Of course not every tiger sighting turned into a good photo situation, so it was good to have enough time at this location for as many sightings as possible.

Here is just a selection of our tour's Tadoba highlights:

Tigress Choti Tara's cub playing with a Crocodile

In the afternoon we saw the 10-month-old cub of the 14-year-old tigress Choti Tara. Her cubs were already very big and had only recently learned to hunt. We saw one cub sneaking up on a female Sambar Deer standing in the water at the edge of a lake. After carefully stalking it, he finally started an attack, splashing water everywhere. The Sambar recognized the danger just in time and escaped. Afterwards we watched the same tiger cub examine a nearby crocodile lying on the bank. As it turned out, the crocodile had already died from injuries sustained in another tiger attack. The cub examined the crocodile from all sides, turning it it on its back and back again, before finally laying down on it! Oddly it didn't seem to be edible for him, but that afternoon some extraordinary tiger photos were taken by everyone.

Tigress at a Wild Boar kill

We saw the particularly elegant tigress Nayantara on two occasions. On the second occasion we were able to observe her feeding at a Wild Boar kill in the buffer zone. Although she was eating somewhat hidden in the bushes, we were able to take some exciting photos. We then followed her to a waterhole, where she cooled off from the hot temperatures in the water and enjoyed a drink, which is typical of tigers after a meal.

Tigress with three cubs

We had a total of three encounters with the tigress Collerwali and her three 5-month-old cubs. She had previously lost a fourth cub to wild dogs. At our first encounter there were so many vehicles that we stopped taking photos and left the place. We tried as consistently as possible to avoid tiger traffic jams. Such situations with too many vehicles can cause too much stress for the animals. But tiger jams are also usually not productive from a photographic point of view.

We saw the tigress and her cubs two more times in much calmer situations, but at a greater distance on the opposite side of a waterhole. We were able to observe the tiger family drinking and bathing for a long time. It was nice to watch four tigers sitting at a waterhole in the best morning light with reflexions in the water.

Male Tigers

During our time in Tadoba, we also had several encounters with male tigers. The males are significantly larger and heavier than the females, they also have a more pronounced beard. A male's territory is larger and overlaps with that of several females.

On one occasion, we saw the large male Yuvraj bathing in the waterhole. Of the male tiger Shambu in a lazy mood, we only saw his feet sticking upwards, while the tiger made himself comfortable laying on his back in the tall grass.

We had a brief but very impressive encounter with Balram, the largest male tiger in the region. This huge tiger crossed the road between our two jeeps and then disappeared back into the bamboo thicket.

We were also able to photograph the collared Collarwala in a good distance.

Finally, we were able to watch the male Tiger Mowgli and his 2 already big cubs as he first drank at the waterhole and then waded through the water with nice reflections.

Sloth Bears

We saw a Sloth Bear three times in total. These bears look unusual with their special snout and their shaggy black fur. They have no front incisors, a specialization in sucking up termites. These animals can break open termite mounds with their long claws. Once it was not possible to take a photo of the bear in the thicket, another time we were only able to take photos of a shy bear from a distance crossing the road. But on one occasion we were able to photograph a large Sloth Bear at a good distance as it came out of the forest and crossed the road.

Asiatic Wild Dogs

The endangered Asiatic Wild Dogs are even rarer than tigers. There are probably less than 2500 individuals worldwide. We were lucky enough to observe this special species three times. Each time it was the same pack of 11 animals. It was good to see that such an endangered species had six young in the pack. The wild dogs came out of the forest to drink at Tadoba Lake. It was fascinating to observe the social behavior of the wild dogs, there are always interactions in packs as large as these. Later the animals chased a leopard up a tree. However, that situation took place in the distance and in dense thickets, but at least the leopard was visible with the binoculars. During further encounters, interactions with other animals such as Sambar deer, Gaur and a Wild Boar could also be seen. Two Gaur chased the wild dogs away from the shore of the lake. During our last sighting, we watched wild dogs eating their prey of a Spotted Deer. The scene was exciting to watch. One Wild Boar seemed to be interested to get something of the prey. All together we spent several hours observing wild dogs.

Further highlights

The Tadoba-Anhari Tiger Reserve is a very diverse protected area where you can see many different species of mammals and birds in addition to the tiger.

We were able to photograph a normally shy female Four-horned Antelope (Chousingha) at close range.

The Gaur are the largest wild cattle in the world and we had several good opportunities to photograph these impressive animals. The males in particular are very massive, black with white legs. They can weigh up to 1500 kg.

The three species of deer in the area are Sambar, Spotted and Barking. We were able to photograph all three species. The Sambar like to stand in the water to eat aquatic plants. Sambar and Spotted Deer are common sightings, while the Barking Deer (or Muntjac) are more secretive.

We had two sightings of a Leopard. Unfortunately, neither proved to be good photo opportunities.

It's always fun to watch a group of Bengal Sacred Langurs. Many of the females had just given birth and various animals in the group wanted to look after the babies. The monkeys were often in a playful mood and we all enjoyed watching one youngster in the tree trying to pull the langurs above him down by the tail.

We also had many ornithological highlights. We saw Jungle Owlet several times, once with a captured skink. We also discovered both Brown Fish Owl and Mottled Wood Owls in the forest. The calls of the Grey Junglefowl were constant companions as we drove through the forest. At one point we were lucky enough to see and photograph a pair of the beautiful Painted Sandgrouse at close range. We had good opportunities to take pictures of the White-eyed Buzzard, Shikra and Grey-headed Fish-eagle. We also saw the very well camouflaged Savanna Nightjar at a short distance along the way.

Little Rann of Kutch

After a domestic flight from Nagpur to Ahmedabad, the journey continued to the Little Rann of Kutch, where the desert is the predominant habitat. Here, the soil is dry and cracked and there are large salt pans. The wildlife here is very different from the species last seen in the forest. The Indian Wild Ass or Khur is a subspecies of the Asiatic Wild Ass or Onager. It is perfectly adapted to the barren landscape. They roam the dusty landscape in small groups. Great images of these animals can be taken, especially in the evening at sunset. We were lucky enough to see two animals taking a dust bath at sunset. The swirling dust looked like a glowing red cloud in the evening light, and we got some very special photos.

The lodge grounds also offered some great photographic opportunities. We were able to photograph an Indian Long-eared Hedgehog here. After sunset, the Indian Crested Porcupine appeared to feed on fruits, providing us all with another unusual photo opportunity. This large rodent can weight up to 18 kg. The quills are effective protection against attackers.

We saw Spotted Owlet here regularly, as there are several nesting boxes for these charismatic small birds in the grounds of the lodge.

Early in the morning and late in the afternoon, we went on a photo safari in a converted pickup truck.

In the desert we were able to watch and photograph the Desert Red Fox.

A photographic highlight of the trip was certainly a morning at the den of a Bengal Fox family. This small species of fox differs from the Red Fox, among other things, by the black tip of its tail. We were very lucky with Bengal Foxes on this tour. Shortly after we arrived, three cubs came out of the fox den, greeted their parents and played with each other. One cub kept pulling the tail of the other. It was fantastic, everyone was able to take great photos. Finally, a Marsh Harrier came alarmingly close to the cubs and was immediately chased away by the male fox to the amazement of all of us.

The vast majority of migratory birds had already left the area by this time, but there were still good opportunities for birds. Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse could be found regularly, and we were also able to photograph a group of three Demoiselle Cranes.

Finally, we spent one morning at a nearby wetlands. Here we observed a variety of birds such as Greater and Lesser Flamingos, Black-winged Stilts, Marsh Harriers, Little Ringed Plovers, spoonbills, various herons and many other waders.

Velavadar/Blackbuck National Park

Finally we spent the last few days in the beautiful Blackbuck National Park at Velavadar. Our lodge there is certainly one of the best in India and it was great to end our tour in such fantastic accommodation.

The Blackbuck National Park has mainly a grassland ecosystem. The tall yellow grass is reminiscent of the African savannah. This is the habitat for the Blackbuck, Striped Hyena, Wolf and Jungle Cat.

We were lucky on our very first morning safari. A large male Wolf approached within photo distance in the most beautiful morning light. He was the alpha male of a pack and to our disbelief, we watched and photographed him capturing a young Blackbuck fawn hiding in the grass right before our very eyes!!!! It was unbelievable and our group caught some wonderful photos. What a fantastic introduction to our time in the reserve! Our wolf encounters didn't stop there. On another safari we saw a pack of five and on the last day some of the group even saw a large pack of nine wolves, but in each of the latter cases they were at a great distance.

In the following two days we had encounters with the Striped Hyena. These animals could mostly be observed at a greater distance, but we did also have two hyenas cross the road nearby. The Blackbuck National Park is one of the few places to see this fascinating species of hyena regularly.

We were also lucky with the Jungle Cat. We found this cat species every day.

The Jungle Cat is slightly larger than a domestic cat, long-legged, with a relatively short tail. Most encounters were brief sightings where the cat quickly disappeared back into the tall grass. But a few sightings led to beautiful photos. We were able to observe one jungle cat searching and jumping for prey. We also saw three cute kittens.

Of course, one of the key highlights was our encounters with Blackbuck, surely one of the world's most beautiful antelopes. These stunning creatures live in large numbers in the protected area established for them. The males are black and white in color and have

long, helically twisted horns.

Once, before the afternoon safari, we took a short and small detour to an abandoned house to take photos of the lesser mouse-tailed bats there.

Overall the tour was lot of fun. Many thanks to our great group, for being so motivated and interested. It was fun to end the evening with a beer together after so many successful days of photograph on the tour. We had so many fantastic opportunities for wildlife photography, many of which would be hard to repeat, but we are already looking forward to our next India Tiger and Wildlife Spectacular tour in 2026.