

India - Northern

Western Himalaya

21st March to 1st April 2024 (12 days)

Bengal Tiger Extension

1st April to 5th April 2024 (5 days)



Himalayan Monal by David Hoddinott

This birding adventure takes us to the rarely visited and remote destinations of Munsiyari and Chaukori in the Western Himalaya. We will have the rare opportunity to search for a host of Asia's most tantalising and desirable species, including the stunning Satyr Tragopan, tricky Cheer & Koklass Pheasants, metallic Himalayan Monal and Wallcreeper. We'll also visit the better-known sites of Sattal in the Kumaon Himalaya foothills and Jim Corbett National Park in search of numerous woodpeckers, hornbills, parakeets, and babblers, as well as several mammals including the scare Bengal Tiger, several deer and Asian Elephant.

Our short extension to Ranthambhore National Park is primarily dedicated to finding the majestic Bengal Tiger but will also provide many more opportunities for several mammals and widespread subcontinent bird species.

Itinerary & Map

Western Himalaya

Day 1	Arrival into New Delhi
Day 2	New Delhi to Kosi River
Days 3 & 4	Jim Corbett National Park
Day 5	Jim Corbett National Park to Sattal
Day 6	Sattal
Day 7	Sattal to Chaukori
Day 8	Chaukori to Munsiyari
Days 9 & 10	Munsiyari
Day 11	Munsiyari to Sattal
Day 12	Sattal, train to New Delhi & depart

Bengal Tiger Extension

Day 1	Arrival into New Delhi
Day 2	New Delhi, train to Ranthambhore
Days 3 & 4	Ranthambhore National Park
Days 4 to 6	Ranthambhore National Park, train to New Delhi & depart



Birding sites in detail



Long-billed Thrush by Forrest Rowland

Kosi River. Clear mountain streams in this area support a selection of torrent specialists, notably the striking Crested Kingfisher, Plumbeous Water and stunning White-capped Redstarts, Grey Wagtail, and active Brown Dipper. Rock-lined riverbanks support small wintering populations of two highly desirable, but rare birds, the incredible Ibisbill and glamorous Wallcreeper; the former would be a lucky find while the latter is more regular.

The forests in this area are excellent for birding and may yield Great Hornbill, Blue-bearded Bee-eater, Common Green Magpie, Black-chinned Babbler and Great Slaty Woodpecker. Along the streams, we could find Spotted and Little Forktails, while the thickets and gullies hold Chestnut-headed Tesia and both Scaly-breasted and Nepal Cupwings, although we will have to have patience and a little luck to see these shy understory species.

We will then enjoy birding the scenic foothill forest along the Corbett National Park buffer zone, strolling a series of wooded back roads and forested trails in search of some delightful species, including Lineated and Brown-headed Barbets, Grey-capped Pygmy, Streak-throated, Grey-headed and Fulvous-breasted Woodpeckers, Golden-fronted Leafbird, outrageous Rufous Treepie, flocks of Red-breasted Parakeet, Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike – often associating with mixed flocks containing a host of bulbuls, such as Black-crested, Ashy and Red-whiskered, both Yellow-eyed and Tawny-bellied Babblers, the very attractive White-crested Laughingthrush, Slaty-blue and Snowy-browed Flycatchers, the stunning Rufous-bellied Niltava, Long-tailed Minivet often perched high in the treetops, White-throated Fantail, Lemon-rumped, Buff-barred and Whistler's Warblers, and



Wallcreeper by Clayton Burne

the charismatic Velvet-fronted Nuthatch. With a dash of luck, we may even find the scarce Long-billed Thrush, an impressive and aptly named winter visitor from higher altitudes.

Jim Corbett National Park. Our drive into the reserve follows the banks of the Ramganga River, and we'll make stops at several lookout points for Black, Asian Woolly-necked and handsome, Black-necked Storks, Pallas's and Lesser Fish Eagles, Himalayan Swiftlet, White-rumped Spinetail and Crested Treeswift. We will have a good chance of spying Gharial and Mugger Crocodile too.

Further along, our drive through the park may yield the minuscule Collared Falconet, Changeable Hawk-Eagle, Cinereous and Himalayan Vultures, Black-crested Bulbul, Common Woodshrike, Maroon Oriole, Black-winged Cuckooshrike, Coppersmith and Lineated Barbets, Scarlet Minivet, Crimson Sunbird and Red Junglefowl. Common Emerald Dove often fly off the road, and, with luck, we will hopefully see roosting Tawny and Brown Fish Owls on their day roosts.



Black-necked Stork by Forrest Rowland

The Dhikala area is one of the best birding sites within Jim Corbett National Park. The extensive grasslands provide excellent habitat for the shy Black Francolin, Yellow-eyed Babblers and Yellow-breasted Greenfinch, while the wetland floodplain below our accommodation teems with a wealth of water-associated birdlife such as Osprey, Hen Harrier, Green and Wood Sandpipers, Lesser Coucal, noisy flocks of Plum-headed and Slaty-headed Parakeets, Crested Kingfisher, Grey-throated Martin, Barn and Red-rumped Swallows, Long-tailed and Grey-backed Shrikes, Golden-headed Cisticola and Common Rosefinch. Forest edge habitat should produce Kalij Pheasant, Ashy Bulbul, Black-throated Thrush, Himalayan Rubythroat and Aberrant Bush Warblers, whilst Blue-

bearded Bee-eater, Blue-throated Barbet, White-bellied Drongo and Jungle Myna are commonly seen around the lodge.



Golden Bush Robin by Daniel Danckwerts

Jim Corbett will also offer us a chance to see several distinctive and well-known Indian mammals such as Rhesus Macaque, the elegant Tarai Grey Langur, Golden Jackal, Jungle Cat, small families of Asian Elephant, Wild Boar, Chital (Spotted Deer) and the endangered Hog Deer, Sambar (the largest Indian deer), and Northern Red Muntjac (also called Common Barking Deer). Bengal Tiger is also present in the park, but they are elusive here and are only occasionally seen.

Sattal. We'll take a train journey to Kathgodam (timber depot), in the Kumaon



Himalaya foothills. From the train station, we will ascend to the hill town of Sattal (7 lakes). This popular tourist area is set in well-wooded hillsides surrounding seven lakes, which provide fantastic mid-altitude birding at around 1,500masl (4,500ft).

We'll work our way along the main roads, taking opportune detours down various side roads as we find flocks. The surrounding habitat comprises fields, scrub and taller woodland which supports the likes of Mountain Hawk-Eagle, Kalij Pheasant, Slaty-headed Parakeet, Red-billed Blue Magpie, Grey Treepie, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler, Maroon Oriole, Greater Flameback, Slaty-blue Flycatcher, Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush, White-crested Laughingthrush, Golden Bush Robin, Rufous-breasted and Black-throated Accentors, Blue-fronted and Blue-capped Redstarts, Green-tailed and Crimson Sunbird, White-capped Bunting and Common Rosefinch.



Red-fronted Serin by Clayton Burne

Birding side roads and forest trails may also reveal Lesser Yellownappe, Siberian Rubythroat, Grey-winged Blackbird, Blue-winged Minla, Black and Ashy Bulbuls, Himalayan Black-lored Tit, Common Green Magpie, Red-billed Leothrix, Speckled Piculet, Rufous-gorgeted Flycatcher, Rufous Sibia, Whistler's Warbler and the cryptic Scaly-breasted Cupwing. With a bit of luck, we may find a day roosting Tawny Fish Owl, or Brown Dipper on the rivers and streams.



Cheer Pheasant by Adam Riley

Time permitting, we may visit a hide where Rufous-throated Partridge occasionally visits, alongside Grey Treepie, Rufous-chinned Laughingthrush, Red-billed Leothrix, Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch and Kalij Pheasant.

Sattal to Chaukori. Mostly a travel day, but birding en route may turn up Kalij Pheasant, Black Francolin, Dark-breasted and Pink-browed Rosefinches, Golden Bush Robin, Himalayan Owl, Bearded Vulture, Spotted Laughingthrush, Himalayan Monal, Rufous-bellied Woodpecker, Brown-fronted Woodpecker, Wallcreeper, Whiskered Yuhina, White-tailed Nuthatch, Himalayan Buzzard, Eurasian Sparrowhawk.

Chaukori. The surround high grasslands are excellent sites for Cheer Pheasant and Himalayan Monal, whilst nearby pine stands make for excellent Koklass Pheasant, Hill Partridge and Satyr Tragopan opportunities. Whilst searching out these two tricky, but very attractive species, we will no doubt come across many other sought-after species such as swirling flocks of Altai and Alpine Accentors, Collared, Spot-



Satyr Tragopan by David Hoddinott

winged and Black-and-Yellow Grosbeaks, Spot-winged Rosefinch, Himalayan Beautiful, Dark-breasted and Pink-browed Rosefinches, Scarlet Finch, Brown Bullfinch, Aberrant and Brown-flanked Bush Warblers, Golden Bush Robin, Himalayan, Rufous-bellied and Brown-fronted Woodpeckers, Stripe-throated and Whiskered Yuhinas, Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler, Scaly-breasted Cupwing, Long-billed Thrush, White-collared Blackbird, Plain Mountain Finch, Snow Pigeon, Speckled Wood Pigeon, Cinereous, Himalayan and Bearded Vultures, Golden Eagle and possibly a day roosting Himalayan Owl.



Koklass Pheasant by Paul Varney

Munsiyari. The hill station of Munsiyari (*place with snow* in the local Kumaoni language), but often referred to as the 'Little Kashmir', is perched a little under 2,300m above sea level, offering a cool respite from the hotter lowlands. The Himalayan views are breath-taking, none more so than the five Panchachuli Peaks that are visible from almost anywhere in the village.

Depending on our success around Chaukori, our key targets in the area are likely to include Cheer and Koklass Pheasants, Himalayan Monal, Satyr Tragopan, Hill Partridge, Alpine and Chestnut Thrushes, Red-fronted Serin, Yellow-breasted Greenfinch, Golden Bush Robin, Whistler's Warbler, Spot-winged and Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinches, Altai Accentor and Black-throated Accentors, Variegated and Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrushes, Chestnut-headed Tesia and Scaly-breasted Cupwing.

We'll visit several key sites around Munsiyari such as Birthi Falls, Binni Bend, Kalamuni Top, Betulidhar and Thamri Kund in search of Dark-breasted and Pink-browed Rosefinches,

Rufous-breasted and Black-throated Accentors, Golden Bush Robin, Himalayan and Rufous-bellied Woodpeckers, Whiskered Yuhina, White-tailed Nuthatch, Streak-breasted Scimitar Babbler, Scaly-breasted Cupwing, White-collared Blackbird, Plain Mountain Finch, Blue-capped and Blue-fronted Redstarts and Red-fronted Serin.

Our efforts are also likely to turn up Wallcreeper, Blue Rock Thrush, Small and Rufous-bellied Niltavas, Spotted, Little and Slaty-backed Forktails, Brown Dipper, Speckled Piculet, Bar-throated Minla, several *Phylloscopus* warblers such as Lemon-rumped, Buff-barred, Greenish, Western-crowned and Hume's Leaf, as well as Bar-tailed Treecreeper, Black-throated Sunbird, Fire-breasted Flowerpecker, Scarlet Finch and Alpine Swift.



Chestnut Thrush by Glen Valentine

We'll also pay a visit the beautifully picturesque Nanda Devi Temple area in search of Whistler's Warbler, Spot-winged Rosefinch, Himalayan Beautiful Rosefinch, Chestnut Thrush, Variegated and Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrushes, Chestnut-headed Tesia, White-browed Fulvetta, Himalayan Buzzard and overflying Bearded Vultures.



Displaying Indian Peafowl by David Hoddinott

Ranthambhore National Park. With our time in the Himalayas over, we switch our attention to the deciduous forests, woodlands, and lakes of the central plateau. A morning train ride will take us to the famous Ranthambhore National Park.

The tropical dry deciduous and thorn forest covers an area of more than 1,300km² (500m²); needless to say, there is plenty of area to roam! Dominated by the 10th century Ranthambhore Fort which sits atop a plateau 700ft above the plains, this scenic reserve contains high concentrations of herbivores such as Chital (Spotted Deer), Sambar and Wild Boar, and it is this abundance of

prey species that supports one of the healthiest populations of Tiger anywhere on Earth. Locating these magnificent cats requires a combination of skill and patience – and, of course, a small dose of luck!



Bengal Tiger by Adam Riley

We will use open-top jeeps and/or canter vans to explore the park in search of Bengal Tigers, watching for tell-tale signs such as pugmarks or scat in the road and listening for the alarm calls of Sambar, Chital, Southern Plains Grey Langurs and Indian Peafowl. With luck, these will lead us to a Bengal Tiger padding along a dusty track or

sprawled out in the dappled sunlight of a bamboo thicket. Looking into the amber eyes of this, the largest of all the big cats, undoubtedly ranks as one of the world's ultimate wildlife experiences! In addition to Bengal Tigers and their favourite prey species, during our safari drives, we may also come across Ruddy Mongoose or even Jungle Cat, Leopard, and Sloth Bear.



Painted Spurfowl by Adam Riley

Although our main reason for visiting Ranthambhore is to search for Bengal Tigers, the rich woods and meadows of this scenically stunning park also offer excellent birding and the valley floors support good numbers of Painted Spurfowl, Jungle and Rock Bush Quail, the uncommon White-naped Woodpecker, Indian Scops Owl, Yellow-footed Green Pigeon, Alexandrine and Plum-headed Parakeets, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Sirkeer Malkoha, Common Iora, White-bellied Drongo, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher (which can often be located by its sweet song

given from dense bamboo patches), the active White-browed Fantail, Grey-breasted and Rufous-fronted Prinias and Yellow-throated Sparrow.

While in the area, we will also keep our eyes peeled for Indian Vulture, Pallid Harrier, Shikra, Bonelli's Eagle, and Crested Serpent Eagle.

We will also take the opportunity to bird around our lodge, which regularly produces the endemic Painted Sandgrouse, Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Indian Roller, Indian Stone-curlew, Brahminy Starling, Common Woodshrike and Ashy-crowned sparrow-Lark, whilst a good degree of luck is required to find Marshall's lora.



Plum-headed Parakeets by Adam Riley

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Moderate to undemanding. Suitable for all birding / wildlife interest levels. India is an assault on the senses first time around, requiring a little tolerance to begin with.
Birding Ease	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Undemanding. Most species provide good visuals in open conditions. Some forest edge, but true forest birding is limited.
Accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comfortable.
Walking / Trails	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Mostly on gently undulating roads/lodge gardens. Potential for some moderate walking in the Himalaya.
Vehicles / Roads	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Busses, trains, 4x4 & open safari vehicles. Variable to poor road conditions. Vehicles are manufactured to local requirements, so tend to be a squeeze/on the small size for Western tourists.
Photography	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Good to excellent. From vehicle and in lodge gardens.
Annoyances	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Slow traffic, poor road conditions. Spicy food, strong smells of various types. Can be cold at altitude & on early morning safaris.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to dinner on day 12 on the Western Himalaya tour;
- All meals from dinner on day 1 to dinner on day 5 on the Bengal Tiger Extension;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour (including train transport);
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions;
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**
- Roads outside of Indian cities are poorly maintained, causing vehicles to travel very slowly. We make use of trains in some areas to cut travel times and increase both comfort and safety. Our local agents, tour leaders and porters ensure that all your luggage is stowed aboard at embarkation, as well as taken off and transferred to our vehicles at disembarkation. The train rides are generally smooth, and relatively quiet, allowing you to process photos, update social media or simply to rest.
- Rest rooms on trains vary in cleanliness. Facilities are of the squat toilet type, typically little more than a cubicle with a hole in the carriage floor.
- It is important for the comfort of your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20 kg (44 lb) for check in luggage and 8 kg (+-18 lb) for hand luggage.

- This tour does require a moderate level of fitness, and participants should be in good general as some of the birding will be done on foot and may require walking for several hours at a time.
- It is not permissible to leave the open safari vehicles within Corbett and Ranthambhore National Parks, except at designated sites.
- If you have any physical or medical limitations or conditions, please notify us in advance of departure.
- For much of this tour we will be far away from modern medical facilities.
- Accommodation throughout the trip is of a good standard, and the hotels and resorts that we make use of range from comfortable to very comfortable. There is no camping on this trip.
- Overnight temperatures, particularly in the Himalayan foothills, can be quite cool and it is advisable to bring layered clothing for warmth and convenience.
- The open jeep tours in Corbett and Ranthambhore National Park can be very cold (especially in the mornings), please bring sufficient warm clothing, including gloves, scarf/buff and a beanie (woolly hat).

Arrival and Departure Details

The Western Himalaya tour begins in New Delhi on day 1, and as this is scheduled as an arrival day; you are free to arrive at any time. The tour will conclude with our evening farewell dinner in New Delhi on day 12.

The Bengal Tiger Extension begins in New Delhi on day 1, and as this is scheduled as an arrival day; you are free to arrive at any time. The tour will conclude with our evening farewell dinner in New Delhi on day 5.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi (IATA: DEL) is the main port of entry for international flights into India.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements. The following website provides detailed information about visa eligibility and assistance with online applications options where viable: [Visa HQ for Travel](#)

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.