

India (Sultanpur, Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Agra, Chambal, Bharatpur) - April 2009

Report by Sjeff Öllers

Introduction

This tour was our first visit to India. Our main interest was mammalwatching, but my partner wanted to include some cultural stopovers and I added a couple of birdwatching sites to the tour. April is a good month for mammalwatching, but certainly not the best month for birdwatching in India, although birding wasn't nearly as bad as I expected.

Note: the trip lists at the end of the report were made in April 2009 directly after the tour, but the rather concise text parts below were written in 2010 and 2011 and unfortunately there wasn't enough time to include day-to-day accounts in this trip report.

Travel Arrangements

We opted for an upmarket trip. Arrangements were made through Nature Safari India: <http://www.naturesafariindia.com>. I discussed the trip with Nature Safari's Sharad Vats, who is knowledgeable and responds quickly to E-mails. All trip arrangements and reservations went virtually without problems. Recommended. I also contacted Asian Adventures, who were friendly but very slow to respond and significantly more expensive (almost 20%!) for exactly the same trip (the only difference being the accommodation in Kanha, which was of lesser quality with Asian Adventures). A third tour operator, Dynamic Tours, was only marginally cheaper than Nature Safari India, but did not seem to be very knowledgeable about nature-oriented holidays, but they were friendly and quick to respond.



Hanuman Langurs

Itinerary

April 2: Flight to India, arrival at 22.50 in Delhi. Transfer to Hotel Ashoka Country Resort (nice place, common birds in the garden)

April 3: Morning: Birdwatching with bird guide at Sultanpur Jheel - transfer to Delhi train station - Night train to Jabalpur in 1st class

April 4: Drive to Kanha National park - Chitvan Lodge

April 5-8: Kanha National park - Chitvan Lodge

April 9: Transfer to Bandhavgarh National park - Tiger Den Resort

April 10: Bandhavgarh National park - Tiger Den Resort

April 12: Morning game drive - after lunch transfer to Katni railway station – 1st class overnight train to Agra

April 13: Arrival Agra at 4.25am; sunrise visit Taj Mahal and morning visit Agra Fort; transfer late morning to Chambal Safari Lodge. Afternoon and evening birding around lodge.

April 14: Morning visit to Chambal River Sanctuary - Afternoon transfer to Bharatpur - The Bagh

April 15-16: Bharatpur (Keoladeo Ghana national park) - The Bagh

April 17: Morning at Bharatpur - afternoon transfer to Delhi airport - Late night departure to Europe

April 18: Back in The Netherlands



Long-billed Vulture

Site Descriptions and Accommodation

Sultanpur Jheel

For some reason I expected Sultanpur to be a medium-sized nature reserve, but it is actually rather tiny at 1.43 square kilometres; it only takes a couple of hours to walk all the trails in the reserve. Nevertheless, this place is great for a morning of enjoyable wetland and woodland birding. There is even a watchtower that provides good views over the wetland in the heart of the reserve. Nilgai antelopes and rhesus macaques are easy to see in the reserve.



Rhesus Macaques

Kanha national park

The drive from Jabalpur to Kanha National park took almost 5 hours. The drive was mostly uneventful but we did see a few white-rumped vultures and Hanuman langurs in a remoter hilly area with a patch of dry open forest. We stayed at the luxurious Chitvan Lodge, which is located at a convenient location close to Mukki gate (10 minute drive). Accommodation is of a very high standard and the food was some of the best Indian food we have had so far (and we love Indian food). Birding around the lodge is quite good. Just outside the gate, there are forest remnants that held some interesting forest birds. Late morning and early afternoon raptors can usually be seen flying overhead and the lodge garden attracts a decent number of birds as well. I did some spotlighting around my room on the lodge grounds and towards the forest edge but I did not see any mammals apart from some bats around dusk. However, macaques and langurs were seen in daytime.

We visited three sectors in the park. The Mukki sector mostly consists of Sal forests, but there are some open grassland areas and the occasional wetland area as well. The Mukki sector seemed to be the most reliable place for the Barasingha swamp deer. The Kanha sector is scenically attractive with rolling grasslands and savannah surrounded by fairly open forest. Most tiger sightings are made here. Inevitably it is almost always very busy in this sector. We also made one game drive through the Kisli sector, which has some nice scenery (mostly Sal forests though). Unfortunately we experienced an afternoon thunderstorm while driving through the area and almost nothing was seen.



Sambar



Gaur

You are allowed to make game drives only from dawn to late morning and a few hours in the afternoon until sunset. You cannot stay in the park during the middle of the day, which leads to long and pointless drives to the lodges twice a day. To add insult to injury, there are more than enough great picnic spots in the park that would be great to spend the hottest hours of the day. The afternoon drives are rather annoying because it takes some 50-60 minutes to get to the central Kanha sector of the park, so you have about 1-1.5 hours to game-drive properly. Just when mammalwatching is starting to get really interesting, you have to start driving back. Since it is almost guaranteed you will see something of interest on the way back, it is then almost unavoidable for the drivers to drive back to the gate at ridiculous speeds (they get hefty fines or are even suspended if they show up late at the gate). This system seems to be more about bureaucracy for the sake of bureaucracy and less about any serious conservation concern. As a result I found the game drives always too rushed and unsatisfying.

Nevertheless, despite the bureaucracy, this was by far the best park we visited. It was the only place on the tour where you at least had the idea to be in a wilderness area. And more importantly the sightings we had in Kanha were outstanding: a couple of tiger sightings, leopard (one seen well, and three times poorly), a jungle cat at close range, and best of all twice a pack of dholes, one pack with puppies and the other pack hunting. Unforgettable. We missed a sloth bear by a few seconds, but we did see a four-horned antelope in the same area. The spectacular gaurs are common in the park. The bharasingha swamp deer seemed to be present only in a limited number of areas, but the guides can easily find them for you. We saw them every day.



Jungle Cat



Dhole

Bandhavgarh national park

The drive between Kanha and Bandhavgarh was uninteresting and almost devoid of wildlife, even birds were thin on the ground. It takes about 6-7 hours. Bandhavgarh national park is scenically more impressive than Kanha, but the segment of the park that is open to visitors is fairly small and overcrowded with vehicles (I have read that regulations have changed substantially in 2010 and vehicles are now spread over different areas). Game drives seemed even more rushed than in Kanha despite the fact that distances are much smaller. The park authorities had recently opened a different sector of the park when we were there. We asked to go there but fires set by locals prevented us from going there the first time. The second time we visited another quiet section of the park and we enjoyed the absence of racing jeeps, which allowed us to focus on birds and smaller mammals. We also visited the fort that is located on top of one of the hills. Views are spectacular and seeing some of India's last vultures spiralling up the thermals almost at touching distance is an experience not to be missed. The drive up the fort usually also yields sightings of bird species and bats that typically are not seen at lower elevations in the park.

We stayed at Tiger Den Resort on the edge of Tala village. The resort is a walled compound with a small garden (about one acre/0.5 ha in size). In the garden area common birds can be found. Rooms are good and while the food was not on the same level as the lodge in Kanha, it was still very tasty. What I didn't like about the walled compound is that it gives the place a cramped feel and there is not much to do in the rather long time between the two game drives.



Green Bee-eater



Indian Roller

Agra

Agra is mostly just a big, boring, smelly city, but it does have the Taj Mahal and the Red Fort. To be honest, we were slightly underwhelmed by the Taj Mahal and actually enjoyed the Red Fort visit a lot more. The Taj Mahal is of course a beautiful and unique building, but we are often disappointed by overhyped places, and this was no exception.



Gharial

Chambal Safari Lodge

This place is absolutely gorgeous and we regretted staying only one night here. More info can be found here: <http://www.chambalsafari.com/>. Nice rooms, excellent food and a very relaxing and pleasant vibe overall. The lodge is situated in the countryside on the edge of a village. Around the lodge are mainly agricultural fields, but around the lodge there are enough trees to give it the feel of a small woodland patch. Birding is good, and there are several mammals to be seen in the lodge grounds. Birding in the fields around the lodge is surprisingly good too with even some rare specialties such as red-necked falcon. It was fun to see herds of unconcerned nilgai wandering across cornfields with locals harvesting only tens of meters away.

The Chambal River Sanctuary can be reached in a 30-minute drive from the lodge. The birding in the degraded scrub on the last kilometre before reaching the river was surprisingly good. You then board a small boat for 2-3 hour ride, either upstream or downstream. The sanctuary has a healthy population of the endangered Gangetic dolphin because the water is still clean enough. It is also an excellent place to see the amazing gharial, Indian skimmer and black-bellied tern.

Bharatpur/Keoladeo Ghana national park

We stayed in the classy The Bagh, a 10-minute drive from the entrance of the park. Fantastic rooms and good Indian food (albeit a bit more tailored to average Western tastes). The gardens hold quite a lot of common birds (good for photography) and even the occasional small mammal will show up here. April is supposedly not a good month to visit Bharatpur, but there was still quite some water in 2009, so decent numbers of waterbirds were still present. Most wintering songbirds had already left though.



White-throated Kingfisher



Indian Roller



Indian Skimmer

Trip Lists

I used two field guides to determine birds, *A Field Guide to the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent* by Krys Kazmierczak and Ber van Perlo and *Birds of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives* by Richard Grimmett, Carol Inskipp, Tim Inskipp. Both have flaws, both in text and drawings, and therefore it is handy to have both. Both books were much cheaper in India (the shop in Bharatpur, for example, sold both when I was there).

For mammal determination I used the less than optimal *Field Guide to the Mammals of the Indian Subcontinent: Where to Watch Mammals in India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan* by Raj Singh, Zillah Richards and K. K. Gurung. It does the job for the larger mammals, but a bit rudimentary overall. The much better *Field Guide to Indian Mammals* by Vivek Menon was out of print when I went to India, but most lodges had a copy of this book.

For trip planning *A Birdwatchers' Guide to India* by Krys Kazmierczak and Raj Singh is an excellent book. Another great, but now rather outdated (1992) book is *Reiseführer Natur Indien* by Gertrud Neumann-Denzau and Helmut Denzau, a German language book with natural history, practical information, maps, beautiful photos, etc. on 48 important nature reserves in India. Still worth picking up if you can read German. The coffee table book *Wild India: Wildlife and Scenery of India and Nepal* by Gerald Cubitt and Guy Mountfort contains nice photos, but the text parts are disappointing.

For up to date travel and site information, I used, as always, countless trip reports from www.travellingbirder.com, www.mammalwatching.com, www.surfbirds.co.uk, www.birdtours.co.uk, www.kolkatabirds.com, etc.

For any questions, comments, additions, wrong determinations, etc., please contact me at: [olpa \[at\] onsneteindhoven.nl](mailto:olpa@onsneteindhoven.nl)

Acronyms:

SUL – Sultanpur Jheel

BAN – Bandhavgarh national park

BHP – Keoladeo Ghana national park (Bharatpur)

CHL – Chambal Safari Lodge and surroundings

CHRS – Chambal River Sanctuary



Sarus Crane family



Nilgai bull

Mammal List

Indian Flying Fox *Pteropus giganteus* - a colony of several tens at CHL

Fulvous Fruit Bat *Rousettus leschenaulti* - a few at Kanha

Greater False Vampire Bat *Megaderma lyra* - a few at Kanha

Indian Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus coromandra* - the small bats seen in Kanha were this species according to our guide

Theobald's Tomb Bat *Taphozous theobaldi* – roosting at the fort gate in BAN

Rhesus Macaque *Macaca mulatta* - common at SUL, a group at Chitvan lodge, regular at BHP/CHL

Hanuman or Northern Plains Gray Langur *Semnopithecus entellus* - common in Kanha and BAN

Golden Jackal *Canis aureus* - one on April 7 in the Kanha sector and one in the Mukki sector on April 8, daily 1 or 2 at BHP.

Dhole *Cuon alpinus* - one group of at least 15 animals with adults and puppies was seen in the evening on the 4th of April. The animals were rather shy and disappeared fairly quickly through high grass into forest. A group of about 8 animals was seen in the Kanha sector for at least 40 minutes during the morning game drive on April 6.

[Sloth Bear *Melursus ursinus* - at the viewpoint on the Bhamani Dadar plateau we missed a sloth bear by a few seconds. Only our guide Vibhav saw it, because we were about 150 meters ahead. Vibhav waved at us to come back and we raced back to the place where he saw the bear, but unfortunately we couldn't find the bear, who had probably walked off into the forest].

Common Grey Mongoose *Herpestes edwardsii* - one in Kanha, daily 1-3 at BHP, one early in the morning in the garden of the Taj Mahal.

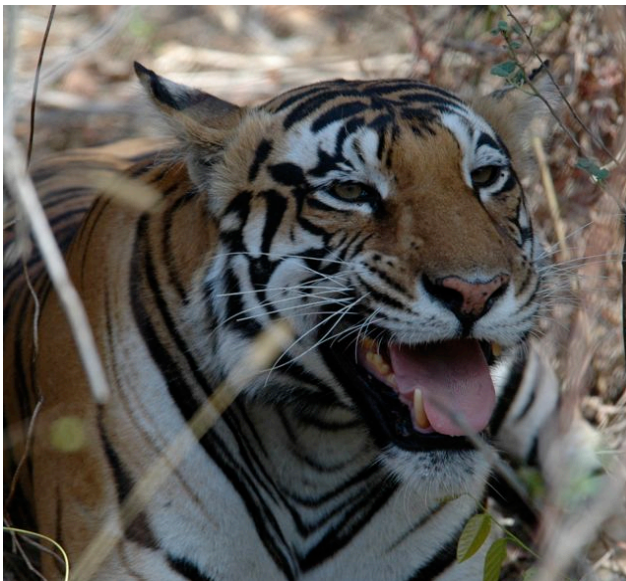
Small Indian mongoose *Herpestes javanicus* - one very shy animal that was significantly smaller than the regularly seen common mongooses was very probably this species. I only got views of one animal, but 1-2 more seemed present in dense bushes where the animal that I saw ran into.

Ruddy Mongoose *Herpestes smithii* - one in Kanha on April 7, two at BAN on April 10, and a single one on the fort plateau in BAN on April 12.

Common Palm Civet *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus* - one seen twice at night at CHL

Leopard *Panthera pardus* - excellent sighting of one animal at close range in the Mukki sector on April 5. Rather poor sightings of a leopard on a hill (April 6) and one with prey in a tree (April 6,7).

Tiger *Panthera tigris* - a female was seen on the first game drive on April 4 giving decent views at about 200 m distance. On April 5 a tigress was seen close up on elephant back. This tiger was later seen for a few seconds when she had started moving. In BAN a female tiger was seen sleeping twice. The B2 male was shortly seen on April 9 on the road and then off-road but as always around sunset and in an annoying mess of cars fighting for the best glimpse.



Tiger (with a missing lower canine)



Rhesus Macaque



Nilgai (females and juveniles)

Jungle Cat *Felis chaus* - lovely views of one animal walking on the road but it only stopped to allow better views and photos when it stared at us from the safety of dense forest undergrowth.

Gangetic Dolphin *Platanista gangetica* - about 10-15 sightings of probably 3 individuals at CHRS

Wild Boar *Sus scrofa* 1-4 groups daily at Kanha, also seen at BAN

Cheetal/Spotted Deer *Axis axis* - abundant at Kanha and BAN, also BHP

Barasingha/Swamp Deer *Cervus duvauceli* about 30-40 in the Mukki sector. Also a group of males and a small group of female with young in the Kanha sector

Sambar *Cervus unicolor* - daily at Kanha and BAN. Common.

Barking Deer/Muntjac *Muntiacus muntjak* - one animal on April 4, two on April 5, one on April 8 in Kanha and a female with young baby at BAN.

Gaur *Bos gaurus* - spectacular animals that are easily seen in Kanha, typically about 3-5 single males and 3-4 groups of females and calves were seen each day.

Nilgai *Boselaphus tragocamelus* about 15 at SU, twice two males at BAN, female groups were seen regularly around CHL and in the countryside around Agra/Bharatpur, common at BHP.

Four-horned Antelope/Chausingha *Tetracerus quadricornis* - one flushed from high grass on the Bhamani Dadar plateau in Kanha. It jumped up twice from the high grass probably to “gauge” us.

Three-striped Palm Squirrel *Funambulus palmarum* - only seen a few times in Kanha

Five-striped Palm Squirrel/Northern Palm Squirrel *Funambulus pennantii* - common, SUL, Agra, BHP, CHL, and possibly Kanha

Indian Hare/Blacknaped Hare *Lepus nigricollis* - two in Kanha and one at CHL



Lesser Adjutant



Barasingha



Indian Flying Fox

Bird List

Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis* - one in a pool at Kanha (Mukki area), 3 at CHRS
Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* - a maximum of 9 birds was seen on our last two days in Bharatpur.
Darter *Anhinga melanogaster* - very common at BHP
Little Cormorant *Phalacrocorax niger* - small numbers at SUL (<10), low numbers and usually singles at Kanha, also BHP
Indian Cormorant *Phalacrocorax fuscicollis* - small numbers at SUL (<10), a few at BHP
Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* - a few at BHP
Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* - small numbers in Kanha and BAN, common at CHRS and BHP
Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea* - small numbers in Kanha, common SUL, CHRS and BHP
Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea* - about 3-4 in SUL, common at BHP
Great Egret *Casmerodius albus* - small numbers in Kanha, common at SUL, CHRS, BHP
Intermediate Egret *Mesophoyx intermedia* - several at CHRS
Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* - very common in all sites visited
Indian Pond Heron *Ardeola grayii* - very common in BHP and SUL, also Kanha and BAN
Striated Heron *Butorides striatus* - one in BHP, one CHRS
Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* - quite common at BHP
Cinnamon Bittern *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus* - one at the pool with the arced bridge at Kanha
Black Bittern *Dupetor flavicollis* - one flushed near the pump station in BHP, another gave spectacular views in dense bushes not far from the large watchtower in the centre of the park.



Cinnamon Bittern

Black Bittern

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* - good numbers (at least 40) on our last morning in BHP, smaller numbers the preceding two days
Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* - about 10 in SUL, relatively small numbers (about 10-20 daily) in BHP
Red-naped Ibis *Pseudibis papillosa* - a few almost daily at Kanha with a maximum of three birds at one of the pools in the Mukki sector, two at CHRS, also 1-2 at BAN
Eurasian Spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* - about 15 at SUL, good numbers at BHP
Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala* - about 15-20 at SUL, common at BHP, small numbers at Kanha
Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans* - at least two at CHRS, 1-4 daily at BHP
Black Stork *Ciconia nigra* - 1-5 daily in Kanha
Woolly-necked Stork *Ciconia episcopus* - several sightings at Kanha (of up to 6 together in the Mukki sector) and two at CHRS
Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* - one at SUL, a single bird and a pair in flight at BHP
Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus* - a maximum of four seen together in Kanha (Mukki sector), a few single birds at BAN

Lesser Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna javanica* - always between 50-100 present at pools in the Mukki area, larger numbers (a few hundreds) at BHP

Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea* - only 3 along the Chambal River, small numbers at BHP

Comb Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos* - about 30-40 along the Chambal River

Gadwall *Anas strepera* - only seen in BHP in low numbers (5-10)

Wigeon *Anas penelope* - one pair at SUL, small numbers at BHP

Spot-billed Duck *Anas poecilorhyncha* - several tens (30-40) at SUL, small numbers at CHRS, also at BHP

Northern Shoveler *Anas clypeata* - about 50 at SUL, small numbers at CHRS (5-10)

Northern Pintail *Anas acuta* - a few tens at SUL and BHP

Garganey *Anas querquedula* - a few tens (20-30) at CHRS

Common Pochard *Aythya ferina* - small numbers at BHP (1-5)

Oriental Honey-buzzard *Pernis ptilorhyncus* - at least 3 different ones at SUL, 2-4 daily in Kanha, also a few at BAN

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caeruleus* - about 3-5 daily at Kanha, also a few at CHRS and CHL

Black Kite *Milvus migrans* - abundant in cities but often surprisingly scarce elsewhere

Egyptian Vulture *Neophron percnopterus* - two patrolling the grassland areas and 2-3 soaring upwards from the fort cliffs in BAN, a pair on the nest at CHRS, and 2-3 at CHL. A few near the Taj Mahal.

White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis* - absolutely dramatic to see how vulture-less India is nowadays. Altogether about ten birds of this species were seen in Kanha. Even deep inside Kanha a sick bird was seen and photographed with his head hanging down, another Diclofenac victim. Two groups of this species (3 and 12 birds) were seen en route between Kanha and BAN and another small group (3-4) in a remoter area between Jabalpur and Kanha.

Long-billed Vulture *Gyps indicus* - a few at Kanha, decent (30-40) but obviously rapidly declining numbers were seen at BAN. According to the local guides white-rumped vulture had been wiped out completely in BAN. I also photographed a few birds that were probably juvenile long-billed vultures (and not Himalayan griffon vulture as claimed by some of the local guides). A group of eight birds was seen en route between Kanha and BAN.

Red-headed Vulture *Sarcogyps calvus* - two resting in trees and three in flight in BAN

Short-toed Snake-Eagle *Circaetus gallicus* - one perched in BHP

Crested Serpent Eagle *Spilornis cheela* - 2-5 daily at Kanha and BAN

Eurasian Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* - 1-2 daily at BHP

Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* - one male above corn fields near SUL

Shikra *Accipiter badius* - 3-5 daily at Kanha and BAN, also common in the Chambal area and BHP

White-eyed Buzzard *Butastur teesa* - one relatively poor sighting of a bird in flight at Kanha on the Bhamani Dadar plateau, a good sighting of a perched bird in BAN

Long-legged Buzzard *Buteo rufinus* - excellent views of two birds at CHRS

Lesser Spotted Eagle *Aquila pomarina* - a few at BHP

Greater Spotted Eagle *Aquila clanga* - a few at BHP, a probable one at SUL

Steppe Eagle *Aquila nipalensis* - seen on all days in BHP usually about 2-4, but about 6-7 at BHP on the morning of 15 April.

Changeable Hawk Eagle *Spizaetus cirrhatus* - one at Kanha in the Mukki sector, one at BAN mobbed by a Rufous Treepie, a possible one at BHP

Common Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* - one along the Chambal River, one in BAN, two en route back to Delhi

Red-necked Falcon *Falco chicquera* - great scope views of a pair in the fields around Chambal Lodge

Painted Francolin *Francolinus pictus* - good views of a female at BAN and decent views of a pair on our way up to the fort.

Grey Francolin *Francolinus pondicerianus* - common in SUL and BHP

Jungle Bush Quail *Perdicula asiatica* - a group of about 15 was seen at close range in a disturbed sandy area at BAN, another smaller group was seen in rocky undergrowth on the way to the fort in BAN.

Red Spurfowl *Galloperdix spadicea* - seen a few times at Kanha, usually 2-3 together

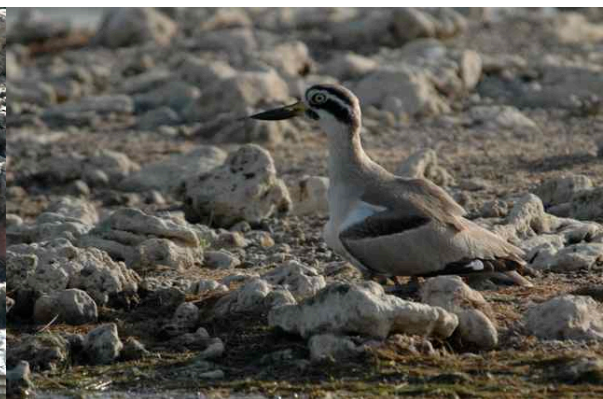
Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus* - very common in Kanha, common in BAN and BHP

Indian Peafowl *Pavo cristatus* - very common everywhere

Sarus Crane *Grus antigone* - a pair at SUL, a total of 7 at CHRS, between 2-6 daily at BHP
 Demoiselle Crane *Anthropoides virgo* - a single bird was only seen by my wife on our way back to Delhi
 White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* - common at BHP
 Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* - about 25 at SUL, common BHP
 Common Coot *Fulica atra* - quite common at BHP
 Purple Swampphen *Porphyrio porphyrio* -- about 20 at SUL, about 10-25 daily at BHP
 Pheasant-tailed Jacana *Hydrophasianus chirurgus* - at least 20 at BHP
 Bronze-winged Jacana *Metopidius indicus* - two birds on a pool near the village at CHL, about 20-30 at BHP
 Eurasian Thick-knee *Burhinus oedicephalus* - one seen and photographed in Kanha, two on dry steppe-like habitat near BHP
 Great Thick-knee *Esacus recurvirostris* - breeding in small numbers along the Chambal River, about 10-12 birds seen
 Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* - about 9-10 at SUL
 Small Pratincole *Glareola lactea* - about 30-40 on islets in the Chambal River
 Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* - about 20 at CHRS
 River Lapwing *Vanellus duvaucelii* - only at CHRS where common
 Yellow-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus malarbaricus* - only one seen well on fields just outside BHP, also seen en route between CHL and CHRS
 Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus* - common
 Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* - one on an islet at CHRS
 Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* - a couple on a rocky islet in the Chambal River



Greater Painted Snipe



Great Thick-Knee

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* - about 9-10 at SUL
 Small Pratincole *Glareola lactea* - about 30-40 on islets in the Chambal River
 Kentish Plover *Charadrius alexandrinus* - about 20 at CHRS
 River Lapwing *Vanellus duvaucelii* - only at CHRS where common
 Yellow-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus malarbaricus* - one only seen well on fields just outside BHP, also present en route between CHL and CHRS.
 Red-wattled Lapwing *Vanellus indicus* - common
 Common Snipe *Gallinago gallinago* - one on an islet at CHRS
 Greater Painted Snipe *Rostratula benghalensis* - a couple on a rocky islet in the Chambal River
 Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa* - a group of about 50 was only seen on one morning in BHP
 Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* - two at SUL, a few at BHP
 Common Redshank *Tringa totanus* - a few at CHRS
 Common Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* - a few in Kanha (Mukki) and BAN, several at CHRS, common in BHP
 Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* - one on the fort plateau in BAN, a few at pools in Kanha, common in BHP
 Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola* - three at SUL, a few at Kanha, several around CHL.

Common Sandpiper *Actitis hypoleucos* - at least two at CHRS, several daily at BHP, only a few seen at Kanha
 Little Stint *Calidris minuta* - at least four at CHRS, also in fairly low numbers at BHP
 Temminck's Stint *Calidris temminckii* - at least two at CHRS, low numbers at BHP
 River Tern *Sterna aurantia* - low numbers (<10) at CHRS
 Little Tern *Sterna albifrons* - low numbers (<10) at CHRS
 Black-bellied Tern *Sterna acuticauda* - a few (3-4) at CHRS including two in adult plumage
 Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea* - a few at CHRS
 Indian Skimmer *Rynchops albicollis* - a few (about 5-6) at CHRS, birds were breeding, no chicks yet



Indian Skimmers and Little Pratincoles breeding

Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus* - a group of about 15 was seen on the river bank at CHRS, more birds were present but too far to see well
 Rock Pigeon *Columba livia* - very common
 Oriental Turtle Dove *Streptopelia orientalis* - quite common at Kanha
 Laughing Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis* - common in cultivated areas
 Spotted Dove *Streptopelia chinensis* - very common in Kanha and BAN
 Red Collared Dove *Streptopelia tranquebarica* - two at CHRS, one at CHL
 Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* - common
 Emerald Dove *Chalcophaps indica* - one in bamboo at BAN
 Yellow-footed Green Pigeon *Treron phoenicoptera* - quite common in Kanha, BAN, BHP and CHL
 Alexandrine Parakeet *Psittacula eupatria* - fairly regular in small numbers at Kanha and BAN
 Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* - common at all sites visited
 Plum-headed Parakeet *Psittacula cyanocephala* - fairly common at Kanha, BAN and CHL, also BHP
 [Pied Cuckoo *Clamator jacobinus* - heard only at SUL]
 Common Hawk Cuckoo *Hierococyx varius* - seen once at CHL, twice at BAN and once at BHP
 Indian Cuckoo *Cuculus micropterus* - one bird seen near Chitvan lodge
 Asian Koel *Eudynamis scolopacea* - quite common in gardens/cultivated areas, but relatively shy, seen at Tiger Den Resort, Chitvan Lodge, The Bagh and BHP.
 Sirkeer Malkoha *Phaenicophaeus leschenaultii* - one at Kanha, two at BAN
 Greater Coucal *Centropus sinensis* - common at all sites visited
 Indian Nightjar *Caprimulgus asiaticus* - one seen and photographed in BAN
 [Savanna Nightjar *Caprimulgus affinis* - one flushed at Kanha on the descent from the Bhamani Dadar plateau may have been this species]
 Collared Scops Owl *Otus bakkamoena* - one in Sal Forest in the Mukki sector in Kanha, also one at CHL
 Dusky Eagle-Owl *Bubo coromandus* - heard well but only fleeting views of one rushing through the trees at subcanopy level in BHP
 Brown Fish Owl *Ketupa zeylonensis* - superb views of a family (two adults and two chicks) in BAN, one adult flushed at CHRS and one young bird on the nest at CHRS.
 Jungle Owlet *Glaucidium radiatum* - seen and photographed at Kanha
 Spotted Owlet *Athene brama* - one seen and photographed at BAN. One roosting in a tree just outside the grounds of CHL

Brown Hawk Owl *Ninox scutulata* - dusk views on the descent from the Bhamani Dadar plateau in Kanha



Brown Fish Owl

Spotted Owlet

Collared Scops Owl

White-rumped Needletail *Zoonavena sylvatica* - often seen near rivers on transfers

House Swift *Apus affinis* - several at CHRS

Crested Treeswift *Hemiprocne coronata* - smashing views of one perched in BAN, a few other sightings in BAN

Indian Roller *Coracias benghalensis* - common at all sites visited except around Delhi and SUL

Common Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* - a few seen at BAN

White-throated Kingfisher *Halcyon smyrnensis* - two at SUL

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* - only two birds seen at CHRS

Blue-bearded Bee-eater *Nyctyornis athertoni* - two different single birds in gallery forest in BAN

Little Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis* - common

Blue-tailed Bee-eater *Merops philippinus* - 3 at CHL

Hoopoe *Upupa epops* - two at SUL, one at CHL, one at BAN

Brown-headed Barbet *Megalaima zeylanica* - common, but only seen at Chitvan lodge, CHL and BHP

Coppersmith Barbet *Megalaima haemacephala* - common, seen at Chitvan lodge, CHL and SUL

Indian Grey Hornbill *Ocyroceros birostris* - quite common, but low numbers, 1-5 daily in SUL, CHL, Kanha, Chitvan Lodge, BAN, The Bagh, and BHP

Malabar Pied Hornbill *Anthraceroceros coronatus* - only three seen on our way up to the fort. Relatively shy.

Eurasian Wryneck *Jynx torquilla* - one in the scrubby riverbank areas of Chambal River

Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker *Dendrocopos nanus* - surprisingly only seen at Chitvan lodge

Yellow-crowned Woodpecker *Dendrocopos mahrattensis* - a female at BAN, a female and male at BHP

Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense* - common

White-naped Woodpecker *Chrysocolaptes festivus* - seen a few times at Kanha, usually in small groups of 2-5 birds, once a group of 3 at BAN

Blue-winged Leafbird *Chloropsis cochinchinensis* - a female bird on the last morning at Chitvan lodge, a male at BAN

Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia* - only once seen in BAN

Eurasian Golden Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* - seen in Kanha (two at Chitvan lodge) and several at BAN.

Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus* - common at Chitvan lodge, BAN, also seen at CHL and BHP

Ashy-crowned Sparrow Lark *Eremopterix grisea* - one at SUL, one at CHRS

Greater Short-toed Lark *Calandrella brachydactyla* - several at CHRS

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata* - one at SUL in the drier areas

Dusky Crag Martin *Hirundo concolor* - only seen in BAN near the fort

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* - small numbers in SUL, Kanha, BAN

Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii* - small numbers in SUL, Kanha and BAN

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica* - small numbers in CHRS
Plain Martin *Riparia paludicola* - several around SUL, also CHRS and BHP
Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus* - common to very common at all sites visited
White-bellied Drongo *Dicrurus caerulescens* - two at Kanha on April 5, daily 3-4 at BAN
Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus* - common in Kanha and BAN, also quite regular at BHP and CHL
Common Woodshrike *Tephrodornis pondicerianus* - two at BAN, about 5 at BHP
Brown Shrike *Lanius cristatus* - one at BAN, one at CHRS
Bay-backed Shrike *Lanius vittatus* - about 3-4 at BHP
Long-tailed Shrike *Lanius schach* - seen at most sites visited, but low daily numbers (1-3)
Grey-backed Shrike *Lanius tephronotus* - two at BHP
Brahminy Starling *Sturnus pagodarum* - quite common in the countryside and BHP
Asian Pied Starling *Sturnus contra* - quite common in cultivated areas and cities
Common Mynah *Acridotheres tristis* - very common at all sites visited
Bank Myna *Acridotheres ginginianus* - only seen at CHL and CHRS
Rufous Treepie *Dendrocitta vagabunda* - quite common at all sites, but usually keeps a distance
House Crow *Corvus splendens* - common
Large-billed Crow *Corvus macrorhynchos* - common in Kanha and BAN, also CHRS
Large Cuckooshrike *Coracina macei* - very common at Kanha, also seen in BAN and one at CHL
Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus* - a pair at BHP
White-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucotis* - only seen at CHL, CHRS and BHP
Red-vented Bulbul *Pycnonotus cafer* - common at all sites visited
[Puff-throated Babbler *Pellorneum ruficeps* - a babbler in semi-open forest undergrowth in Kanha was almost certainly this species]
Common Babbler *Turdoides caudatus* - only seen at CHRS
Large Grey Babbler *Turdoides malcolmi* - common in the Chambal area, also several groups at SUL
Jungle Babbler *Turdoides striatus* - very common in Kanha, BAN and BHP
[Brown-cheeked Fulvetta *Alcippe poioicephala* - a probable sighting in bamboo at Kanha, viewing conditions not optimal]
Asian Brown Flycatcher *Muscicapa dauurica* - two around Chitvan lodge
Red-breasted Flycatcher *Ficedula parva* - one at SUL, one at CHL
Tickell's Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis tickelliae* - only a few seen at Kanha (3) and BAN (4)
Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher *Culicicapa ceylonensis* - a single bird at BAN
Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea* - a female at Chitvan lodge, a male at BAN
Asian Paradise-flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi* - a female at CHAM and BHP
White-browed Fantail *Rhipidura aureola* - one at BAN
Zitting Cisticola *Cisticola juncidis* - a few heard and briefly seen at KAN in Kanha sector
Ashy Prinia *Prinia socialis* - a few at SUL, also at Chitvan lodge, The Bagh, CHL
Plain Prinia *Prinia inornata* - fairly common at SUL, also at Chitvan lodge, BHP
Rufous-fronted Prinia *Prinia buchanani* - one seen well at CHRS
Paddyfield Warbler *Acrocephalus agricola* - seen well in fields around CHL
Blyth's Reed-Warbler *Acrocephalus dumetorum* - heard at SUL, one seen at BAN
Booted Warbler *Hippolais caligata* - seen at BHP, The Bagh, and CHL.
Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius* - only seen at Taj Mahal and The Bagh gardens
Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca blythi* - one at CHRS
Hume's Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus humei* - a few seen and heard at Kanha
Greenish Warbler *Phylloscopus trochiloides* - a few at Chitvan lodge, also small numbers in Kanha
Bluethroat *Luscinia svecica* - one at SUL, one at CHRS, one in full plumage at BHP
Oriental Magpie Robin *Copsychus saularis* - quite common in SUL, BHP and CHL, also at BAN and Kanha
Indian Robin *Saxicoloides fulicata* - less often seen than expected, a female at SUL, common around CHL, about 3-4 at BAN and 3 at BHP
Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros* - a few at SUL, a few at BAN, one female at CHRS, one male at BHP
Common Stonechat *Saxicola torquata* - one female at SUL, one male in the Kanha sector

Pied Bushchat *Saxicola Aprillata* - several at SUL, one pair at CHRS, a few at BHP
 Indian or Brown Rock Chat *Cercomela fusca* - about 4-5 around CHL, a few at BHP
 Orange-headed Thrush *Zoothera citrina cyanotus* - at Kanha very common around dusk, but difficult to approach well. Only a few seen at BAN, but strangely these birds seemed easier to approach.
 Great Tit *Parus major* - one at Kanha (Mukki area)
 Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus* - small numbers in the meadows in Kanha sector
 Olive-backed Pipit *Anthus hodgsoni* - at least three at Chitvan Lodge
 Forest Wagtail *Dendronanthus indicus* - a single bird in Sal forest in the Mukki sector in Kanha
 White Wagtail *Motacilla alba* - a few at CHRS
 White-browed Wagtail *Motacilla maderaspatensis* - one in BAN, common at CHRS and BHP
 Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* - about 6-7 at Chitvan lodge and a few in Kanha
 Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* - two in BHP, probably overlooked
 Citrine Wagtail *Motacilla citreola* - one in BHP, probably overlooked
 Oriental White-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus* - two at Tiger Den Resort and a small group on the way up to the fort in BAN, small group at The Bagh
 Thick-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum agile* - one at CHL
 Pale-billed Flowerpecker *Dicaeum erythrorhynchos* - a few at Kanha, Chitvan lodge, 3-4 at BAN
 Purple Sunbird *Nectarinia asiatica* - quite common at all sites visited
 House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* - common in urbanized and cultivated areas
 Chestnut-shouldered Petronia *Petronia xanthocollis* - very common at Kanha and BAN, also CHL, CHRS and BHP
 Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus* - one bird in the southern part of BHP
 Red Avadavat *Amandava amandava* - two females in the southern part of BHP
 Indian Silverbill *Lonchura malabarica* - two at SUL, about 10 at CHRS, also at BHP
 Black-headed (or Chestnut) Munia *Lonchura malacca* - a few seen in bamboo in Kanha
 Crested Bunting *Melophus lathami* - one male in Bharatpur - a female in the fields around CHL, poor flight views of a male at CHRS, excellent views of a male at BHP
 Red-headed Bunting *Emberiza bruniceps* - good views of both sexes in the fields around CHL, also a few seen at CHRS.

Other wildlife

Gharial *Gavialis gangeticus* - about 15 at CHRS
 Marsh Crocodile *Crocodylus palustris* - about 5-6 at CHRS
 Flap Shell Turtle *Lissemys punctata* - one at BAN in a pool, also at CHRS
 Soft Shell Turtle *Trionyx gangeticus* - several seen at CHRS
 Monitor Lizard *Varanus bengalensis* - one at BAN, at least three in BHP
 Garden Lizard *Calotes versicolor* - common at Chitvan lodge, a few elsewhere
 House Gecko *Hemidactylus flaviviridis* - very common at CHL



Golden Jackal



Forest Wagtail