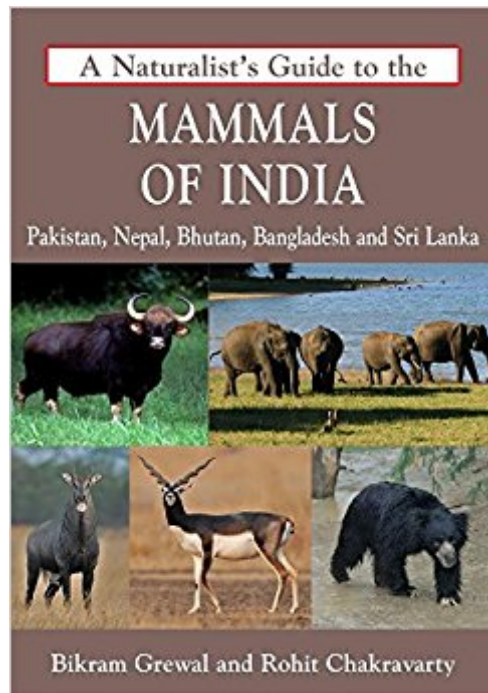




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A Naturalist's Guide To The Mammals Of India (Naturalist's Guides)



Synopsis

This easy-to-use identification guide to the 280 mammal species most commonly seen in India is perfect for resident and visitor alike. High quality photographs from India's top nature photographers are accompanied by detailed species descriptions, which include nomenclature, size, distribution, habits and habitat. The user-friendly introduction covers geography and climate, vegetation, opportunities for naturalists and the main sites for viewing the listed species. Also included is an all-important checklist of all of the mammals of India encompassing, for each species, its common and scientific name, its status in the country as well as its global IUCN status.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Bikram Grewal grew up in the dense evergreen forests of India's north-east where he first developed his love for birds. He gave up his full-time publishing career to devote his time to the conservation of Indian wildlife, especially working on rare birds. He is the author of over ten books on birds of the subcontinent and also acts as a consultant on eco-tourism to several Indian states. He helped conceive the 'birdsofindia' website, which is now the biggest birding site in India and is ranked amongst the top ten birding sites in the world. He is a trustee of the Wildlife Preservation Society of India (WPSI). He was awarded the Lifetime Award for spreading awareness about birds and conservation in India.

This book and its sister titles on Trees and Shrubs and Butterflies arrived in a very timely fashion, a

day before I flew out to Delhi as an invited speaker at the Uttar Pradesh Bird Fair 2016. Over the years a number of field guides have been produced for the mammals of India. On previous trips I have used Vivek Menon's *A Field Guide to Indian Mammals*™. Once again faced with the practical issue of which book to carry on a short trip, I took this with me for the Uttar Pradesh Bird Fair. South Asia has just around 590 species of mammals. A book, even if using a pocket photographic guide format would be quite big if it covered all the species. However, many of the species of mammals are not seen by even serious mammal watchers. Many of the mammals in the Indian subcontinent are bats (order Chiroptera) rats and mice (the family Muridae). To see many of these species will require extensive nocturnal field work with permits to use traps. As a result, this guide which covers 200 of the most commonly seen species is adequate for most visitors. The guide covers a representative sample of the orders and families and includes many species of bats, rats and mice, shrews and cetaceans and hedgehogs. Although visitors on a short trip are unlikely to see many of these species it makes the book a useful first book for people resident in the subcontinent. On my first morning at the Chambal Safari Lodge I was able to put the book to the test by identifying a pair of Five-striped Palm Squirrels associating in a symbiotic relationship with Jungle Babblers. A group of female Nilgai were feeding in an open field and a group of international delegates to the Uttar Pradesh Bird Fair had gathered to watch them. I was the only one with a lightweight guide in the bag and I was able to confirm them as Nilgai. These are common in Uttar Pradesh and are unlikely to be confused with another species. In the night using red filters over a low intensity torch in the lodge grounds we found Indian Hare and Common Palm-civet. The book was useful to compare with other similar species and check on identification characteristics and their distribution. The grounds of Chambal Safari Lodge spans a few acres and included a matrix of habitats from wooded patches (rare in the flatlands of Uttar Pradesh) to grassland. I had an extra few days here as a guest of the lodge and walked about encountering not only birds but also mammals during the day. It was lovely to see both Indian Hares out during the day as well as one of their predators the Jackal. A small colony of Indian Flying Foxes dangled from tall trees and Rhesus Macaques furtively visited a fruiting fig tree in the adjoining village. On an excursion organised by the lodge we saw Grey Mongoose and Small Indian Mongoose. The book certainly had all of the mammals I saw on this trip. As it is intended to cover the subcontinent, it has a few species such as the Purple-faced Langur, endemic to Sri Lanka and therefore absent from Peninsular India. In my own photographic guide to the Mammals of Sri Lanka, I have more details on mammals such as these. A multi-country guide can never be as granular as a country specific guide but this book seems to work well for the countries in peninsular India. Thumbing through the

book, the images bring home the intoxicating mix of mammals that inhabit the Indian subcontinent. The amazing thing about India is that it is not difficult to see a fabulous range of mammals on even a short trip. On a boat safari to the Chambal River I had sightings of Nilgai and Jackal topped up with Gangetic River Dolphin. My companions on the boat had done better on a walk about at the Chambal Safari Lodge with a sighting of a Jungle Cat. Writing this on a wintery day in London, I can't wait to go back to India. If this book inspires you to take an interest in Asian Mammals, on a visit to India look out for Volume 1 and 2 of the Mammals of South Asia edited by A.J.T. Johnsingh and Nima Manjrekar. I bought a set of volumes at the Uttar Pradesh Bird Fair from Divya Arora, Managing Director of Natraj Publishers. Volumes 1 and 2 have 614 and 739 pages respectively, adding up to over 1,300 pages, these are definitely one for the reference library. The Naturalist's Guide, at 176 species with photographs of the 200 species covered, is good alternative for people on holiday or who want to get started in learning the diversity of Indian mammals. Other comments All three titles adopt commonplace principles in photographic field guides with a focus on ID, but also covering distribution and habitat, behaviour etc. The Naturalist Guide series also includes a full checklist of species for animals. For plants this is reduced to a list of families. Given the huge numbers of species found on the Indian subcontinent, sometimes less is more. Books like these will make natural history more accessible as they are highly visual and cover a manageable number of species for the beginner or visitor to get their head around.

Sachdeva, Pradeep & Tongrbram, Vidya. (2017). A Naturalist's Guide to the Trees and Shrubs of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. John Beaufoy Publishing: UK. Pages 176.

Grewal, Bikram, & Chakravarthy, Rohit. (2017). A Naturalist's Guide to the Mammals of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. John Beaufoy Publishing: UK. Pages 176.

Smetacek, Peter. (2017). A Naturalist's Guide to the Butterflies of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. John Beaufoy Publishing: UK. Pages 176.

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