



WWF EXPEDITIONS

Doubling Wild Tigers:

Tiger Recovery in Nepal and India with Nilanga Jayasinghe

March 8 – 20, 2019

The epitome of power, grace and beauty, tigers are the essence of wildness. They are a marvel of resilience and adaptation, yet they face enormous pressures, from habitat loss and fragmentation to rampant poaching. Over the last century, we lost 95 percent of the world's wild tigers.

In 2010, the world made a bold commitment to double the world's wild tiger population by 2022, the next Year of the Tiger. By strategically working across entire landscapes and encouraging trans-boundary collaboration, WWF and its many partners were able to celebrate in 2016—the vital halfway point of this ambitious goal—tiger beginning to make a comeback.

Join WWF's Nilanga Jayasinghe on a journey into the heart of our recovery efforts as we visit two vital countries for tiger. In Nepal—a global leader in anti-poaching and community-based conservation—you will see why the country is poised to be the first to double its wild tiger population. And in India—which holds nearly 60% of the world's remaining tigers—you will gain insight into the country's decades-long commitment to tiger conservation. Throughout our journey, you will learn how WWF is working with communities, NGOs, governments, and the private sector to ensure this recovery is sustained through 2022 and beyond.

Itinerary at a Glance



Day	Date	Location	Accommodation
1	March 8	Kathmandu, Nepal	Dwarika's Hotel
2 – 4	March 9 - 11	Chitwan National Park	Megghauli Serai
5	March 12	Bharatpur / Kathmandu / Delhi	Taj Mahal Hotel
6	March 13	Delhi	Taj Mahal Hotel
7 – 9	March 14 - 16	Kanha National Park	Singinawa
10 - 12	March 17 - 19	Bandhavgarh National Park	Kings Lodge
13	March 20	Bandhavgarh National Park / Delhi	Day Room Trident Hotel

Itinerary in Detail

DAY 1: MARCH 8, KATHMANDU, NEPAL

Arrive in Kathmandu, the storied capital of Nepal. For centuries the city has been a center of religious art and architecture in both Hindu and Buddhist traditions, and is renowned for its ancient temples and urban squares. This evening we gather at the hotel for a welcome dinner and briefing with our WWF hosts and Expedition leader. Please note that there will be very limited time available for sightseeing in Kathmandu. If you would like more time for those activities, we are happy to arrange extra hotel nights and optional tours.

Overnight Dwarika's Hotel – Heritage Room

(D)

DAY 2: MARCH 9, BHARATPUR / CHITWAN NATIONAL PARK

This morning we will take a scenic flight to Bharatpur and transfer to our lodge, where we'll spend the next three nights in Chitwan National Park—located in the Terai lowlands, bordering India.

Our luxury safari lodge is ideally situated near Chitwan National Park in the largest area of undisturbed wilderness along the base of the Himalaya. Its location is the best in the Chitwan region for wildlife viewing, which we take full advantage of during our stay. The area surrounding the lodge has a high sighting rate for the one-horned rhinoceros, crocodile, and gharial.

Chitwan National Park, established in 1973, is Nepal's first national park and was granted World Heritage Site status in 1984. It covers 360 square miles of subtropical lowlands and is home to about 50 species of mammals and more than 500 species of birds. We spend our days exploring the park on river

trips, 4x4 drives, and guided nature walks, hoping for views of the park's most famous wild residents. While sightings are never guaranteed, we have good chances to observe rhinoceros, wild elephant, crocodile, leopard, sloth bear, sambar deer, wild boar, monkeys, and jungle fowl in their natural habitat.
Overnights Meghauli Serai – Rapti Villa (B, L, D)

DAYS 3 & 4: MARCH 10 & 11, CHITWAN NATIONAL PARK

WWF began working in Nepal decades ago in 1967, when it launched its rhino conservation program in Chitwan National Park. During our visit in Chitwan we will have many rare and exciting opportunities that few people get to experience to learn about the many projects WWF has initiated in the area. This includes a private guided journey to see firsthand how WWF is leading efforts to protect tigers and other majestic animals from poaching. We will learn how Nepal has accomplished four 365-day periods of zero poaching of rhinos since 2011, including an in-depth look at some of the tools used to accomplish that feat, as well as get an on-the-ground understanding of how WWF is working with Nepal's government and local communities to connect 11 protected areas by restoring the forests between them.

Near the park headquarters we'll also visit the Gharial Breeding Center, home to the massive crocodile with its distinctive long snout. We will learn about the WWF-supported sniffer dog program, where special dogs are trained to help track down, apprehend, and deter poachers in and around Chitwan National Park. Additionally, we will embark on a traditional wooden boat called a "patella" for a gentle float down to Amaltari Ghat. There is a good chance to see rhinoceros, crocodiles, and many birds. At Amaltari Village, located in the park's buffer zone, we'll see WWF's first piloted sustainable village in Nepal, which features a home stay program, fish and turmeric enterprises, and a health clinic.

Overnights Meghauli Serai – Rapti Villa (B, L, D)

DAY 5: MARCH 12, BHARATPUR / KATHMANDU / DELHI

We return to Bharatpur airport this morning for our flight back to Kathmandu and then onto our flight to Delhi. Upon arrival we will be welcomed and taken to the Taj Mahal Hotel, located in the exclusive residential area of Lutyens' Delhi close to the seat of government and foreign embassies.

Overnight Taj Mahal Hotel (B, L, D)

DAY 6: MARCH 13, DELHI

India's thriving capital offers a captivating introduction to the country and its cultures, in vivid counterpoint to the wild places and jungle animals that lie ahead in our journey. There are two distinct sections of the city, ancient Old Delhi, and New Delhi, which was founded in 1911 by the British at the height of their empire.

Today we visit the WWF-India office in Delhi for our first introduction to WWF's tiger recovery work in India. The balance of the day will include a half-day city tour. A rickshaw ride provides a fitting overview, while a guided walk through the narrow lanes of Old Delhi reveals architectural treasures like Jama Masjid, India's largest mosque and the magnum opus of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan. Completed in 1656 with the labor of more than 5,000 workers, the grand edifice features alternating vertical strips of red sandstone and white marble, with a vast inner courtyard that can hold 25,000 people. We will enjoy dinner this evening with staff from WWF-India.

Overnight Taj Mahal Hotel (B, L, D)

DAY 7: MARCH 14, KANHA NATIONAL PARK & TIGER RESERVE

We start with a morning flight to Raipur. Upon arrival, we continue by road to Kanha National Park, in the heart of the Kanha Tiger Reserve. Situated in central India's Satpura Hills, Kanha National Park is

home to a WWF field office and several WWF-supported programs. Here, WWF has helped create habitat corridors, linking key reserves so that tigers can roam more freely. Together with local partners, WWF is working in villages closest to the corridor to help reduce people's dependency on the forest and reduce conflict between humans and tigers.

As we explore the park's lush sal and bamboo forests, grassy meadows, and precipitous ravines, we will discover the wild beauty that inspired Rudyard Kipling to write *The Jungle Book*. Kanha National Park was established in 1955, while Kanha Tiger Reserve was created in 1974 under India's Project Tiger. The park's landmark achievement is the preservation of the rare hard-ground swamp deer, barasingha, saving it from near-extinction. Stringent conservation programs for the overall protection of the park's fauna and flora make Kanha one of the most exemplary national parks in Asia.

From our ecolodge base—located in the tiger heartland of the world—we have the chance not only to learn about the tiger and its habitat, but also to experience ecologically responsible tourism and see how conservation can benefit local communities.

Overnight Singinawa – Cottage

(B, L, D)

DAYS 8 & 9: MARCH 15 & 16, KANHA NATIONAL PARK & TIGER RESERVE

We will spend two days in search of Bengal tigers and other wildlife on excursions through the park in open 4x4 vehicles. Scenic Kanha, once a hunting ground for imperial rulers and viceroys, is now one of India's most important conservation reserves. As an ideal habitat for tigers and their prey, it offers some of India's best tiger viewing, though it can take effort to locate them in the sun-dappled scrub forest that provides superb camouflage for many species. Dawn arrives each day with an early-morning wildlife drive, entering the park just as the sun's rays break over the jungle. The open meadows where herbivores graze attract tiger, leopard, and wild dog to the edges of the clearings, and we'll hope to see some of these stealthy predators.

The Banjar River, which forms the park's southwestern border, provides a steady water source for the abundant wildlife. Verdant jungle interspersed with vast grassy meadows, called maidans, support a range of species similar to those found in Bandhavgarh, which is the next stop in our journey. Other mammals we might see here include chowsingha (four-horned antelope), common langur, gaur (the world's largest wild oxen), rhesus monkeys, and the occasional leopard. At the close of each day we retire to the inviting comfort of our lodge.

Overnights Singinawa – Cottage

(B, L, D)

DAY 10: MARCH 17, KANHA / BANDHAVGARH NATIONAL PARK

Enjoy a final wildlife drive in Kanha before a half-day road journey to Bandhavgarh National Park. An essential stop on any serious tiger safari, Bandhavgarh is renowned for being home to one of India's highest concentrations of this magnificent endangered cat. On arrival, we check into Kings Lodge, surrounded by wild natural forest just outside the park boundary.

Overnight Kings Lodge – Cottages

(B, L, D)

DAYS 11 & 12: MARCH 18 & 19, BANDHAVGARH NATIONAL PARK

Over the next two days we explore the park's varied habitats on morning and afternoon wildlife drives. Bandhavgarh was established as a national park in 1968 and declared a protected tiger reserve under Project Tiger in 1993. At 444 square miles, it is a relatively small park with a thriving tiger population, offering guests a good chance of encountering this lord of the jungle, as well as a selection of other exotic wildlife.

Predominantly covered with sal and mixed deciduous forest, thickets of bamboo and expansive grasslands that line the stream valleys, the park's hilly terrain harbors one of the highest densities of tigers in the world. Bandhavgarh was once a prime hunting reserve for the Maharajahs of Rewa, where Maharaja Raman Singh himself shot an astounding 111 tigers by 1914. Today it is one of the premier pacesetters in tiger protection. With tigers at the apex of the food chain, Bandhavgarh's rich biodiversity includes a multitude of other fauna. We'll hope to see many of the 37 mammal species that live in the park including leopard, jungle cat, civet, wild boar, sambar, spotted deer, muntjac (barking deer), sloth bear and Asiatic jackal. If we're exceptionally lucky, we might spy striped hyena or dhole (wild dog). Some 250 bird species, 70 different butterflies and various reptiles round out the diverse wildlife population.

Overnights Kings Lodge – Cottages

(B, L, D)

DAY 13: MARCH 20, JABALPUR / DELHI / DEPART

We enjoy a final wildlife drive this morning. After brunch back at the lodge, we set out for the half-day drive to Jabalpur to catch our afternoon flight to Delhi. Day rooms have been reserved, for those who require, with a transfer included to the international terminal to meet departing flights this evening. Please note that there will not be a lot of time available for sightseeing in Delhi. If you would like more time for those activities, we are happy to arrange extra hotel nights and optional tours such as an Agra and Taj Mahal extension.

Day Room Trident Hotel – Superior Garden View Room

(B, L)

Meet Our Expert

Nilanga Jayasinghe, WWF Senior Program Officer, Asian Species



Originally from Sri Lanka, Nilanga Jayasinghe has always had a deep love for wildlife. She channels that passion in her role as WWF's Senior Program Officer for Wildlife Conservation, with a focus on Asian species—particularly elephants, rhinos, snow leopards, and tigers.

Nilanga has worked on wildlife conservation issues on three continents for over 15 years and frequently serves as a spokesperson on Asian species issues. Her many experiences on the Indian subcontinent include participation in the translocation of five rhinos from Chitwan to Bardia National Park in Nepal.

What to Expect

Wildlife Encounters: While the nature experiences here are exciting, there is a fundamental difference between the wildlife experience in the Indian and Nepalese jungle and a typical African safari. We designed this itinerary to capitalize on the best places to see wildlife including tigers. But various factors can affect potential sightings, including inclement weather, which creates small pockets of water that allow the animals to remain hidden in the forest, rather than being driven into the open to drink. The secret for visitors lies in the assistance of expert guides, as well as knowing what to expect, and in understanding that the privilege of stepping into a wild natural realm is a reward in itself.

Safari Vehicle Routes, Seating Allocation and Driving: In India, park regulations are extremely strict regarding seating arrangements on wildlife drives. Requirements dictate that guests be confirmed in specific vehicles upon booking, well in advance of the departure date, and we are unable to change vehicles while we are exploring each park. To the best of our ability, we attempt to ensure that guests who are traveling with a partner or friend will have seats together during wildlife drives. Because couples or friends are booked together in the same vehicle and are unable to split up during drives, it may mean that in some instances, certain vehicles will contain fewer guests than others.

India is a large country with its tiger reserves in more remote areas. Drive times from the airports to the tiger reserves can take 3 hours and the drive between Kanha and Bandhavgarh will take 6 hours. These transfers are done in private passenger-size vehicles to ensure comfort and safety.

About WWF Expeditions

WWF Expeditions is an invitation-only conservation travel program for our closest supporters, along with friends and family, to see firsthand the positive impact World Wildlife Fund is making.

These custom-designed journeys are led by WWF experts and offer exclusive opportunities to discover the wildlife and ecosystems we protect; meet community members whose lives are being improved because of our work; and immerse yourself in the worlds of our field staff and partners on the ground. Come explore the best of the natural world and see how together we are making a difference for our planet.

About Our Travel Partner



Discovering Our Planet Together

This journey is being arranged by Natural Habitat Adventures of Boulder, Colorado. For more than a decade, WWF has partnered with Nat Hab to take travelers to view nature's greatest sights. WWF selected Natural Habitat as its partner because of its long-standing commitment to conservation and the exceptional quality of its adventures.

Accommodations

THE DWARIKA'S HOTEL



The Dwarika's Hotel is an award-winning heritage hotel that takes its inspiration from the Kathmandu Valley's rich history and cultural traditions. Modeled on the architectural grandeur of the palaces of the Newar kings, the hotel houses an extensive collection of artifacts dating to the 14th century, with intricate carved wood and terracotta work by the finest craftsmen in Nepal. Its 87 rooms and suites are meticulously designed to offer an experience that is both aesthetic and comfortable. Rooms combine traditional Newari decorative motifs and antiques with the contemporary amenities of a luxury hotel. Beds feature handwoven organic linens and custom handmade furniture showcases exquisite woodcarving. The hotel's three restaurants and bar serve continental and multicultural cuisine, prepared with fresh-picked vegetables from The Dwarika's own farm.

MEGHAULI SERAI



Meghauri Serai is an elegant safari lodge in the heart of Nepal's Terai lowland jungle with exceptional proximity to Chitwan National Park. Perched on the edge of the Rapti River, the property melds its lush natural setting with fine guest accommodations to create a serene escape from the everyday. Sixteen luxury riverside villas with spacious living areas and views of the park across the river offer a soothing sanctuary in the heart of the jungle. Each villa includes a private plunge pool, air conditioning and en suite bathrooms adorned with traditional Nepalese stone spouts. From its prime position within the wilderness, the lodge offers excellent opportunities for spotting wildlife—like the one-horned rhinoceros and gharial—directly from the property.

TAJ MAHAL HOTEL



One of the most distinguished addresses in the national capital, the 5-star Taj Mahal Hotel is a city landmark, located in the exclusive residential area of Lutyens' Delhi close to the seat of government and foreign embassies. The hotel's elegant interiors reflect the heritage of Mughal Delhi, with intricate motifs, golden inlay work, marble fountains, original art and a veritable showcase of historic artifacts. Exuding refined ambience, the hotel's 294 spacious guestrooms enjoy views over the city or pool and gardens through panoramic windows. Each room is appointed with every amenity befitting a property of this caliber. The health and fitness center features steam baths, sauna, Jacuzzi and traditional Indian Ayurvedic massage and Sirodhara treatments. A suite of restaurants offers a wide range of cuisines and beverages, and classic afternoon tea is served each day in the Machan and Emperor Lounge.

SINGINAWA JUNGLE LODGE



Singinawa Jungle Lodge is perfectly situated near Kanha National park, one of India's premier tiger reserves. Situated in 55 acres of grasslands, the lodge offers both beautiful scenery with a charming ambience, along with all the creature comforts you'd expect from a world-class jungle lodge. The word Singinawa is a Sherpa word that translates to "Protectors of the Sacred Forest" and its ideal position in the reserve makes it easy to understand why this name was chosen. Singinawa offers 12 luxury cottages among rich grasslands, with rivers, water holes, and dense forest nearby. Each cottage features private veranda, en-suite bathrooms, fire place, and air conditioning. The lodge features a lovely grand dining room that serves fresh home cooked food with a variety of worldwide and Indian cuisine choices.

KINGS LODGE



Kings Lodge is nestled among sal-forested hills in a large natural wooded estate just minutes from Bandhavgarh National Park. Surrounded by wild country, this elegant ecolodge enjoys an exceptional location near some of India's most diverse and abundant wildlife. The lodge exhibits a concern for conservation and local communities in every aspect of its design and operations. Accommodations are in 10 cottage rooms and 8 stilt cottages, built with nature and solitude in mind. All have air conditioning, 24-hour electricity, modern en suite bathrooms, crisp cotton linens, dark wood furniture including a writing table and chair, and a large private veranda with views of the forest. The dining room serves varied cuisines in a warm and romantic setting, with a fireplace and dramatic views. In between morning and late-afternoon game drives, enjoy the swimming pool and sundeck, indulge in an Indian massage at the spa, peruse a book in the small natural history library, or climb up into the watch tower to survey the surrounding landscape and search for wildlife.

Expedition Information

Dates: March 8 – 20, 2019

Land cost:

\$12,995 per person, double occupancy

Internal air cost: \$995 per person

Single supplement: \$2,895

GROUP SIZE: Limited to 8 guests.

INCLUDED: Arrival and departure airport transfers (if you are staying at the Dwarika's Hotel or Trident hotels), internal flights, accommodations, meals from dinner Day 1 to lunch final day, purified drinking water during activities and drinking water and soft drinks at meals, services of an NHA Expedition Leader, local guides and lodge staff, most gratuities, still camera fees in all parks, all permits, entrance fees and taxes.

NOT INCLUDED: Travel to and from start and end points of trip (Kathmandu, Nepal and Delhi, India), early arrival and late departure airport transfers (if you are not staying at the Dwarika's Hotel or Trident hotels), alcoholic beverages, passport and visa fees, some gratuities, optional activities, fees for video cameras in parks, items of a personal nature (phone calls, souvenirs, Internet, etc.), airline baggage fees, required medical evacuation insurance and optional travel insurance.

PAYMENTS: A nonrefundable deposit of \$1000 confirms your space. Payments are accepted by credit card or by check made out to Natural Habitat.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS: Cancellations must be received in writing at NHA by U.S. mail, email or fax. At the time WWF receives your written cancellation, the following per person penalties apply: 91 days or more before departure: lose deposit. 90 to 45 days before departure: Forfeit 50% of tour cost. 44 days or fewer before departure: No refund.

INSURANCE: Since the areas we travel to on this trip are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require medical evacuation insurance for our guests' safety. If you decline the medical evacuation insurance coverage offered by Natural Habitat, we request that you send us documentation of the independent coverage you have selected. We will add the cost of a medical evacuation policy to your tour invoice until you provide our office with proof of coverage including your insurance company's name, contact number and your individual policy number. Thank you for understanding that our policy exists exclusively in the interest of our guests' safety.

GETTING THERE & GETTING HOME:

Arrival: Please arrive in Kathmandu, Nepal no later than 4 pm on Day 1 in order to attend a welcome/ orientation dinner at 7 pm. **Departure:** You are free to depart from Delhi, India after 9 pm on Day 13.

We highly recommend that Natural Habitat Adventures' air department staff make your reservations, as they are intimately familiar with the special requirements of this program. They can also make any necessary extra night hotel arrangements for you.