



Email: contact@ficuswildlife.net

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Rann of Kutch - Birds, Wildlife & Landscapes

The stunningly open, salt-encrusted plains of the Rann of Kutch covers tens of thousands of sq.km's of north Gujarat, bordering the Arabian Sea to its west, Rajasthan & Pakistan to its north and the Indian mainland to the south and east - a unique haven for desert adapted wildlife.

The diversity of natural habitats of the Rann, which include flats of saline clay, thorny scrub in higher ground, grasslands enriched by river deposits and ephemeral wetlands, and its favourable location on the Palearctic bird migration route have contributed to the eco-region's astonishing birdlife of over 350 species (winter count), which include millions of wintering waders and waterfowl. A number of these birds are globally threatened and/or best seen here, than anywhere in the sub-continent. These include large numbers of raptors (mainly, *Aquila* Eagles and Harriers but also Falcons and Buzzards), Common Cranes, MacQueen's and Indian Bustards, over 10 species of Larks, Indian and Cream-coloured Coursers, Syke's Nightjar, Grey Hypocolius, Sociable Lapwing, both Flamingoes and miscellaneous desert specialist and wetland birds. These arid habitats also support a number of subcontinental mammalian rarities, including Indian Wild Ass, Caracal, Desert Cat, Desert Fox, Chinkara, Striped Hyena and Indian Wolf among the commoner Jungle Cat, Indian Jackal and Nilgai. Spiny-tailed Lizard, a regional endemic, are seasonally important prey for raptors and the ecoregion holds a number of regionally significant reptiles of arid habitats such as Desert Monitor Lizard, Kutch Rock Gecko and a number of snakes.

Dates

TBA

Please note that we can customise schedule for either a combined itinerary which includes Little and Great Rann of Kutch or to either location

Costs (per person)

From INR 45000 (for Little & Great Rann)

From INR 20000 (for Little Rann only)

From INR 27500 (for Great Rann only)



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Please note that these scheduled trips are based on a budget travel option. This trip can be customised for better comfort levels for independent travel

Price Inclusions

Transfers and Transport, ex-Ahmedabad
Accommodation
Food
Naturalist cum Tour Leader
Local Guide
Entrance Fees
Safaris/activities

Itinerary Outline

Day 1, 2 & 3: Little Rann of Kutch (AM transfer from Ahmedabad, Gujarat)

Day 4, 5, 6 & 7: Great Rann of Kutch (Banni & Naliya Grasslands, Chari Dhand, Thorn Forests, Gulf of Kutch)

Day 8: O/N train (Early AM arrival in Ahmedabad, Gujarat)

Facilities

Accommodation: Simple, comfortable, accommodation in a quaint resort with local flavour (Little Rann); Simple, comfortable, accommodation with access to expert guidance on the Rann's natural history from Desert Ecologists and Ornithologists (Great Rann)

Food: Largely local vegetarian

Transport: Road transfers in MUV's and Train Transfer in Upper Class A/C

Difficulty level: Easy

Best Time to Visit

Early November to End of February

For Whom



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Bird-watchers, Wildlife Enthusiasts, Bird & Landscape Photographers

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1, 2 & 3, Little Rann of Kutch: We leave Ahmedabad, Gujarat by 10 AM on Day 1 and reach Little Rann for Lunch. We spend the next 3 days exploring the barren salt-flats, sparsely vegetated uplands and wetlands here primarily for its fantastic birdlife, unique desert wildlife and superb scenery.

The Little Rann of Kutch is the southeastern extent of the vast area, covering tens of thousands of Kilometres, of barren salt-flats in north Gujarat. For birders this part of the Rann is especially known for sightings of the shy MacQueen's Bustard which winter here, more than ten species of Larks, including rarities like the greater Hoopoe Lark, Syke's Nightjar, Short-eared and Pallid-scops Owls, Cream-coloured and Indian Coursers, Sociable Lapwing and thousands of wetland birds, many of which migrate here from various parts of the Palearctic during winter. This is also prime raptor country which include large numbers of harriers and *Aquila* eagles as well as rarities like Red-necked Falcon. Much of the Little Rann is the Indian Wild Ass Sanctuary and is the best place to observe and photograph these animals. Other mammals include potential sightings of both Indian and Desert Foxes and Jungle Cat. During our short visit to the Little Rann we enter its vast salt-flats, providing opportunities to experience its striking openness at various times of the day.

Day 4, 5, 6 & 7, Great Rann of Kutch: We leave Little Rann after our morning activity on Day 4 and reach our base near the Great Rann by evening. We spend the next 4 days exploring the diverse habitats around the Great Rann for its astonishing birdlife, unique desert wildlife and stunning landscapes.

Much of our effort will be concentrated in the sedge and halophyte (salt-resistant plants) dominated Banni Grasslands, on the southern edge of the Great Rann - the key site for natural history experiences in all of the Rann. Here it is possible to find Grey Hypocolius in a well known roosting site, Stolickza's Bushchat, Desert Warbler and Red-tailed Wheatear as well as the impressive birds of the Little Rann (please see above). Tens of thousands of Common Crane winter here, along with large numbers of raptors and waterfowl. Further south, thorn forests hold more rarities, including White-naped Tit, Marshall's Iora, Rufous-fronted Prinia and White-bellied Minivet. Our visit to the coast, on the Gulf of Kutch, is likely to be productive for Crab Plover, in among the regular winter sites for these unique shorebirds. The highly endangered Indian Bustard is possible in the Naliya Grasslands, in a sanctuary created to protect a breeding population of these majestic birds. There are some excellent mammals to be found in the grasslands and thorn forests including, with luck, Desert Cat, Indian Wolf and



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Striped Hyena. Jungle Cat, Indian Gazelle and Indian and Desert

Foxes are relatively common, while Caracal are extremely rare. Other faunal highlights include intriguing animals like the Desert Jird and Spiny-tailed Lizard (rarely seen in peak winter). Multi-hued, bizarrely shaped rock formations, dark hills strewn with marine fossils and stark, sparsely vegetated landscapes on the edge of the Rann - visual splendours that will accompany us during our visit here - are reflective of complex geological and hydrological history of the region.

Day 8, O/N Train to Ahmedabad: After a half a day activity on Day 8, we board an overnight train to Ahmedabad. Early AM arrival in Ahmedabad on Day 9.

FYI and Guidelines

1. Gujarat in general and the areas surrounding the Rann are politically stable, safe to travel in and generally crime free.
2. Expect cold nights and early mornings, typically below 10 Celcius, necessitating woolens, including protection for the head and hands for morning excursions. Days will be warm, pleasant and dry.
3. Typically birds and animals in the Rann will be seen at distances where binoculars or ideally spotting scopes are essential for observing them. Although we will have a high-quality spotting-scope to share among the group, please also carry your own optics for more timely viewing.
4. It is best to wear earthy colored clothing to blend into the environment.
5. A hat and sunblock are highly recommended and sunglasses will be useful.
6. Please bring essential medication with you, since the local outlets will not always carry what you are looking for. Do check with your doctor on medication and medical safety before you travel to the region.

Terms and Conditions

1. Maximum group size for these tours is 6.
2. Tour costs are per person based on twin sharing basis ex-Ahmedabad and is all inclusive (transport, accommodation, food, personnel and all taxes and fees). Personnel includes an expert birding guide/tour leader and resource persons locally. Alcoholic beverages, porter charges, laundry and ala carte snacks are extra. Please check with us on specific items are included in the published tour costs.
3. Bookings are confirmed only upon full payment of the tour cost and at least one month in advance from the proposed departure date
4. Our preferred mode of payment is through electronic transfers into our bank account. Relevant details will be provided to you once you are ready to make the payment. Alterna-



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tively we accept demand drafts/cheques in the currency of your choice.

5. If you are paying in foreign currency, we might have apply a currency surcharge on the published rates, if the INR appreciates against your currency at the time of payment.
6. In the unlikely event in which we are forced to cancel the tour we will refund you the entire booking amount. In case we are unable to conduct the tour due to circumstances beyond our control (for e.g. forces of nature, political conditions), we will make every effort to refund as much of the booking amount as possible.
7. In case you to cancel your booking more than one month in advance from the tour date, we will refund *at least* 50% of the tour cost (assuming tour costs are fully paid). The precise refund beyond this will be dependent on the refund policies of our travel partners that we use on tour. In case you cancel your booking less than 1 month from the start of the tour, we will refund 10% of your booking amount

Disclaimer and Emergency Contact

Participants should be aware of unlikely, but potential risks involved during wildlife tours and general travel. This may include, among other things, injuries or fatalities associated with general travel, snake bites, field activities and encounters with wildlife. We require that all tour participants sign this disclaimer that acknowledges the risks associated during our conducted tours and relieves us of any liabilities arising out of the same. This also acknowledges that you have read and abide by the terms and conditions mentioned in the document.

Name of participant:

Age:

Emergency contact person:

Relationship:

Tel no:

Email:

Signature and Date:



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