



India's Wild West and Tiger Tour

With John van der Dol and Asian Adventures

March 5th-21st 2012 (provisional dates)

Sat March 5th: Depart Sandwich in our own bus to London for the evening flight to Delhi

Day 01: Arrival in Delhi (rooms held from the previous night).

Day at leisure or we may do a city tour depending on arrival time in Delhi. Lunch and dinner in Delhi

Evening train to Ranthambhor at 1700, arriving at 2200 hours. Overnight in Tiger Moon.

Day 02: AM & PM drives in open trucks in search of wildlife and particular tigers and leopards





Jackal and Five-striped Palm Squirrel

Ranthambhor used to be the hunting grounds of the Maharaja of Jaipur. Today, it is famous for its tigers and is one of the best places in the country to see these majestic predators in the wild. The tigers can be easily spotted even during the day. A good time to visit between November and May when the nature of the dry deciduous forests makes sightings common.

The Park which covers an area of nearly 400 sq. km. and is set between the Aravali and Vindhya ranges. Its deciduous forests were once a part of the magnificent jungles of Central India. The terrain is rugged and there are rocky ridges, hills and open valleys with lakes and pools.

Ranthambore's royal past manifests itself in the picturesque ruins that dot the Park. There are lake palaces, chhatris, and a majestic thousand year old fort on a ridge overlooking the Park. The forest rest house at the foot of the Ranthambore fort is located in the lovely Jogi Mahal. It overlooks a tank (reservoir) the pretty Padam Talao, afloat with water lilies.

Day 03: AM & PM drives in open trucks.

Day 04: AM & PM drives in open trucks. Six drives will give us good chances of sightings.

Highlights other than the park:

Birding,

a visit to Dastkar (arts and crafts community project)

Ranthambhor School of Art

a visit to the fort.

We will have dinner and proceed to the station to connect with the night train to Jodhpur at 2200 hours using A/C sleeper compartments.

Day 05: Arrival at Jodhpur at 0500 hours (rooms held from the previous night in a small hotel). Morning guided tour of Mehrangarh Fort. After lunch, we will proceed to a desert oasis called Manvar.

Overnight stay in Manvar Desert Resort.

Day 06: We will make a brief halt early morning halt at Kheechan to see the congregation of Demoiselle Cranes

Kheechan is a small village 4 kms from Philodi, on the way from Bikaner to Pokhran in Rajasthan. This small village shot to fame in less than a decade for its Havelis and the largest congregation of Demoiselle Cranes in India. Oswal Jains of Kheechan village, who are very affluent class and successful business community, pool in money and feed these birds every day. About 1000 kilogrammes of feed is spread everyday for these migratory birds.

Its an exhilarating sight for any wildlife enthusiast to see these birds arriving at the Chugga Ghar (feeding ground) in the morning, the whole village reverberates with the loud calls of cranes in flight as they descend onto the feeding grounds. We need to be there at around 0615 hours to ensure that we see the whole ritual from the time it commences.



Demoiselle Cranes

Arrive in Jaisalmer at lunch after which we will go on a camel ride. Overnight in a hotel.

Day 07: Full day guided tour and birding in Jaisalmer. Overnight in a hotel.

Once a sleepy desert city, Jaisalmer has transformed itself into a major tourist destination of India. Situated amid picturesque Thar Desert, the Jaisalmer city commands premiere position among the tourist attractions scattered all over the desert land of Rajasthan. The Jaisalmer city is revered both by Indians as well as foreign tourists.



Thar Desert

Day 08: We will proceed to the desert early morning for full day birding looking in particular for the very rare Indian Bustard.

tour. Overnight stay in a tented camp in the sand dunes of Sam.

Day 09: Morning departure to the Little Rann of Kutch. Today it is a long journey of 9-10 hours but very interesting. Overnight stay in Rann Riders.

The sanctuary is known for its herds of the handsome chestnut brown Asiatic Wild Ass, which is the last of India's wild horse family and which does not survive anywhere else in India. It also supports a thriving population of gazelle, blue bull, wolf, and Indian foxes, jackal, jungle cat, hare. Birds include the Mc Queens Bustard, Spotted & Indian Sandgrouse, and many other desert species such as Desert Warbler, Hoopoe Lark, Desert Wheatear, and many birds of prey such as Steppe, Imperial and Short-toed Eagle, 5 species of vulture, Laggar falcon etc to flamingoes, pelicans, ducks, cranes and storks .

Day 10: AM & PM drives in open jeeps. Rann Riders.



Day 11: AM & PM drives in open jeeps. Rann Riders.

Day 12: Morning departure from the Little Rann of Kutch to Gir National Park(7 hours). Overnight Gir Birding Lodge.



Lion, Leopard at Gir Forest and Asian Ass at Little Rann of Kutch

Gir National Park & Wildlife Sanctuary is a 1412 sq km tract of dry deciduous forests, acacia scrub, evergreen and semi-evergreen flora and grasslands, fed by rivers and streams. Among the many water-bodies in the reserve is the Kamleshwar Dam, known for its birdlife and for its large crocodile population.

This reserve is the last abode of the Asiatic Lion and is also known for its Leopard population. Other mammals of Gir are Sambar (India's largest deer), Chital (spotted deer), Chousingha (the world's only four-horned antelope), Nilgai (bluebull antelope), Chinkara (Indian gazelle), Wild Boar, langur, Jackal, Jungle Cat, Rusty-spotted Cat, Striped Hyena and Black-naped Hare.



Male Lion, Gir



Mottled Wood Owl

Day 13: AM & PM drives in open jeeps. O/N Gir Birding Lodge.

Day 14: AM & PM drives in open jeeps.O/N Gir Birding Lodge.

Day 15: Drive from Gir National Park to Diu (3 hours) to connect flight to Mumbai. Fly back to London from Mumbai.



This tour is being organised in conjunction with Asian Adventures of Delhi and I will be travelling with the tour as well as a guide/representative of Asian Adventures.

Cost of this tour is fully inclusive at £2010 based on 8 people travelling plus international flight approx £500-£550 and internal flight (about £80). Based on two sharing.

Single supplement £495

Transport from Sandwich to London is extra (approx £300 to be shared by the number of people travelling)

John van der Dol Dec 2010

Sandwich Bird Tours and Asian Adventures

