

Nepal December 2000 - January 2001.

This trip came about due to all the fuss about the “Millennium”.

Where could we go to escape all that palaver? Well Nepal is a Hindu country with a different calendar and I remembered a promise by Shambu Ghamire to take us walking in Chitwan NP. So Nepal it was to be.

We booked a standard Naturetrek trip to Nepal and bolted on an extension to Chitwan and the trip was on.

Route was IOM-LHR-DOH-Katmandhu with Manx and Qatar.

No particular medications needed and just my Minolta SLR and binoculars. Not digital so any photos are scanned from prints.

December 22nd. Into LHR which was packed and a scrum to check in. Off on time and into Doha overnight.



December 23rd. Change planes for the four hour flight to Katmandhu. We met three other group members and Hathan our leader/guide whisked us off to the Dynasty Hotel which was pleasant enough although E had severe misgivings about the City.

December 24th A planned walk up Phulchowki turned into a ride up the mountain and a walk back down the same road. Not a particularly good way to spend Christmas Eve but.....

December 25th.

To the airport for our flight to the east of Nepal to a small town whose name escapes me where we land and take a minibus to Khoshi Tented Camp. Tents in the African style spread around a grassy field with a mess tent for meals. The Christmas meal was a pig roast which made a nice change from Turkey.

December 26th. We embark on a large Dinghy for a drift downstream on Khoshi river. Warm in the sun but we see various birds and mammals including River Dolphins. We land and walk the river banks and meet domestic elephants and a funeral procession.

December 27th We walk the local area, see birds and meet more elephants.

December 28th. To the river barrage where we see more dolphins and some pelicans.

The birders are bored but on the way home we stop and they get out to trudge the fields looking for some sort of Sparrow-lark.

They need not have bothered as it was by the car all the time.

December 29th . A full day in some sort of forest where we find more birds and a nice Yellow-throated



Marten. We make our way back to camp for a special good bye dinner as we now split from the main group who are to return home whilst we take the extension to Chitwan.

December 30th. We now embark on the long drive west along the Terai to Chitwan National Park as part of our plan to escape the dreaded Millennium . The drive is pleasant enough crossing many rivers and through several towns before arriving at Gaida Wildlife Camp where we get put in another very rusty truck and ferried over the river where we arrive in our new Lodge in near darkness. After dinner and traditional dancing we make our excuses and leave for bed in which there is a nice Hot water bottle.

December 31st. We take an elephant ride into the forest where we see many Asian Rhino and the clever elephant also spots a leopard in a tree and points with her trunk so the Mahout can take us closer for a good view.

The evening meal was to have been a BBQ but heavy rain put an end to that but the meat was good in the restaurant. The heavy rain persisted so we turned in early and slept through the continuous music and fireworks.



January 1st. Happy New Year and prosperous millennium. Back on the elephant which E is getting quite fond of. After breakfast we take a boat down river to a new camp for the rest of our stay. We paddle along passed Gharial and Mugger Crocs and many birds. After checking in and lunch we are taken to a Gharial hatchery with other guests at TEN to a truck. Back for dinner and an early night.

January 2nd. Today is our looked forward walking day. Elizabeth has not walked in wildlife areas before so this can be interesting. We do not find the sought after tiger but do hear her close by and see her still warm pee steaming against a tree so she was not far away. We nearly die of fright when a large stork clatters out of some nearby bushes. After lunch we continue and it starts well with a Rhino and a quick glimpse



of two Sloth Bears. We hear crashing and somebody calls 'Bear ' so we back up a bit to give it room. It is a Rhino so we back up a bit more. Later we meet a large bear on the track and Elizabeth does well, and as briefed so there is little risk. We get some photos despite the poor light in the dusk and forest.

Back to camp for a well deserved dinner and rest.

January 3rd. Another day in the Jungle on elephant back with more rhino and four leopards but sadly no tigers. Lots of birds too.

The restaurant is deserted so we have about six waiters all vying to serve us and top up our glasses.

Evidently there is industrial trouble in Katmandhu and strikers are blockading the road to the airport. So the current guests have been shipped out early and their replacements have not made it here.

Never have we had such service.

January 4th. We now return to Katmandhu and so pack up after breakfast and say our goodbyes to the lovely staff. On the drive out we see more Rhino and at the 'ferry crossing' we get put on an elephant over a deep river. On a short cut back to our first camp and on the way we see a big tusker, a rhino and assorted birds.



We get re-united with our car and set off for Katmandhu stopping on the way by a river for lunch where finally find the coveted Ibisbills as well as White-capped Redstarts, Brown Dipper and Wallcreepers.

After climbing a big pass we leave the Terai and enter the city which is as busy as when we left it two weeks ago. We have the same Hotel room and book an early call for our trip to the

airport.

January 5th. All does not go well at the airport. It starts with security muttering about my camera and batteries in hand luggage. Would they rather they went in the hold?

Then whilst boarding the plane more or less on time we get held ages for Air Traffic clearance. So long that we have lunch and see a whole film before take off. Naturally this makes us four hours late into Doha but Qatar have held the connection and we are hurried over the tarmac to the waiting plane to LHR where the already boarded passengers were less than pleased.

So into Heathrow very late and we got put up at the Hilton which was nice and re-booked on to IOM next morning. Qatar had never heard of Manx Airlines or Isle of Man but they have now.

And so to home at last without further problems AND with our luggage!!