

WILD WESTERN INDIA

A Wildlife Expedition across Gujarat and Rajasthan



LOCATION

Rajasthan & Gujarat

ROUTE

Bera · Little Rann · Jamnagar · Gir · Velavadar

DURATION

11 Days · 10 Nights



A KIANG COLLECTIVE EXPEDITION

10 — 20 DECEMBER 2026

THE EXPEDITION

Itinerary

Eleven days across the dryland and coastal west.

DAY 01

Thu · 10 Dec

Udaipur to Bera

We will set out from Udaipur after a morning pickup, driving for roughly three hours through the rolling Aravalli Hills to the granite landscape of Bera. After lunch at the lodge, we will head out for our first evening among the boulders, where leopards live in unusually close proximity to the Rabari herders and have become remarkably accustomed to vehicles. As the light fades across the warm granite, there is every chance of our first leopard sighting.

OVERNIGHT · BERA

DAY 02

Fri · 11 Dec

Bera

A full day in the hills, with morning and evening drives among the granite outcrops in search of leopards. Between the two, we will spend time around Jawai Dam, where wintering waterfowl and waders gather, and raptors patrol the open country. Eagle-owls haunt the cliffs, while the surrounding scrub supports striped hyenas, Indian foxes and, for the fortunate, the seldom-seen smaller cats of the region.

OVERNIGHT · BERA

DAY 03

Sat · 12 Dec

Bera to Little Rann of Kutch

After a final morning drive at Bera, we will begin the long journey south into Gujarat, crossing into the flatlands via Palanpur and Patan. It is a full day on the road, but we will reach the edge of the Little Rann with the afternoon still ahead of us, in time for our first excursion onto the salt flats as the light begins to soften.

OVERNIGHT · LITTLE RANN OF KUTCH

DAY 04

Sun · 13 Dec

Little Rann of Kutch

We will spend the day exploring the Rann, traversing the salt-free islands of higher ground, known locally as *bets*, and the seasonal wetlands that teem with birdlife through the winter. This is the only place on Earth where the Indian Wild Ass still survives in large numbers, and we will look for herds roaming the vast salt flats. The wetlands around Bajana Creek host spectacular gatherings of cranes, flamingos and pelicans.

OVERNIGHT · LITTLE RANN OF KUTCH



Itinerary

Days five to eight.

DAY 05

Mon · 14 Dec

Little Rann of Kutch

A second full day allows us to range more widely across the reserve. We will explore the grasslands in the cool of the morning in search of harriers and the wintering MacQueen's Bustard, and scan the scrub for the enigmatic Stoliczka's Bushchat and Sykes's Nightjar. In the afternoon, we will return to the wetlands, where the sheer abundance of waterfowl and waders rewards patient watching, and where the golden light at day's end is reason enough to linger.

OVERNIGHT · LITTLE RANN OF KUTCH

DAY 06

Tue · 15 Dec

Little Rann of Kutch to Jamnagar

This morning, we will turn west towards the coast, driving for much of the day through farmland and past lakes to the town of Jamnagar on the Gulf of Kachchh. We will spend the evening at Khijadiya, a remarkable reserve where freshwater wetlands meet tidal marshes and mudflats, opening up a new world of waterbirds quite different from the dry interior we have travelled through. Here we will have the opportunity to see some spectacular species such as the Indian Skimmer and Crab Plover.

OVERNIGHT · JAMNAGAR

DAY 07

Wed · 16 Dec

Jamnagar to Gir

We will devote the morning to the coast, exploring Khijadiya and the intertidal flats of the Gulf for various shorebirds, gulls and terns, as the tide allows. After lunch, we will turn south towards Gir, reaching the forest by evening and settling into our lodge. Ahead of us lies the last refuge of the Asiatic Lion.

OVERNIGHT · GIR

DAY 08

Thu · 17 Dec

Gir

A full day in the forest, with morning and afternoon drives taking us through one of the world's finest tracts of dry deciduous woodland. The lion is our primary target, but Gir also supports a high density of leopards, along with sambar, chital and a rich assemblage of forest birds that we will not have encountered elsewhere on the journey. Among them are the magnificent Mottled Wood Owl and the secretive Painted Sandgrouse as they come to drink at the waterholes.

OVERNIGHT · GIR



Itinerary

Days nine to eleven.

DAY 09

Fri · 18 Dec

Gir to Velavadar

After a final morning drive at Gir, we will make our way north-east to the grasslands of Velavadar, reaching Blackbuck National Park in time for an evening safari. As the day draws to a close, we will take up our place near the harrier roost, where the first birds begin to gather against the fading light, offering an opening glimpse of one of the great spectacles of the journey.

OVERNIGHT · VELAVADAR

DAY 10

Sat · 19 Dec

Velavadar

We will devote the morning to the open savannah, where blackbuck roam in their hundreds and Velavadar offers one of the finest opportunities in India to see the Indian Wolf and the Striped Hyena. As evening falls, we will return to the harrier roost to watch Marsh, Pallid, Montagu's and Hen Harriers descend into the grass in their dozens, an unforgettable spectacle as the last light fades from the sky.

OVERNIGHT · VELAVADAR

DAY 11

Sun · 20 Dec

Velavadar to Ahmedabad

We will enjoy one final morning on the grasslands before breakfast, in search of a few localised and spectacular birds, then make the short drive to Ahmedabad for onward travel. For those with time to spare, we are happy to arrange drop-offs at either the airport or a city hotel. Here, our journey comes to a close.

TOUR CONCLUDES

Why this journey

Western India in winter.

Western India in December is a meeting of worlds. Over eleven days this journey moves through several distinct landscapes, each with its own character and its own flagship creature: the granite hills where leopards rest against the warm rock, the salt flats where the wild ass runs, the tidal coast of the Gulf, the teak forests that hold the last of the Asiatic lions, and the grasslands where harriers gather at dusk.

We travel in winter for good reason. December brings the migration south, and with it the gatherings that define the season: cranes in their thousands, flamingos and pelicans across the wetlands, bustards and larks out on the salt, and the roost where harriers drop into the grass as the light fails. The days are warm, the air clear, and it is the finest time to be in the field.

The trip is built first for those who love birds, but it gathers along the way a list of mammals that few can match: lion and leopard, wild ass and blackbuck, wolf and striped hyena. It is led by an ornithologist and kept small, moving at the unhurried pace that good watching needs, and resting each night in the best lodges each place has to offer.

Birds

Some of those we will be looking for.



EAGLES & HARRIERS

Greater Spotted Eagle
Eastern Imperial Eagle
Steppe Eagle
Tawny Eagle
Crested Hawk-Eagle
Montagu's Harrier
Pallid Harrier
Marsh Harrier

BUSTARDS, FLORICANS & CRANES

MacQueen's Bustard
Lesser Florican (*mainly monsoon, occasional Dec*)
Sarus Crane
Common Crane
Demoiselle Crane

FLAMINGOS & WILDFOWL

Greater Flamingo
Lesser Flamingo
Wintering & resident ducks

LARKS, COURSERS & GRASSLAND

Indian Courser
Cream-coloured Courser
Sykes's Lark
Rufous-tailed Lark
Greater Hoopoe-Lark
Stoliczka's Bushchat
White-bellied Minivet
Sociable Lapwing (*rare winter visitor, LRK*)

COASTAL & WETLAND

Indian Skimmer
Crab Plover
Waders & gulls

OWLS, NIGHTJARS & OTHERS

Painted Sandgrouse
Indian Eagle-Owl
Indian Scops Owl
Mottled Wood Owl
Brown Fish Owl
Short-eared Owl
Sykes's Nightjar
Indian Nightjar
Indian Pitta
Yellow-throated Sparrow
Indian Robin
Marshall's (White-tailed) Iora
White-naped Tit
White-rumped Vulture (*possible*)
Red-headed Vulture (*possible*)

Mammals

A roll-call few journeys can match.



THE PREDATORS

Asiatic Lion
Indian Leopard
Indian Wolf
Striped Hyena
Golden Jackal
Jungle Cat

ANTELOPE & DEER

Indian Wild Ass (*Khur*)
Blackbuck
Chinkara (*Indian Gazelle*)
Nilgai
Sambar
Chital

OTHER MAMMALS

Desert Fox
Indian Fox
Common Langur
Indian Mongoose
Indian Hare
Wild Boar
Sloth Bear (*possible*)
Rusty-spotted Cat (*possible*)



YOUR EXPEDITION LEADER

Dr. H S Sathya Chandra Sagar

Conservation scientist and field ornithologist.



PHD, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

17+ SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

FIELDWORK ACROSS FOUR CONTINENTS

Sagara is a conservation scientist, field ornithologist, and lifelong birder whose love of birds began in the forests and coffee country of the Western Ghats in southern India. Over the past decade he has led and joined research expeditions across four continents, working in tropical and temperate landscapes from India and Indonesia to Liberia, the United States, and across Europe.

His work centres on biodiversity, the relationships between species and their habitats, and what actually makes conservation work, with a particular love of birds and long-term ecological monitoring. He has authored more than seventeen scientific papers and recently completed his PhD at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, studying the role of carbon financing in tropical forest conservation. Alongside his research he has co-founded two initiatives, one following migratory landbirds along the Central Asian Flyway, the other studying forest restoration in North America.

Whether he is leading a birding expedition, running fieldwork, or mentoring young naturalists, Sagara loves sharing his enthusiasm for birds and wild places. When he is not counting, ringing, or tracking birds, you will usually find him sailing, backpacking, or exploring somewhere wild.

THE ESSENTIALS

What to know

Everything the journey includes, and the practical details.

INCLUDED

All accommodation, on a twin-share basis

All meals throughout the expedition

All ground transport, Udaipur to Ahmedabad

All scheduled safaris and park entries

Your expedition leader and local naturalists

All permits and reserve fees

NOT INCLUDED

International and domestic flights

Visa and travel insurance

Drinks and personal expenses

Tips and gratuities

Anything not specified as included

PAYMENT

A deposit of 25% confirms your place on the expedition. The balance is due 30 days before departure.

CANCELLATION

Cancellations made 30 to 60 days before departure are refunded at 50%. Within 29 days of departure, no refund is available.

Single accommodation can be arranged on request, subject to a supplement. Full booking conditions are shared at the time of enquiry.

WILD WESTERN INDIA

Join us in the field this December.

A small group, a long winter's birding and wildlife across the dryland west, and the unhurried pace that good watching needs. We would love to have you with us. To enquire, or to talk through the journey, write to us and we will take it from there.

TO ENQUIRE

gaitondepanchami@gmail.com



A KIANG COLLECTIVE EXPEDITION

PHOTO CREDIT: VIDHAN DWIVEDI AND PANCHAMI GAITONDE