

Lions and Tigers and Bears ... & Birds!

February 14 – 28, 2023

Detailed Itinerary

- **Day 1 (14th/15th Feb 2023)** Our tour begins in Delhi where you will overnight following your arrival. (International flights usually reach Delhi at night which means guests can rest on 14th Feb night or 15th Feb morning). Accommodation will be available from the evening of the 14th. Redfox/Atrio/Radison Blu or similar hotel.
- **Day 2 (15th Feb 2023)** We travel to Rajkot via airplane, and from the Rajkot airport we will travel to Sasan Gir National Park by road which is about a three-hour journey. We will be birding while traveling to Sasan Gir. Once we arrive at Sasan Gir, guests can have a rest at the hotel. In the evening we will bird in and around Sasan Gir. Our targets include *Black Francolin*, *Painted Francolin*, *Rock Bush-quail*, *Jungle Bush-quail*, *Sykes's Lark*, *Singing Bush Lark*, *Rufous-tailed Lark*, *Greater short-toed Lark*, *King Vulture*, *White-rumped Vulture* and many more species. The Fern Resort or similar hotel.
- **Day 3 (16th Feb 2023)** We will be doing morning and evening safaris in the forest of Sasan Gir. During the safari we will be looking for lions, leopards, jungle cats, golden jackals and birds, including *Crested Tree Swift*, *Black Shoulder Kite*, and various kinds of falcons, shrikes, and vultures. Gir has 38 species of mammals, 300+ species of birds, 37 species of reptiles and more than 2,000 species of insects. It is the only place in Asia to see Asiatic Lions. The Fern Resort or similar hotel.
- **Day 4 (17th Feb 2023)** Our itinerary will be similar to that of Day 3. The Fern Resort or similar hotel.
- **Day 5 (18th Feb 2023)** After breakfast we will be traveling to Velavadar by road which will take almost 5 hours. After arriving, we'll check into the hotel and have lunch there. After lunch we will go for evening safari in Velavadar Black Buck National Park. Our targets include mammals such as black buck, Indian wolf, hyena, jackal, sambar deer, and jungle cat; birds include *Lesser Florican*, *Red-necked Falcon*, *Laggar Falcon*, *Saker Falcon*, *Greater Spotted Eagle*, *Hen Harrier*, *Pallid Harrier*, *Stoliczka's Bush Chat*, *Common Crane*, and *Demoiselle Crane*. The Black Buck Safari Lodge.
- **Day 6 (19th Feb 2023)** Our itinerary will be similar to that of Day 5. The Black Buck Safari Lodge.
- **Day 7 (20th Feb 2023)** After breakfast we will be traveling to Ahmedabad to catch our flight to Jaipur. After checking in to our hotel, time permitting, we will go for a walk through the local

markets. Founded in 1727 by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II, Jaipur is the capital of Rajasthan and is known as “the Pink City.” It’s famous for its textiles, jewelry and miniature paintings. The Holiday Inn / Clarks Amer or similar hotel.

- **Day 8 (21st Feb 2023)** After breakfast we have a whole day excursion in Jaipur. We will visit the Amber Fort, the City Palace, Jantar Mantar (the Jaipur Observatory), and have lunch in a local restaurant. The Holiday Inn / Clarks Amer or similar hotel.
- **Day 9 (22nd Feb 2023)** After breakfast at Jaipur, we will leave for Ranthambore Tiger Reserve by road, a three-hour journey. After lunch, we will go for an evening safari in the reserve. During our safari we will look for tiger, leopard, sloth bear, rusty spotted cat, golden jackal, hyena, langur, mongoose, spotted deer, wild boar, porcupine, mugger crocodile, caracal, sambar deer, and nilgai (the largest Asian antelope whose name literally means “blue cow.”) Target birds include the *Brown Fish Owl*, *Indian Scops Owl*, *Painted Spurfowl*, *Painted Sand Grouse*, *Chestnut-bellied Sand Grouse*, *White-naped Woodpecker*, *Rufous-fronted Prinia*, *Orphean Warbler*, *Indian Vulture*, *Stork-billed Kingfisher*, *Black-bellied Tern*, and various wheatears, larks, and barbets. Hotel Ranthambore Kothi / Omak Tiger 7 Resort or similar hotel.
- **Day 10 (23rd Feb 2023)** Morning/evening safaris at Ranthambore Tiger Reserve. (If possible, we will do a whole day safari in the park). Hotel Ranthambore Kothi / Omak Tiger 7 Resort or similar hotel.
- **Day 11 (24th Feb 2023)** Morning/Evening safaris at Ranthambore Tiger Reserve. Hotel Ranthambore Kothi / Omak Tiger 7 Resort or similar hotel.
- **Day 12 (25th Feb 2023)** After a morning safari at Ranthambore we will leave for Bharatpur with packed lunches. On the way to Bharatpur we will visit Chand Baori, one of the largest and deepest step wells in the world. Built by King Chanda in 8th-9th century, it has more than 3500 steps, descending the equivalent of 13 stories. The Laxmi Vilas Palace Hotel / Regenta by Royal Orchid or similar hotel.
- **Day 13 (26th Feb 2023)** We will bird for whole day at Keoladeo National Park, which was the private hunting reserve of the royal family of Bharatpur. Known as the Paradise of Birds, it was declared a World Heritage Natural Site by UNESCO in 1985. During our visit at Keoladeo we will look for water fowl in particular, including *Bar-headed Goose*, *Greylag Goose*, *Knob-Billed Duck*, *Common Shelduck*, *Ruddy Shelduck*, *Cotton Pygmy Goose*, *Gargany Teal*, *Northern Pintail*, *Falcated Duck*, *Common Teal*, *Ferruginous Pochard*, *Red-Crested Pochard*, *Greater Flamingo*, *Yellow Bittern*, *Black Bittern*, *Striated Heron*, *Painted Stork*, *Asian Openbill*, *Black-Necked Stork*, and *Saras Crane*. Other targets include *Siberian Rubythroat*, *Bluethroat*, *Long-Tailed Nightjar*, *Savana Nightjar*, *Blue-Tailed Bee-eater*, and *Lesser Golden-backed Woodpecker*. The Laxmi Vilas Palace Hotel / Regenta by Royal Orchid or similar hotel.

- **Day 14 (27th Feb 2023)** After breakfast we will leave for Agra, a two-hour drive. We will check into our hotel, have lunch and then spend the rest of the day at the Taj Mahal, returning to our hotel after sunset. The Taj Mahal was built by King Shahjahan in memory of his beloved wife Mumtaj Mahal who died during the birth of her fourteenth child. Twenty thousand laborers, working day and night, took 22 years to complete the monument, which is built of pure white Makrana marble inlaid with semiprecious stones. The Clark Shiraz / Trident or similar hotel.
- **Day 15 (28th Feb 2023)** After breakfast we will visit a factory where artisans produce works of marble inlay. Then we'll travel to Delhi, where we'll check into our hotel and enjoy our farewell dinner. After dinner guests will be dropped at the airport for their overnight flights home. Redfox/Atrio/Radison Blu or similar hotel.

Tour Leader

Rajveer Singh, the owner of Wild India Tours, has over twenty years of experience guiding trips throughout India. He is a certified naturalist, licensed by the Forest Department of Rajasthan, India, and has an immense knowledge of not only the wildlife of India but also of its culture. He is passionate about sharing his knowledge with his clients and he loves to introduce them to the wonders of India. He is well known as a guide among Indian travel agencies, and he worked as a local tour leader for National Geographic Expeditions in the years 2015 to 2017.

We can expect 376+ bird species, 40+ mammal species and 25+ reptile species and few butterflies throughout the tour.



Cost: US\$6150 per person, double occupancy; 1350 single supplement. Limit 8 people.

Price includes

Hotel Accommodation including all meals, mineral water and soft drinks. Hotels / Resorts (four or five stars). All transportation: domestic flights, Innova cars / One mini AC coach for the entire tour and airport transfers. Permit to National Parks along with two Safari Jeeps including the per person still camera fee (this is particularly important in Gujarat since the still camera fee is very expensive there), local guides and drivers. All monument fees and local history guides. Rickshaws in Keoladeo National Park (the only form of transport allowed there.) A farewell dinner and drinks in Delhi. All tips for drivers, local guides, hotel staff, etc. Covid-19 precautions will be taken care by Wild India Tours. Our naturalists will be vaccinated.

Price Excludes

- Flights to/from New Delhi International Airport

- Travel Insurance (highly recommended)
- Cost of visa
- Cost of any required vaccinations
- Cost of testing expenses including Covid-19 disease
- Cost of medical expenses including Covid-19 disease
- Cost of lodging expenses in case of Covid-19 quarantine
- Any pre- or post-tour accommodation, meals, or other excursions
- Laundry & personal expenses (e.g. toiletries, snacks, souvenirs)
- Hard Liquor (Gujarat is a dry state so no hard alcohol is available there)

Payments

To register for this tour, please contact Cris Heins at travelprogram@goldengateaudubon.org first. A deposit of 20% (US\$1230) of the total cost is required within a week of signing up for this trip.

The balance, 80% (US\$4920) of the total must be paid no later than 90 days before the first day of the tour. All payments to be paid to GGAS.

Checks should be made out to "GGAS" and "India tour" should be written in the memo line. (We cannot accept credit card payments at this time.) Checks can be mailed to

**Golden Gate Audubon
2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G
Berkeley, California 94702**

Cancellation & Refund Policy

You may cancel your booking at any stage. Cancellation must be advised in writing by the 'lead name' (where possible) and takes effect on the day such notice is received by us.

- Cancellation within 90 days before the start of the tour will result with your deposit being refunded after a deduction of 15%.
- Cancellation 45 days before the start of the tour will be refunded after the deduction of 15% of the total amount of the tour.
- Cancellation between 30 – 44 days before the start of the tour will be refunded after a deduction of 30% of the total amount of the tour.
- Cancellation between 15 – 29 days before the start of the tour will be refunded after a deduction of 60% of the total cost of the tour.
- No refunds can be made if you cancel less than 15 days before the start of the tour.

e-Visa

You will need to obtain a visa to travel to India. You can complete this process online at <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in>

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is essential and we insist that you take out suitable cover as soon as your tour is booked. If you are bringing expensive optical equipment or other valuable items, please make sure they are also adequately insured on your home contents policy since most travel insurance policies do not cover very expensive individual items. You may wish to consult your insurance broker regarding coverage. Please also ensure that your policy covers you in the event of a medical emergency, cancellation of a trip or severe delays. Medical costs abroad can often be expensive. Please note that WILD INDIA TOURS is not liable for any medical or repatriation costs resulting from injury or illness during a tour or for covering any costs resulting from a flight delay such as extra hotel accommodation.

Health

Participants are advised NOT to drink the tap water. Bottled water will be available at all times throughout the tour. Fresh vegetables can also induce stomach problems—if you are in any doubt about whether something is safe to eat, just ask your guide—he will tell you. Refer to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which includes vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases. Guidelines for COVID-19 can be found here: <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>

Luggage

Please check baggage weight and size restrictions imposed by the airline used for this tour. If possible, please bring your luggage in soft-sided bags or cases (rather than large hard-shelled suitcases) since these pack more easily into our vehicles during the tour.

Entering India, Currency, Electricity

To enter India, a visa is mandatory and must be obtained prior to departure.

ATMs for local currency are available everywhere.

The electrical current in India is 220V, 50 cycles. Bring Type D plug adapter.

Electricity is available 24/7 and in case of power cuts, we have a generator also.

Pace of the Tour

The itinerary for this tour is designed not to be hectic. We are focused on providing comfort while following our complete itinerary.

Weather, Insects & Clothing

Carry insect repellent since there will be mosquitos and insects. And remember to purchase travel health insurance. The weather in India will be pleasant in February. In Gujarat, it will be warm with the temperature varying between 70° and 85°. It will be cooler on the morning safaris since we will be wandering inside the jungle in open jeeps. The temperature in Ranthambore will be cooler than that in Gujarat.

*Please do not wear brightly colored clothing—dressing in drab-colored clothing will enhance our chances of seeing some very elusive species.

Accommodations and Internet access

Accommodations will be very comfortable with internet service available. In Velavadar, internet service may be available only in the lobby area.

Food

At our accommodations, guests will enjoy delicious local Indian food with the spice level adjusted to guests' tastes. During our journey we will also enjoy lunches in excellent restaurants where our guests can sample classic Indian foods.

Transportation

Transportation will be comfortable. In Gujarat, we will have three SUVs at our disposal. In Rajasthan, we will be traveling in an air-conditioned luxury coach.

Photography

The camera fee allows each person to have free use of **one camera**. Unlimited photography is allowed but please remember not to disturb mammals and birds.

Recommended reading: *Birds of the Indian Subcontinent* by Richard Grimmett, Carol Inskipp, and Tim Inskipp.