



Royle Safaris, like many people have been looking hard for a place where the mainland (other known as Indochinese) clouded leopards can be seen with regularity. This search had taken us to the forested hills of the vast Langtang National Park in Nepal. We were last here in the spring of 2020 (just before the world closed down with the covid-19 pandemic) and had some success with finding good habitat and our local guide (hired from the nearby village) seeing a clouded leopard one night. We were in the same area than Jens Hauser had also had a successful trip the year before (2019) and so we believed we had found the best place. But alas we were not able to get here for a while and when we finally returned in November 2023 with a group we had been told that there had been a lot of development in the region we had stayed last time.

This was disappointing news and so in the few months prior to the trip we had our local Nepalese expert (Hari Basnit) who is a clouded leopard and small carnivore researcher visit several areas he and his team had been working in whilst studying this species. And we settled on a location deep in the forest and nearby the areas we had visited in the past. So we would base ourselves here, we would camp in the forest with special permits and use a nearby lodge (tea-house) for meals and washing etc each day.

So with our new location scouted out and Hari hired along with the clouded leopard expert guide (Mike Gordon) of Borneo fame, we headed out to try once again for mainland clouded leopards. We started in Kathmandu where everyone arrived and met Mike and Hari and were briefed on the trip, the following day they set off on the drive to the Himalayan foothills and the entry trail to Langtang National Park. The walk to the campsite is too long to do after this drive and so the first night was spent in a tea-house on the top of the same slope we had scanned and searched along in 2019. The group arrived just before dark after a good uphill walk. The trail went past the tea-house we stayed at last time and the tea-house is much larger and the area very developed which is a shame. But it is a good job that Hari has found this pristine habitat nearby and we would explore here over the coming week. The habitat was proved to be great as Mike found several clouded leopard footprints a few minutes between the campsite and the tea-house.

With the help of the local team, tea-house owner and Hari we would walk many trails, some of which are new and have never been explored by westerners. The forest was stunning and home to a good amount of wildlife, however the density and diversity of mammals in the Himalayas is low (as expected with the mountainous conditions and extremes in weather throughout the year). There is also a bamboo forest nearby (a full day trip is required from our base camp) where we would try for red pandas also.

Mammals seen including wonderful a **Himalayan musk deer** resting near the side of the trail, several **orange-bellied Himalayan squirrels** in the trees all around as well as common ungulates from the region such as **northern red muntjacs** and **Himalayan brown gorals**. Commonly seen in the hills and forest were **Assamese macaques** and **Nepal gray langurs** and Mike had great views of a pair of **yellow-throated martens**. Near the tea-house there was a **Asian house shrew** spotted and on the day trip the group took to the bamboo forest they had unbelievable views of three **Himalayan red pandas** all resting together on the same tree branch. The unexpected mammal highlight of the trip was very nice views of **Hodgson's giant flying squirrel**; these animals combined with the **mainland clouded leopard** tracks that Mike found and evidence of **Eurasian wild boars** rooting around in the forest; shows the great potential for more wildlife sightings in this wonderful forest. The only other mammal seen on the trip were some **rhesus macaques** which were seen in and around the city of Kathmandu and along the roads to and from Langatang.

Whilst this trip didn't work out in terms of seeing a clouded leopard, we are Royle Safaris remains committed to trying to establish small-scale sustainable eco tourism centred around some of the world's rarest and little seen mammal species. We believe we have found the location and the right habitat. We just need more time and more groups here to really explore and any patterns and really nail down how to regularly see this awesome and elusive cat.

So anyone who is interested in looking for such an animal (such as the mainland clouded leopard or any other species) and cannot find a means of getting a trip together or is struggling to find like-minded people to travel with; contact us (info@royle-safaris.co.uk) we have a network of local guides, researchers and conservationists around the world as well as a large following of clients and so are uniquely situated to put together pioneering mammalwatching trips and get small groups together for such trips. Or we can arrange private tours if you do not want to be in a small group. Any and all options are possible and we look forward to hearing from you and working on the next rare mammalwatching expedition.

Species List

Clouded Leopard Expedition (Nepal) – November 2024

	Common Name	Binominal Name
1	Himalayan Red Panda	<i>Ailurus fulgens</i>
2	Orange-bellied Himalayan Squirrel	<i>Dremomys lokriah</i>
3	Assam macaque	<i>Macaca assamensis</i>
4	Rhesus Macaque	<i>Macaca mulatta</i>
5	Yellow-throated Marten	<i>Martes flavigula</i>
6	Himalayan Musk Deer	<i>Moschus leucogaster</i>
7	Northern Red Muntjac	<i>Muntiacus muntjak</i>
8	Himalayan Brown Goral	<i>Naemorhedus hodgsoni</i>
9	Indochinese Clouded Leopard ‡	<i>Neofelis nebulosa</i>
10	Hodgson's Giant Flying Squirrel	<i>Petaurista magnificus</i>
11	Nepal Grey Langur	<i>Semnopithecus schistaceus</i>
12	Asian House Shrew	<i>Suncus murinus</i>
13	Eurasian Wild Pig ‡	<i>Sus scofra</i>

‡ - Animals where signs were seen but not the animal

Birds

	Common Name	Binominal Name
1	Shikra	<i>Accipiter badius</i>
2	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
3	Bar-throated Siva	<i>Actinodura strigula</i>
4	Black-throated Tit	<i>Aegithalos concinnus</i>
5	Fire-tailed Sunbird	<i>Aethopyga ignicauda</i>
6	Green-tailed sunbird	<i>Aethopyga nipalensis</i>
7	Rufous-winged Fulvetta	<i>Alcippe castaneiceps</i>
8	Nepal fulvetta	<i>Alcippe nipalensis</i>
9	Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>
10	Hill partridge *	<i>Arborophila torqueola</i>
11	Eurasian eagle owl	<i>Bubo bubo</i>
12	Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>

13	Upland buzzard	<i>Bufo hemilosius</i>
14	Common buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
15	Grey nightjar	<i>Caprimulgus jotaka</i>
16	Common rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i>
17	Beautiful Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus pulcherrimus</i>
18	Pink-browed Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus rodochroa</i>
19	Himalayan white-browed rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus thura</i>
20	Hodgson's Treecreeper	<i>Certhia hodgsoni</i>
21	Yellow-bellied fantail	<i>Chelidorhynch hypoxanthus</i>
22	Woolly-necked Stork	<i>Ciconia episcopus</i>
23	Snow Pigeon	<i>Columba leuconota</i>
24	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>
25	Oriental Magpie Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
26	Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>
27	House crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
28	Nepal House Martin	<i>Delichon nipalense</i>
29	Grey treepie	<i>Dendrocitta formosae</i>
30	Gray-headed woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos canus</i>
31	Crimson-breasted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos cathpharius</i>
32	Fire-breasted Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum ignipectus</i>
33	Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>
34	Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
35	White-browed Fulvetta	<i>Fulvetta vinipectus</i>
36	Black-faced laughingthrush	<i>Garralux affinus</i>
37	Chestnut-crowned laughingthrush	<i>Garralux erythrocephalus</i>
38	Spotted laughingthrush	<i>Garralux ocellatus</i>
39	White-throated Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax albogularis</i>
40	White-crested laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax leucolophus</i>
41	Chestnut-backed rock-thrush	<i>Geokichla dohertyi</i>
42	Collared Owlet	<i>Glaucidium cuculoides</i>
43	Jungle owlet	<i>Glaucidium radiatum</i>
44	Striated Laughing-thrush	<i>Grammatoptila striata</i>
45	Lammergeier	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>
46	Rufous Sibia	<i>Heterophasia capistrata</i>
47	Blood pheasant	<i>Ithaginis cruentus</i>
48	Long-tailed Shrike	<i>Lanius schach</i>
49	Grey-backed Shrike	<i>Lanius tephronotus</i>
50	Plain Mountain Finch	<i>Leucosticte nemoricola</i>
51	Grey-crested tit	<i>Lophophanes dichrous</i>
52	Himalayan Monal	<i>Lophophorus impejanus</i>
53	Kalij Pheasant	<i>Lophura leucomelanos</i>

54	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>
55	Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush	<i>Monticola rufiventris</i>
56	Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
57	Blue Whistling Thrush	<i>Myophonus caeruleus</i>
58	Eurasian Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>
59	Maroon oriole	<i>Oriolus traillii</i>
60	Common tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus sutorius</i>
61	Mountain Scops Owl	<i>Otus spilocephalus</i>
62	Green-backed Tit	<i>Parus monticolus</i>
63	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
64	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer monantus</i>
65	Coal tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>
66	Rufous-vented Tit	<i>Periparus rubidiventris</i>
67	Blue-throated redstart	<i>Phoenicurus frontalis</i>
68	Plumbeous water redstart	<i>Phoenicurus fuliginosus</i>
69	Hume's leaf warbler	<i>Phylloscopus humei</i>
70	Green warbler	<i>Phylloscopus nitidus</i>
71	Buff-barred warbler	<i>Phylloscopus pulcher</i>
72	Grey-hooded warbler	<i>Phylloscopus xanthoschistos</i>
73	Rufous-breasted accentor	<i>Prunella strophiiata</i>
74	Green Shrike Babbler	<i>Pteruthius xanthochlorus</i>
75	Red-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus cafer</i>
76	Himalayan bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus leucogenys</i>
77	Red-headed Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula erythrocephala</i>
78	Brown Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula nipalensis</i>
79	Whistler's warbler	<i>Seicercus whistleri</i>
80	Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch	<i>Sitta castanea</i>
81	White-tailed Nuthatch	<i>Sitta himalayensis</i>
82	Oriental turtle dove	<i>Streptopelia orientalis</i>
83	Yellow-browed tit	<i>Sylviparus modestus</i>
84	White-browed Bush Robin	<i>Tarsiger indicus</i>
85	Himalayan bluetail	<i>Tarsiger rufiatus</i>
86	Satry tragopan	<i>Tragopan satyra</i>
87	Streaked Laughing-thrush	<i>Trochalopteron lineatum</i>
88	Variiegated laughingthrush	<i>Trochalopteron variegatum</i>
89	Eurasian wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
90	Black-throated Thrush	<i>Turdus atrogularis</i>
91	Red-billed Blue Magpie	<i>Urocissa erythroryncha</i>
92	Yellow-billed Blue Magpie	<i>Urocissa flavirostris</i>
93	Stripe-throated Yuhina	<i>Yuhina gularis</i>
94	Rufous-vented Yuhina	<i>Yuhina occipitalis</i>

‡ - Birds where heard but not seen

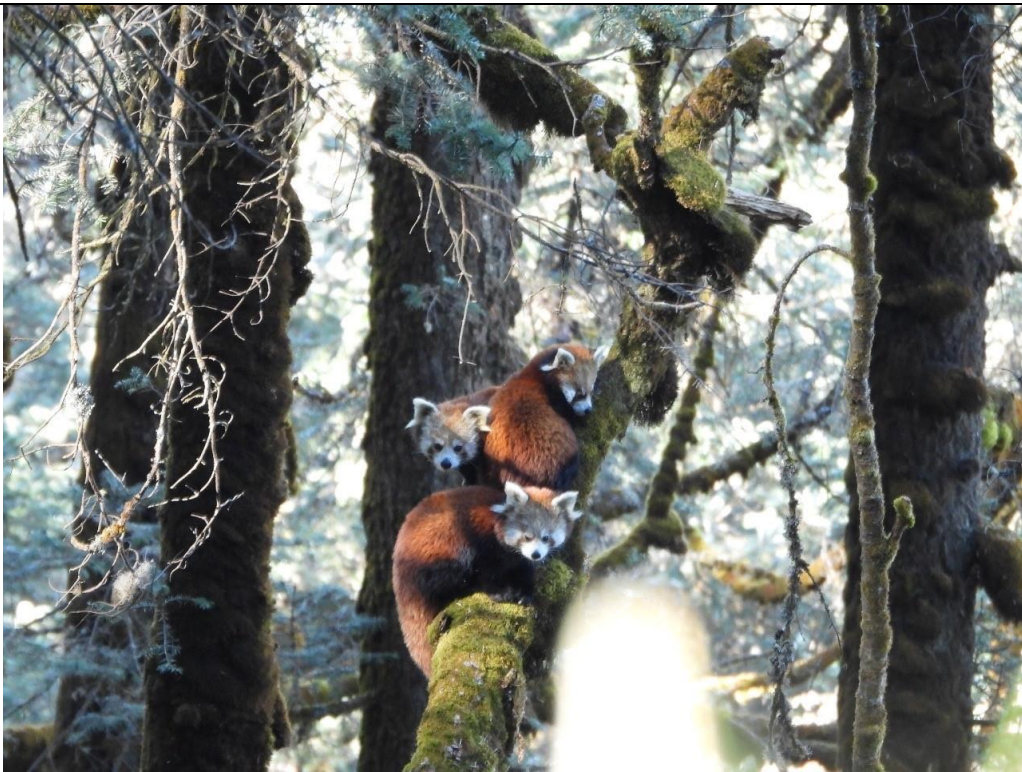
All of the pictures below are from Mike Gordon, Tomo Akaiyama and Jan Fleischmann with their permissions.



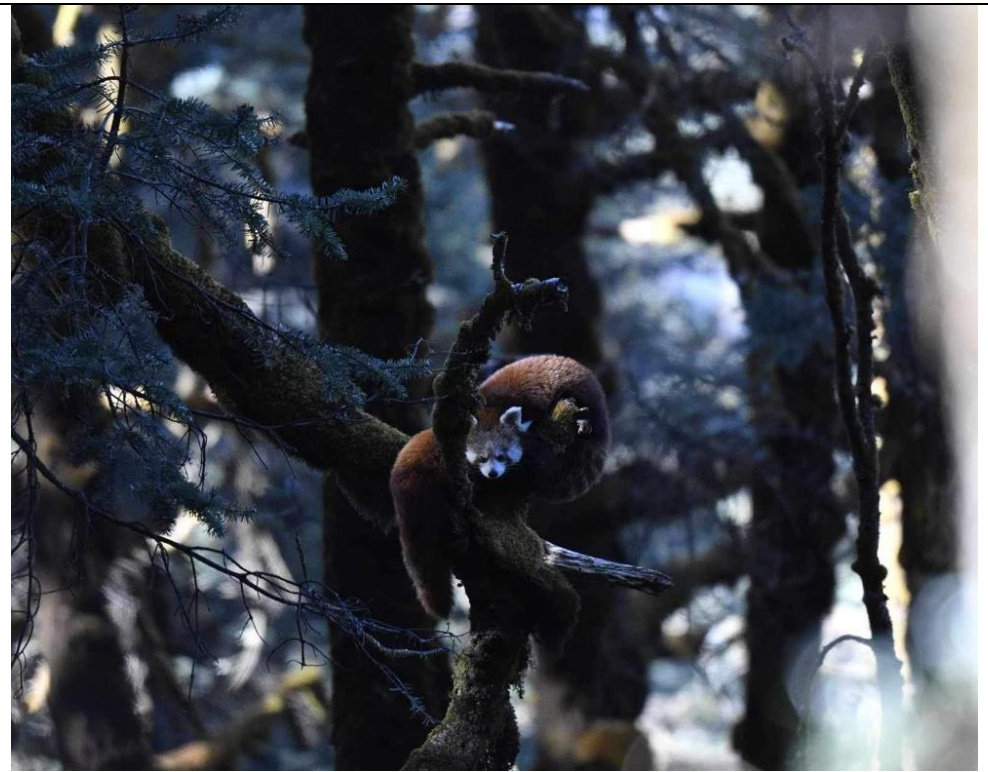
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Hodgson's Giant Flying Squirrel



Himalayan Red Pandas



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Northern Red Muntjac



Himalayan Brown Goral



Nepal Gray Langur



Nepal Gray Langur



(C)Tomo Akiyama

Himalayan Monal



(C)Tomo Akiyama

Red-headed Bullfinch



Large-billed Crow



(C)Tomo Akiyama

Langtang National Park