

## **Wildlife & Culture Tour NE-India**

### **Assam & Arunachal Pradesh – 21 days**

**Tour JTT-NEI-WL02:** Guwahati – Nameri (Eco Camp) – Eagles' Nest – Ziro – Daporijo – Along – Pasighat – Dibrugarh – Kaziranga National Park – Jorhat

**On this tour you'll explore some of India's best national parks and wildlife reserves, encountering rhinos, wild elephants, river dolphins, an abundant bird life and who knows a tiger. But you'll also travel through the tribal areas of Arunachal Pradesh where the locals live in time-warped bamboo villages hidden among the endless folds jungle-clad mountains.**

#### ***Itinerary***

##### **Day 01: Flight Amsterdam - Delhi**

Most international flights reach Delhi late evening. There you'll be awaited by our local representative and taken to your hotel or guesthouse not far from the airport.

##### **Day 02: Guwahati**

After an early breakfast you'll be transferred to the airport for the 2,5 hour flight from Delhi to Guwahati, the capital of Assam.

On reaching Guwahati, the local guide and Dutch tour leader of your trip will receive you. Assamese jeeps will take you to Greenwood Resort on the outskirts of the city. The resort is full of trees on the campus and around it and provides an opportunity for birding right on its premises. Besides all modern facilities, it also has a swimming pool. Lunch at the resort.

After lunch we visit the famous Kamakhya Temple, dedicated to the goddess Shakti and the site of animal offerings (which you most likely won't have to witness). The temple will give you a distinct feel of the India as most people imagine it: crowded, colorful and with an amazing number of things happening anywhere at the same time, many of them related to Hinduism. Later you'll discover that most of the Northeast is actually not like this, but very different: lush green, and sparsely populated by people adhering to animistic beliefs or Buddhism.

Then we take a short boat ride on board a motorized country boat to get to Peacock Island, in the middle of the mighty Brahmaputra. The island has a small population of the rare golden langur, a monkey species that is endemic to Assam and southern Bhutan. It also has a small temple, dedicated to Shiva.

We return to Greenwood Resort for dinner and overnight.

### **Day 03: Guwahati– Nameri National Park (Eco Camp) (200 km / 5 hours)**

After breakfast you will be transferred to Nameri National Park, where we will have lunch upon arrival. At Eco Camp, you will be staying at tented camps covered with a thatch roof canopy. These tents have an attached bathroom with hot and cold water. In the evening we do a nature walk on the banks of river Bhorelli that flows near the Camp. Dinner and overnight.

### **Day 04: Eco camp – Eagle Nest (150 km / 5 hr)**

Early morning we go inside the park to look for birds like merganser, Pallas's fish eagle, lapwings, cormorants, ruddy shell duck, kingfishers and perhaps the elusive white-winged wood duck and the Great Indian Hornbill. Return to Eco Camp for breakfast. Then drive to Eagle Nest in Arunachal Pradesh and check in at Lama Camp. Later in the evening we go for birding at the Eagle Nest. Dinner and overnight.

Rising from 500 m to 3500 m altitude with an area of 218 sq. km. is the Eagle Nest Wildlife Sanctuary that hosts one of the finest birdlife assemblages that Asia has to offer. Ward's trogon, wedge-billed and rufous-throated wren-babblers, rufous-necked, great and wreathed hornbills, black-necked crane, beautiful nuthatch, emerald cuckoo are some of the most sought after birds.

### **Day 05: Eagle Nest**

After breakfast we go for a birding trip on foot around Lama Camp.

### **Day 06: Eagle Nest**

We leave after breakfast today and drive for a short while and then trek to Bompou Camp inside the Eagle Nest.

Later in the day we go for birding around Bompou camp. Dinner and overnight.

### **Day 07: Eagle Nest – Nameri (Eco Camp) (150 km/5 Hours)**

After breakfast drive to Eco Camp near Nameri National Park. Rest of the day at leisure. Dinner and overnight at Eco Camp.

### **Day 08: Nameri/Eco Camp – Ziro (300 km / 8 hr)**

We drive to Ziro in the central Part of Arunachal Pradesh today. En route, we'll visit villages inhabited by the Nishi tribe. That is, time permitting, as this is a long drive. On arrival check into hotel Blue Pine. Dinner and overnight.

### **Day 09: Ziro**

Whole day at Ziro visiting Apatani tribal villages. Ziro is one of the most traditional areas in Arunachal Pradesh. It is home to the Apatani tribes and it is located in an

extremely picturesque valley called Apatani Plateau surrounded by pine-covered mountains. The Apatani tribes themselves are Ziro's greatest attraction. The older menfolk tie the hair in top-knots and tattoo the faces. Apatani women wears wooden nose plugs and tattooed their faces. However, new generation of Apatani men and women have stopped this practice of tying hair knot, nose plugs and face tattooing since early 1970s. The Apatani are good cultivators and practice both wet and terrace cultivation. Paddy (wet rice cultivation) with fish culture is very popular among them. Dinner and overnight at lodge in Ziro.

### **Day 10: Ziro – Daporijo (172 km / 6 hr)**

After breakfast we will proceed to Daporijo. En route we will visit Nyisi (Previously known as Hill Miri) and Tagin villages. They are the dominant tribe of this area. On arrival check into Village guest house. Dinner and overnight.

*Nyisi* meaning 'people of the land' or the human being. Their population of around 300,000 makes them the most populous tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. Their language belongs to the Sino-Tibetan family, polygamy is prevalent among the Nyisi. It signifies ones social status and economical stability and also proves handy during hard times like clan wars.

Both the Nyisi and Tagins are generally adherents of Donyi Polo, the god of Moon and Sun that is revered by most animistic tribes of Arunachal. But two groups of Tagin – the Nga and Mara have come under the influence of Tibetan Buddhism. Tibetan Buddhist influence among these sections of the Tagin is a result of migration of Tibetans from the north in the 18th century as well as visits by Buddhist missionaries of the Nyingma sect who paid tribute to the chiefs in return for Tibetan veing allowed to settle in the area.

### **Day 11: Daporijo**

Whole day at Daporijo. In the morning we drive to the village of Sippi of the Tagin tribe by the Radin River. This area has a very beautiful archaic landscape, with forests, bamboo groves, meadows and small hamlets that dot the hill side. We walk in the village and return to the Ligu village where we are staying. Lunch is at the guest house. In the afternoon we walk to the next village of the Tagin tribe, where we take a look at the dwelling houses, agriculture fields and the general way of living of these indigenous people.

### **Day 12: Daporijo – Along (160 km/6 hr)**

After breakfast drive to Along. The main tribe of this area is the Adi Gallong. We will visit their villages on the way. On reaching Along we will visit the local market and museum. We check into hotel Aagam on arrival. Dinner and overnight.

### **Day 13: Along**

Whole day at Along, visiting more villages and a trek to Adi Galong Tribal of Paya from Kabu village villages. Among other things, we will cross the Siang River and walk along

the river and through paddy fields and orange grooves. Again, this area is very good for birding, so the walk may take anywhere from one to four hours!

#### **Day 14: Along – Dibru-Saikhowa N.P. (225 km /8 hr + 1 hr ferry)**

Today is another long drive, but there is a lot to see and experience. First we drive down from the Arunachal hills to the banks of the Brahmaputra. Then we will cross the mighty Brahmaputra river by ferry. This is an experience that you don't want to miss. Not just for the float on one of the world's mightiest rivers, and the chance to see the rare Ganges (river) dolphin, but also for seeing the way these ferries are being loaded and unloaded. Car drivers have to do a balancing act to steer their vehicles over two loose planks onto the deck of the ship. On the other side we travel East, passing the city of Dibrugarh till we reach a simple but rustic ecolodge at the bank of the river. Here, bordering the Dibru-Saikhowa N.p. we'll spend the night.

#### **Day 15: Day Trip To Dibru Saikhowa National Park**

Dibru - Saikowa National Park is located at about 13 km north of Tinsukia. Saikowa is a safe haven for many extremely rare and endangered species of wild life including, over 300 varieties of avifauna, which are endangered and migratory. We'll explore the edges of the park in different manners; With a big boat, leisurely floating past stork-billed kingfishers, adjutant storks, crested serpent eagles and many more birds, on foot looking for some very rare reed birds and again floating in small canoes through the marshlands bordering the park.

Early evening we drive to Dibrugarh where we check in to a comfortable hotel.

#### **Day 16: Dibrugarh – Majuli Island (140 kms / 3 hrs + 2 hrs ferry)**

After breakfast we drive to Jorhat to take a ferry to Majuli Island which is a cultural place and – until recently - the largest river island in the world. On the ferry there is again a good chance of seeing river dolphins, along with water birds.

Majuli It is the seat of the Vaishnava culture in Assam. We will cross the mighty Brahmaputra river by ferry which will take us to Majuli. The great 15th century Assamese reformer and saint, Shankardeva had come down here and set up 'satras' or Vaishnavite monasteries to make the people motivated towards culture and religion. We will be visiting these 'satras' and interact with the monks and other locals there. Dinner and overnight will be at Mishing Cottages, an atmospheric set of traditional bamboo houses on stilts run by the local community. Staying here does not only give you a feel of life in the bamboo houses, it also directly contributes to the standard of living of the Mishing people living here.

#### **Day 17: Majuli Island**

After an early breakfast we visit a village inhabited by Mishing tribe, and interact with the people. On the way we'll pass numerous wetlands (meadows, marshes, ponds) that are teeming with water birds such as spot-billed ducks, whistling ducks, gadwalls,

common teals, bronze-winged jacanas, great egrets, white-fronted goose, greylag goose, bar-headed goose and ruddy shelduck.

After lunch you can either visit a pottery and mask making village or go for a bicycle ride in the northern part of the island. You'll pass through rustic villages where foreigners are a very rare sight. The landscape here is reminiscent of the Netherlands, as you'll ride over small dikes, passing grasslands, reeds and ponds. Again, there are good chances of seeing birds, especially wetland birds, on this ride. Dinner and overnight at the resort on Majuli Island.

### **Day 18: Majuli Island – Kaziranga National Park (90 kms / 2½ hrs + 2 hrs ferry)**

We take the ferry back to Jorhat and then drive on to Kaziranga N.P., where we check into Iora Resort. After lunch we go inside the park for our first jeep safari. We'll explore the western range, one of the five different ranges (parts) of the park.

Kaziranga N.P. is a paradise for greater Indian one horned Rhinoceros as well as a birdwatcher's delight. It covers a little over 1000 sq km (200 of which are protected parts of the Brahmaputra), bordered on the north by the Brahmaputra River and on the south by the Karbi Anglong hills. The largest number of one-horned (Indian) rhinoceros in Asia lives here. The landscape is a mix of swamps, grasslands with tall thickets of elephant grass and areas of mixed deciduous and tropical semi-evergreen forest. It is home to a wide variety of other animals and birds. The number of birds exceeds 500, which is roughly the same as the number of birds that live in the whole of western Europe.

Apart from the Indian rhino, the Park contains about 35 major mammals, including wild elephant, tiger, small population of Hoolock gibbon ( a rare ape, endemic to Assam), capped langur, bristly hare, hog badger, otter, leopard, wild boar, sambar, swamp deer, hog deer, muntjac, water buffalo and gaur. Among the rich birdlife are the rare greater adjutant stork, Bengal florican, black-necked stork, lesser adjutant stork, Pallas's fish eagle, swamp partridge, grey peacock-pheasant, great pied hornbill, green imperial pigeon, babblers and thousands of migratory birds, seasonally attracted to the various water areas of the park from as far away as Siberia.

Dinner and overnight is at Iora Resort

### **Day 19: Kaziranga National Park**

Early morning we will see the National Park on elephant back. Apart from the rhino, other species that can be seen on the elephant ride are hog deer, swamp deer, wild buffalo and wild elephants. We will return to the Lodge for breakfast. Mid morning we will visit nearby tribal village inhabited by Mishing tribe. After lunch we will do another Jeep safari, this time in the eastern range inside the park. We return to the Lodge at dusk. Dinner and overnight at Iora Resort.

### **Day 20: Kaziranga National Park**

In the morning we go for an elephant ride or jeep safari in the Central Range.

In the afternoon we go for a jeep safaris In the Burra Pahar Range, which is at the utter western side of the park. Here, there are good chances of seeing the great Indian hornbill, as well as two other species of hornbill, and Hoolock gibbons.

### **Day 21: Kaziranga – Guwahati (220 kms / 5 hrs)**

Transfer to Guwahati airport for the afternoon flight to onward journey. Lunch will be had on the way or at the airport.

Itinerary is subject to change due to weather condition or any other locally prevailing situations.

### ***Tour Price***

2 pers. INR 162.250 pp.

3 pers. INR 146.000 pp.

4 pers. INR 146.000 pp.

**Price Includes:** all transfers by Tata Sumo, accommodation in twin sharing, all meals (Day 01 Lunch till Day 19 Breakfast), English speaking escort cum naturalist throughout, fuel and driver allowance, three times river crossing by ferry, village visits, Entry fee at Nameri N.P., Eagles' Nest Sanctuary, Dibru-Saikhowa N.P. and Kaziranga N.P., camera fees in the mentioned parks, boat trip and canoe trip at Dibru-Saikowha, Government tax. Cost for Dutch tour guide (excl. of flights) is also included.

**Price excludes:** Airfare Delhi – Guwahati an return, RAP fee, tips, laundry, alcohol, insurance and any other expenses of personal nature. Camera & video fee for national parks.

### ***Entry formalities***

Please note that all Foreign Nationals need Restricted Area Permit (RAP) to visit Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland.

### **Arunachal Pradesh**

The Arunachal Pradesh Government stipulates the number of tourists to minimum 2 in a group to apply for RAP. The Government charges **USD 50 per person for a 30 days permit**. Please note that for Arunachal Pradesh RAP, **less than 02 can also apply** if the total **fee of 2 persons** (USD 50 x 2 = USD 100) is paid by the client.

The following documents are required for the permit and we need at least 20- 25 days to process the same after we receive these documents:

- 1) Photocopy of passport & visa
- 2) 4 passport size photographs
- 3) Duly filled RAP application form (provided by us)

***Hotels used***

Guwahati – Greenwood Resort

Nameri - Eco Camp

Eaglenest – Bompa Camp

Ziro - Siiro Resort

Daporijo - Daporijo Village Guesthouse

Along – Hotel Agam (deluxe rooms)

Dibrugarh - Hotel Natraj

Dibru-Saikhowa – Local Ecolodge

Majuli Island - Mishing Cottage (Me O Pokum)