

# India

17–30 november 2019



**Tour leader: Mads & Tina Elley**  
**Local guide: Dalveer Singh**

## With Fågelguidning AB to the amazing birding-destination India.

For two weeks we will explore the northern part of India, visiting the fertile Ganges River Valley and the Himalayan foothills. At an easy pace allowing us time for many exciting birds and animals, we will focus on 4 great birding areas.

In the lowlands we'll find ourselves sailing on the almost pollution free Chambal River and visiting one of the best birding spots in the world, Keoladeo National Park in Bharatpur. We will also admire Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri, all on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

After this we will drive to the Himalayan foothills, where we will visit Corbett National Park (alt. 400-1200 m), not only home for many birds but also one of the best places to see Tigers. Finally we'll go to Pangot (alt. 2000 m) where the avifauna is very different.

Everybody can join this tour, both new and experienced birders will be able to get a high output. With one of India's best bird guides we may find well over 300 species of birds like Indian Skimmer, Indian Courser, Ibisbill, Himalayan Rubythroat along more well known birds like Indian Peafowl, Red Junglefowl (ancestor of the domestic chicken) and 5 species of Parakeets. Chances are also high for several threatened animal species like Gharial, River Dolphin, Elephant and not least Bengal Tiger.

### Program

#### Day 1 (17 november)



The tour begins at the airport in Delhi (Indira Gandhi International Airport) in the morning.

Upon request we can assist you finding air tickets. Tour leader will arrive on Air India's flight from Copenhagen landing 17/11 at 07.35 am.

In our 2 minibusses we drive directly to Chambal Safari Lodge, home for our first 2 nights. The drive is long (approx. 300 km) but already from the vehicles we'll spot the first Peafowl, Parakeets, White-breasted Kingfishers, Mynas og Drongos.

Chambal River is one of the least polluted rivers in India. In the afternoon we'll do our first boat trip, where we enjoy the rich bird and animal life. We have good chances of

several endangered species not easily seen on more polluted rivers.

In the evening we meet by the fire and talk about our first day before a well deserved good nights sleep.

#### Possible species today:

Birds: Red-naped Ibis, Bonelli's Eagle, Bronze-winged Jacana, Small Pratincole, Indian Skimmer, Pallas's Gull, Black-bellied Tern, Indian Eagle Owl.

Animals: Mugger Crocodile, Gharial, Ganges River Dolphin, Jungle Cat.

#### Day 2 (18 november)



In the morning we explore the area's bird life and do another boat trip. We look out for species missed yesterday and many others. Already in the hotel garden we

may see many good birds like Spotted Owllet, Brown Hawk Owl, Plum-headed Parakeet and many others.

After lunch we drive to The Sarus Crane Conservation Reserve in search of Sarus Crane, the world's tallest flying bird. The reserve is home to many other birds and also holds a good population of raptors.

**Possible species today:**

Birds: Woolly-necked Stork, Black-necked Stork, Indian Spotted Eagle, Sarus Crane, Pheasant-tailed Jacana, Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse, Ashy-crowned Sparrow Lark, Bay-backed Shrike, Black-breasted Weaver, Crested Bunting, Red-headed Bunting.

Animals: Nilgai, Asian Palm Civet.

**Day 3 (19 november)**



After breakfast we drive to the city of Agra (65 km) where we will see three of India's major cultural treasures: Taj Mahal, the mausoleum of Shah Jahan's favorite wife Mumtaz Mahal. Agra Fort, home of several Maharajas. Fatehpur Sikri, capital of the Mughal Empire.

Then it is time to drive to Bharatpur (60 km) where Kadamb Kunj Resort is our base for the following 3 nights.

**Possible species today:**

Birds: Along the way we spot some more common species like Indian Roller, Black-shouldered Kite, Brahminy Starling, Pied Bush-Chat and Purple Sunbird.

Animals: Rhesus Macaque.

**Day 4 and 5 (20–21 november)**



For two full days we explore Keoladeo National Park and the surroundings of Bharatpur. The park was established as a hunting reserve for the Maharaja and in the colonial time the British continued this use of the area. In 1982 it was declared a National Park. Access is only on foot or by bicycle taxi. Two rivers flood the area to various levels every year. Here we'll find wetlands, open grassland and forest. The park is home to a large population of Storks, Herons and Wildfowl, several Owl species and many passerines. It is also known for the high numbers of wintering raptors and several mammal species. We expect 100+ species here.

**Possible species today:**

Birds: 12 species of Herons, 4 species of Storks, Cotton Pygmy Goose, Shikra, Eastern Imperial + Tawny + Steppe + Greater Spotted + Indian Spotted Eagle, Indian Courser, Greater Painted Snipe, Large-tailed Nightjar, Dusky Eagle Owl, Collared Scops Owl, Brown-headed + Coppersmith Barbet, Indian Grey Hornbill, Black-rumped Flameback, Long-tailed Shrike, Long-tailed Minivet, Red-vented + White-eared Bulbul, Siberian Rubythroat, Oriental Magpie Robin, Orange-headed Thrush, Oriental White-eye, Red Avadavat, Indian Silverbill, Chestnut-shouldered Petronia.

Animals: Spotted Deer, Sambar Deer, Golden Jackal, Wild Boar, Indian Grey Mongoose among others.



## Day 6 (22. november)



It's time to start the long drive towards the Himalayan foothills. Due to the traffic conditions in India we need to do the drive over two days. Today we head to Delhi (200 km) where we spend the night in the Mapple Express Hotel.

We have time for some birding along the way and for a walk on your own in the streets of Delhi.

### Possible species today:

Along the way we spot some more common species like Red-wattled Lapwing, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Indian Roller, Asian Pied Starling, Bank Myna, Jungle Babbler, Large Grey Babbler.

## Day 7 (23 november)



After breakfast we drive through the morning traffic of Delhi, a true experience of it's own. Well out of the city we cross the holy Ganges River and after 270 km we arrive to our next hotel, Tiger Camp where we'll stay for 3 nights.

We are now in the foothills of the tallest mountain range in the world, the Himalayas. Not only the climate and the landscapes are very different from what we know from the lowlands, we also meet a whole new range of birds.

During the drive and when we arrive to

Tiger Camp there'll be time for some birding as well. If time permits we will already today pay Kosi River a visit to search for the Ibisbill.

### Possible species today:

Ibisbill, Red-breasted Parakeet, White-throated Fantail, Himalayan Rubythroat, White-capped Redstart, Plumbeous Water Redstart, Wallcreeper.

## Day 8 and 9 (24–25 november)



Corbett National Park is India's oldest national park. Named after Jim Corbett, the Tiger hunter who became one of the first to see the need for protection of nature and not least the Bengal Tiger. The park is situated at 400-1200 m above sea level and holds lush forests, grasslands and a large lake. Corbett NP is one of the best places to see the endangered Bengal Tiger. The park holds a good (and increasing) population of Tigers and for that reason access is only in vehicles. We will do 3 jeep safaris in the park, home to not only Tigers but many other animals (among others Leopard) and lots of birds as well. Outside the park we also visit Kosi River, at this time of the year a quiet river.

### Possible species today:

Birds: Black Stork, Black-necked Stork, White-eyed Buzzard, Mountain + Changeable Hawk Eagle, Pallas's + Lesser Fish Eagle, 6 species of Vultures, Collared Falconet, Kalij Pheasant, Red Junglefowl, Alexandrine + Plum-headed Parakeet, Brown + Tawny Fish Owl, Asian Barred + Jungle Owlet, White-rumped Needletail, Crested Tree-Swift, Crested + Stork-billed Kingfisher, 5 species of Barbets, Great Hornbill, 16 species of Woodpeckers, Black-hooded Oriole, Greater + Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo, Green Magpie,

Scarlet Minivet, 6 species of Bulbuls, Slaty-blue Flycatcher, Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher, Grey-bellied + Chestnut-headed Tesia, Spotted + Little Forktail, Brown Dipper, Blue Whistling Thrush, Long-billed Thrush, Black-lored + Black-throated Tit, Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Crimson Sunbird.

Animals: Bengal Tiger (good chances), Leopard (more difficult to see), Hanuman's Langur, Sambar Deer, Spotted Deer (Chital), Hog Deer, Barking Deer among others.

### Day 10 (26. november)



Today we drive 80 km to the village of Pangot at 2000 m above sea level, where we will stay at Ashoka's Naini Chalet for 3 nights. Driving up here we notice how the increasing altitude changes the vegetation and also the birdlife. We have good time for several stops on the way so new species will be added to the list today as well.

#### Possible species today:

Besra, Hill Partridge, Slaty-headed Parakeet, Great Barbet, Greater Yellow-nape, Brown-fronted Woodpecker, Speckled Piculet, Red-billed Blue Magpie, Himalayan Bulbul, White-crested Laughingthrush, Olive-backed Pipit.

### Day 11 and 12 (27–28 november)



We have 2 full days to experience the exciting birds of this altitude. The landscape is more exposed to a harsh climate and vegetation is lower than further down hill. We explore Pangot itself and areas further up hill where several good species occur. The weather is often a determining factor at this altitude but November is the driest month of the year so we have the best chances of some fine weather. The pace will be easy respecting the altitude.

#### Possible species today:

Koklass Pheasant, Cheer Pheasant, Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Grey-backed Shrike, Black-headed Jay, Red-billed Leiothrix, Blue-winged Minla, Rufous Sibia, Large Hawk Cuckoo, Bronzed Drongo, Grey Treepie, Striated + Streaked + White-chinned Laughingthrush, Grey-hooded + Lemon-rumped + Ashy-throated Warbler, Orange-flanked Bush Robin, Blue-capped + Blue-fronted Redstart, Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush, Grey-winged + White-collared Blackbird, Dark-throated + Chestnut Thrush, 5-6 species of Tits, Upland Pipit, Russet Sparrow, Alpine + Altai + Rufous-breasted + Black-throated Accentor.

### Day 13 (29 november)



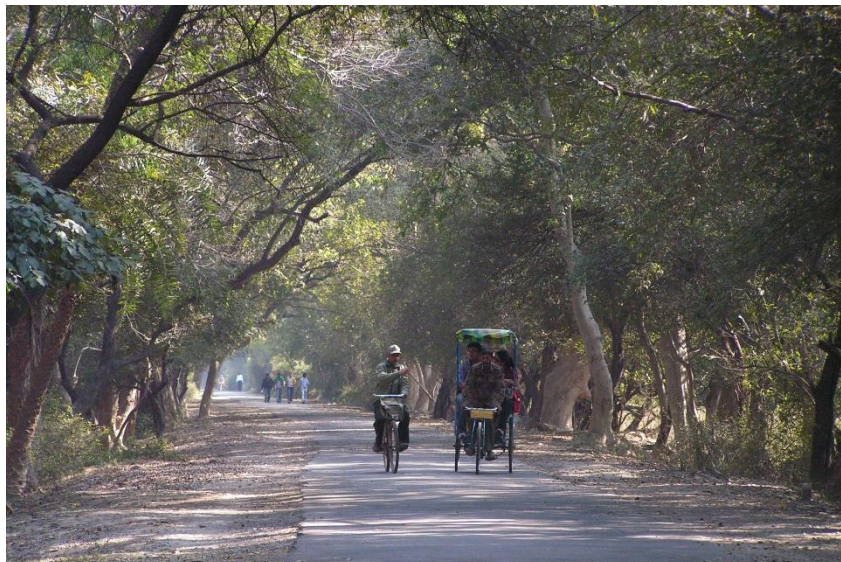
After breakfast and the last highland birds we head off for Delhi and our last hotel Shanti Palace close to the airport. It's a long drive (300 km) so there is limited time for birding along the way. After our farewell dinner we evaluate the tour in the bar before it's time for packing.

### Day 14 (30 november)



In the morning there will be time for a walk on your own or some relaxing at the hotel. Before noon we head off to the airport, depending on your flight.





Bharatpur Main Road

## About the trip

**Tour cost: 30 900 SEK.**  
(approx. 2.975 EUR / 2.615 GBP (rates 3/2-2019))

Deposit is paid when booking.

Final balance no later than 60 days prior to departure.

Tour cost includes:

- Danish tour leaders Mads Elley + Tina Elley. Speak English, Danish, Swedish
- Indian expert bird guide Dalveer Singh
- Shared double room (single room available at an additional cost)
- All meals
- Ground transportation in India
- All entry fees in parks and Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri
- Bottled water
- Recommended tips
- Bird list and trip report

Not included in tour cost:

- Flights to and from India / Delhi
- Visas
- Personal travel insurance
- Personal expenses of any kind
- Drinks others than bottled water
- Possible camera fees in parks and cultural sights
- Other expenses not mentioned in the tour description

More information on terms and conditions for this tour here: <http://fagelguidning.se/resevillkor-2/>

## Quick facts

Tour leaders Speak English, Danish and Swedish. The currency in India is INR, Indian Rupees. 100 INR = 9,13 DKK / 12,70 SEK / 1,22 EURO / 1,07 GBP (rates 3/2 2019).

Only Indian citizens can take Indian Rupees into the country. You can bring Euro, GBP or USD i cash.

Visa and MasterCard are accepted in many places especially in larger cities. In smaller towns, many restaurants and in many shops only cash is accepted. Bank machines (ATM) are found in all larger cities and at the airport. Please notice that many banks will charge you a fee for using ATMs. In India tips are an important part of the income for service personnel. Recommended tips are included in the tour cost. Additional tips are not expected but always welcomed.

The time zone in India is GMT + 5½. This means the time is 4½ hours ahead of central Europe (Denmark and Sweden) and 5½ hours ahead of Great Britain.

In India the currency is 230V as in Europe. Bring an adapter for Indian plugs. Power failures are frequent especially in rural areas.

November is one of the driest months, temperatures most likely 6-30 degrees.

We should be able to see well over 300 species of birds on this tour.

A good field guide is essential as most species are unknown in Europe. Several are available.

Because the literature is in English, we use the English bird names during the tour.

A bird list is handed out on the first day and will be updated daily. After the tour you will receive a trip report.





<b>Day</b>	<b>Destination/areas</b>
Day 1 – 17/11	The tour starts at Indira Ghandi International Airport in Delhi. Drive to Chambal Safari Lodge, boat safari on Chambal River.
Day 2 – 18/11	Morning: Chambal River. Afternoon: Sarus Crane Reserve.
Day 3 – 19/11	Drive to Agra. Guided visits to Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri. Drive to Bharatpur.
Day 4 – 20/11	Keoladeo National Park / Bharatpur.
Day 5 – 21/11	Keoladeo National Park / Bharatpur.
Day 6 – 22/11	Keoladeo National Park / Bharatpur. Drive to Delhi. Stop along the way.
Day 7 – 23/11	Drive to Corbett National Park. Stops on the way. Kosi River if time permits.
Day 8 – 24/11	Corbett NP / Kosi River.
Day 9 – 25/11	Corbett NP / Kosi River.
Day 10 – 26/11	Drive to Pangot. Good time for stops.
Day 11 – 27/11	Pangot
Day 12 – 28/11	Pangot
Day 13 – 29/11	Drive to Delhi.
Day 14 – 30/11	Morning on your own. Transfer to the airport.

### **The tour and India in general.**

The above program describes what we will do each day. The program may be changed during the tour because of weather conditions, bird occurrence and/or other unexpected situations. All changes will be made in order to ensure the participants the best possible experience during the tour.

Travelling in India is always an experience in itself. India has the world's second largest population and a very high population density, especially in the fertile Ganges River valley where we will spend the first 6 days. This has a high impact on the traffic conditions so even short distances can be more time consuming than usually in Europe. On the other hand, India is the synonym of colourful people and a fascinating combination of old and new. At large tourist attractions there are always many people and like in the cities you should be aware of pick pockets. The people are generally very friendly and open to tourists but limited language skills can make communication difficult, especially in rural areas.

We will encounter very diverse landscapes and should expect many fine moments with nature and wildlife.

### **Flights to/from India.**

Please notice that air tickets are not included in the tour cost. You choose and book your own flights. The tour leaders may assist you finding flight tickets upon request. The tour leaders will fly with Air India directly from Copenhagen as mentioned above. SAS has good connection flights from/to Stockholm.

Please check with Fågelguidning AB for times and changes before booking your flight tickets.

The meeting point is in the arrival hall at Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi. The tour starts here, and it ends at the same airport. If you choose the same flights as the tour leaders, we can meet at Copenhagen Airport and the tour leaders can assist you with checking in if you wish. Please make an appointment in advance. This goes for the homebound flight as well. We expect to be at the meeting point at 08.30 am on Day 1 (17 November

2019) which is also the meeting time for all participants.

### **Luggage.**

On your flights to and from Delhi you are responsible for keeping the airline's rules. It is important that you check the rules for your flights as rules vary between companies. Please also be aware of the custom regulations.

We recommend packing binoculars, camera equipment, chargers, medications and other necessities in your hand luggage. Should your luggage be delayed you will not be missing your binoculars and other things you'll need every day.

The minibuses are reasonably spacious but we kindly ask you to consider the amount of luggage. It is a good idea to bring a smaller bag/back pack for the daily excursions.

### **Passport and visa.**

Please check the rules for entering India in good time before the tour. Pay attention to the expiration date of your passport as most countries demand the passport to be valid for some months after entering the country. Please also check the rules for visa as these vary according to your citizenship.

At present (January 2019) Danish and Swedish (and many other) citizens can apply for an e-visa from this homepage:

<https://indian-visaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html>

This may change. You are responsible for your own visa application but the tour leader may assist on the telephone if you wish.

### **Health.**

The Danish "Statens Serum Institut" gives their recommendations on vaccinations and Malaria prevention: [rejse.ssi.dk/rejse-vaccinationslande/i/indien#!4week](http://rejse.ssi.dk/rejse-vaccinationslande/i/indien#!4week)  
We recommend that you discuss this with your own doctor.

At the hotels the hygiene is good and the risk of infection is low.

Personal medicine is best kept in your hand luggage. It is always a good idea to bring a small "travel pharmacy" in case of headache, diarrhea, allergies etc. Please also consider the strong midday sun.

### **Hotels.**

All our hotels are of good standard:

17/11 - 19/11: [Chambal Safari Lodge.](#)

19/11 - 22/11: [Kadamb Kuni Resort.](#)

22/11 - 23/11: [Mapple Express Hotel.](#)

23/11 - 26/11: [Tiger Camp.](#)

26/11 - 29/11: [Ashoka's Naini Chalet.](#)

29/11 - 30/11: [Shanti Palace.](#)

Most hotels have wifi but the connections may be slow and unstable in some places.

### **Food and drinks.**

All meals are included in the tour cost. The hotels often serve from a buffet and the Indian food is usually very well prepared. In India many are vegetarians but in the hotels meat, often chicken is usually a part of the meal. Please tell us about any allergies or other food related things we should know in good time before the tour.

Drinks at hotels and restaurants are not included in the tour cost. Wine and beer is available in many hotels but not at all restaurants.

### **How will the pace be on this tour?**

The tour is categorised as A1 which means that knowledge of India's birdlife is not necessary for participating. New bird-watchers as well as the experienced birder will be able to have a high output from this tour. The pace will be moderate allowing us time to enjoy the birds. The tour leaders will point out birds and identify them as we see them. Read more about the categories here: <http://fagelguidning.se/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/F%C3%B6rklar-ing-kunskap-och-tempo.pdf>

### **Climate.**

In general November means sunny weather with pleasant temperatures. In the lowlands it can be hot in the middle of the day (max 30 degrees) with pleasant evenings (min 14 degrees). In the highlands it will be cooler but here as well the days are pleasant (max 16 degrees in Pangot) while mornings and evenings can be cold (min 6 degrees). November is one of the driest months of the year so the risk of rain is low. In Pangot we should be prepared for a more unstable climate but even here November is the driest month.

### **Clothing.**

In the nature it's always best to avoid bright colours. We should expect temperatures between 6 - 30 degrees so you will need a flexible clothing. Dress in several layers to take off as the temperature rises. Light summer clothes for the hot days and a sweater for the cool evenings. In the highlands the temperatures are lower so warmer clothes are needed here, especially for the cold mornings and evenings. We hope not to need rain gear but you'd better bring a rain jacket just in case. We recommend a hat/cap to protect you from the sun. Good walking shoes are necessary as we will be walking on uneven roads and tracks. This does not mean difficult terrain but unpaved and sometimes stony conditions. Some of our hotels have swimming pools so remember your swimsuit.

### **Other equipment.**

Binoculars are of course indispensable.

The tour leaders bring a telescope and will let everybody enjoy the birds as best possible. If you want to be certain of having access to a telescope all the time you are welcome to bring your own.

This is not a dedicated photography tour but there will be plenty of photo opportunities. In India hunting is rare so many birds are more confident than in Europe.

Bring a small bag for the daily walks. Field guide, water bottle and a snack is always good to have at hand.

### **Power supply.**

The electric supply in India is 230 Volts as in Europe. We recommend that you bring an adapter for Indian plugs. Power failures are frequent in some areas. A power bank to charge your phone may be a good idea.

### **Litterature.**

Several field guides cover all the birds of India.

The tour leaders will bring "Birds of the Indian Subcontinent" by Grimmett, Inskipp and Inskipp and "A Field Guide to the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent" by Kazmierczak and van Perlo.

Travel guides to India are also well represented on the market.



### **Bird list and trip report.**

You will receive a bird list on the first day. Every day we will go through the list and note the species we have seen. The tour leaders will write a trip report and send it to you after the trip.

### **Our Tour leaders and guides.**

Mads Elley and Tina Elley have done many birding trips around the world. Together they have visited all 7 continents for bird watching. Both have been birders for more than 40 years. They form an excellent team with a large knowledge of birds, great experience in planning and doing birding trips and are very good at making a group work well together. Dalveer Singh is an independent guide specializing in birding tours in India. He is one of India's leading experts in the field. Mads and Tina met him in India in 2011 and know him as a very competent birding guide and a very sympathetic person.

### **Other information.**

Time zone: The time zone in India is GMT +5½. This means the time is 4½ hours ahead of central Europe (Denmark and Sweden) and 5½ hours ahead of Great Britain.

Travel insurance: You must have a valid travel insurance covering you in India to participate in tours arranged by Fågelguidning AB. Many have this insurance along with their basic insurances. Ask your insurance company about how you are covered.

The danish yellow (national) and blue (European) cards are not valid in India.

### **Travel conditions**

Further information about the terms of this trip can be found here:

<http://fagelguidning.se/resevillkor-2/>

### **Contact information to Fågelguidning AB.**

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Please don't hesitate to contact us if you need further information.

We'll see you!

Fågelguidning AB, Mads & Tina!



Mads and Tina Elley your tour leaders.

**Fågelguidning**  
- Se Upp! 