

TRACKS SAFARIS

WE GET YOU CLOSER



Wildcats of Western India

Destinations: Mumbai, Udaipur, Bera, Siana, Dasada, Velavadar, Gir & Bhuj



DAY ONE

Arrive at Mumbai International airport. Connect on to your domestic flight to Udaipur. On arrival you will be met and transferred to Bera Safari lodge.

Rajasthan has been the abode of many birds and mammals. Many efforts have been put in to conserve the flora and fauna of this desert state of India. One of them - Jawai Conservation Reserve was established in the year 2013. This project was proposed to promote ecotourism and safeguard the wellbeing of flora & fauna in this area. Ancient Rocks of the pre-Cambrian period, represents Bera in the Aravalli Range which runs diagonally across the state, The southern part of the range is formed by granite and rise to their highest summit Mt Abu (1722 msl) Bera region lies between Kumbalgarh National Park and Mt Abu Sanctuary, this area has granite hills, These large granite formation are scattered with Anogeissus scrub,

and rocky dry river beds the kopjes are scattered with religious shrines and temples. The leopards of Bera have accepted these as a part of their habitat and it is the most incredible sight to see villagers at prayer and leopards sitting quite calmly and watching the ceremonies. Traditionally the area was maintained for grazing livestock and farming, with the creation of watering holes and feeding stations for wildlife.



A healthy population of 50+ Leopards is there in Bera/Jawai Region, and it's one of the few places on earth where among human settlements leopards thrive. The area is Inhabited by Rabari Tribe (The Shepherds/Herdsman) and where there is prey predators follow.

Some of the other animals found in the area are - Caracal (rare sight), Chinkara, Desert Cat, Indian Wolf, Sloth Bear, Pythons, Jackal, Jungle Cat, Striped Hyena, Rusty-spotted Cat and the Blue Bulls.

There are no activities planned for this evening so that the guests can recover from the long travel
Overnight will be at Bera Safari Lodge.

DAYS TWO AND THREE

The next two days are spent looking for wildlife in the mornings and evenings. During the day explore the villages and learn about the people who inhabit this landscape.

Overnight will be at Bera Safari Lodge

DAY FOUR

This morning after your safari and breakfast, you will check-out and will transfer by road to Siana.

Siana at one time was known for its prolific Leopard sightings and a popular stopover for travellers looking to do birding. The region boasts of about 200 species of birds and one may also find Desert Cat, Jungle Cat, and Rusty-spotted Cat. Although Caracal have been caught on camera traps there has been no consistency in sighting these. Like Bera it is a combination of bare rocks & sparse vegetation makes it ideal for some

wonderful Leopard sightings along with those of the Striped Hyena. Explore surrounding hills using open Jeeps.

Overnight will be at Siana Garden Resort.



DAY FIVE

Continue exploring the area in search of the various species like Hyena, the Desert fox, Jackal, Jungle Cat, Bluebull and Chinkara along with the leopard.

Overnight will be at Siana Garden Resort

DAY SIX

Having explore the landscapes of Rajasthan, this morning you make your way into Gujarat to the Little Rann of Kutch. The sanctuary to explore in this region is the Wild Ass Sanctuary, home to the Asiatic Wild Ass. The journey to Little Rann of Kutch (LRK) should take about 6 Hrs. You should arrive by late afternoon. Rest of the day is at leisure.

The Rann of Kutch is a geographically unique landscape that was once an arm of the Arabian Sea. As the land separated from the sea by geological forces, it became a vast, featureless plain encrusted with salt that is inundated with water during the rains.

The safari across the Little Rann visits the 'bets', islands on the ancient seabed that are now higher grounds covered with grass and scrub. These 'bets' support a variety of wildlife including the 'Gudkhur' (Asiatic wild ass) that is not found elsewhere. The wild ass is a handsome chestnut brown member of the equus genus (horse family). Capable of reaching high speeds when galloping across the Rann, the wild ass is usually seen in small herds.

The elegant blackbuck (Indian antelope), nilgai or blue bull (India's largest antelope) and the graceful chinkara (Indian gazelle) are other mammals seen at the bets. The main carnivores of the Little Rann of Kutch are the endangered Indian wolf, desert fox, Indian fox, jackals, desert and jungle cats, and a few hyenas.

Smaller mammals like hares, gerbilles and hedgehogs, and reptiles like spiny tailed lizard, monitor, red and common sand boa, saw-scaled viper, cobra, dhaman (Indian rat snake), etc, could also be seen during the safaris in the Rann

Overnight will be at Rann Riders



DAY SEVEN

The Little Rann of Kutch is also a birding paradise and has been declared a Ramsar Site. During the safaris in the Rann expect to see large flocks of larks, and other dryland birds like sandgrouse, coursers, plovers, chats, warblers, babblers, shrikes. Among the many winter visitors are the houbara bustard and spotted sandgrouse.

The best birding is at the lakes and marshes in and around the Rann where birds gather in numbers beyond comprehension during the winter months from October to March. These are the months when demoiselle and common cranes are seen in incredibly large numbers. The wetlands also attract flamingos, pelicans, storks, ibises, spoonbill, a variety of ducks and other waterfowl.

The Rann is also the hunting ground of raptors like the short-toed eagle, Aquila eagles, six species of falcon, buzzards and three species of harrier. It is one of the few places where harriers can be seen roosting on open ground at night.

Spend the day exploring the sanctuary and the surrounding area. Each day we have planned a morning and an afternoon safari in and around the park depending on animal movements as quite often the birds and animals are found outside the park

Overnight will be at Rann Riders

DAY EIGHT

This morning after safari you will be transferred by road to Velavadar. The journey can be completed in 4 hours.



The Blackbuck Sanctuary is a hidden gem, one of the last stands of grassland remaining in the massive alluvial plain running along the Gulf of Khambatt called Bhal. The Bhal is a tapestry of cotton, wheat and other agricultural fields, saline flats, grasslands, pastures, freshwater wetlands and coastal marshes. Nearly forty species of grasses have been identified from Bhal. The dominant grass species are *Dicanthium annulatum*, *Sporobolus virginicus*, *S. coromandelianus* and *S. maderspatensis*.

The national park is a beautiful 35sq.km tract of largely treeless Savannah grasslands and bushes that makes a stunning and enchanting sight. It is wonderful to watch the grasslands changing colour at different times of the day, and also in different seasons of the year, from bright gleaming greens to golden browns, and the grasses swaying in gentle breezes. The beauty of the grassland is enhanced by its abundance of wildlife from butterflies and dragonflies to India's largest antelope, the nilgai. Some of the largest herds of Blackbuck antelope can be found here.

The key predator of Velavadar is the Indian wolf, an endangered species. Indian wolves generally hunt in pairs or small packs, with one of them distracting the antelopes while the other takes one from a group by surprise. In open country they may give a sustained chase to their prey. Velavadar is also one of the most likely places to view a striped hyena, a species that is rarely seen elsewhere because of its nocturnal habits.

This afternoon we recommend you rest after the long drive, else explore the 150 acres of property with the lodge naturalist at your convenience

Overnight will be at The Blackbuck Lodge

DAY NINE

We have planned two safaris for you in the Blackbuck Sanctuary today. The grasslands of Velavadar offer close viewing of various species of larks, quails, painted and grey francolin, shrikes, wheatears, sparrow

larks and other characteristic birds of the bush. The globally threatened Stolickza's bush chat is one of the specialties of this national park. The tall and striking-looking saras crane is a subcontinent endemic that is seen in flooded grassland areas of the park, while flocks of demoiselle and common cranes gather in winter at the wetlands. River and riverside birds can be watched at the Porvalia and Alang Rivers that run alongside the park to its north and south respectively, and some of these sites can be prolific for watching flocks of sandgrouse coming to drink.

Velavadar is also well-known for its concentration of raptors. Short-toed eagles are often seen, while Aquila eagles like imperial, greater spotted and steppe could also be seen at Velavadar in winter. Other raptors often seen are kestrel, laggar falcon, black-shoulder kite and shikra. The most spectacular sight is the winter roost of harriers, mostly Montagu's and pallid but also marsh and the occasional hen – thousands of them have been seen settling down to roost among the grasslands on a winter evening. This is widely rated as the world's largest harrier roost. Eurasian eagle owl hunts here and could be seen even in daylight

Overnight will be at The Blackbuck Lodge



DAY TEN

After morning safari, you will be transferred to Gir National Park, journey will take 5 hrs. Gir National Park was set up in 1965, and a 259-sq-km core area was declared a national park in 1975. Since the late 1960s, lion numbers have increased from under 200 to over 650 (not all these lions live within the park). The sanctuary's 37 other mammal species, most of which have also increased in numbers, include dainty chitals (spotted deer), sambars (large deer), nilgais (large antelopes), chousinghas (four-horned antelopes), chinkaras (gazelles), crocodiles and rarely seen leopards. The park is a great destination for birders, too, with more than 300 species, most of them resident.

Unlike other parks in the country Gir offers 3 safari excursions into the park per day for tourists – Early morning 0600 – 0900, 0930 – 1200 & 1500 – 1730. Please note timings of the park changes each month depending on sunrise and sunset time so there may be a variance of 15-30 minutes.

Rest of the day is at leisure exploring the surroundings

Overnight will be at Gir Birding Lodge.

DAY ELEVEN

Besides wildlife that park still is inhabited by human settlements. This community primarily consists of distinctively dressed Maldhari (herders). The park officials have been trying to resettle them elsewhere, largely because their cattle and buffalo were competing for food resources with the antelopes, deer and gazelles while also being preyed upon by the lions and leopards. About 000 people still live in the park, however, their livestock accounts for about a quarter of the lions' diet. Apart from the Maldhari, a tribe of African origin, who were most likely brought here centuries ago as slaves live in the region. If interested, we can organize a visit to their villages.

Your exploration of Gir National Park continues with two more jeep safari explorations planned today
Overnight will be at Gir Birding Lodge



DAY TWELVE

Your exploration of Gir National Park continues with two more jeep safari explorations planned today.

DAY THIRTEEN

Today morning drive to Kutch (9-10 hours). Kutch Desert Wildlife Sanctuary is situated in the Great Rann of Kutch, Kutch district, Gujarat, India, it was declared a sanctuary in February 1986. It is the largest Wildlife Sanctuary in India area wise. It is one of the largest seasonal saline wetlands having an average water depth between 0.5 and 1.5 metres. By October–November each year, rainwater dries up and the entire area turns into saline desert. The sanctuary supports wide variety of water birds and mammalian wildlife. It encompasses a true saline desert where thousands of greater flamingos (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) nest in the world-famous 'Flamingo City' located in the mud flats of the Rann, about 10 km from Nir outpost on Kala Dungar hill. It is the only area where flamingos congregate to breed regularly.

Transfer to Cedo Homestay - *CEDO Homestay for Birders is a place for Birders and Nature Lovers situated in the small village of Moti Virani in Kutch district of Gujarat in India, it is approved under the Home stay*



policy of Incredible India and Gujarat Tourism. The facility is run by a family with vast experience of the area and subject.

DAY THIRTEEN, FOURTEEN AND FIFTEEN

Explore the area with inhouse naturalists. Morning and Evening Safaris/activities.

DAY SIXTEEN

Early morning transfer to the Bhuj Airport to board the flight for Mumbai. On arrival in Mumbai, transfer to International Airport to check in for your international flight back home.





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