

DEPARTURE

14TH APR TO 27TH APR 2018



SNOW LEOPARDS & BROWN BEARS

WILDLIFE IN THE UPPER HIMALAYAS

Ladakh which is part of Jammu & Kashmir is home to exceptional wildlife. This diversity is a result of the unique landscape and the weather conditions in the region. The fauna of Ladakh has much in common with that of Central Asia in general and that of the Tibetan Plateau in particular.

Exceptions to this are the birds, many of which migrate from the warmer parts of India to spend the summer in Ladakh. For such an arid area, Ladakh has a great diversity of birds — a total of 225 species have been recorded. Many species of finches, robins, redstarts and the hoopoe are common in summer. The brown-headed gull is seen in summer on the river Indus and on some lakes of the Changthang. Resident water-birds include the Brahminy duck and the bar-headed goose. The black-necked crane, a rare species found scattered in the Tibetan plateau, is also found in parts of Ladakh. Other birds include the raven, Eurasian magpie, red-billed chough, Tibetan snowcock, and chukar. The lammergeyer and the golden eagle are common raptors here.

Some key mammals to look out for in the region are the snow leopard, brown bear, Tibetan wolf, Eurasian lynx, weasels, Tibetan fox, ibex, blue sheep and yak to name a few.





ITINERARY

14 Apr: Arrive in Delhi | Overnight in Delhi

15 Apr: Morning flight to Leh | Day spent acclimatizing | Overnight in Leh (Grand Dragon Hotel)

16 Apr: Explore Leh, Thiksey Monastery and an interaction with experts from Snow Leopard Conservancy | Overnight in Leh (Grand Dragon Hotel)

17 Apr: Drive to Drass | Explore the villages around Drass | Overnight in a Homestay in Drass

18 Apr: Today with a team of scouts and a naturalist you explore the region for its wildlife. The wildlife highlight of the region is the Himalayan Brown Bear. | Overnight in a Homestay in Drass



19 Apr: Today with a team of scouts and a naturalist you explore the region for its wildlife. The wildlife highlight of the region is the Himalayan Brown Bear. | Overnight in a Homestay in Drass

20 Apr: Transfer to Uley Valley by road | All along keep a lookout for wildlife. Wildlife to look for in Uley is snow leopards, Himalayan wolf, Himalayan fox, Ladakh Uriel, Ibex, Marmots to name a few. | Overnight at Snow Leopard Lodge – A Homestay in Uley

21- 25 Apr: Explore Uley Valley in search for snow leopards and other wildlife | Drive back to Leh on 25th Apr – Overnight in Leh

26 Apr: Fly back to Delhi | Overnight in Delhi

27 Apr: Catch your flight back home



KEY INFORMATION

- Acclimatization:** Since the expedition takes you to an elevation of 3500m to about 4900m, it is imperative that all guests spend at least 2 days in Leh to acclimatize. During this period they should spend time resting or go out on short excursions to the city or the surrounding villages.
- AMS:** AMS or Acute Mountain Sickness is a big risk when traveling over 3000m. AMS can be unpleasant and may reduce enjoyment of activities. In addition, if it is not managed appropriately it can result in more serious illness which can lead to death. An understanding of the prevention and recognition of AMS is important to anyone travelling to high altitude.
- Symptoms:** The main symptom is headache, which is as a result of mild swelling of the brain, caused by the reduced oxygen levels. This can vary in severity. Rarely, people can experience more severe swelling leading to a condition called high altitude cerebral oedema (HACE).
- For a diagnosis of acute mountain sickness (AMS) to be made you need a Headache plus one other symptom from:
- Poor appetite and/or nausea/vomiting
 - Fatigue/weakness
 - Dizziness/light-headedness
 - Difficulty sleeping
- Connectivity:** Being a border state, Ladakh is an army base and security is always high as we share borders with Pakistan and China. Satellite phones thus are not permitted and there is no mobile connectivity in the region where we trek. However, there is a satellite phone in the village of Rumbak from where emergency calls for rescue can be made in case of any mishap.



CALCULATE YOUR AMS

The Lake Louise score is a scoring system used to make a diagnosis of acute mountain sickness (AMS). This is something you can do yourself to decide how severe your symptoms are and what they mean. A total score of 3 to 5 = mild AMS and 6 or more = severe AMS. Remember that any symptoms at altitude are altitude illness until proven otherwise.

The scoring is as follows:

Symptom	Severity	Score
Headache	No headache	0
	Mild headache	1
	Moderate headache	2
	Severe headache	3
Gut (gastrointestinal) symptoms	None	0
	Poor appetite or nausea	1
	Moderate nausea and/or vomiting	2
	Severe nausea and/or vomiting	3
Fatigue and/or weakness	Not tired or weak	0
	Mild fatigue/weakness	1
	Moderate fatigue/weakness	2
	Severe fatigue/weakness	3
Dizziness/light-headedness	Not dizzy	0
	Mild dizziness	1
	Moderate dizziness	2
	Severe dizziness	3
Difficulty sleeping	Slept as well as usual	0
	Did not sleep as well as usual	1
	Woke many times, poor sleep	2
	Could not sleep at all	3



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Best Time of the Year:

The winter months (Jan, Feb, March) are great to view the snow leopard, however, the brown bears are in hibernation at this time of the year. This is the reason why this program has been planned for April as winter in Ladakh is ending and it is still possible to get good sightings of the snow leopard and the bears too are coming out of hibernation and becoming more active.

Other important wildlife:

The area is also home to other predators such as the Tibetan Wolf, Eurasian Lynx, Pallas Cat, Tibetan Fox, Weasel, Blue Sheep (Bharal), Ibex, Ladakh Urial and the Yak.

Accommodation (What to expect): Since the area being explored is extremely remote all accommodation is in Homestays. The Snow Leopard Lodge & Drass homestays are comfortable though basic. They provide a gas heater to warm up the room. At minus 25 Celsius the water pipelines freeze thus bucket water is available and water is kept hot using immersion rods. The homestays do not offer attached bathrooms with all the rooms, however, with hot water and clean loos they make an excellent option. Alternative being staying in tents with a make shift loo and camping. Hot meals are prepared by a team of chefs. Naturalists will be there to talk about the region and this does not have to be only about wilderness or only about wilderness in Ladakh. These naturalist have travelled extensively and can hold a discussion on other aspect of traveling within India.



