



# India

February, 2020

Tentative Itinerary

Friday, January 31st departure (to arrive February 1) for international flight. Could be a good idea to arrive a day earlier (January 30 departure to arrive January 31) to help get over jet lag. Recommended flight TBD.

**Saturday, February 1--Trip Begins** Arrive in Delhi, the capital city of India, and transfer to hotel. There is an option of going birding locally this evening or doing a half day city sightseeing tour.

**Lodging** in Delhi at Taj Dwarika.

**Sunday, February 2--**This morning take your flight from Delhi to Jaisalmer (SG 871: ETD 0845/ETA 1005). Upon reaching Jaisalmer, check-in to your hotel followed by lunch. Visit Jaisalmer Fort this afternoon. It is the only living fort of India i.e. there is a large community that still lives inside this 12<sup>th</sup> century structure and its narrow lanes are full of houses, temples, shops and restaurants.

In the evening go birding in the outskirts of the city.

Back to the hotel for dinner.

**Lodging** in Jaisalmer at Rang Mahal Hotel.

**Monday, February 3--**Just before sunrise this morning, along with packed breakfast, we will drive for about 1 hour to Desert National Park (Thar Desert). Spend the entire day birding. This sandy desert is one of the last remaining refuges of the critically endangered Great Indian Bustard besides being the winter abode of birds like the Cream Coloured Courser, various vultures and eagles, Trumpeter Finch, Desert

Wheatear, etc. We will have a lunch break at a local restaurant. Return to our hotel in the evening.

**Lodging** in Jaisalmer at Rang Mahal Hotel.

**Tuesday, February 4--**This morning, after breakfast, we will drive about 6 hours to Chandelao including a quick stop for lunch en-route. Chandelao is a well kept secret of Demoiselle Crane winter congregation. Fewer visitors make it a more enjoyable spot to watch the cranes.

**Lodging** in Chandelao

**Wednesday, February 5--**This morning, set out on our drive towards Bera. Enroute, after about an hour's drive, we will stop in Jodhpur for birding at Rao Jodha Park. Rao Jodha Park is a restored rocky desert habitat in the middle of Jodhpur city. After the un-urbanisation it has become a preferred spot for many different birds. We will explore the park on foot and look for birds like the Eurasian Marsh Harrier, Ferruginous Pochard, Bonelli's Eagle, Little Swifts, etc.

If time permits, we can squeeze in a visit to the Mehrangarh Fort before we proceed for lunch. We will then resume our drive to Bera. It will take about 3 hours to reach Bera. On reaching Bera, check in to our camp followed by dinner.

**Lodging** in Bera at Godwad Safari Camp.

**Thursday, February 6--**Today we will do a morning and evening safari to explore this rocky region of Bera that became famous for the peaceful co-existence of its leopards and people. We will look for birds like the Indian Eagle Owl, Eurasian Wryneck in it's scrub habitat and water birds near the Jawai reservoir close by.

**Lodging** in Bera at Godwad Safari Camp.

**Friday, February 7--**After an early breakfast, we will set out on a long drive (about 8 hours) to the Little Rann of Kutch. Lunch on the way. Reach LRK in the evening, check-in to our camp for a relaxing evening.

**Lodging** in Little Rann of Kutch at Royal Safari Camp.

**Saturday, February 8--**The seasonal salt pans and tidal flats of the Little Rann of Kutch made by the receding sea water becomes a hot spot for birds in winter. Flamingoes, pelicans, plovers, cranes, larks among many other birds come in large numbers. There is also a chance to see the Short-eared Owls. We will explore the region in the morning and in afternoon excursions.

**Lodging** in Little Rann of Kutch at Royal Safari Camp.

**Sunday, February 9--**Drive 4 hours from LRK to Velavadar- Blackbuck Sanctuary. Explore the Sanctuary on an evening excursion. This is when one can see Harriers, mostly Montagu's and sometimes Palid, coming to roost in the grasslands. It is the largest congregation of Harriers in the world.

**Lodging** in Velavadar at Blackbuck Lodge.

**Monday, February 10--**This morning after an excursion in the Blackbuck Sanctuary, we will drive 5.5 hours to Gir National Park, which hosts the last remaining population of Asiatic Lions.

After reaching our lodge in Gir, time permitting we can bird around the lodge that evening.

**Lodging** in Gir at Gir Birding Lodge.

**Tuesday, February 11--**Today we will explore Gir on a morning and an evening safari in the park. This dry deciduous forest will be a new habitat during the trip to explore for woodland birds like Flycatchers, Yellow-footed Green Pigeon, Oriental Honey Buzzard, Serpent Eagle, etc.

**Lodging** in Gir at Gir birding Lodge.

**Wednesday, February 12**

After breakfast, we will drive 2.5hours to Diu Airport for our flight to Delhi. We will arrive in Delhi by late evening and drive to our hotel for the night.

**Lodging** in Delhi at Taj Dwarka

**Thursday, February 13**

This morning drive 4 hours to Agra.

Visit the Taj Mahal & Red Fort in the evening.

**Lodging** in Agra at Trident.

**Friday, February 14**

Visit the Taj at Sunrise. Drive to Delhi and transfer to the airport