

**BIRDS AND OTHER WILDLIFE IN CHAMBAL**

Second part. Chambal as a multi-day wildlife destination

27 June 2017

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<https://wsimag.com/travel/27379-birds-and-other-wildlife-in-chambal>

**INDIA – TADOBA AND CHAMBAL**

09-24 April 2017

Mattia Altieri

<http://www.mammalwatching.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/MA-INDIA-2-ENGLISH-smaller.pdf>

Chambal river is another great place. In two full days I was surprised to see **Common Palm Civets** in full daylight at the lodge. Then at the river and farmlands **Gharials**, a herd of **Blackbucks** with a rutting male strutting and catching females, **Indian Skimmers** “skimming”, **Golden Jackals**, and the magnificent **Saurus Cranes** dancing and reinforcing their lifelong pair bond. Best of all: a mother **Ganges River Dolphins** giving multiple (obviously brief) views in the quiet of the sunset. A few times I was able to see well the long snout. My lodge was Chambal river lodge, and I had another great naturalist: Bachchu Singh <http://www.chambalsafari.com/>.

**NUMBER OF GHARIALS, MUGGERS GOES UP IN CHAMBAL**

Apr 3, 2017

Aditya Dev

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/agra/number-of-gharials-muggers-goes-up-in-chambal/articleshow/57993791.cms>

**RANTHAMBHORE, BANDHAVGARH, BHARATPUR, CHAMBAL RIVER, SULTANPUR & DELHI**

India, November - December 2017

Peter Aley & Alison Rowntree

[http://www.surfbirds.com/trip\\_report.php?id=2820](http://www.surfbirds.com/trip_report.php?id=2820)

**17th November: Chambal Safari Lodge**

Left Delhi by car, seeing four Black-winged Kites and three Egyptian Vultures en route, and after a six-hour drive (including two brief stops) arrived at Chambal Safari Lodge early afternoon, for a three-night stay.

After lunch, we toured the excellent lodge grounds with one of their wildlife guides. He quickly located a trio of roosting owls – a Brown Hawk Owl, two Indian Scops Owls and three Spotted Owlets, all giving great views and looking relaxed on their perches in the trees. Amongst a mixed flock of Baya Weavers, Indian Silverbills, Scaly-breasted Munias and Chestnut-shouldered Petronia, we found a male Black-headed Munia, apparently only the second record for the site! Other highlights were our first Golden Jackals (3) including one asleep, and two beautifully colourful Plumb-headed Parakeets. Dozens of huge and noisy Flying Foxes were roosting near our room.

**18th November: Chambal River & Safari Lodge**

Driven to the Chambal River in the morning and before embarking on our half day boat trip, a search around the shore by the launch spot produced a few birds notably two Sand Larks.

The boat trip provided a great opportunity to get views of a wide variety of species, land birds as well as water dwellers. We quickly came across three each of River and the striking Black-bellied Terns, one of the latter watched resting on a sand bar. Other highlights were: several parties of Great Thick-knees (5); distinctive Asian Openbills (6); our highest trip count of Red-naped Ibises (6); fascinating Gharials with their narrow snouts side-by-side with huge Marsh Crocodiles; and several sightings of the scarce Indian River Dolphin surfacing. A Pallas's Gull gave an all too brief and distant appearance down the river and a Long-legged Buzzard flew by, however we had no luck in finding Indian Skimmer nor Small Pratincole.

Other birds seen on the boat trip or shore near the launch spot included: Lesser Whistling-duck (40), Striated Heron, Black-winged Kites, Western Osprey (3), Shikra (2), Egyptian Vulture (3), Peregrine ("Shaheen Falcon"), River Lapwings, Temminck's Stint (3), Bronze-winged Jacana (4), Greater Coucals, Pied Kingfishers, Southern Grey Shrike, Desert Wheatear, Blue Rock Thrush, Citrine (2), White and White-browed Wagtails, Tawny Pipit (3), Crested Lark (2) and a variety of Turtles.

Back at the Lodge, Grey Mongoose (2) appeared, our guide expertly found three Barred Buttonquail lurking under bushes, and in nearby fields, two Yellow-wattled Lapwings. After dark Alison found a Jungle Cat just outside our room but it slipped away before I could get on to it. However the guide came and found us to show us a superb Common Palm Civet in torch light up a tree near the restaurant.

Other species we recorded around the Lodge included Red-necked Falcon, Laughing Doves, Little Swifts, Indian Grey Hornbill (10), Brown-headed & Coppersmith Barbets, Wryneck, Grey-headed Canary Flycatcher (2), Yellow-eyed Babbler (6), Asian Pied and Brahminy (4) Starlings, Olive-backed Pipit (4), Common Rosefinch (6), Red-headed Bunting (6) and some Indian Hares.

**INDIA'S WILDLIFE – A PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR**

With Chambal & Bharatpur Extension

25 October - 5 November 2017

Nature trek Tour Report

[https://www.naturetrek.co.uk/reports\\_new/IND03\\_report\\_171025\\_Indias\\_Wildlife\\_A\\_Phography\\_Tour.pdf](https://www.naturetrek.co.uk/reports_new/IND03_report_171025_Indias_Wildlife_A_Phography_Tour.pdf)

Day 1/ Extension Day 1 Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> November

Those on the Main Tour flew back to the UK, where the Main Tour ended. Meanwhile, for those on the Extension, a half hour drive took us from our lodge to the jetty, from where we boarded our boat for a river safari on what is considered to be India's cleanest river, the Chambal.

On the walk from the coach to the boat we photographed a Long-legged Buzzard and Indian Tent Turtles. Osprey, Marsh Harrier and a nesting pair of Bonelli's Eagles were other notable raptors seen this morning. River Terns, Black-bellied Terns, Pallas's Gulls, Little Ringed Plover and Egyptian Vulture were very approachable and added to our lengthening bird list, which also included a multitude of egrets, herons, storks and ducks.

As Tim mentioned this morning, a day on which one has seen two critically endangered species before breakfast could not possibly be anything but outstanding, and we were having such a day: the critically endangered Gharial Crocodile and the Gangetic Dolphin had allowed us glimpses into their lives before breakfast. Muggers Crocodiles had also been more than obliging, as had the giant Indian Soft-shelled Turtles. As we docked our boat close to a sand bank to have breakfast, several Gangetic Dolphins kept popping up around us in every direction. It felt truly surreal!

We headed back to the lodge after what had been a lovely morning, and had lunch and some rest. At 4.30pm we had tea and then went for a nature walk around the property. We managed to get some good photographs of a pair of Spotted Owlets, a large flock of roosting fruit bats (Indian Flying Foxes), many scrub birds such as munias, babblers, thrushes, etc., and we disturbed some herds of Nilgai antelope and a few jackals.

It got dark early and we came back to freshen up and sip our gin and tonics while updating the checklist. After dinner we went for another short walk, hoping to see creatures of the night, and Carol helped us spot a Palm Civet up a tree!

Extension Day 2 Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November

We went back to the river for another river safari. This morning we had what could qualify as the natural history moment of the trip. The following quote is David's entry in the Rare Sightings Register at Chambal Safari Lodge: *"Soon after the start of the boat ride we spotted a female Jungle Cat hunting on the bank. It was some time before she spotted us and disappeared into the undergrowth. We continued on our way until we heard the Jungle Cat mating calls. We caught glimpses of a large male and the female as they went about their business accompanied*

*by a lot of cat noises. A once in a lifetime experience, lots of photos and sound recording.” It was a once in a lifetime experience indeed!*

The rest of the morning was no less fantastic. We found an Osprey feeding on a kill, and got more photographs of Bonelli’s Eagles. Mugger, Gharial and Gangetic Dolphins were seen again, and we also achieved our target of a seeing an adult male Gharial - a very large specimen with the trademark ‘ghara’ at the end of its snout that gives the species its name.

Back at the lodge, we had lunch and packed our bags for Keoladeo National Park at Bharatpur, Rajasthan. It was a three-hour drive and it was dark by the time we checked in at the Birder’s Inn at Bharatpur.

### **GHARIALS & CROCODILES | CHAMBAL | RIVER SAFARI**

October 2017

<http://www.indiamike.com/india/indian-wildlife-and-national-parks-f74/gharials-and-crocodiles-chambal-river-safari-t267992/>