



HIGHLIGHTS

An extended bird watching trip in an area that has about 600 species, including time at Camp Forktail Creek, all birding spots in and around Corbett Tiger Reserve and then a few days for Himalayan species at Mangoli valley, Nainital, Pangot & Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary.

The trip involves many hikes, days in a jeep on forest tracks, a 2-hr elephant ride; luxurious meals and stay at Camp, Dhikala FRH and small birding lodges at Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary and Nainital/ Pangot.



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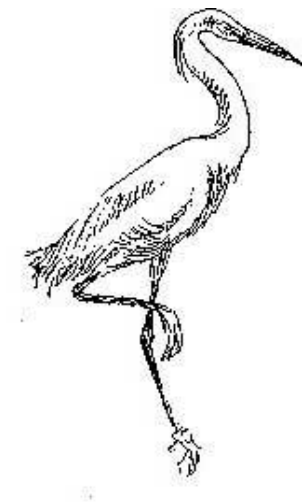
BEST TIME

Mid-November to March



OUTLINE ITINERARY

- Day 1 Arrive into the airport at Delhi and transfer to a Homestay. Night in Delhi.
- Day 2 Depart for Camp by road. Afternoon birding around Camp. Night in Camp.
- Day 3 Camp to Lohachaur range. Full day of bird watching in and around Lohachaur. Night in Camp.
- Day 4 Morning game drive at Bijrani. Afternoon birding on the banks of the Kosi River. Night in Camp. .
- Day 5 Full day of birding in the forests around Camp. Night in Camp.
- Day 6 Camp to Dhikala range. Full day in and around Dhikala. Night in a room at Dhikala FRH complex.
- Day 7 Full day game drive at the Dhikala range with a try for an elephant ride. Night in Dhikala.
- Day 8 Full day in and around the Dhikala range. Return to Camp by evening. Night in Camp.
- Day 9 Full Day birding on the banks of the Kosi River. Night in Camp.
- Day 10 Camp to Nainital. Birding along the way in Mangoli Valley, Nainital & Pangot. Night in a small birding lodge in Pangot or Nainital.
- Day 11 Full day birding in Sattal, Nainital & Pangot. Night in a small birding lodge in Pangot or Nainital.
- Day 12 Nainital to Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary (BWS). Birding around Binsar. Night in a small birding lodge in BWS.
- Day 13 Full day birding in and around BWS. Night in a small birding lodge in BWS.
- Day 14 Morning birding in Binsar. Post lunch depart for Kathgodam railway station to board the overnight train to Delhi.
- Day 15 Early morning arrive into Delhi. Transfer to the Homestay and then depart for the airport to board your flight back home.



PLAN WOULD INCLUDE

- Arrival transfer from the airport in Delhi to place of stay in Delhi.
- Transfer by AC car from Delhi to Camp.
- Accommodation at all places of stay as mentioned in the plan above.
- Meals from breakfast on Day 2 till breakfast on Day 15, aerated drinks, mineral or filtered drinking water, tea/ coffee.
- Escorted hikes with our resident naturalist into the forests and other birding areas throughout the trip and wherever required.
- One elephant ride (2-hour each) while inside the National Park (subject to availability as it cannot be booked in advance).
- A dedicated jeep with a driver and a naturalist for all the game drives and excursions, as mentioned in the plan outlined above.
- All relevant entries fees and permits (charges levied by the forest department are subject to change without prior notice)

- Train tickets from Kathgodam to Delhi on departure.
- Transfer from Delhi railway station to Homestay and then to the airport on Day 15.

EXTRA EXPENSES

Expenses of personal nature such as beverages (except those mentioned above) laundry, telephone calls, internet, souvenirs and tips.

INFORMATION ON FOOD AND ACCOMMODATION

Camp Forktail Creek is a small jungle camp located on the north-eastern periphery of Corbett Tiger Reserve, India (23 kms from the town of Ramnagar). It is set amidst dense Sal forests and accommodation is in locally handcrafted ensuite mud huts. Elaborate and sumptuous home-cooked meals accompany each trip with enjoyable, courteous and knowledgeable naturalists, who have been in the region most of their lives.

Camp is in a village which does not have electricity but ample lighting is provided with solar powered lamps and lanterns and candles.



Indian Homestay is a small two-room bed and breakfast in south Delhi, close to the airport owned and managed by a delightfully hospitable lady. It is located in a posh residential colony, close to some of south Delhi's popular markets.

Lohachaur Forest Rest House is a charming 2-room bungalow, built in the early 1900's with architecture typical to the smaller forest bungalows made in those days; 2 ensuite bedrooms with a central dining area and a deep verandah running all along the front of the structure. Its scenic location, with a panoramic view of the Mandal River, is in the midst of a moist, fern laden subtropical forest which the northern range of the Tiger Reserve is famous for. The rich landscape in the valleys of Mandal and Ramganga rivers make this a chosen spot for bird watching.

Entry into this range is from Durgadevi Gate, about 5 kms from Camp. The forest rest house is 17kms from this gate.



Over the last few years each place of stay within the Tiger Reserve, has been tastefully restored, making it a very pleasant stay. In addition, the team from Camp inspects and readies each room prior to the arrival of our guests. Essential toiletries, bed and bath linen are taken from Camp and replaced for the duration of your stay. Meals at Dhikala are at the restaurant in the complex which serves wholesome clean vegetarian food and at Lohachaur FRH a team from Camp would accompany your visit and help with hot meals right on site!

Dhikala Forest Rest House Complex is the largest tourist rest house complex within Corbett Tiger Reserve. It stands atop the left bank of Ramganga River overlooking the expansive grasslands called '*chaurs*' further below which is the huge Ramganga reservoir, the heart of Corbett.

The grasslands of Dhikala are home to a small but endangered population of Hog Deer.

Being the largest complex, accommodation varies from simple dormitory bunk beds to more comfortable rooms to the old heritage building in middle of the complex called the "Old FRH".



Mountain Quail Lodge is a small birding lodge in Pangot, at 6500 ft located on a hillside close to a clear running stream, surrounded by dense oak and rhododendron forests. The lodge faces jungle clad hills through which can be glimpsed the high Himalayas and further below the land falls away to the plains providing a dramatic backdrop for the setting sun. Accommodation in the lodge consists of 3 comfortable 'cottage style' suites. Each suite has a bedroom and bathroom, sitting room as well as a large outdoor patio. There is plenty of space to lie back, relax, and just enjoy the surroundings! The meals are a selection of Indian and Continental cuisine, including some special dishes by local Kumaoni chefs. Drinking water is piped from a mountain spring and filtered.

Binsar Retreat, Binsar is located at a height of 7500ft on the south west flank of Binsar, deep in the core area of Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary (it is part of one of the six private estates within the Sanctuary) with superb views of snow capped Himalayan peaks and the densely forested valleys, ridges and ravines of Binsar. There are innumerable walk trails leading out of the Retreat through dense oak, rhododendron and pine forests that are alive with bird sounds with an occasional call from a barking deer or if lucky the sawing of a leopard.



The Retreat comprises of five luxury tents and three rooms each with wooden floors, an attached bath (with running cold water & hot water provided on request) and a private verandah.

Meals at the Retreat are simple and a wholesome mix of Indian or Continental cuisine.

INTRODUCTION TO PLACES OF VISIT

Corbett Tiger Reserve is India's first and one of her finest Tiger Reserves. It supports a strong historical background, which can be traced to the early 1800's when its forests were private property of the rulers of the princely state of Tehri Garhwal.

Nestling in the foothills of the mighty Himalayas, Corbett Tiger Reserve lies mainly in the hilly districts of Nainital, Almora and Pauri Garhwal. At present the Tiger Reserve covers an area of 1318.54 sq km and includes within it Corbett National Park (520.82 sq km) Sonanadi Wildlife Sanctuary (301.18 sq km) and Reserve Forest (496.54 sq km)



Three rivers feed Corbett Tiger Reserve - Ramganga, which flows in from the northeast and meanders through the Park to form the reservoir at Dhikala. It is then dammed at Kalagarh, in the southwest; Sonanadi, a tributary of Ramganga River flows in from the northwest; Palain, another tributary of Ramganga flows in from the north.

Besides these, Mandal River flows in through the northeast, forming a portion of the northeastern boundary and merging with the Ramganga River at Domunda. The Kosi River forms the eastern boundary of the reserve but does not enter the park at any point.

Corbett Tiger Reserve has three distinct topographic zones within it...

-the Shivaliks in the north -the Bhabar tract of the Patlidun valley and -the swampy Terai in the south

The reserve has an elevation ranging from 400m to 1200m, thus having a rich diversity of flora, fauna and habitats.



The most dominant tree in these mixed deciduous forests is Sal (*Shoera robusta*); it accounts for about 73% of the floral coverage. The valleys thrive with grassland locally called 'chaurs' and riverine forests. About 110 species of trees, 51 species of shrubs and 33 species of grasses and bamboo are listed in Corbett.

Corbett also boasts of a rich variety of faunal species. About 50 species of mammals, about 600 species of birds, 26 species of reptiles, 7 species of amphibians and many insect species are found in the reserve.



Besides, being home to the Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris*), Corbett is also the northern most tract of habitat for the Asiatic Elephant (*Elephas maximus*) and one can see large herds in the grasslands during the summer months.

Other mammals of the reserve include the Leopard (*Panthera pardus*), Jungle Cat (*Felis chaus*), Leopard Cat (*Felis bengalensis*), 4 kinds of deer - Sambar (*Cervus unicolor*), Hog Deer (*Axis porcinus*), Spotted Deer (*Axis axis*), Barking Deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*), Nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*), Rhesus Monkey (*Macaca mulatta*) & Langur Monkey (*Presbytis entellus*), Ghoral or Mountain Goat (*Nemorhaedus goral*), Wild boar (*Sus scrofa*), Sloth Bear (*Melursus ursinus*), Indian Grey Mongoose (*Herpestes edwardsi*), Small Indian Civet (*Viverricula indica*), Indian Crested Porcupine (*Hystrix indica*), Asiatic Jackal (*Canis aureus*), Yellow-throated Marten (*Martes flavigula*) etc.

There have also been rare sightings of Serow (*Capricornis sumatraensis*) and the Himalayan Black Bear (*Selenarctos thibetanus*).

The Mugger or the fresh water Crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*), Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*), Common Otter (*Lutra lutra monticola*), Smooth-coated Otter (*Lutra perspicillata*), Small-clawed Otter (*Aonyx cinerea*), turtles and a variety of fishes; Golden Masheer (*Barbus Tor putitora*), Goonch, Trout, etc are seen in and around the Ramganga River.



Reptile species include Monitor Lizard or the Bengal Monitor (*Varanus bengalensis*), King Cobra (*Ophiophagus Hannah*), Indian Rock Python (*Python molurus*), Indian Trinket Snake (*Elaphe Helena*), Common Indian Krait (*Bungarus caeruleus*), Spectacled or Indian Cobra (*Naja naja*)...



Corbett is also a bird watchers paradise with a count of about 600 species (almost 50% of the total count for the Indian Subcontinent) and some of the avian attractions include a variety of Woodpeckers, Kingfishers, Hornbills, Parakeets, Shrikes, Barbets, Drongos, Minivets, Storks, Owls, Pheasants, Eagles, Vultures, Harriers...

Please download the 'bird checklist' from our website for the entire list.

Corbett Tiger Reserve has three main tourist zones.

One is called the **Bijrani Range**, entry is through Amdanda Gate. Though this is a much smaller range it is preferred for day-visits and has many criss-cross tracks, making wildlife tracking a joy. One could do a game drive here in the morning or afternoon or the whole day. One could also stay overnight at the Bijrani forest rest house (FRH) and Malani FRH- both in this zone. Two-hour elephant rides are possible in Bijrani in the morning or afternoon but they are subject to availability and cannot be booked in advance. **This zone is open from mid-October to end June.**

UPPER HIMALAYAS

A birding trip to northern India is not complete without a taste of the western Himalayan avifauna. The hill station of **Nainital** in the Kumaon hills is ideal, surrounded by forests with many montane specialties. Nainital lies at 1940m and the surrounding peaks reach over 2600m. Many interesting birds are found in the town's gardens and parks as well as in forests on adjacent hillsides.

Mangoli Valley which is located on the drive from Camp to Nainital/ Pangot is at a lower elevation than Nainital and has a good number of altitudinal and northern migrants. This is an area of excellent open woodland, streamside vegetation and fields.



The other range, a much larger range, is collectively referred to as **Dhikala**. Entry here is through Dhangari gate and is restricted to those who have a permit to stay overnight in any one of the forest rest house's within this section of the Park, namely, Sultan, Gairal, Sarpduli, Khinnanauli, Dhikala or Kanda. Each of these rest houses has a superb location- Dhikala taking the cake, being located by the reservoir of the Ramganga River which in turn is surrounded by vast grasslands. Apart from being beautiful, it's great for wildlife sighting. Two-hour elephant rides are possible at some of the rest houses in the morning or afternoon but they are subject to availability and cannot be booked in advance. **This zone is open from mid-November to mid-June.**

The third, lesser known range is **Lohachaur** with excellent fern laden patches and moist sub tropical jungles. Entry here is through Durgadevi gate. This is the best zone for birding. This is also the zone where multi-day elephant safaris are permitted by the forest department. Lohachaur and Kanda are the two bungalows accessible in this zone, where overnight stays are possible. **This zone is open from mid-November to mid-June.**



Pangot is a small village, 15kms from the hill station of Nainital and is separated from the town by a mountainous ridge. The entire drive is through the forested areas of Cheena Peak Range via Snow View Point and Kilbury- extremely good habitat for excellent birding. One can see a variety of Himalayan species along the way such as Lammergeier, Himalayan Griffon, Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Chir Pheasant and a variety of thrushes etc.

Almost 150 bird species have been recorded at Pangot and the surrounding areas. The numerous perennial & seasonal creeks are home to an amazing variety of flora and fauna including the Leopards, Yellow-throated Martins, Himalayan Palm Civet, Ghoral, Barking Deer, Sambhar etc

Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary is situated in the heart of Kumaon, 30 kms north east of Almora town in the state of Uttarakhand in northern India. It comprises of about 50 sq. km. of protected area on a mountain rising to 8000 ft with valleys rich with dense oak, rhododendron and pine forests.

On clear winter days, Binsar offers stunning views of the entire chain of Himalayan peaks from Yamunotri in Garhwal to Mt. Nampa in Nepal, dominated by the scared peak of Nanda Devi flanked by her sentinels Trishul and Nanda Kot. The grandeur of the views is not all that is special about Binsar. Its forests, abundant in fauna and flora and steeped in myths and legends dating from the mythological Saptrishis (seven saints after whom a constellation is named) to the British rulers and the Nehru family who owned an estate in Binsar, captivate the imagination and senses with the feeling of unspoilt wilderness at its best. The silence of jungle is broken only by the sounds of animals and birds while oak trees more than a hundred years of age, bear silent witness.

The Sanctuary is home to Rhesus Macaque, Common Langur, Leopard, Leopard Cat, Jungle Cat, Large Indian Civet, Himalayan Palm Civet, Jackal, Red Fox, Black Bear, Yellow-throated Martin, Himalayan Weasel, Serow, Ghoral, Barking Deer, Sambar Deer, Wild Boar, Porcupine, Hare, Flying Squirrel and over 150 bird species.



DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive into Delhi

Arrive into the international airport at Delhi- a driver would assist with transfer to the Homestay where you would spend the night.

Day 2: Delhi to Camp Forktail Creek

After an early breakfast, depart by road for Camp Forktail Creek. Depending on the time of departure from Delhi, you would be in Camp by lunch or later. It is a drive of 7 hours.

Spend the afternoon exploring the surrounding forest and streams for species like Great Hornbill, Chestnut Headed and Grey Bellied Tesia, Great Slaty Woodpecker, Spotted Forktail, Long Billed Thrush, Slaty Backed Forktail, Brown Fish Owl, Collared Falconet, Snowy Browed Flycatcher, Red Billed Leothrix and Scaly breasted Wren Babbler.



Back to camp by sundown for campfire and dinner, which is leisurely and personal. Along with the excellent cuisine, your guide and hosts will amuse and amaze you with their stories of exciting experiences. Then it is time to relax once again and enjoy carefree chatter by the fireside whilst feasting on the unique sounds and smells that your exclusive location offers, before retiring to bed in your mud hut.

Day 3: Full day of birding in the Lohachaur zone.

After an early breakfast with some birding in Camp we depart for Lohachaur- the best zone for birding within the reserve, with the added advantage of being able to walk in it, with jeep support.

A full day of challenging birding in the Mandal Range of the Corbett Tiger Reserve. Species to look out for include Long Tailed Broadbill, Little Forktail, Grey Headed Fish Eagle, Maroon Oriole, Rufous Gorgeed Flycatcher, Slaty Blue Flycatcher, Silver Eared Mesia , Lesser Racquet Tailed Drongo, Black Chinned Yuhina, White Crested Laughing Thrush, Small Niltava, Rufous Bellied Niltava, Bar Tailed Treecreeper and Chestnut Bellied and Velvet Fronted Nuthatch.

We would be amidst some excellent patches of fern laden, moist sub tropical jungle and would encounter a variety of wildlife and birds.

Return to Camp by sundown for tea. After a quick wash, join your hosts by the campfire for drinks and snacks and resume the discussions leftover from the previous night. For those of you weary from the long day, dinner would be ready under the Thatch after which you could settle into your comfortable beds.





Day 4: Morning game drive into Bijrani and afternoon by the banks of Kosi.

We leave the Camp early in the morning for a game drive into the Bijrani range of Corbett National Park to search for the elusive Bengal Tiger. While there we may even spot the Brown Headed Barbet, Black Stork, Oriental Pied Hornbill, Little Pied Flycatcher, Changeable Hawk Eagle, Shikra....

We would be back in Camp by lunch and then an afternoon on the banks of the Kosi River to try and spot the Ibisbill, Wall Creeper and Great Thick Knee.

Back to Camp by late evening. Night in Camp.

Day 5: Birding in and around Camp

A full day to bird in and around Camp. The day starts early in the mixed deciduous forests around Camp and then a visit to the Bhakrakot village which could reap birds like the Fire Tailed Sunbird, Blue Throat, Scarlet Minivet, Black Hooded Oriole, Black Crested Bulbul, Zitting Cisticola, Striated Prinia, Crested Treeswift, Eurasian Hobby, Collared Falconet and Rufous Bellied Eagle.

An afternoon by the stream for Kingfishers (you might find all recorded species right here!), Forktails, Brown and Tawny Fish Owl.

Back to Camp by late evening. Night in Camp.

The next day we head for 'Dhikala Range' in the heart of the National Park for two nights.

Day 6 & 7: Dhikala FRH

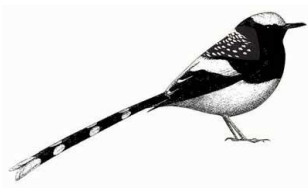
Dhikala is the largest tourist centre of Corbett National Park. So it also has many restrictions and walking is prohibited in this zone except in designated areas. Our stay for two nights in Dhikala would involve game drives to observe the wildlife of the area, an elephant ride to probe into the thick jungles and short walks wherever possible. Birding in Dhikala is quite an attraction and species that can be observed here include Lesser Fish Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Cinereous Vulture, Red Headed Vulture, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Pied Harrier, Black Francolin, Tawny Pipit, Oriental Pied Hornbill, Slaty Headed Parakeet, Emerald Dove and Jungle Bush Quail.

Both nights in a room at Dhikala Forest Rest House complex.



Day 8: Camp Forktail Creek (return from Dhikala)

Return to Camp Forktail Creek by late evening. Around camp you might hear the Spot bellied Eagle Owl at night or if lucky the sawing of a leopard. Overnight at Camp.



Day 9: Camp Forktail Creek (Kosi, Kumeria)

A full day by the banks of Kosi River. We would start early for the Ibisbill and work our way upstream till Kumeria. Species to look out for would be Tawny and Brown Fish Owl, Little and Spotted Forktail, Pallas Fish Eagle, Silver Eared Mesia, Brown Dipper, Kingfishers, Crimson Sunbird...

Back to Camp for your last night here. Night in Camp.

Day 10 & 11: Nainital/ Pangot region

Depart from Camp after breakfast- our travels today would take us to Nainital and areas around- a drive of 4 hours. The drive in itself involves good birding.

For the next two and a half days we bird around Pangot, Nainital and the Mangoli valley. The excursions would be by jeep and a great many walks.

Species to look out for are Red-billed Blue Magpies, Black-headed Jays, Bronzed Drongo, Mountain Bulbul, Blue-winged Minla, Pink-browed Rosefinch, Spot-winged Grosbeaks, Blue-fronted Redstart, Scarlet Finch, Green-Backed Tit, Yellow-Browed Tit, Russet Sparrow, Great Barbet, Grey-Backed Shrike, Eurasian Jay, Mistle Thrush, Orange-Flanked Bush Robin, White-Rumped Shama, Rusty-Checked Scimitar Babbler, Streak-Breasted Scimitar Babbler, Chestnut Thrush, Rufous-Bellied Niltava, Mrs Gould's Sunbird, Lammergier, Himalayan Griffon, Collared Owlet, Chestnut-Eared Bunting, Small Niltava and Slaty-Blue Flycatcher.

Overnight in a small lodge at Nainital or Pangot.

Day 12 & 13: Binsar and around

Last morning of birding around our place of stay in Nanital or Pangot and then depart for Binsar which has a Wildlife Sanctuary that is spread over 46 sq km of pine, oak and rhododendron forests. It is situated at an altitude varying 900 to 2500m with an average height of 2412 mts. There is a view point offering a view of the 300-kilometre stretch of famous Himalayan peaks that include the Kedarnath, Trishul, Nanda Devi, Nanda Kot and Panchchuli.

Binsar is rich in its flora and fauna and has dense oak forests with hanging mosses and many other species of wild flowers.

We would spend the next three days here.

Species to look for would be the Great Barbet, Blue Whistling Thrush, Eurasian Jay, Fire-tailed and Green-tailed Sunbirds, Scaly Breasted Wren-babbler, Black Bulbul, Black Capped Sibia, Black Eagle, King Vulture, Black Breasted Sunbird, Blue Throated Barbet, Plain Backed Thrush, Striated Laughing Thrush, Chestnut-tailed Minla, Common Wood Pigeon, Slaty-headed Parakeet, Common Green Magpie, Dark-sided Thrush, Black-throated Thrush, Himalayan Woodpecker, White-tailed Nuthatch, Blue-capped Redstart, Black-naped and brown crested Tit, Booted Hawk Eagle, Broad Billed Roller, Green, Gold and Rose Finch, Brown-fronted Woodpecker, Hill Pigeon, Mountain Bulbul, Rufous-naped Tit and Upland Pipit. In winter you may be lucky to spot Snow Partridge and Snow Pigeon.

**Day 14: Around Binsar in the morning and then an overnight train to Delhi.**

A full day of birding in and around the forests of Binsar and then post lunch depart for Kathgodam Rly Stn for the overnight train to Delhi.

It departs at 2040 hrs and you would be in Delhi at 0500 hrs the next day.

**Day 15: In Delhi/ Depart for onward journey...**

You would arrive in Old Delhi Railway Station by 0500 hrs. A car would transfer you to a bed and breakfast where you could relax for the night or for a few hours before your flight back home.

