



***TROPICAL  
BIRDING***



**PHOTOJOURNEY**

**INDIA**

*8th - 24th February 2018*

India is often touted as one of the top wildlife watching and photography destinations on the planet, and for good reason. For a place that is famed for its sprawling humanity, its wild places and wildlife are unbelievably abundant. Delhi, for example, is known as the 'birdiest city in the world' for its birdlife. During this tour we used four different bases to explore a variety of subjects and habitats.



*Rufous Treepie*



The winding Chambal River, expansive Bharatpur Wetland Reserve, quiet and barely touched Bandhavgah National Park and little-visited Kaziranga National Park all have one thing in common... they take you away from the masses, and show you the real *wild* India.

We made our way through these four areas, visiting the grand and unmissable Taj Mahal along the way, pointing our cameras at myriad subjects and sampling Indian life along the way. As a Brit, I grew up on Indian food, but 2 weeks in India will change the way you look at it forever... it's not often a destination's cuisine could steal the show if you let it, but India is one of those places.

*Sarus Crane*

Over the next few pages I present the photographic efforts of Iain Campbell and I during this tour. However, I urge you to bare in mind that the guide is always going to be the one of who brings home the least images. We spend the majority of our time ensuring that you are in the right place, at the right time, with the right settings, to capture moments. Our photos always come last in the list of priorities, often shortly after sourcing the best Masala Chai in the area to sip while shooting. This is a commitment that we all take very seriously. So, please grab your beverage of choice, or order a curry from your local Indian restaurant, and see what can be achieved, as a bare minimum, in India.

- Lisle Gwynn

*Pied Bushchat*



# CHAMBAL

## The Unholy River





The Chambal River was our first port of call. Its smouldering, misty banks are a thing of legend, famed amongst birders and photographers for its bountiful wildlife. This is one of the very few rivers in India that is considered 'unholy' which, ironically, has prevented it from being polluted beyond repair. For this reason, large animals like the Mugger Crocodile, bizarre Gharial and freshwater Indian River Dolphin have survived and are targeted by our cameras. River Lapwings patrol the banks, whilst day-roosting owls around camp provide ample entertainment, all whilst enjoying a comfortable lodge in an idyllic setting.

*Indian Robin*



*Eurasian Wryneck*



Bar-headed Goose



*Indian Roller*



# BHARATPUR

## Wetland Paradise

*Common Kingfisher*

Situated at the edge of a typically-busy Indian town, our stay at Bharatpur was characterised by sprawling wetlands, endless targets to shoot at, and the luxury of travelling from target to target in the back of an open cycle-rickshaw. This meant we could cover maximum ground, and thus, shoot the maximum amount of targets. We spent two full days exploring and getting blissfully lost in this wetland, shooting everything from Brahminy and Bank Mynas, to Bar-headed Geese, Painted Storks and the regal Sarus Crane, as well as Common and White-throated Kingfishers to name but a few of the targets we sought.

Outside of the wetland we took trips further afield to photograph beautiful Indian Rollers and the highly sought after Indian Courser, as well as a bounty of finches and seedeaters and yet more waterbirds. There was no shortage of birds to photograph here.

*Brahminy Myna*





*Long-tailed Cormorant*



*Bank Myna*



*Common Kingfisher*



*Indian Spot-billed Duck*



*Jungle Babbler*



*Painted Stork*



*Rose-ringed Parakeet*



*Sarus Crane*



*Indian Courser*



*White-throated Kingfisher*

# **BANDHAVGAH**

**Realm of the Tiger**



*Bengal Tiger*

Bandhavgah is like something straight out of The Jungle Book. The forests hum in a golden hue at dawn, and bake in the midday heat, but all the while the sound of Silver Langurs, barking Sambar and Spotted Deer, and snuffling Wild Boar are evident. Giant Gaur, the largest bovid on the planet, roam the forests looking menacing but acting placid, but it is a large, silent, orange cat that we seek most intensely. Our extended stay at this world-famous reserve rewarded us with no less than 15 individual tigers, often with multiple sightings. Our most memorable encounter came during one of our exclusive full day permits when we had the park entirely to ourselves and a large male tiger walked along a bank just feet from us to bath in the river. Absolutely unforgettable. The only thing that helped push this stay over the edge... a sunset Indian Leopard that posed for photos, and two unexpected encounters with the legendary Sloth Bear. All whilst enjoying excellent accommodation and ever-fantastic food.



**Bengal Tiger**









*Brown Fish Owl*



*Gaur*



*Indian Leopard*



Silver Langur



Silver Langur



# **ASSAM**

## **Land of the Rhino**

*Indian One-horned Rhino*

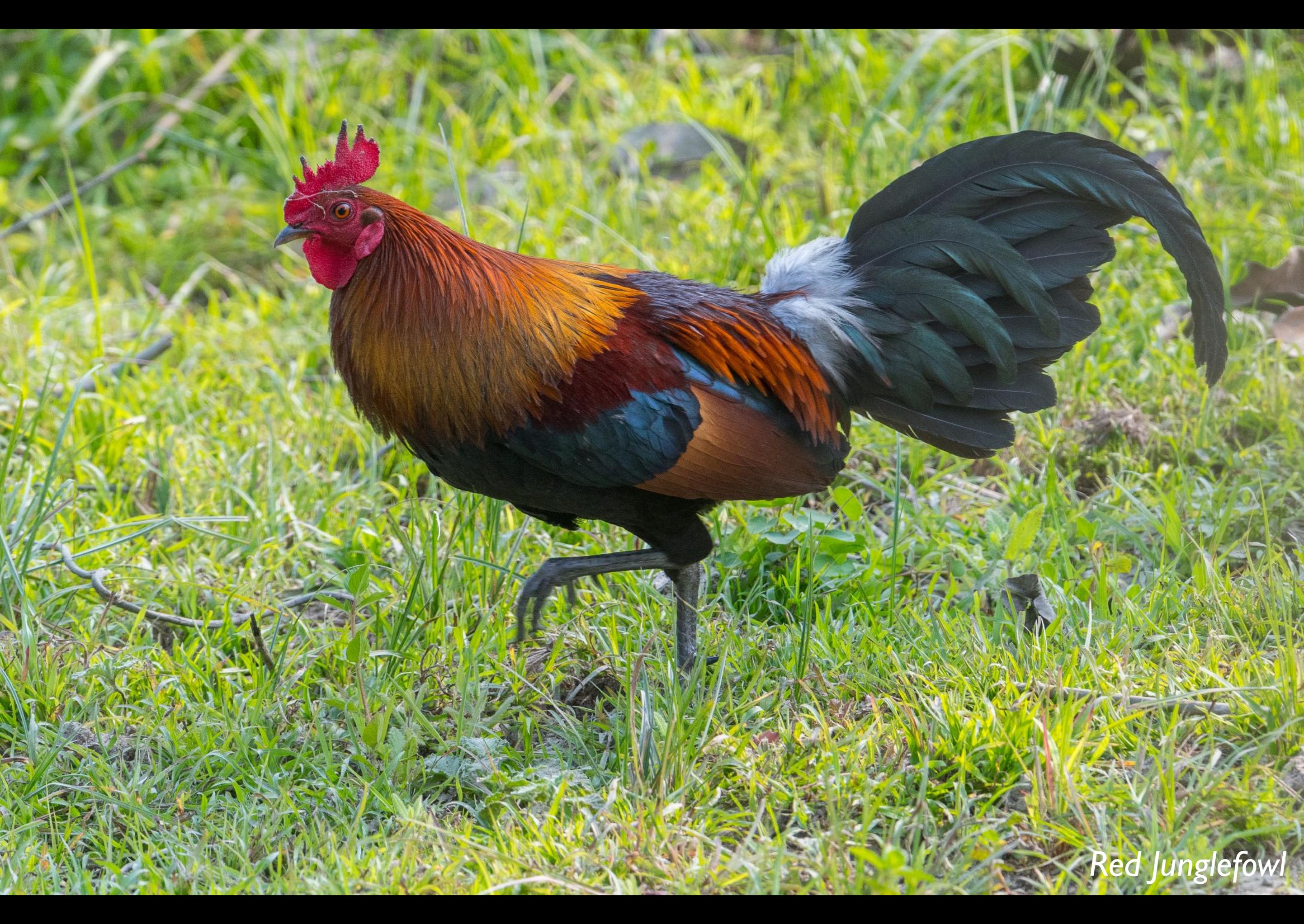
A visit to Assam is necessary to photograph one of India's most iconic animals - the Indian One-horned Rhino. This ancient, prehistoric looking creature, with its apparent armour plating, is easy to find and incredibly common in Kaziranga National Park. We had numerous close encounters with these docile animals, allowing excellent photographic opportunities. Though, there was much to shoot besides large mammals, with Great Hornbill, Kalij Pheasant, Red Junglefowl, Lesser & Greater Adjutants, Giant Squirrel, Asian Elephant and a bounty of woodland and wetland birds being just a scratch on the surface of what we found to shoot over our few days here.

Great Hornbill





*Asian Barred Owlet*



Red Junglefowl



*Indian Giant Squirrel*



*Indian One-horned Rhino*



Indian One-horned Rhino



*Indian One-horned Rhino*



*Jungle Myna*



*Kalij Pheasant*



Long-tailed Shrike



*Plum-headed Parakeet*



*Smooth-coated Otter*



*Rice Paddy*



*Bar-headed Goose*



*Stork-billed Kingfisher*



No visit to India would be complete without spending time at the magnificent Taj Mahal. The Taj is a symbol for everything India is... large, grand, immaculately unfinished and busy, yet serenely immersive. In the Islamic faith, perfection is not believed to be possible, and thus one wall of the Taj Mahal was left unfinished, in keeping with this belief. Likewise, the feeling of leaving India is one of extreme satisfaction, yet you can never help but feel there's something left unfinished; there's always more to see...