

NEPAL

BIRDS, WILDLIFE, and CULTURE



January 8 - 21, 2025



Wild **LATITUDES**
WORLDWIDE NATURE TOURS

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BIRDS, WILDLIFE, and CULTURE

Nepal is a land of extremes! Grand mountains, robust glacially fed rivers, lowland jungle-like forests... Eight of the fourteen highest peaks in the world are in Nepal, including Mount Everest, the highest peak on planet Earth. While many people are familiar with the majesty of the **Himalayan Mountains**, most are not aware of a region known as **The Terai**. This is an area of dense forest, beautiful rivers, biologically rich wetlands, and small culturally engaging villages. It is a natural border between the plains of North India and the hills and mountains of Nepal. Known for being the birthplace of the Buddha, for its culturally vibrant towns, and incredible birding, there's a lot to see and do in The Terai. A trip to Nepal with Wild Latitudes will provide an opportunity to immerse yourself in the rich history and breathtaking scenery of this unique region.

We begin this tour with several days in **Kathmandu**, a city filled with medieval temples, palaces and modern high-rise structures, as well as some great birding just outside the city limits. After some exploration of Kathmandu, we'll take a short flight to the city of Biratnagar, setting us up for birding across the diverse habitats found in The Terai region. Birds we hope to find include the **Spot-Billed Pelican**, **Lesser Adjutant Stork**, **White-tailed Eagle**, **Stork-billed Kingfisher**, **Swamp Francolin**, and the **Striated Grassbird**.

We'll spend several days exploring the wetlands, grasslands, and riverine forests of **Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve**. In addition to being declared a "Ramsar Site" (a wetland of international significance), more than half of Nepal's known birds occur in Koshi Tappu! Among mammals, **Wild Water Buffalo**, the elusive **Ganges River Dolphin** and the **Fishing Cat** are occasionally observed here.

From Koshi, we'll make our way to one of the most famous national parks in Asia: **Chitwan National Park**. This large protected area consists of forests, grasslands, and marshes. It's home to an astonishing **544 bird species**! In addition, rare **Slender-snouted Gharial crocodiles**, **Asian Elephants**, and the **Greater One-horned Rhinoceros** can be seen. Chitwan also has one of the highest concentrations of **Royal Bengal Tigers** in the world.

From the glory of the Terai, we'll return to Kathmandu, where you can explore more of the city on your own or with the group.

TRIP DETAILS

Start Date: January 8, 2025

Duration of Tour: 14 days

Number of participants: Max of 10

Fee for Main Tour: \$6,595 per person

Deposit: \$3,300

Single Supplement: \$1,195

Trip Leaders: David Jaffe

Included:

- Double-occupancy lodging
- Ground transportation
- Breakfasts, lunches, and some dinners
- Excursions and park fees
- Guiding services

Not Included:

- Flights
- Some dinners
- Alcoholic beverages
- Personal items
- Optional gratuities for guides



Steve Robertson and Ivan Phillipsen
Co-owners and Lead Guides at Wild Latitudes

info@wildlatitudes.com 503-714-3504

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Tentative and subject to change depending on weather, road, or other conditions.

Day 1 - Jan 8 - Arrive in Kathmandu

Welcome to the renowned city of Kathmandu! The tour begins with our arrival at Tribhuvan International Airport. We'll drive a short distance north to our lodging, Hotel Padma. Literally out the door of the hotel is **Boudhanath Stupa**, one of the largest stupas in the world and a UNESCO World Heritage site. Every day, hundreds of tourists and pilgrims walk in a clockwise direction around this stupa, a circumambulating act known as a 'kora'. Buddhists do Kora as a form of pilgrimage and meditation and is an integral part of Tibetan Buddhist devotional practice. Bold, vibrant, and colorful, Boudhanath is truly a special place to visit. After settling into our hotel, we'll head to the hotel's rooftop restaurant, Nina's, where we'll introduce ourselves, have a brief orientation and enjoy our first dinner together in view of Boudhanath Stupa.

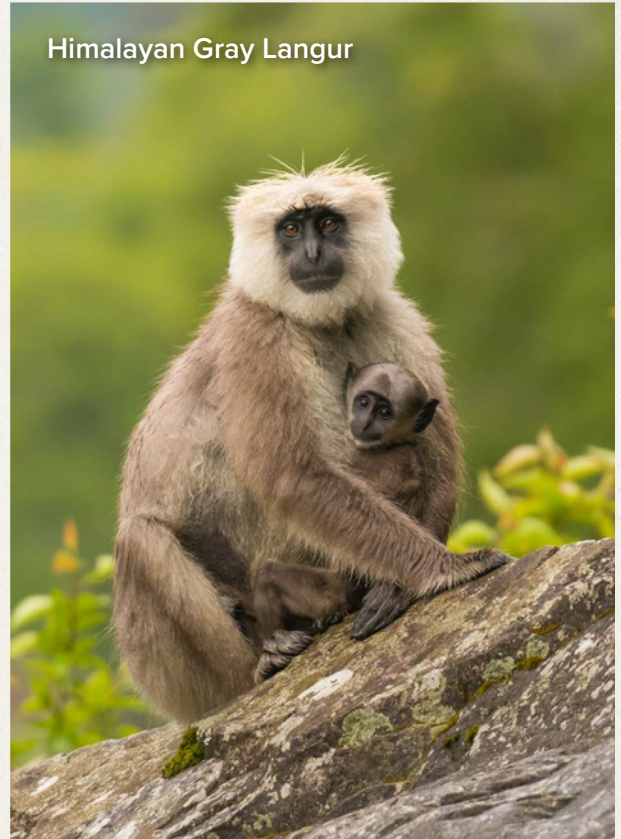
Lodging: [Hotel Padma](#)

Day 2 - Jan 9 - Kathmandu Exploration

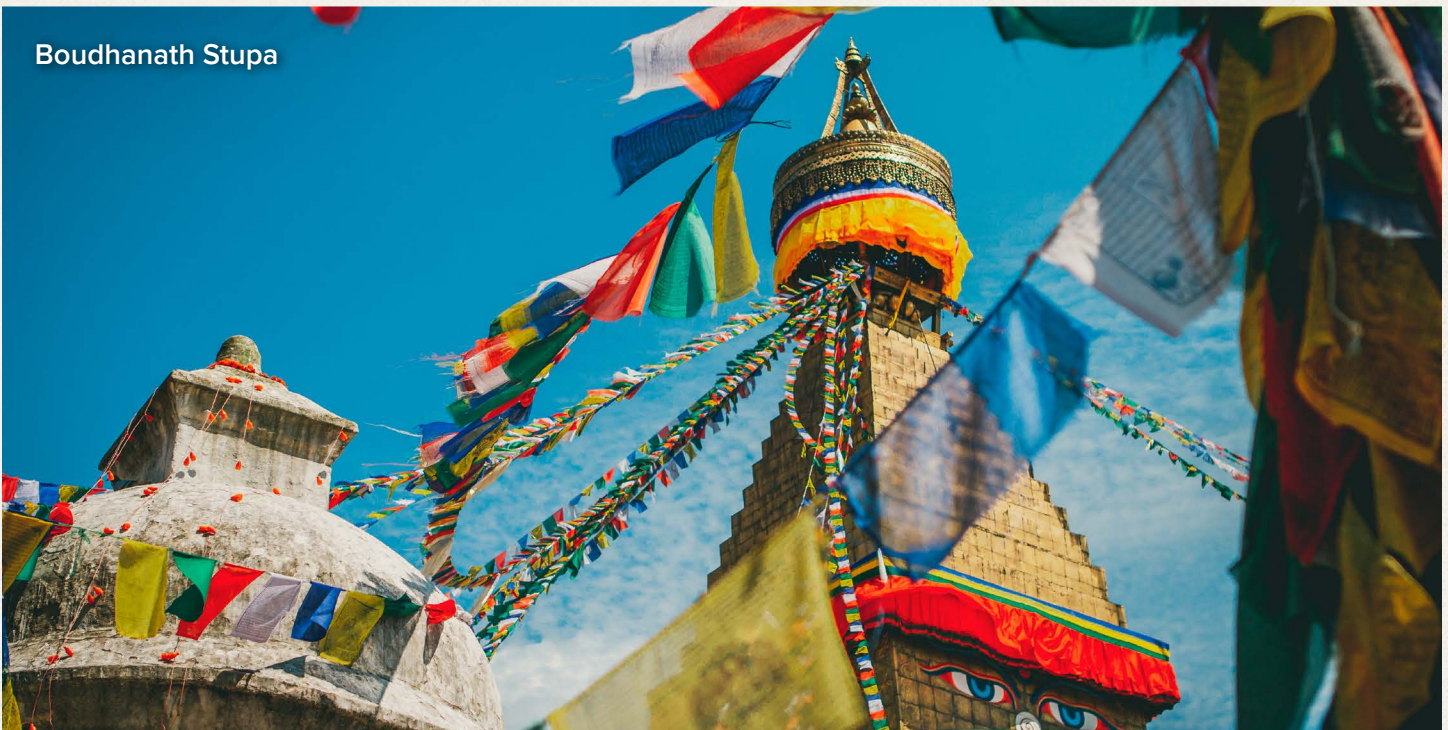
Following breakfast at the Hotel, we will make our way out to Phulchowki Hill. “Phulchowki” means “hill full of flowers,” in Nepali. It is the highest point in the Kathmandu Valley standing at just over 9,000 feet and well-known for beautiful vistas that are truly enchanting. And it is also a known birding hotspot! In the dense forests that covers the hill’s lower flanks, we’ll be seeking the **Red-headed Trogon**, **Blue-naped Pitta**, **Common Green-Magpie**, **Barred Cuckoo-Dove**, and many other interesting species. In the cloud forest that covers the upper half of Phulchowki, we’ll keep our eye out for birds such species as the **Red-tailed Minla**, **Himalayan Cutia**, **Hoary-throated Barwing**, and the **Darjeeling Woodpecker**. After lunch, we’ll continue birding before returning to the hotel for a little relaxing, after which we’ll gather to go over our bird list before having dinner.

Lodging: [Hotel Padma](#)

Himalayan Gray Langur



Boudhanath Stupa



Day 3 - Jan 10 - Gokarna Forest, Pashupatinath Temple and Durbar Square

This morning we'll head to the **Gokarna Forest Reserve**. A wall was built around the forest in 1862, as it was the royal hunting reserve for the kings of the day. This is the last natural forest of Kathmandu Valley representing the wilderness that existed here over 500 years ago. With trees up to 200 years old, the Gokarna Forest Reserve is an ornithological paradise. This morning we'll have the opportunity to spot many species, including the **Lesser Yellownape, Grey-headed Woodpecker, Orange-bellied Leafbird, Long-tailed Minivet, Yellow-bellied Fantail, and Brown Wood Owl**.

After a delicious lunch, we shift towards culture as we visit **Pashupatinath Temple** and Kathmandu's **Durbar Square**. Pashupatinath is the largest and oldest Shiva temple in the world, and is a designated UNESCO World Heritage site. Durbar Square is where the city's kings were once crowned, and from where they ruled. The square remains the traditional heart of the old town, and Kathmandu's most spectacular legacy of traditional architecture. We return in the evening to our hotel, meeting up again for our list and dinner.

Lodging: [Hotel Padma](#)

Chestnut-tailed Starling



Nepalese Paper Plant





Durbar Square, Kathmandu

Day 4 - Jan 11 - Travel to Koshi Tappu

Perhaps you'll enjoy one more Kora before breakfast since after breakfast we fly, both figuratively and literally! Today we will make a short flight to Baranagar in east Nepal. This sets us up perfectly to visit **Barju Lake** en route to Koshi Tappu Wildlife Refuge. Barju Taal ('taal' means lake), sometimes called Chimdi Taal, is just over 250 acres of water and wetland and hosts more than 200 species of birds including the **Baikal Teal**, **Ferruginous Duck**, **Greater Coucal**, **White-breasted Waterhen**, **Pheasant-tailed Jacana**, and many others. After our fill at the lake, we'll make our way to our home for the next couple of days: **Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve**. We'll settle in for a late lunch followed by an exploration of the local grounds. Time permitting, we hope to visit a nearby village for an engaging, but relaxed afternoon. We return to our lodge in time to freshen up before we meet to review our list and have dinner.

Lodging: Koshi Camp Resort

Day 5 - Jan 12 - Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve

After Breakfast we'll visit the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, where nearly 500 species of birds can be found! Originally established 1976 to protect Nepal's last remaining wild **Water Buffalo**, the population has since increased from the 63 to over 500 since the park was formed. In addition to the buffaloes, Koshi Tappu is known for the successful management of its wetlands that support other threatened species including the **Ganges River Dolphin**, the **Smooth-coated Otter** and the massive crocodilian known as the **Gharial**, once believed extinct in Nepal, they have again been sighted in the reserve.

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Countryside in Nepal



Kalij Pheasant



Great Hornbill

To register for this tour, email or call: info@wildlatitudes.com, 503-714-3504

On our first full-day, we will venture into the reserve for an all-day jeep excursion. This will give us our first foray in the Terai as we seek birds and other wildlife in the pristine riparian wetlands, diverse forests, lush grasslands, swamps, and the numerous lakes and ponds protected in the reserve. In addition to the wild Water Buffalo and other mammals in the reserve, we'll be looking for the **Bar-Headed Goose**, **Black Francolin**, **Common Hawk-Cuckoo**, **Himalayan Griffon**, **Crested Serpent-eagle**, **Indian Gray Hornbill**, **Asian Green Bee-eater**, **Indian Roller**, and the **Blue-throated Barbet**...just to name a few!

Our Commitment to Conservation

On every Wild Latitudes tour, we aim to make a positive conservation impact wherever we travel. We utilize the services of local guides and, when possible, stay in environmentally-sensitive, locally-owned lodges. Through our partnership with the Rainforest Trust, a portion of all international tour fees goes to purchasing rainforest acreage, for its protection in perpetuity. On every trip, we also make a contribution to a local conservation effort that works to protect a native species or ecosystem.



Plum-headed Parakeet

A barrage (dam) on the southern side of the reserve has created a reservoir where thousands of waders and wildfowl take rest. This is one of very few locations to catch a glimpse of the pink Ganges River Dolphin. We'll end the day visiting a tower overlooking the wetlands before returning to the lodge for a wonderful dinner and perhaps a little owling, returning in the evening to the resort for dinner.

Lodging: Koshi Camp Resort

Day 6 - Jan 13 - Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, Day 2

Our second full day in Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve will start with a flat-water **boat trip on the Koshi River**. Being in this special habitat will provide opportunities to search for different water fowl, river birds and simply relax as we float the calm waters back down to the lodge. After lunch, we'll further explore the rich, forested landscape immediately surrounding the property. Species list and dinner in the evening as always.

Lodging: Koshi Camp Resort



Day 7 - Jan 14 - Scenic Drive Westward

Today will be a day to marvel at the countryside as we travel by bus through the diverse landscapes and culturally vibrant villages of the Terai region. After a morning birding session and a hearty breakfast, we'll load the bus and head towards Hetauda, our destination for the evening. En route, we'll stop to stretch our legs and bird a bit along the river. Upon arrival in Hetauda, we'll add species to our list and enjoy a delicious meal at the hotel before relaxing for the evening.

Lodging: [Avocado and Orchid Resort](#)

Day 8 - Jan 15 - Chitwan National Park

We'll begin today a little early as we want to have time to search for the elusive **Ibisbill** as we make our way to a premier Nepalese attraction: **Chitwan National Park**. Chitwan has a particularly rich flora and fauna and showcases the last surviving example of the natural ecosystems of the Terai region. The spectacular landscape, covered with lush vegetation and the Himalayas as the backdrop, makes the park an area of exceptional natural beauty. Situated in a river valley basin with a mosaic of riverine forest and grasslands, this protected landscape makes for exceptional wildlife viewing and fantastic birdwatching opportunities.

After lunch on our arrival day, we'll head out to a local community forest to get right into the birding. We'll walk back through the village area and then have a cultural dinner and performance hosted by local Tharu Families.

Lodging: [Sapana Lodge](#)



Asian Elephants



Bengal Tiger

Day 9 - Jan 16 - Chitwan National Park, Day 2

Our first full day will be an all-day jeep safari within Chitwan National Park. We'll keep a sharp eye out for **Asian Elephants**, **Greater One-horned Rhinoceros**, and **Royal Bengal Tigers**. Birds are less elusive, and we should see many species, including the **River Lapwing**, **Black Drongo**, **Cinereous Tit**, **Black-hood Oriole**, **Greater Flameback**, **Lineated Barbet**, **Indian White-eye**, **Citrine Wagtail**, and the **Siberian Stonechat**. We'll enjoy dinner as the sun sets at the Sunset View Restaurant.

Lodging: [Sapana Lodge](#)

Day 10 - Jan 17 - Chitwan National Park, Day 3

The next full day will start early for some fantastic birding as we gently **float down Jankouli Creek**. Our canoe will move through more open riparian forest as well as a slightly tighter canopy. After about an hour or so on the creek, we disembark the canoes and walk through beautiful, old growth lowland forest continuing our safari on land. This afternoon, we'll bird the nearby confluence of Rapti and Budhi-Rapti rivers, returning back to the lodge in the evening for dinner and to review our species list.

Lodging: [Sapana Lodge](#)



Himalayan Griffons

Day 11 - Jan 18 - Chitwan National Park, Day 4

Our third full day in the Chitwan area will begin with a visit to the **Jatayu Vulture Restaurant**. This is a restaurant for vultures, not humans. It is the first community managed vulture restaurant in the world, and provides poison-free food to the birds. Jatayu and several other similar restaurants have been the reason for a great resurgence of several endangered vultures. Nepal has recorded nine of the 23 vulture species found in the world, four of them are 'critically endangered', one is 'endangered' and three species are 'near threatened'. We will learn how the Jatayu Vulture Restaurant and other vulture restaurants are contributing to a success story in the making for these noble and extremely important birds.

Lodging: [Sapana Lodge](#)

Day 12 - Jan 19 - Chitwan National Park, Return to Kathmandu

After one more early morning birding session in and around the area, we will begin our transit back to Kathmandu. We plan to arrive early enough to give you time to relax or do a bit of souvenir hunting before dinner.

Lodging: [Hotel Padma](#)



Red-billed Blue-Magpie



Himalayan Black-lored Tit

Day 13 - Jan 20 - More Kathmandu Exploration

Our last full day will be weather dependent and may include an optional birding trip to the **Ranibari Community Forest** or the **Chandragiri Cable Car**. Ranibari Forest was once the site of religious retreats for the kings of Nepal. It is now an oasis of nature with footpaths that explore 17 acres of dense forest within the city. The forest is notable for

its abundance of birds. Highlights include **Alexandrine Parakeet**, **Black Kite**, **Scarlet Minivet**, and the extravagantly tailed **Red-billed Blue-magpie**. If visibility is good, another option is to ride the cable car to Chandragiri Hilltop. The car will carry us above verdant pine forests to awe-inspiring panoramic views of the valley below, the lush hills surrounding it, and the majestic Himalayan range.

The afternoon will be open for personal time to explore on your own, or simply relax with a cup of chai at a local restaurant. We will meet in the evening to go over our species lists one last time, before we share a farewell dinner to celebrate our amazing journey across Nepal.

Lodging: [Hotel Padma](#)

Day 14 - Jan 21 - Departure

After breakfast, we'll provide shuttles to the airport and say our farewells!

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

YOUR GUIDE

DAVID JAFFE

David Jaffe has been guiding and teaching since 1991. His childhood interest in nature eventually led him to Evergreen State College, WA where he earned a B.S. in Environmental Studies and Geology. After 13 years of 'life-experience' he returned to graduate school, earning a M.S. in Applied Ecology with The Field Naturalist Program from the University of Vermont.

David has trekked through the Himalaya in Nepal, looked into the eyes of masked boobies in the Galápagos, sought nudibranchs on the Great Barrier Reef, and walked the Ghats along the Ganges River in India. He has led backcountry trips in Denali National Park, learned from students in Kentucky, and gained great insights while hitchhiking home from work in Yosemite National Park. He has experience as a naturalist in many of the lower 48 states and Baja California. David worked as a divemaster in Australia, Costa Rica, and India. He assisted with the establishment of a marine protected area off the coast of Madagascar and researched and formally studied birds in Canada and South America. His understanding, love and enthusiasm about the natural world continues to grow.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

THE PACE AND STYLE OF OUR TOURS

The primary goal of our trips is to experience and learn about the natural world, especially the region's birds and other wildlife, and of course, to have fun! As birding is often a primary focus of our tours, and birds are active in the morning, we will sometimes have early morning outings before breakfast. That said, our style of birding may not be ideal for hard-core "listers." We prefer to spend time observing the species we encounter, and learn a bit about their natural history, rather than rushing through the field to add the maximum number of species to our bird list. We also make diversions for interesting, non-avian wildlife, plants, geological wonders, and cultural activities. The pace of most of our trips is moderate, and we encourage anyone in good health to attend and enjoy the experience. Please contact us about if you need specific information on the types of physical activities on a tour and their physical requirements.

We strive to immerse participants in the local culture and to that end, wherever possible, we stay in locally owned and operated hotels that are designed and run in an environmentally sustainable way. Though some accommodations may be more basic than others, all are safe, clean and comfortable. We also utilize the services of local guides, visit local markets, and other culturally significant sites.

TOUR DATE AND TRIP LEADER CHANGES

Leaders and schedules are determined up to a year in advance of our tours. In the event that we have a change in a tour's dates or leaders, we reserve the right to do so, and will strive to inform participants as early in the process as possible. Additional leaders may be added to tours according to the group size, and will be specified in the tour itinerary. We also reserve the right to cancel any trip for which there are insufficient reservations.

HOW TO REGISTER FOR THE TOUR

When you're ready to sign up for the tour, please let us know by doing one of the following:

- Send us an email at info@wildlatitudes.com
- Call us at 503-714-3504

Then we'll send you the link to our online registration form. You can choose to pay your deposit by credit card or check. See 'Deposit Policy' below.

DEPOSIT POLICY

A deposit is due at the time of registration. ***A deposit is the only thing that guarantees your place on the trip.*** Registration can be made over the phone with a credit card: 503-714-3504. *Note:* there is an additional 3.0% fee for credit card payments. This is only what we are charged by the credit card company.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Checks are happily accepted and should be made out to *Wild Latitudes LLC*. Include the tour name on the memo line of the check and send to:

Wild Latitudes, PO Box 25115, Portland, OR 97298.

PAYMENT POLICY

Full payment is required **90 days** prior to the tour departure date for international tours or any tour involving flights; and **30 days** prior to the tour departure date for local (i.e. in the Portland, Oregon area), van-based tours.

CANCELLATION POLICY

In the event a participant needs to cancel a reservation for any tour, the following policies will apply:

- **90 days** or more prior to tour departure date, the deposit will be refunded, minus an administrative fee of \$100.
- **Less than 90 days but more than 60 days** prior to tour departure date, all payments refunded, minus 50% of deposit.
- **Less than 60 days** prior to tour departure date, no refunds will be given.

We *strongly* recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance to protect yourself from unforeseen circumstances.

If for any reason Wild Latitudes cancels a tour prior to the start of the tour, full refunds—minus the cost of any internal/in-country airline tickets purchased and/or any non-refundable deposits or expenses already made by Wild Latitudes—will be given to all participants. In the event that the tour is canceled while underway due to unforeseeable events such as but not limited to natural disaster, military activities, social uprising, or other extremely dangerous conditions not within the control of Wild Latitudes, no refund will be issued.
