

INDIA:
KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK
FEBRUARY 13 – 19, 2015
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Referred to as the ‘Serengeti of Asia,’ Kaziranga National Park is without doubt one of the most wonderfully exciting reserves in the entire Oriental Region. Located on the south bank of the mighty Brahmaputra River, its mosaic of marshes, vast reed-beds, riverine woodlands and lowland subtropical forests literally teem with birds and mammals—many of them big, mega-charismatic beasts! Kaziranga provides a rare window into what wild Asia must once have looked like. During the course of previous VENT tours to this reserve, we have recorded more than 240 species of birds and a large number of very spectacular mammals including multiple close studies of Indian Rhinoceros, Asian Elephant and the evocative-sounding Hoolock Gibbon. The photographic opportunities on this tour are outstanding.

Just to whet your appetite, the following are some of the bird and mammal highlights we encountered on previous VENT tours to Kaziranga National Park: hundreds of the globally threatened Spot-billed Pelicans flying into roost; a close study of the richly coloured Cinnamon Bittern; six species of stork including the endangered Greater Adjutant and impressive Black-necked Stork; Pallas' Fish-Eagle bugling from its nest; four species of vulture at a kill; point-blank looks at the globally threatened Swamp Francolin; incredible views of displaying male Bengal Floricans, Red-headed Trogon; gigantic Great Hornbills; the very localized and rarely seen Black-breasted Parrotbill and, perhaps most astonishing of all, a male Gray Peacock-Pheasant working right in front of the entire group in response to our playback. Then there was the male Tiger that gazed at us across the bheel. We also enjoyed sensational views of the little known Jerdon's and Slender-billed babblers. All this to the accompaniment of trumpeting herds of Asian Elephants, and Hoolock Gibbons ululating through Panbari forest, raising the hairs on everyone's necks. Indian Rhinos, Capped Langurs and Giant Squirrels beguiled even the most focused birder. And there is so much more! Fishing Cat, Wreathed Hornbill...the list is seemingly endless. Join us for what is always a very exciting trip!

This tour may be taken in conjunction with VENT'S “India: Tigers, Taj, & Birds Galore” tour January 26 - February 13, 2015 or “India: Royal Rajasthan Train Journey” February 18 - March 4, 2015. Please contact the VENT office for more information about either of these departures.

February 13-14, Days 1-2: Fly USA to Delhi. There are many choices for flights from the United States to Delhi, India. Depending on your route, flights generally will depart the USA on February 13 to Delhi India Gandhi International Airport (airport code DEL) arriving the following day. Upon arrival and clearing customs and immigration, you will be transferred to our hotel by our local agents. Please note it is a long flight from the USA to India and we recommend you consider arriving a day early to help get-over jet-lag recover from the

journey. This will greatly enhance your enjoyment of the first few days of this tour. The VENT office is more than happy to make special arrangements for you although additional fees will apply.

NIGHTS: Day 1 on Aircraft; Day 2 Radisson Hotel, Delhi

February 15, Day 3: Fly to Gauhati and Drive to Kaziranga National Park. Early this morning we will fly across the entire breadth of northern India to the capital of Assam, Gauhati. After a short birding respite close by the airport, we will commence our drive to Kaziranga National Park. For the entire length of our journey we will follow the course of the mighty Brahmaputra River. Here the rich alluvial deposits left by the river's frequent summer floods have created emerald-green farmland—which, with its well kept rice fields plowed by water buffalo, is more reminiscent of tropical Southeast Asia. At this time of the year, the temperature will be pleasantly warm to occasionally cool. We will take the entire afternoon to reach the park, with regular stops along the way to look for birds and mammals. Some of the species we may see include the globally endangered Greater Adjutant; Asian Openbill; Pied Harrier; Red-breasted Parakeet; Asian Palm-Swift; Pied and White-throated kingfishers; Blue-tailed Bee-eater; Large Cuckoo-shrike; Red Whiskered Bulbul; Chestnut-tailed Starling; and White-rumped Munia.

As we enter the park we should be watchful for mammals, including the Indian Rhinoceros and Asian Elephant.

NIGHT: Wild Grass Lodge, Kaziranga

February 16-18, Days 4-6: Kaziranga National Park. Kaziranga is without doubt one of the truly great wildlife sanctuaries of southern Asia. Encompassing an area of approximately 900 square kilometers it boasts a wonderful mélange of habitats. They range from the vast, head-high grasslands interspersed with lagoons and marshes that border the Brahmaputra, to monsoon woodlands alive with flowering *Erythrina* trees, to the rich lowland, subtropical forest at the foot of the Panbari hills. Consequently, Kaziranga supports a profusion of wildlife, including an exceptional number of uncommon and globally threatened species such as the Indian Rhinoceros (impressively common in Kaziranga, this is its global stronghold); Asian Elephant (also common); Tiger (Kaziranga has one THE largest populations of this mega charismatic cat in its entire range. During recent tours to Kaziranga we have enjoyed some good luck seeing this species BUT this is never guaranteed.

Some of the other species we may encounter include Little Cormorant, Oriental Darter, Spot-billed Pelican; Black-necked, Woolly-necked, Asian Openbill and Lesser Adjutant storks; Bar-headed Goose; a good variety of ducks including Ruddy Shelduck, Cotton Pygmy-Goose and Indian Spotbill; Pallas' and Grey-headed fish-eagles; several migrant birds of prey including Greater Spotted, and perhaps Steppe eagles; the ultra rare Slender-billed Vulture, Black and Jerdon's Baza, Crested Serpent-Eagle, Changeable Hawk-Eagle, the scarce Red-necked Falcon; Kalij Pheasant (moderately common); Grey Peacock-Pheasant (vocal but very shy); Red Junglefowl; Bronze-winged Jacana; Gray-headed Lapwing; River Tern; Ashy-headed, Orange-breasted, Thick-billed and Yellow-footed Green pigeons; Green Imperial-Pigeon; Blossom-headed, Alexandrine, and Red-breasted parakeets; Indian Cuckoo; Green-billed Malkoha; Asian Barred-Owlet; Brown Hawk-Owl; Large-tailed Nightjar; Stork-billed Kingfisher; Wreathed, Oriental Pied, and Great hornbills (the latter the largest of all arboreal hornbills); Red-headed Trogon; Chestnut-headed and the strange Blue-bearded bee-eater; Lineated, Coppermith and Blue-throated barbets; White-browed Piculet; Rufous, Streak-throated, Grey-headed and Fulvous-breasted woodpeckers; Silver-breasted Broadbill (difficult); Bengal Bushlark, Oriental Skylark, Black-headed and Maroon orioles; Crested Treeswift; Scarlet Minivet; Golden-fronted Leafbird; the exquisite Asian Fairy-Bluebird; White-throated Bulbul; Greater Racket-tailed Drongo; Greater and Lesser Necklaced, Rufous-necked and White-crested laughingthrushes; Slender-billed Babbler (rare and local); the bamboo specialist Indian White-headed Babbler; the handsome Chestnut-capped Babbler in the tall elephant grass; Striated Babbler, Pin-striped Tit-Babbler; White-rumped Shama; perhaps Black-backed and White-crowned forktails; Striated Grassbird; a plethora of *Phylloscopus* leaf-warblers (most of which present quite a challenge at this time of the year); Chestnut-crowned Warbler; Asian Pied, and Spot-winged starlings; White-browed and Citrine wagtails; Rosy Pipit; Little Spiderhunter; Scaly-

breasted Munia; and Yellow-breasted and Black-faced buntings. There is always the chance of something really rare, such as the elusive Pied Falconet, the little known White-cheeked Partridge, possibly a Blue-naped Pitta, or a group of the sensational Sultan Tit. During a recent VENT tour to Kaziranga we enjoyed sightings of the spectacular Black-breasted Parrotbill and the little known Jerdon's Babbler. We will make a special point of seeking out these species in addition to other recently discovered rarities such as the enigmatic Bristled Grassbird, Marsh Babbler and Finn's Weaver..

In addition to some of the mammals already mentioned we should also see Asian Wild Buffalo; Swamp and Hog deer; Wild Boar, Capped Langur; and with a bit of luck hopefully Hoolock Gibbon, Smooth Otter, Hog Badger or the recently discovered Arunachal Macaque. There will be a lot of wildlife to search for.

NIGHTS: Wild Grass Lodge

February 19, Day 7: Drive from Kaziranga to Gauhati and fly to Delhi. It will be very hard to tear ourselves away from this little piece of paradise. However, early this morning we will return to Gauhati, arriving in time to connect with our flight back to Delhi. Those participants with international flights home tonight will enjoy dinner and the use of day rooms until 10:00 p.m. for flights which generally depart Delhi late night on Day 7 with connections to get you home the next day. Those continuing to the Royal Rajasthan Train Journey will overnight in Delhi tonight.

DAY ROOM or NIGHT: Radisson Airport Hotel, Delhi

EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS: Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least two months prior to your departure date. We can very easily make hotel arrangements and often at our group rate if we receive your request with enough advance time.

MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE REQUIREMENT: All participants will be required to purchase a medical evacuation policy for this tour and will be asked to sign and return to the VENT office a waiver stating that this has been done. Such a policy should be available from any insurance company which provides trip cancellation coverage.

TOUR LIMIT: This tour is limited to 8 participants.

TOUR LEADER: Dion Hobcroft

Dion Hobcroft has been working for VENT since 2001. He has led many tours (more than 120) to Australia, New Guinea, New Zealand, Bhutan, Indonesia, India, China, Southwest Pacific, Philippines, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Japan, Russia, Alaska, Tanzania, Madagascar, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and the Antarctic. In 2007 and 2013 alone Dion showed more than 2,000 species of birds to VENT clients. His informative, relaxed, and educational nature, combined with sharp eyes and ears, has established Dion as a favorite of many tour participants. His fieldwork for over 30 years on birds and other terrestrial vertebrates has allowed him to amass an extraordinary knowledge of the biodiversity in the Asia-Pacific region. Born in Tasmania and based in Sydney, Dion has traveled widely throughout Australia listing over 770 species, placing him in the top echelons of Australian birders. He is very tuned-in to the songs of bird species in the Asia-Pacific region, and specializes in rare and elusive species. He is delighted to show these skulking rarities to his travel companions. Dion has published several papers on field ornithology, served on national and state rare bird committees, managed *Birdline NSW*, run introduction to ornithology courses for Sydney University, and, before he traveled so continuously, was a popular speaker with various natural history societies. Dion has worked for many research and government agencies ranging from the Antarctic Division, Department of Environment NSW, Agriculture Protection WA, Taronga Zoo, Australian Museum, and the Queensland Department of Primary Industry. Dion lives in Sydney with his wife, Lise, and two young children, Grace (age 13) and Daniel (age 9).

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS: The fee for the tour is **\$4195** per person in double occupancy from Delhi. This includes all meals from Breakfast on Day 3 to Dinner on Day 7, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, India internal flights in economy class, ground transportation during the tour, park entrance fees, gratuities, and guide services provided by the tour leaders and local guides. It does not include airfare from your home to Delhi and return, airport departure taxes, visa fees, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may be charged.

The single supplement fee for this tour is **\$395**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodation, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES: In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES: In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Our prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$500** per person. If you prefer to pay your deposit by check, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard, Visa or American Express at the time of registration. The VENT registration form should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

PAYMENTS: Initial tour deposits may be made by MasterCard, Visa, American Express, check, money order, or bank transfer. All other tour payments, including second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc., must be made by check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Cancellation penalties and refunds are based on the following schedule: if cancellation is made 120 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$250** per person will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be **\$100** per person. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre-trip and post-trip extensions. *We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance for your protection.*

<u>If you cancel:</u>	<u>Your refund will be:</u>
120 days or more before departure date	Your deposit minus \$250*
Fewer than 120 days before departure date	No refund available

*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be \$100 per person.

TRIP INSURANCE: A brochure and application form for optional coverage for baggage, illness, and trip cancellation can be obtained through the VENT office. **We strongly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance as soon as possible to protect yourself against losses due to accidents or illness.** VENT recommends *Travel Insured International* as our preferred insurance provider. Check with your insurance agent regarding coverage you may presently have via other insurance policies that may cover illness during your trip. **Waiver for pre-existing conditions is available; however, stipulations apply, usually requiring the purchase of the insurance soon after registering.** Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as work-related cancellation, medical upgrade, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” clause among others. Contact *Travel Insured International* prior to registration for details. Not all insurance providers provide the same levels of coverage. If you purchase insurance through a company other than *Travel Insured International*, please be advised that rules and stipulations may be different.

Medical Insurance which covers you for emergency evacuation/repatriation during the trip is required for this tour. This coverage is included in the Worldwide Trip Protector plan offered by *Travel Insured International*. If you do not choose to purchase the insurance through Travel Insured International, you will need to do so through another insurance provider. A good website for information and acquisition of emergency evacuation/repatriation insurance is: www.insuremytrip.com.

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.

AIR INFORMATION: Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. ***Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be responsible for any air ticket penalties.***

CLIMATE: Assam will be warm (in the open during the middle of the day) to cool (during the early morning and late afternoon) and at times humid, with a possibility of some rain. It may be cool enough to need a sweater and jacket while traveling in the open jeeps for an hour or so around dawn and dusk.

CLOTHING: Casual is the order of the day. Hard wearing, easy to wash and dry field clothes are ideal. Sturdy hiking boots with a solid lug sole are essential; sneakers or sports type shoes are not as appropriate. Laundry service will be available at all the places we stay in Assam. Other items that are recommended include a hat for protection against the sun. Thick socks that absorb perspiration and cushion one's feet from hard surfaces are important; and it would also be useful if they were long enough to tuck the bottom of one's pants into.

SPECIAL NOTE: Please, absolutely NO bright or neon type colors. Although the birds and other wildlife are relatively approachable, we will be trying to see a number of very elusive species. Muted colors are essential to enhance our chances. Please do not wear brightly colored clothes, hats, gloves, bags or other paraphernalia. Furthermore, if you can avoid crackling nylon/plastic jackets and pants, this will greatly enhance everyone's enjoyment of the trip and enable the leader to hear those critical but so easily overlooked subtle call-notes of the birds you want to see!

CURRENCY: Rupee (Rs); Currency can only be changed at banks or authorized moneychangers. Credit cards are accepted by most of the major hotels. Participants are advised to carry sufficient funds in low denomination American Express, US dollar traveler's checks, and/or US dollar cash. The latter can be very useful in an emergency. India has some very fine handicrafts, including spectacular rugs and carpets from Kashmir that have to be seen to be believed. And, at prices to match every pocket!

SHOPPING: India has some very fine handicrafts, including spectacular rugs and carpets from Kashmir, metal cast statues and inlaid marble from Agra that have to be seen to be believed.

DOCUMENTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure is required for United States citizens to enter India. **Visas ARE required for entry into India and must be obtained prior to your arrival.** For further information, you may wish to contact the India consulate nearest you or Pinnacle Travel Document Systems (www.traveldocs.com on the web or 888-838-4867 by phone), a company which handles visa procurement. Non-United States citizens should check with their local Indian consulate/embassy for instructions.

EQUIPMENT: Everyone should have a good pair of binoculars that are not in need of repair (please **check before departure!**). Many people carry a second pair in case of emergencies. Your tour leader will be carrying a spotting scope; however, you are welcome and **encouraged** to bring your own spotting scope if you so wish.

You should bring **all** the camera equipment, spares, batteries and film-cards (most participants find that they require a great deal more film-card space than they think they will before leaving home). India is exceptionally photogenic with lots of good lighting and many opportunities for both cultural, scenic and wildlife photography. Thus you should bring all the film-cards you will need as your preferred film-card will likely be **almost impossible** to obtain once we arrive in New Delhi. UV and polarizing filters are recommended. A supply of robust plastic bags is very useful to protect equipment from rain and especially dust. India is one of the most photogenic countries in the world. You could spend a day literally standing in one spot, and shooting in all directions. Furthermore, the wildlife is exceptionally tame. Add good lighting and a preponderance of open habitats, and you have a photographer's paradise. However, beware of dust, and bring spares of all those batteries you may need, in addition to lots of digital memory.

A small day pack (either waterproofed or with a strong plastic bag inside) is essential for carrying excess clothing, camera equipment, toiletries, food and water. However, in many of the birding areas, we will have regular access to our transport, which will be attended by a driver and his mate. **Water bottles are important** if you like to carry a regular supply of water.

LAUNDRY: Laundry service will be available at all the places we stay in Assam.

LUGGAGE: When traveling within India, one piece of checked luggage weighing no more than 44 pounds is allowed free of charge. In addition, you are allowed one piece of carry-on luggage and whatever you carry over your arm or in your hands (i.e. coat, book, purse, umbrella, etc.). In reality, we find that the internal Indian airlines are fairly flexible; however, you should be prepared for some excess baggage charges in the range of \$20.00 to \$30.00 if you exceed the baggage limits by more than 5 or 6 pounds. We feel it is better to incur this charge, rather than to cut back on your baggage and therefore not have enough clothing or equipment for the trip.

HEALTH: Participants are **strongly advised NOT** to drink the tap water or unboiled water placed at the table except as advised by your tour leader. Bottled drinks (including uncarbonated bottled mineral water) will be available at **all times** throughout the tour. Participants should not eat uncooked foods such as meat or vegetables or food that has cooled and/or been sitting in the open. Unpeeled fruit is fine; provided you wash the exterior first in clean water. Ice and salads should be avoided at all times.

No vaccinations are required for this trip. Cholera and yellow fever inoculations are required only if you arrive within five days of departing from an infected area. Malaria is highly unlikely, but a slight possibility. Participants may wish to protect themselves with prophylactics. These should be taken as prescribed by your doctor. A number of forms of hepatitis may be present and participants are recommended to contact their doctor for advice prior to departure. If you are taking prescription medication or over-the-counter medicine, **be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely** as it will be difficult to obtain

anywhere during the tour. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta Georgia. The CDC operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636), or you can check their website at www.cdc.gov/travel. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html (click on travel health).

MISC: Departure Tax: Typically included in the price of your airline ticket.

Electricity: India 230 - 240 volts, 50 cycles, AC systems. Power points vary but include two pin and flat three pin outlets. Bring a cross-section of adaptors.

Language: The national language of India is Hindi.

Time: 10 1/2 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time.

SUGGESTED READING: Our website at www.ventbird.com offers an online store that carries a wide variety of items for birding and nature lovers, including over 6,000 books. A portion of the sales from our store benefits the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You might also want to visit such other online stores as www.amazon.com, and for those out-of-print and hard-to-find titles, www.abebooks.com or www.buteobooks.com, which specializes in ornithology books.

The most important book for you to obtain is:

Grimmet, R., C. Inskipp and T. Inskipp. *Pocket Guide to the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. Helm Identification Guides. Christopher Helm & A.C. Black. London. 1999. **This book illustrates and documents in detail every species we are likely to encounter on any tour to the Indian subcontinent. All participants are recommended to obtain a copy of this guide as it greatly supersedes all previous guides we have advocated for tours to this region. This excellent guide covers all the species of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Andaman Islands and Sri Lanka.**

Other good guides to the birds of India include:

Kazmierczak, K. & B. van Perlo. *A Field Guide to the Birds of the Indian Subcontinent*. Robertsbridge. Pica Press. 1999. **This is a very nice alternative to the Rasmussen & Anderton 2005 or the Grimmet *et al* guide.**

Rasmussen, P. C. & J. C. Anderton. 2012. *Birds of South Asia. The Ripley Guide. Vols. 1 and 2*. Smithsonian Institution and Lynx Editions. Washington D.C. and Barcelona. 2nd Edition. **If you want something more detailed and comprehensive than the Grimmet *et al* book, then you should also obtain the Rasmussen book. This book also has a much more up to date taxonomy.**

For general background books on India, we recommend:

Collins, L. & D. LaPierre. *Freedom at midnight*. 1975. **A fascinating account of India's independence movement and much background material on India in general.**

Other books include:

Ali, S. *The Fall of the Sparrow*. Bombay. OUP. 1984.

Beebe, W. *Pheasant Jungles*. Reading. World Pheasant Association. 1994.

Bole, P.V. & Y. Vaghani. *Field Guide to the Common Trees of India*. Bombay. WWF India/OUP. 1986.

Bradnock, R. & R. *India Handbook*. Bath. Passport Books. 1998.

Cubbit, G. & G. Mountfort. *Wild India*. London. New Holland. 1991.

Daniel, J.C. *The Book of Indian Reptile and Amphibians*. Bombay: Bombay Natural History Society, 2002.

- Gay, T., Kehimkar, I.D. & J.C. Punetha. *Common Butterflies of India*. Bombay. WWF India/OUP. 1992.
- Gee, E.P. *The Wildlife of India*. London. Collins. 1964.
- Gurung, K.K. and Raj Singh. *Field Guide to the Mammals of the Indian Subcontinent: Where to watch Mammals in India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan*. San Diego: Academic Press, 1996.
- Hawkins, R. E. *Encyclopedia of Indian Natural History*. Oxford University Press. 1987.
- Insight Guides. *Indian Wildlife*. Apa Productions, 1987. A superb evocation of the subcontinent's wildlife, in addition to very useful details of its huge variety of parks and reserves.
- Kazmierczak, Krys and Raj Singh. *A Birdwatchers' Guide to India*. Bedfordshire, United Kingdom: Prion Ltd., 1998. This book describes a cross-section of birding sites covering all of India's regions and main habitats, and is very informative. It's a wonderful and fascinating book co-authored by Raj Singh, co-author of *Mammals of the Indian Subcontinent*, and owner of the company handling our ground arrangements in India, Assam, and Bhutan. Currently, it is not available in the USA; however, it is available through Natural History Book Service, 2 Wills Road, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5XN U.K., phone 011-44-1803865913 or fax 011-44-1803865280.
- McNeely, Jeffrey A. and Paul Spencer Wachtel. *Soul of the Tiger: Searching for Natural Answers in Southeast Asia*. New York: Doubleday, 1988. One of the most intriguing and beautifully written books on the complex relationships between man, his myriad beliefs and nature, and the implications for conservation.
- Menon, V. *A Field Guide to Indian Mammals*. DK Delhi. 2003. **Undoubtedly the very finest field guide to the mammals of India.**
- Prater, S.H. *The Book of Indian Animals (Mammals)*. Bombay: Bombay Natural History, 1971. Detailed descriptions and illustrations of most, if not all, the animals inhabiting the Indian Subcontinent. A fairly easy book to obtain in India, if it's not available near your home.
- Schaller, G. B. *The Deer and the Tiger*. 1998. Natraj Publishers, Dehra Dun, India.
- Singh, R.L. *India – A Regional Geography*. Varanasi. National Geographic Society of India. 1989.
- Whittaker, R. and A. Captain. *Snakes of India. The Field Guide*. Draco Books, Chennai, India. 2004.

TIPPING: As noted in our itineraries, tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, local guides, and train stewards) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. **We emphasize that such tips are not expected and are entirely optional.**

RESPONSIBILITY: Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc. (VENT) and/or its Agents act only as agents for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT and its agents can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. The right is reserved to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute leaders on any tour. Where this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members. No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The prices of the tours are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect May 13, 2014 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change therein. The right is reserved to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely. The airlines concerned and their agents and affiliates are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their aircraft. The passenger ticket in use by said airlines, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the airlines and the purchaser of these tickets and/or passenger. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for these tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airline Reporting Corporation.