

TRACKS SAFARIS

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WILDLIFE WATCHING IN THE HIMALAYAN KINGDOMS



Delhi – Paro – Thimphu - Punakha – Gangtey – Paro – Kathmandu – Chitwan - Delhi

- Day 1 Travel to Delhi
- Day 2 Arrive at Delhi. Afternoon sightseeing
- Day 3 Travel to Paro. Afternoon sightseeing at Paro
- Day 4 Morning birding at Paro. Afternoon drive to Thimphu
- Day 5 Morning drive to Punakha. Afternoon birding at Punakha
- Day 6 Morning and afternoon birding at Punakha
- Day 7 Morning, drive to Gangtey. Afternoon birding at Gangtey

- **Day 8 Morning drive to Paro**
- **Day 9 Morning fly to Kathmandu. On arrival – driven to Chitwan. Afternoon Safari**
- **Day 10 Morning and afternoon jeep safaris and probable elephant rides at Chitwan National Park**
- **Day 11 Morning and afternoon jeep safaris and probable elephant rides at Chitwan National Park**
- **Day 12 Morning – driven to Kathmandu. Afternoon sightseeing**
- **Day 13 Morning at leisure. Afternoon fly back home**

Himalayas has always fascinated mankind and will continue to do so forever. The ice-capped peaks of the Himalayas are an abode of biodiversity, a cradle of civilization and a challenge for adventure seekers. The Himalayan countries naturally retain a part of that charm that the mountains have. The people and their life are laced with the mountains so intricately that at times one wonders if they have a separate identity of their own. This tour explores three contrasting landscapes across three very different countries. Though they share borders and culture, their history and their present situations are very different, the state of wildlife and importance that it holds is also very different. The landscapes, the hotels, the lifestyle of these three contrasting countries are the main theme of this trip. The forests are home to species like the Satyr Tragopan, Ward's Trogon, Ibisbill, Black Necked Crane, Rufous Necked Hornbill, Beautiful Nuthatch, Fire Tailed Myzornis and Bhutan Laughing Thrush. Mammals include the elusive Clouded Leopard, Marbled Cat, Takin, The One Horned Rhinoceros, Asiatic Elephant, Wild Buffalo, Bengal Tiger and the Asiatic Leopard. The high mountains of Bhutan and Nepal are home to a lot more birds than one manages to see in one trip – that is why this area is best explored – slowly.

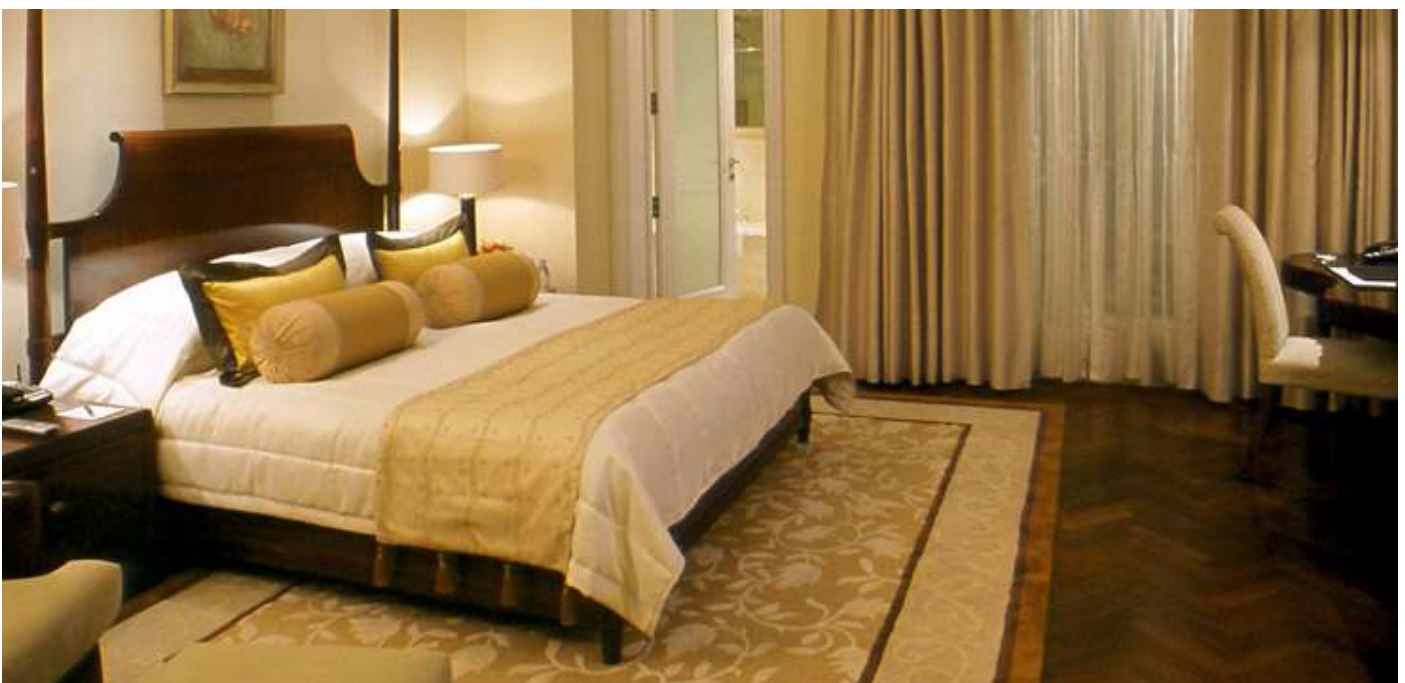
Day 1

Depart the UK to Delhi arriving early next morning.

Day 2 Arrive New Delhi

Arrive into New Delhi. On exiting the baggage reclaim you will be met by a representative and transferred in an air conditioned vehicle to your hotel, The Claridges New Delhi (40 minutes' drive from the airport). Time permitting, you will enjoy a privately guided walking tour of New Delhi – after the tour you will be driven back to the hotel.

Overnight - The Claridges, New Delhi - No meals included



Day 3 Delhi to Paro

You will fly out to Paro - flight to Paro normally offers excellent views of the Himalayas including many of the highest mountains in the world (Mt. Everest, Chomolhari, and Mt. Narsing). After clearing customs and immigration, you will be met by your Bhutanese hosts and be driven to your hotel in the beautiful Paro Valley. You will spend the afternoon exploring the lovely Paro Valley, where such species as Ibisbill and perhaps the scarce Black-tailed Crake can be found, apart from species as White Wagtail, White-capped Water Redstart, Blue Whistling-Thrush, Plumbeous Water Redstart, Oriental Turtle-Dove and Russet/Cinnamon Sparrow. If you are up to it a trek to the Tatskang Monastery is an interesting way to get acclimatized in Bhutan.

Overnight - The Dechen Hill Resort - All meals included



Ibisbill

Day 4 Paro - Thimphu

Early (Very Early) – you will start for Chele la. Here you will explore the area on foot and look for birds like Blood Pheasant, Himalayan Monal, along with other species like the Collared Grosbeak, Himalayan Griffon, Kalij Pheasant, Spotted Laughingthrush, Rosy Pipit, Blue-fronted Redstart, Rufous-breasted Accentor, Himalayan White-browed Rosefinch. After breakfast and lunch in the field, you will gradually head towards the capital Thimphu during and arrive there late afternoon. On reaching Thimphu - if it is a weekend you can visit a rural market - it is interesting to watch the people and the products that they make.

Overnight – The Riverview Hotel - All meals included

Day 5 Thimphu – Punakha

Early this morning, you will leave for Punakha – the drive is a spectacular drive through the high pass Dochu la (which offers great views of the Bhutan Himalayas). The drive itself is a bird-rich one with species like Blood Pheasant, Himalayan Monal, Spotted Laughing Thrush, Collared Grosbeak and more. You should also see Nepal Grey Langur, Assamese Macaque and with some luck a Barking Deer or a Wild Boar. Here as you cross the Punakha Dzong – you will stop to look for the rare and endemic White Bellied Heron. A few of these birds use this area and you might be very lucky to see one scanning the shallow waters for fish or other rodents/amphibians.

Overnight - The Zangtho Pelri – All meals included



Inside a Dzong

Day 6 Punakha

Very early this morning, after a tea and some biscuits – you will start the two hour drive to Jigme Dorji national Park – this is moist broad-leaved forest with trees line with moss and lichen and home to an incredibly rich avifauna. Bird highlights include – Red Headed Trogon, Wallcreeper, Greater Yellowthroat, Yellow bellied Fantail, Nepal Fulvetta, Ashy throated Warbler, Rufous capped Babbler, Striated Laughing thrush, Streak-throated Barwing, Fire tailed Myzornis, Pale Chinned Flycatcher, Black-eared Shrike Babbler, White Browed Shrike Babbler, Crested Kingfisher. Mammals include Orange-bellied Squirrel, Assamese Macaque and Barking Deer. After enjoying a packed lunch birding would resume and you will be looking for species like the Ward's Trogon, Rusty Flanked Treecreeper, Rufous Chinned laughing Thrush, Lesser Yellowthroat, Crested Kingfisher, Yellow Breasted Greenfinch, Blue Bearded Bee-eater and more. You will be back in town in time for a quick visit to the magnificent Punakha Dzong and also look for the White Bellied Heron.

Overnight - The Zangtho Pelri – All meals included



Little Forktail



Blue Throated Barbet

Day 7 Punakha to Gangtey

After breakfast you will ascend Pele La steadily climbing an increasingly lush, forested valley, making several stops along the way to search for birds and plants, enjoy the of magnificent snow-capped Himalayan peaks. Specialties you may encounter include Kalij Pheasant, the gorgeous Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Spotted Forktail, rare Gold-naped Finch, Black-throated and Brown Parrotbills, Brown Bullfinch, Fire-tailed Myzornis etc. On reaching Pele la – you will be stopping at that area and explore the old road which is a lot quieter (compared to the new road) – this is a good area for the Satyr Tragopan and your guide will try to playback the males which are territorial and do respond to the calls. Before long you'll be descending through, moss-covered trees and some really exquisite temperate mixed conifer forest and thick bamboo forest towards the Phobjika valley. This is where the Black Necked Cranes fly into breed and before long you will see these magnificent birds – several of them – as you slowly head towards the beautiful lodge in one corner of the valley. Other birds include Pintail Snipe, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveller, Oriental Sky Lark.

Overnight – The Dewachen Resort - All meals included



Satyr Trogopan

Day 8 Gangtey to Paro

After an early breakfast, you will head back to Pele la and spend quite a while there looking for the Satyr Tragopan. After spending sometime looking for this rare bird – you will slowly be driven back to Paro (6 hours drive). On arrival at Paro you will check in at the Dechen Hill Resort for an overnight stay. A short afternoon hike to the nearby Tatskang Monastery is a possible option.

Overnight – Dechen Hill Resort - All meals included

Day 9 Paro to Chitwan via Kathmandu

Today you be driven to the airport to connect to your flight to Kathmandu. On arrival – you will be met by your driver and be driven to the Chitwan National Park (6 hours drive). The journey from Kathmandu to Chitwan follows the fast flowing Trisuli River, a fairly reliable site for Ibisbills. Other birds that one might see here include White-capped Water Redstart, Brown Dipper and with some luck Wallcreeper. You will possibly arrive at the Royal Chitwan National Park by mid-afternoon where you will transfer to the comfortable Machan Paradise View Lodge. The park comprises 932 square kilometres of Sal and riverine jungle, a magnificent environment with a greater variety of wildlife than any other area of Nepal. Over 500 species of birds have been recorded here and one can hope to see at least 200 species over a three-four nights stay in Chitwan. The mammals and reptiles count is impressive too including Indian Rhinoceros, Wild

Boar, Sambar, Indian Muntjac, Spotted and Hog Deer, Rhesus Macaque and Nepal Grey Langur and possibly Marsh Mugger and the fish-eating Gharial Crocodiles. Cats like the Jungle Cat, Tiger and Leopard are all present but are very elusive and rarely sighted.

Time permitting – enjoy an afternoon jeep safari to the Chitwan National Park.

Overnight – Machan Paradise View Lodge - All meals included



Day 10 Chitwan National Park

Early morning – enjoy an elephant safari to explore the park. Later in the day explore the rivers and the surrounding areas and enjoy jeep safaris to go further looking for mammals. The main mammals here include the Indian Rhinoceros, Asiatic Wild Buffalo, Indian Gaur, Nepal Gray Langur, Hog Deer, Swamp Deer and Sambar. There might be sighting of Jungle Cat, Leopard or Tiger as well – but they are elusive and rare. Birds include Green Billed Malkoha, Spangled Drongo, Spiny Babbler, Grey Capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Himalayan Flameback, Red Headed Trogon, White-browed Scimitar Babbler, Lesser and Greater Yellownappe and many more birds. With some luck one might see the Bengal Florican too.

Overnight – Machan Paradise View Lodge - All meals included



Nepal is famous for three mountains of which one is the Fishtail or Machhapuchare

Day 11 Chitwan National Park

Early morning – enjoy an elephant safari to explore the park. Later in the day explore the rivers and the surrounding areas and enjoy jeep safaris to go further looking for mammals. Today you will be exploring an area of the park that you did not go to the day before.

Overnight – Machan Paradise View Lodge - All meals included

Day 12 Chitwan to Kathmandu

Today morning you will fly back to Kathmandu. On arrival, check in to the beautiful Dwarika's hotel. After lunch you will explore the Kathmandu and the Patan area and then you will be driven to Bhaktapur. Time permitting – you can consider driving to Dhulikhel area to enjoy the view of the peaks. After the sightseeing you will be driven back to Kathmandu. Evening is at leisure.

Overnight – Dwarikas - Breakfast only



Patan Museum at Patan Darbar

Day 13 Kathmandu – Fly back - you will be driven to the international airport to connect to your flight back home.

PRICE INCLUSIONS:

- Accommodation for 11 nights on Twin share basis and meals as specified in the itinerary
- Transportation by Toyota Innova's - mineral water will be provided in the car for sightseeing and long drives – In Bhutan & Nepal a Toyota Prado or a similar vehicle will be used
- Porterage fee at the hotel/airports only
- Local English speaking guide and entrance fees to (single entry) to any monument in the itinerary
- All entrance fees at the national parks and walking safari fees, elephant ride fees
- Air fare from New Delhi to Bhutan and Bhutan to Kathmandu in economy class

PRICE EXCLUSIONS:

- International, visa fees, airport tax or any kind of insurance cover
- Drinks and other meals than those mentioned in the itinerary
- Tips or gratuities

- Any car arrangements on free days
- Still and video camera fee at monuments and game parks
- Items of personal nature like drinks, laundry, telephone calls, tips, camera fees, etc



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AND NEPAL**

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