

TRACKS SAFARIS

WE GET YOU CLOSER



14 NIGHT SNOW LEOPARDS AND TIGERS!
Ladakh and Tadoba



Wildlife in the Upper Himalayas

Ladakh which is part of Jammu & Kashmir is home to exceptional wildlife. This diversity is a result of the unique landscape and the weather conditions in the region. The fauna of Ladakh has much in common with that of Central Asia in general and that of the Tibetan Plateau in particular.

Exceptions to this are the birds, many of which migrate from the warmer parts of India to spend the summer in Ladakh. For such an arid area, Ladakh has a great diversity of birds — a total of 225 species have been recorded. Many species of finches, robins, redstarts and the hoopoe are common in summer. The brown-headed gull is seen in summer on the river Indus and on some lakes of the Changthang. Resident water-birds include the Brahminy duck and the bar-headed goose. The black-necked crane, a rare species found scattered in the Tibetan plateau, is also found in parts of Ladakh. Other birds include the raven, Eurasian magpie, red-billed chough, Tibetan snowcock, and chukar. The lammergeyer and the golden eagle are common raptors here.

Some key mammals to look out for in the region are the snow leopard, brown bear, Tibetan wolf, Eurasian lynx, weasels, Tibetan fox, ibex, blue sheep and yak to name a few.

During the time of this expedition in winter key wildlife to look for in are as follows:

Mammals: Brown Bear, Snow Leopard, Eurasian Lynx, Pallas Cat, Himalayan Wolf, Himalayan Fox, Ibex, Ladakh Uriel, Blue Sheep, Weasel, Marmot and the Woolly Hare.

Birds: Golden Eagle, Lammergeier, Yellow-billed Chough, Red-billed Chough, Eurasian Magpie, Himalayan Snowcock, Chukar Partridge, White-capped Redstart, Horned Lark, Alpine Accentor, Robin Accentor and Ibis Bill.



Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve

The Tadoba Andheri Tiger Reserve is the second largest park in Maharashtra with a core area of 625 sq. km and a bigger buffer zone of 1102 sq. km. The park derives its name from the legend - Taru who was a village chief who was killed in a mythological encounter with a tiger. A shrine dedicated to the God Taru now exists beneath a huge tree, on the banks of the Tadoba Lake. 'Andhari' is derives from the name of a river with the same name.

The park today is one of the best places to see the Bengal Tiger in its natural habitat. Teak is the predominant tree species. Other deciduous trees include Ain (crocodile bark), Bija, Dhauda, Haldu, Salai, Semal and Tendu. Beheda, Hirda, Karaya gum, and Mahua are other common species.

Apart from the wildcats, other wildlife that you will find in the region are:

Mammals: Sloth Bear, Dhole (Asiatic wild dog), Gaur (Indian bison), Flying Squirrel, Golden Jackal, Indian Fox and if lucky you might see the Indian Pangolin and the Honey Badger

Birds: Indian Peafowl, Paradise Flycatcher, Golden Oriole, Indian Pitta, 4-5 species of Woodpeckers, 3-4 species of Kingfishers, Crested Serpent Eagle, Changeable Hawk Eagle along with 250 other species of birds.

Reptiles: Marsh Crocodile, Indian Rock Monitor, Rock Agama, Chameleon, Fan-throated Lizard, Russell's Viper, Indian Rock Python, Spectacled Cobra and many more.



DAY ONE

On arrival into Delhi International Airport you will be met and transferred to your airport hotel for check-in (Check-in 1400 hrs). Rest of the day is at leisure.

Overnight in Delhi at The Pride, Aerocity on a bed and breakfast basis

DAY TWO

After breakfast you will transfer back to the airport and take a flight to Leh in Ladakh district. Ladakh is the largest district in the country and part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Leh was the capital of the Himalayan kingdom of Ladakh, the seat of which was in the Leh Palace, the former mansion of the royal family of Ladakh, built in the same style and about the same time as the Potala Palace in Tibet - the chief residence of the Dalai Lama until the 14th Dalai Lama fled to Dharamshala, India.

Since the city of Leh lies at an altitude of 11,562ft above sea level, one needs to acclimatise to the high altitude. The region is a high-altitude desert and thus a lack of trees also contributes to low oxygen levels which the body needs to adapt to. Thus days 2 and most part of day 3 are at leisure in order to **ACCLIMATISE**.

Overnight will be at The Grand Dragon Hotel, Leh (or similar) on full board

DAY THREE

Spend the day acclimatising. Should you feel up to it we will organize local sightseeing around Leh. This normally includes a visit to Leh market, Shanti Stupa and a visit to a Buddhist monastery. In the evening we have planned an interaction at the hotel with the Snow Leopard Conservancy, during which one can learn about the big cat and other wildlife of the region, the landscape, people that inhabit the landscape and the various challenges faced by wildlife of the region along with the conservation work that is taking place in the region to protect the wildlife

Overnight will be at The Grand Dragon Hotel, Leh (or similar) on full board

DAY FOUR

Acclimatised and well rested this morning we make our way to Ulley in search of the elusive snow leopard. Ulley is actually not even a village, it is a set of 5-7 families that live amongst Himalayan wilderness. A few years ago, one of the families realized the importance of wildlife that was all around them and started promoting wildlife travel to the region to showcase the elusive grey ghost. The drive to Ulley is about 2.5hrs, however quite scenic. You should arrive at Ulley by noon.

After lunch explore the surrounding area in search of the snow leopard. The region is also home to Wolf, Himalayan Fox, Ibex, Ladakh Uriel, Golden Eagle and Lammergeiers.

Overnight will be at Snow Leopard Lodge – a homestay – on full board

DAY FIVE

Continue exploring the valleys and mountains around Ulley in search of wildlife. Please note the idea is not trekking but searching for wildlife so all travel happens at the pace you will be comfortable with. The lodge will provide trackers and naturalists to accompany you on these excursions. All meals will be at the lodge unless you decide to trek the whole day – in which case a packed meal can be carried with the team.

Overnight will be at Snow Leopard Lodge – a homestay – on full board



DAYS SIX, SEVEN AND EIGHT

Our explorations continue for three more days. In the evenings one can enjoy interactions with the naturalists and trackers or enjoy a wildlife documentary on the wildlife diversity of the Indian Subcontinent.

Overnight will be at Snow Leopard Lodge – a homestay – on full board

DAY NINE

After spending the morning searching for the snow leopard, after lunch we make our way back to Leh. Hopefully by now you have managed to see the wildlife you came to see and experienced the untouched landscape that they call home. The evening is at leisure.

Overnight will be at The Grand Dragon Hotel, Leh (or similar) on full board

DAY TEN

This morning you take a flight back to Delhi. You have the day at leisure. Alternately you can explore the city yourself or we would be happy to arrange a tour to suit your interests – please ask!

Overnight will be at The Pride, Aerocity, Delhi on a bed and breakfast basis

DAY ELEVEN

This morning transfer to the airport and catch your flight for Nagpur. On arrival in Nagpur, you will be transferred to Tadoba National Park. The Tadoba Andheri Tiger Reserve is the second largest park in Maharashtra with a core area of 625 sq. km and a bigger buffer zone of 1102 sq. km.

Overnight stay will be at Bamboo Forest Lodge on a full board basis



DAY TWELVE

The park derives its name from the legend - Taru who was a village chief who was killed in a mythological encounter with a tiger. A shrine dedicated to the God Taru now exists beneath a huge tree, on the banks of the Tadoba Lake. 'Andhari' is derived from the name of a river with the same name.

Morning and Evening Safaris are included.

Overnight stay will be at Bamboo Forest Lodge.

DAY THIRTEEN

The park today is one of the best places to see the Bengal Tiger in its natural habitat. Teak is the predominant tree species. Other deciduous trees include Ain (crocodile bark), Bija, Dhauda, Haldu, Salai, Semal and Tendu. Beheda, Hirda, Karaya gum, and Mahua are other common species. Morning and Evening Safaris are included.

Overnight stay will be at Bamboo Forest Lodge.

DAY FOURTEEN

Today you will depart by road for Nagpur airport to board your flight for Delhi. On arrival you will be met and transferred to your airport hotel for one night.

Overnight will be at The Pride, Aerocity, Delhi

DAY FIFTEEN

Transfer to International Airport and fly back to home.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

Best time to travel: The best time to look for the snow leopard is December through to March when it is the coldest. The more snow fall there is the better it is as they camouflage well with the rock. Snow Leopards are not white in colour rather they are slate coloured as the rock so they stand out against the snow. Also it is easier to track them as they leave behind tracks in the snow for us to follow them.

Searching for Wildlife: All exploration is done on foot therefore one needs to be carrying clothing for such terrain and weather.

Clothing: It is ideal to wear layers as opposed to wearing one heavy piece of clothing as one can keep adding or removing layers. The sun can be harsh so one can remove a layer and if cloud cover comes in the temperature can dip very quickly so layers need to be added. Some things that you should consider packing are:

- Gloves
- Woollen caps / Balaclava
- Woollen & water-proof socks as one might have to trek through snow.
- Warm inners.
- Shoes – bring comfortable, water-proof and shoes that protects your feet from extreme temperatures.
- Sunglasses – the sun is bright and if there is snow the glare can cause sun-blindness.
- Sun-screen, lip balm and moisturizers are quite helpful.
- Hot-water bottles are quite handy.
- Toiletries: Please do carry your own toiletries as you will be staying in very basic accommodations. Only Grand Dragon in Leh and your Delhi hotel will provide towels and toiletries.

- Sleeping bags – although not a part of clothing, this is something that you may want to consider. As you feel much colder than you usually would in other developed destinations as there is not central heating anywhere. Although blankets and quilts will be provided, sometime guests prefer to carry their own



Other things you may want to pack:

Camera Gear:

- Wide angle lenses will be very handy. You will have many opportunities to capture the stunning Himalayan landscapes.
- Long focal lengths: Since wildlife in the region is usually quite a distance away from you, please do carry the longest focal lengths that you can. Super-zoom point & shoot cameras too are great in the region. The area has no tree cover thus the wildlife sees you coming from very far away.
- Tripods/Monopods: These are necessary since you will be using long focal lengths thus stabilization will be required.
- Carry extra batteries. Cold weather drains the batteries much quicker and in these remote regions you will not find camera batteries.
- Carry extra memory cards.
- Although the team at snow leopard lodge and brown bear lodge do carry a wildlife scope, it is best to carry a pair of binoculars which will help you scan the rock outcrops – a favourite place for snow leopards.

Medicine: Do carry any medication advised by your doctor be it for a specific illness or general medication. We usually carry a first-aid kit with us which usually includes:

- AMS
 - Oxygen cylinder / cans
 - Diamox
 - Instrument to check SpO2 levels
- Paracetamol

- Imodium
- Medicine for motion sickness
- Domstal
- Medicine for pain relief – Voveran – tablet & spray along with a crepe bandage. Leh city has hospitals that can address more serious medical problems.



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