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North-East India Birding Tour

14 DAY/ 13 NIGHT TOUR

OVERVIEW

India. The world in one country. It is home to over 1.3 billion people, but also hosts 9% of all mammalian, 14% of all avian, 8% of all reptilian, 6% of all amphibian, and 6% of all flowering plant species of the world. A country that conjures up images of colour, diversity, culture, mountains, food, texture, tigers and excitement. We will experience all this and much more on our North-East India Birding Tour.

DAILY SUMMARY

DAY 1	16 Jan	Arrival in New Delhi
DAY 2	17 Jan	New Delhi to Guwahati and Nameri
DAY 3	18 Jan	Nameri
DAY 4	19 Jan	Nameri to Lama Camp
DAY 5	20 Jan	Birding around Lama Camp
DAY 6	21 Jan	Lama Camp and Bompou
DAY 7	22 Jan	Bompou to Sessni
DAY 8	23 Jan	Birding around Sessni
DAY 9	24 Jan	Dirang to Kaziranga National Park
DAY 10	25 Jan	Birding around Kaziranga National Park
DAY 11	26 Jan	Birding around Kaziranga National Park
DAY 12	27 Jan	Birding around Kaziranga National Park
DAY 13	28 Jan	Kaziranga to Guwahati and on to New Delhi
DAY 14	29 Jan	New Delhi – End of tour

DETAILED DAILY ITINERARY

DAY 1: Arrival in New Delhi

You will be met at the Indira Gandhi International airport by a company representative and transferred to your hotel. Time to rest up for a wonderful trip that lies ahead.

🏠 **Accommodation: Comfortable Hotel in New Delhi**

DAY 2: New Delhi to Guwahati and Nameri

This morning after breakfast we will transfer back to the airport to board our flight to Guwahati at 0745 hrs. The flight is approximately 2 and a half hours long. We will meet our driver at Guwahati airport and drive to Nameri National Park which will take around 5 hours. We will enjoy a late lunch at the resort and around dinner we will try to do some evening bird watching near the lodge.

Nameri National Park is located at the foothills of the eastern Himalayas along the border of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, next to the Jia Bholeli river. It is possibly the most scenic wildlife area of the region. The mixture of tropical and semi-evergreen forest and the habitat along the river supports a large number of bird species – most notably the critically endangered White-winged Duck. Other target birds of the area are Ibisbill, Wreathed Hornbill, Oriental Hobby, Silver-breasted Broadbill and Red-headed Trogon.

🏠 **Accommodation: Nameri Eco Camp / Jia Bholeli Wild Resort**

DAY 3: Nameri

Today we will have the opportunity to go on a jungle walk, take a boat ride, or even go rafting on the Jia Bholeli river which bifurcates the Park. (Please note that these activities are subject to availability and weather conditions.)

Nameri shares its northern boundary with the Pakhui Wildlife Sanctuary of Arunachal Pradesh. Together they constitute an area of over 1000 sq kms of which Nameri has a total area of 200 sq kms. The vegetation type of Nameri is semi-evergreen, moist deciduous forests with cane and bamboo brakes and narrow strips of open grassland along rivers. The forests are rich in epiphytes, lianas, and creepers and clump-forming bamboo.

Nameri is a birdwatcher's paradise with over 300 species that have been recorded here. White-winged Duck, Great Pied Hornbill, Wreathed Hornbill, Rufous-necked Hornbill, Black Stork, Ibisbill, Blue-bearded Bee-eaters, babblers, plovers and many other birds make Nameri their home.

Nameri is excellent Elephant country and was previously considered to be an Elephant reserve. It is an ideal habitat for a host of other animals including Tiger, Leopard, Sambar, Dhole (the Asiatic wild dog), Pygmy Hog, Indian Wild Bison, Clouded Leopard, Leopard Cat, Muntjac, Gaur, Wild Boar, Sloth Bear, Himalayan Black Bear, Capped Langur and Indian Giant Squirrel.

🏠 **Accommodation: Nameri Eco Camp / Jia Bhoreli Wild Resort**

DAY 4: Nameri to Lama Camp

Very early this morning we will start birding at Tippi-Balukpong. After breakfast we will depart for Tenga. Our route follows the main highway to Tawang along the Bhareli River. En route, we will stop for some birding around Sessa. From here the road climbs over the Nichiphu pass and descends into the Tenga Valley. From the military township of Tenga the road will start climbing rapidly to Lama camp (2350m) which is situated on the edge of the Eagle's Nest Sanctuary. We expect to arrive at Lama Camp late afternoon. Lama camp is located amidst temperate broad-leaved primary and degraded forest.

Rising from 500 m to 3200 m altitude with an area of 218 sq kms the Eagle's Nest Wildlife Sanctuary in west Arunachal Pradesh hosts one of the finest birdlife assemblages that Asia has to offer. We will look out for Bugun Liocichla, Beautiful Nuthatch, Fire-tailed Myzornis, Himalayan Cutia, White-georgeted Flycatcher, Brown Parrotbill, Rufous-backed Sibia, Pale-billed Parrotbill, White-breasted Parrotbill, Red-billed Scimitar Babbler, Coral-billed Scimitar Babbler, Blue-winged Laughingthrush, Red-faced Liocichla, Rufous-throated Wren Babbler, Long-billed Wren Babbler, Yellow-rumped Honeyguide and Maroon-backed Accentor.

🏠 **Accommodation: Lama Camp**

DAY 5: Birding around Lama Camp

Today we will do morning and afternoon birding around Lama Camp, with Bugun Liocichla being our main target. Bugun Liocichla was described from Lama Camp in 2006, and it is the main habitat of the bird.

Due to the rarity of the bird no type specimen was collected; instead feathers from the mist net, photographs, recordings and notes were used to classify the bird as a new species. While looking for this magnificent bird, we may encounter other species such as Gold-naped Finch, Grey-sided Laughingthrush and Maroon-backed Accentors feeding on the road.

🏠 **Accommodation: Lama Camp**

DAY 6: Lama Camp and Bompu

This morning we will drive to Bompu Camp (altitude 1940 m), birding along the way. The road goes up to Eagle's Nest Pass (2800 m) and then goes down towards Bompu through Sunderview (2465 m). Just after leaving Lama Camp, we have a good chance of seeing the resident Yellow-rumped Honeyguides. Eagle's Nest Pass is a good place for Brown Parrotbills and Bar-winged Wren Babblers. As we go down through Sunderview our chance of finding Ward's Trogon and Fire-tailed Myzornis is high. We should also encounter flocks with good birds such as Golden-breasted Fulvetta, Yellow-throated Fulvetta, Brown-throated Fulvetta, Slender-billed Scimitar Babbler, Darjeeling Woodpecker, Cutia, Black-eared Shrike Babbler, Black-faced Warbler etc. We will spend the night at Bompu Camp (Tented Camping).

(Please note that the accommodation and ablutions at Bompu Camp are very basic and there is no electricity at this camp.)

🏠 **Accommodation: Bompu Camp**

DAY 7: Bompu to Sessni

Full day birding below Bompu Camp, going down to Sessni (1250 m). This morning we will focus on finding Beautiful Nuthatch, for which Sessni is arguably the best place in the world. Seeing multiple birds in one morning is quite possible and they are quite cooperative for viewing and photography. Other birds we will look for are Blythe's & Temmincks Tragopan, Rufous-necked Hornbill, Lesser & White-browed Shortwings, and Ward's Trogon amongst many others.

🏠 **Accommodation: Bompu Camp**

DAY 8: Birding around Sessni

Today we will spend the full day birding below Bompu Camp, crossing Sessni and going further down towards Khellong. Today we target the birds resident at lower altitude. Just below Sessni, we look for Pale-billed Parrotbill, Red-billed Scimitar Babbler, Long-tailed Sibia and Rufous-backed Sibia. We have a chance of seeing Rufous-necked Hornbills in this area as well. As we go down further towards Khellong we should encounter different species. Spot-throated Babbler, Speckled Piculet, Red-faced Liocichla and Red-headed Trogon becoming more possible at this altitude. We have lunch at Khellong Camp (750m), and slowly bird our way back up to Bompu.

🏠 **Accommodation: Bompu Camp**

DAY 9: Dirang to Kaziranga National Park

After breakfast we will drive to Kaziranga National Park stopping *en route* for birding. In total it is a 6 hour drive.

Kaziranga National Park lies partly in Golaghat District and partly in Nagaon District of Assam. It is the oldest park in Assam and covers an area of over 400 sq km along the river Brahmaputra in the North and the Karbi Ang long hills in the South. The National Highway 37 passes through the park area and tea estates, hemmed by table-top tea bushes. The Park is a UNESCO world heritage site and was declared a national Park in 1974. The landscape is of sheer forest, tall elephant grass, rugged reeds, marshes and shallow pools.

Kaziranga National Park is famous for the Indian Rhinoceros, also called the greater one-horned Rhinoceros, as it holds two thirds of the world population of these incredible animals. It is estimated that there are only about 3500 of them alive in the wild, and as such they are listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.

We will arrive at our lodge in the late afternoon and enjoy dinner at the resort later this evening.

🏠 **Accommodation: Jupurighar or Wild Grass Resort**

DAY 10: Birding around Kaziranga National Park

Morning and afternoon game drives to the National Park. We will enjoy breakfast and lunch at the Resort.

Kaziranga National Park in Assam has to be the most beautiful and attractive place you can choose to visit in Northeastern India. It is home to some of most fascinating wildlife of Asia. The Burma monsoon forest of Kaziranga lies in the floodplains of mighty Brahmaputra River at an altitude of 50-80 meters. The habitat consists primarily of tall, dense grasslands interspersed with canebrakes, open woodlands, interconnecting streams and numerous lakes or “beels”. The three primary types of vegetation are alluvial grasslands, tropical wet semi-evergreen and evergreen forests.

Everything about Kaziranga is large – from 5 meter long elephant grass to Greater Adjutants, Bengal Floricans, Pallas’s Fish Eagle, Black-necked Storks, Indian Rhinoceros, Asian Elephants, Asiatic Water Buffalos and Bengal Tigers. The rarity and restricted range of most of these giants adds to the excitement and the experience.

Kaziranga is of course also a birding paradise with a checklist of almost 500 species. Key species include Swamp Francolin, Pale-capped Pigeon, Bengal Florican, Great and

Wreathed Hornbill, Jerdon's Baza, Slender-billed Vulture, Pallas's Fishing Eagle, Greater Spotted Eagle, Imperial Eagle, Pied Harrier, Pied Falconet, Oriental Hobby, Black-necked Stork, Greater Adjutant, Hodgson's Bushchat, White-vented Myna, Rufous-vented Prinia, Marsh Babbler, Jerdon's Babbler, Black-breasted Parrotbill and Finn's Weaver. There is even a breeding colony of Spot-billed Pelicans in the park. We will enjoy dinner at our resort.

🏠 **Accommodation: Jupurighar or Wild Grass Resort**

DAY 11: Birding around Kaziranga National Park

Morning and afternoon game drives in the Western and Buraphar/Central Zones of the national park. Breakfast and lunch will be enjoyed at the Resort.

Kaziranga is popularly known as a home of the 'Big 5' – the Elephant, Rhinoceros, Wild Buffalo, Bengal Tiger and Swamp Deer. A total of 52 mammalian species have been recorded in the park itself and include such rarities like Gangetic Dolphin, Chinese Pangolin, Hoolock Gibbon, Hog-Badger and Particoloured Flying Squirrel. 39 reptiles make the list and include the endangered Gharial and the rare Assam Roofed Turtle. Both the Reticulated and Rock Pythons occur in the area.

Kaziranga has been identified by Birdlife International as an Important Bird Area. Some of the birds that we will look for today are the Lesser White-fronted Goose, Ferruginous Duck, Baer's Pochard, Lesser and Greater Adjutant, Black-necked Stork, Asian Openbill, Blyth's Kingfisher, Nordmann's Greenshank, Black-bellied Tern, Lesser Kestrel, Indian vulture, Slender-billed Vulture, Indian White-rumped Vulture, Swamp Francolin and Pale-capped Pigeon. Dinner will again be at our resort.

🏠 **Accommodation: Jupurighar or Wild Grass Resort**

DAY 12: Birding around Kaziranga National Park

This morning after breakfast we enjoy a safari on the backs of Elephants in the Kohora range followed by a game drive to the Eastern Zone. After lunch we have a boat ride on the Brahmaputra river to look for the elusive and endangered Gangetic Dolphin.

We will of course also look for some of the birds we may have missed on the previous safaris. There is also an option to explore some of the surrounding tea gardens and local villages to get a sense of the unique northeastern Indian culture found here.

🏠 **Accommodation: Jupurighar or Wild Grass Resort**

DAY 13: Kaziranga to Guwahati and on to New Delhi

We will enjoy a short morning birding trip in the park and later drive to Guwahati (about 250km) to board a flight at 16:55 hrs to arrive at the airport in New Delhi at 19:45 hrs. We will be met by a local representative on arrival at New Delhi and then we transfer to the hotel in New Delhi.

🏠 **Accommodation: Comfortable New Delhi Hotel**

DAY 14: New Delhi – End of tour

Morning free for leisure activity and later transfer to international airport to board a flight back home.

Thank you for choosing Nature Travel Birding.