



Email: contact@ficuswildlife.net

Web: www.ficuswildlife.net

Kalakad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve (KMTR) - Sengaltheri

Please see <http://travel.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?262065> to read an article, based on a guided tour we conducted for Outlook Traveller Magazine to KMTR in Sep 2009

When

Nov 12th to 16th 2010

(Depart from Chennai on 11th night and arrive back on the 16th morning)

Costs

INR 13,500 (USD 300) per head (for 4 persons traveling, ex- Chennai)

Facilities

Accommodation: Simple forest rest houses with basic facilities

Difficulty: Moderate for walks in mountainous uneven terrain

Food: Simple local vegetarian

Transport: Train transfers in upper class A/C coaches. Road transfers in Toyota Qualis or similar.

Highlights

KMTR is located among the southern most ranges (Ashambu Hills) of the Western Ghats and as such, it is the southern most range of some of India's megafauna, including the tiger and elephant. However, KMTR is better appreciated for its biodiversity rich, contiguous tracts of old-growth wet-evergreen forests and stunning, often mystical, mountain scenery. The park contains many biotic treasures including an amazing diversity of flora, herpetofauna, small vertebrates and invertebrates which are often unique to the Western Ghats. KMTR is also a well known centre for plant endemism. Bird diversity, including ecoregion endemics, is excellent, as is typical for other Western Ghats locations with similar habitat diversity. Notably, the rare oriental bay owl, known from very sporadic records from northeast India and the Western Ghats, was recently photographed in the reserve.



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Sengaltheri (800m), is classically KMTR - an isolated wilderness, located on a grassy hill side surrounded by evergreen and moist deciduous forest and grassland. A stroll through the vast evergreen forests of the locations could reveal real rarities such as Lion-tailed Macaque, Brown Mongoose, Brown Palm Civet, Nilgiri Marten, Jerdon's Baza and Blue-eared Kingfisher to name a few - species generally restricted to mature, dense rainforest. The grasslands and deciduous forests offer better visibility and large mammals, including Gaur, Sambar and Elephant are often and Wild Dog and Leopard less frequently seen here. A striking variety of arboreal animals, including flying lizards, gliding frogs, snakes, squirrels and primates, adapted to life in a forests of gaint trees, are among the other highlights of this magical location.

The tour will be led by an experienced naturalist and the team will be ably guided and supported by the 'Kaani's', an indigenous forest hunter-gatherer tribe who have an intimate knowledge of the reserve's biodiversity and natural locations. An element of ecotourism is built into this tour - by employing the services of the local tribals as support staff we will contribute to their economic well being, consequently reducing their dependence on forest resources for sustenance and providing an economic incentive to conserve the local biodiversity.

FYI and Guidelines

1. Accommodation will be basic, with minimal furnishing and other creature comforts. Although we will be staying in forest department tourist rest houses, we recommend that you pack as though you were out camping, i.e. include your sleeping bags, towels etc into your backpack.
2. Food will be simple and largely locally available vegetarian fare.
3. Expect warm, sunny days with few rainshowers associated with winter rains. Sengaltheri, at a little over 800m is likely to have cool to chilly nights and we expect that a light pullover will provide sufficient comfort.
4. Please bring your binoculars (at least 8x magnification, ideally 10x). While much of the biodiversity in the park can be enjoyed without a pair of binoculars, they would certainly come in handy for closer observations of fauna that do not allow close approach.
5. A considerable amount of walking around will be involved during this tour. Some of the terrain will be mountainous and uneven. It is essential that you wear a very comfortable pair of trekking shoes and full pants during our forays into the wild. We expect that all tour participants are in good physical condition. Please be advised that we could be up to 3hrs away from the nearest medical facility.
6. A hat and sunblock are highly recommended. We also suggest that you carry insect repellents and anti-allergy creams/medication. Please bring essential medication with you.



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Terms and Conditions

1. Tour costs are based on twin/triple sharing basis ex-Chennai and is all inclusive (transport, accommodation, food, personnel and all taxes and fees). Personnel includes one tour guide/naturalist and resource persons from the local community. Please check with us on specific items to make sure if it is included in the published tour costs.
2. Maximum group size on this tour is 4.
3. Bookings are confirmed only upon full payment of the tour cost and at least 30 days in advance from the proposed departure date
4. We reserve the right to cancel the tour at anytime due to unforeseen circumstances. We will refund the entire booking amount under these circumstances.
5.
 - a. We accept demand drafts in Indian Rupees and online credit card payments in US Dollars through Paypal
 - b. Customers can also transfer funds electronically into our bank accounts (details provided on request). Indian customers can also use a credit card to pay online through Paypal, but please be aware that you will be charged an additional currency conversion fee for the same.
 - c. Demand drafts are payable to “Ficus Wildlife and Natural History Tours” located in Chennai.
6. In case you want to cancel your booking:
 - a. A 90% refund if cancellation requested more than 30 days before the proposed date of departure
 - b. A 15% refund if cancellation requested less than 30 days from the proposed date of departure.

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:



Email: contact@ficuswildlife.net

Web: www.ficuswildlife.net

Relationship:

Tel no:

Email:

Signature and Date: