

Tadoba + Gujarat Tour - special £100 discount per person - see below

Season's Greetings

2012 is ending on a high for us. It has been our busiest year to date for bookings, but rather than numbers of people travelling with us, it is the quality of our clients' experiences that gives us most pleasure.

Our most popular tours feature northern and central India where sightings of Tiger, a guided tour of the Taj Mahal and the chance to explore the Himalayan foothills feature highly. South India for a mix of birdwatching and relaxation is also proving popular with holidays that include top sanctuaries like Thattakkad with time to relax on the backwaters staying on board a houseboat. In addition to a long list of endemic birds South India offers views of endemic and range-restricted mammals, many butterflies and some stunning architectural sites including the Shore Temple and ancient rock carvings at Mamallapuram (Mahabalipuram) and temple complex at Hampi, both of which are World Heritage Sites.

Sri Lanka here we come – we'll be promoting Sri Lanka soon, so watch this space to hear more about the island's endemic birds, leopard sightings, elephants, whale and dolphin watching opportunities.

This newsletter is the perfect opportunity to share some of our clients' most treasured memories and a few photos, starting with....

"Ecuadorian euphoria"

The latest tour to return from Ecuador had an impressive list of mammal sightings and birds.

Tour participant Peter Pilbeam was delighted to have fabulous views of Spectacled Bear in the cloud forest. Peter continued "as someone very keen on mammals, this tour to the cloud forest on the western Andean slope and two lodges in the Amazon rainforest proved very rewarding".



Spectacled Bear © A Elphinstone

Peter continued "some of us were fortunate to have two sightings of Giant Otter, including a group of five. We enjoyed watching Two-toed and Three-toed Sloths and were pleased to see six species of primate including Dusky Titi, Night and Common Woolly Monkeys. The Red Howlers were another highlight".

"Ecuadorian euphoria continues on next page"



Tiger cub, Tadoba © P Vashista

We have a few places available on our early 2013 tours and there is still time to book.

Would you like to explore the much-acclaimed Tadoba National Park in Maharashtra (it's reported that 26 cubs were born there during 2011) and see Lions, Hyenas or Wolves in Gujarat? Book by the end of December and get £100 discount per person on our small-group tour "Tigers at Tadoba along with Lions, Hyenas and Wolves of Gujarat" (Feb/March 2013). Lead by a local wildlife expert, this tour offers not only an excellent chance of seeing Tiger, but also Asiatic Wild Dog and several other top predator species in Gujarat. For full details visit <http://www.wildabouttravel.co.uk/travel-itineraries/Tigers-Lions-Hyenas-and-Wolves-tour-Feb-March-2013.pdf> or call us as soon as possible and we will post you the details.

It's not too late to book on our Snow Leopard Tour in March. We have two places remaining - see <http://www.wildabouttravel.co.uk/travel-itineraries/Snow-Leopards-Ladakh-tour-March-2013.pdf>

Want ideas for a Western Rajasthan and Gujarat holiday?

You can preview our photo book here

<http://www.blurb.co.uk/bookstore/detail/3402542>

Ecuadorian Euphoria continued



Two-toed Sloth © P Pilbeam



Red Howler Monkey © P Pilbeam

A quote from Alison Elphinstone, who is probably our most well-travelled client "visiting the Oilbird cave was one of the best birdwatching experiences I've had in my life – I could have cried"



Oilbird (adult left and young right) © M O'Dell

And this from Chris Percival "Ecuador was amazing (I've been told I need to vary the adjectives more!). It was like the Eden Project expanded to the size of the UK with all the colourful wildlife added in and less people! Such a super holiday - with Napo being the 'icing on the cake'! All the guides, from the cloud forest to the Amazon, were wonderful and the planning just perfect! I enjoyed every minute and thank you so much for the excellent organisation! PS. The 'stinky turkey' didn't disappoint – Hoatzins are wonderful".

Mike Rogers added "Capped Heron must have been one of the prettiest birds and four Scarlet Macaws landed at the clay lick to drink where there must have been 1,500 – 2,000 parrots in the trees around. The noise they made was deafening".

And Sylvia O'Dell...."I just wanted to say again how much we really, really enjoyed the Ecuador tour - I think it's one that we will be talking about for a long time! Birding highlights - Mick loved all the hummingbirds, naturally. We saw his first choice (Black-tailed Trainbearer) on the first morning at Yanacocha, but he just loved photographing them all and has got some great shots. We thought the feeders at Yanacocha were amazing, but the lunch stop at Alambi topped that easily (the food was good too). We saw 40 different hummingbirds in total during the trip, but I think the group as a whole will have seen 45+. Thank you again for all your hard work in organising everything. We will certainly consider visiting the country again - perhaps the eastern side of the Andes next time and Napo."



Violet-tailed Sylph © M O'Dell



Three of a group of five Giant Otters at Napo Wildlife Centre © P Pilbeam

"Worth Solid Gold - An Email from Paradise"

And this email account of a special 'Tiger' moment for Dave and Anni in Ranthambhore in early November "This is Machli (top image shown below) and she is about 16 years old. We were told she had not been seen since February so they are pleased that she has shown up. There was a fantastic Wildlife on One about her a week or so ago. Within two hours of arriving we found her lolling by a pool."



Tigers at Ranthambhore © D Webber

Glorious Gujarat

Patrick and Clare, just back from two weeks in Gujarat, were asked about the highlights. Patrick said 'It was all a highlight; it's easy to combine wildlife and culture in Gujarat which is bigger than England and feels like a country in its own right with wildlife and culture so very distinct and colourful'. He read about Gujarat years ago and is pleased he's now visited. Its diverse artisan culture is a well-kept secret worthy of exploring; they found they were the only foreigners visiting Palitana, Jamnagar, Mandvi and Bhuj. Local people were curious, friendly and pleased to be photographed.



Whilst they saw Asiatic Lion, they were mindful this species could so easily be missed. Three Great Indian Bustard at Lala Bustard Sanctuary was a particular highlight for Patrick.



Claire with her new purchase (top), Asiatic Lion at Gir National Park (middle) and Great Indian Bustard at Lala Bustard Sanctuary (bottom) All © Patrick Frew

Please do register your interest in any of our destinations and we'll keep you informed about future tour ideas and wildlife or cultural highlights.

Happy Christmas to you all and the very best of wishes for 2013.

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