



India

– by –

Hamish Mackie

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

“ YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO LOOK WILDLIFE SCULPTURE IN THE EYE AND SEE LIFE. ”



Like many artists, I am inspired by wildlife. I have been lucky to sketch and sculpt in situ around the world. However I had never seen a tiger in the wild, only imagined what this might feel like from the crouching tiger depictions of Delacroix and The Tiger Hunt of Rubens springing to life. So my long held fascination with tigers led me to take a journey to the jungles of India with Steppes.

It was with both curiosity and excitement that I flew from Mumbai to Nagpur and drove just three hours to Tadoba National Park. Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve is a park that is lesser known and as such offers visitors a rare view of India's central jungle. Two lakes and open waterholes have created a healthy population of tigers (70 individuals at last count). I was incredibly heartened by the support initiatives that are in place there.

A new policy has been implemented to promote community nature conservancy (CNC) on private lands outside wildlife sanctuaries. This policy was launched in Tadoba in attendance by Sudhir Mungantiwar, the Forest Minister and Dr Debabrata Swain, the inspector General of Forests and National Tiger Conservancy. I have been lucky enough to witness CNC being implemented in Africa from the Masaimara to the Serengeti. In summary, the tiger foundation provides compensation to farmers, thus reducing human-animal conflict, whilst encouraging locals to protect their own environment through wildlife conservancy.

The experience of an Indian safari is very different than an African one. Perhaps because of the habitat and the superb camouflage of these cats, I was surprised how incredibly close my tiger sightings were. In

part down to my brilliant guide Chinmay Joshi. His knowledge and cat-like instinct seemed to pre-empt their very moves and it wasn't long until we sighted the first of many encounters.

Nothing quite prepares you for that first encounter. The whole character and essence of an animal can be seen in the wild. This is the very reason I only sculpt from sketches and maquettes I make on location. The confines of captivity no longer apply. I was aware of the very

immediate power and force of this majestic animal. I watched transfixed as a large male dragged a freshly killed sambar deer back into the camouflage of the jungle habitat. An incredibly inspiring thing to witness.

If you, like me, believe in protecting the natural habitats where wildlife flourish then I urge you to travel and view wildlife responsibly. Tigers need your support. Travelling with Steppes means just that. Their team and their connections in India made my trip the success it was. 💰

*Tiger Safari in Tadoba National Park
10 days from £2,795 pp excluding int flights*

For more information, please call one of our experts on 0843 783 4413

WHY STEPPES THE BENEFITS OF BOOKING WITH STEPPES vs GOING IT ALONE

HAMISH MACKIE'S HOLIDAY BRIEF

- | A fourteen day research holiday to see the wildlife of India | Maximum time viewing wildlife |
- | Return flights in business class | Accommodation at three different lodges |
- | Behind the scenes access to the national parks | Private guides throughout |
- | Access to conservation charities on the ground | All transfers and internal flights |

WITH STEPPES

- PLANNING -



- GETTING ADVICE -

"Joe at Steppes took the time to truly understand what I wanted to experience and was honest about what would work well and be right for us"

- BOOKING -



- EXPERIENCE / RESULTS -

"Steppes offered value for money in ways that booking independently just didn't match. They streamlined what would have been an exhausting and arduous task. I had private safaris within India - so was able to travel freely, photographing and sketching without time restraints."

DIY

- PLANNING -



- GETTING ADVICE -

"It was difficult to get a balanced view across the various forums I had searched. I wasn't sure which areas of India to go to for the best experience."

- BOOKING -



- EXPERIENCE / RESULTS -

"There was a minefield of information and I wasn't sure where to start. I wouldn't have been able to tap into the experts on the ground that Steppes have contact with. Booking by myself would have been an all together expensive and exhausting experience."

"In short, booking a holiday is the one exception where I wouldn't endorse doing it yourself. For a beyond the ordinary experience we wouldn't travel with any other company."

Hamish Mackie has travelled to India and Kenya with Steppes.

