



Birding tour at  
High Altitude  
Western Himalaya  
guided by experienced naturalists.

Chopta landscape

**Nishit Gupta**

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# Guided Birding tour of the Western Himalayas

	<b>Gopeshwar - Chopta - Tungnath - Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary</b>
<b>Landscape</b>	High altitudes.
<b>Best Time</b>	October, November, April, May and June
<b>Wildlife Expected</b>	Golden Eagle, Lammergeyer, Yellow-rumped Honeyguide, Snow and Chukar Partridges, Cheer, Koklass, Monal Pheasants, Scarlet Finch, Himalayan Woodpecker and Himalayan Tahr, Goral, Musk deer, Leopard, Red Fox, Himalayan Palm Civet, etc.

**DAY 01 - JIM CORBETT NATIONAL PARK | DAY 02 - GOPESHWAR | DAY 03, 04 & 05 - CHOPTA | DAY 06 - KATHGODAM**



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# Overview

High Altitude Birding of the Western Himalaya is popular for its best known spot Chopta. Famous for highest density of the state bird – Himalayan Monal and various other pheasants and partridges. Another attraction of this region is – Tungnath Pilgrimage and trek to Chandrashila. The entire trek is inside Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary. Its altitude varies between 1,160 and 7,070 metres. It boasts one of the richest bird diversities in the mid to high altitudes of the Western Himalaya, with a checklist of over 240 bird species, and is listed as an Important Bird Area (BNHS & Birdlife International).

The finest bird spots are at Mandal, Deoriya Taal (2387 m), Chopta (2,680 m), Tungnath (3580 m), and Chandrashila (4000 m). Oak, Rhododendron and conifer forests clothe the hill slopes at mid to high altitudes, while bugyals (alpine meadows) exist at higher altitudes.

While October-November is the best time for birding, April to June is good time for trekking in this area. Summer is open for Tungnath Pilgrimage, but one can enjoy birding as well, since it's a breeding time for resident birds.

**Kedarnath Wild Life Sanctuary:-** Consisting of 975 km<sup>2</sup>, this forest was declared as a wildlife sanctuary in 1972, with the primary purpose of protecting the endangered Himalayan Musk Deer. It is internationally important for the diversity of its flora and fauna (particularly of ungulate species) in Uttarakhand.

Situated at high altitudes, the sanctuary is a part of Western Himalayan alpine shrub and meadows of alpine eco-region of India, Nepal and Tibet. The rivers – Mandakini, Kali, Biera, Balasuti and Menan flow through the sanctuary and form beautiful valleys. Lakes, waterfalls and mountain peaks abound in this forest and is famous for it's pilgrimage sites including – Kedarnath and Tungnath.

Tungnath is the highest Shiva temple (3680m) in the world and is one of the famous panch-kedar temples. The peak of Tungnath is the source of the river Akashkamini. Chopta is a base for Tungnath trek that wends through alpine meadows and rhododendron forest. 1km steep trek from Tungnath leads to Chandrashila with its panoramic views.



# Operational Itinerary

## DAY 01 JIM CORBETT NATIONAL PARK

<b>Activity</b>	Delhi - Corbett (260km Distance)
<b>Gradient</b>	Gentle
<b>Detail</b>	Drive or take a train from Delhi to Corbett and check in to a lodge located in the peripheral of Corbett Tiger Reserve (Lunch mid-way)

Overnight at a lodge located in the peripheral of Corbett Tiger Reserve. (B, L, D)



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# DAY 02: GOPESHWAR

**Activity** Delhi - Corbett - Gopeshwar

**Gradient** Gentle

**Detail** A long mountainous drive of 280 kilometers from Ramnagar, most of which runs along the Ganges river and its tributaries, towered over by the Himalayan foothills on all sides. We will come across Pallas's Fish Eagle and River Lapwing along the Ganges. We will frequently encounter Steppe, Black, and Crested Serpent, and Mountain Hawk Eagles on this journey.

Arrival at picturesque Gopeshwar for an early dinner and rest.

Overnight at a homestay in Gopeshwer (B, L, D).



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# DAY 03: CHOPTA

**Activity** Gopeshwar - Mandal - Chopta

**Gradient** Gentle

**Detail** After an early breakfast, we will drive onwards to Mandal toward Chopta. Dense temperate forest and numerous icy streams gushing down from the dominating mountains on all sides make it a perfect habitat for Spotted, Slaty-backed, and Little Forktails. We'll probe the woodlands for Speckled Piculet, Greater Yellownappe, Grey-headed, and Brown-fronted and Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpeckers. The wet areas will be approached carefully for the Long-billed Thrush, Scaly-breasted Wren Babbler, Chestnut-headed Tesia, and Scaly Thrush and Vinaceous Rosefinch. The rare Musk Deer is found in these high altitude forests.

Overnight at camp in Chopta (B, L, D)



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Himalayan Monal  
(*Lophophorus impejanus*)

**Kalyan Singh Sajwan**

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Snow Partridge  
(*Lerwa lerwa*)

**Kalyan Singh Sajwan**

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# DAY 04 & 05: CHOPTA

**Activity** Chopta, Tungnath and Chandrashila.

**Gradient** Uphill climb

**Detail** The enormous altitudinal range here gives a birder the opportunity to get to grips with such species as the the Golden Eagle, Himalayan Snowcock, Snow, Hill and Rufous-throated Partridges, Koklass Pheasant, Spotted Laughing Thrush, Spotted Bush Warbler, Gould's Shortwing, Grandala, White-throated Tit, Upland Pipit, White-browed and Red-fronted Rosefinches, Scarlet Finch, and Crested Bunting.

We will be exploring Chopta, Tungnath and Chandrashila in these 2 days. This high Himalayan bird tour also offers ample photo opportunities for professionals and beginners. Spectacular species such as Himalayan Monal and Himalayan Tahrs mocking gravity on vertical rock faces amidst stunning landscapes make memorable photographs.

Most of our birding will be on foot, hence physical fitness is vital. To optimize our quality birding time, we will have a taxi at our disposal.

Overnight at camp in Chopta. (B, L, D).



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Yellow-rumped  
Honeyguide  
(*Indicator xanthonotus*)

**Kalyan Singh Sajwan**

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# DAY 06: KATHGODAM

**Activity** Chopta - Kathgodam

**Gradient** Gentle

**Detail** Drive to Kathgodam from Chopta.

Overnight at a hotel in Kathgodam. (B, L, D).



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# DAY 07: KATHGODAM

<b>Activity</b>	Kathgodam - Journey Onwards
<b>Gradient</b>	Gentle
<b>Detail</b>	From Kathgodam board a train for journey onwards.



## Tour inclusions:

- Accommodation for 06 nights at hotels and homestays mentioned above on twin share basis.
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary as B, L, D (B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner).
- Service of English speaking local naturalist.
- All payable Tiger Reserve fees.
- Train journey between Kathgodam/ Delhi on A/C Chair Car.
- Services of Naturalist tracker during trek.
- Porters wherever needed.
- 4 X4 and taxi transfers.
- All applicable taxes at the time of quoting.



**Tour exclusions:**

- Any expenses of personal nature such as telephone calls, tips, use of payable items in room mini bar, any kind of alcoholic non-alcoholic beverages (unless specified).
  - Air Fare.
  - Cost incurred in obtaining visa, insurance etc.
  - Cost incurred in case of hospitalization or evacuation.
  - Tips gratuities given to drivers/ guides, restaurant waiters etc.
  - Train journey between Kathgodam/ Delhi on A/C Chair Car.
- \* Please note that in case of any revision in government tax structure or substantial fuel hike we reserve the right to revise the tour cost. However, marginal difference will be absorbed by us.

**Important:**

- Itinerary order may change however number of days and general programme will remain the same.



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# BOOKING & CANCELATION POLICY

## **Booking Conditions:**

A 50% advance confirms your trip with us. Balance needs to be deposited at least 30 days before trip date.

## **Cancellation Policy:**

- Less than 15 days before the arrival date - no refund
- Less than 20 days before the arrival date - 60% refund
- Less than 25 days before the arrival date - 75% refund
- No refund in case of road block, accident, no show etc.



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- The tour price is quoted as a package. No partial refunds or credit will be given for services not used. We recommend that you obtain travel insurance upon booking.
- It is mandatory for guests to present valid photo identification at the time of check-in.
- The inclusion of extra bed with a booking is facilitated with a folding cot or a mattress as an extra bed.
- Early check-in or late check-out is subject to availability and may be chargeable by the lodge. The standard check-in time is 1 PM and the standard check-out time is 11 AM.
- The room tariff includes all taxes. The amount paid for the room does not include charges for optional services and facilities (such as room service, mini bar, snacks or telephone calls). These will be charged at the time of check-out.
- The hotel/lodge reserves the right of admission. Accommodation can be denied to guests posing as a couple if suitable proof of identification is not presented at check-in. Rural Traveller will not be responsible for any check-in denied by the hotel/lodge due to the aforesaid reason.



**Important Note:**

In case of any revision in government tax structure or fuel prices, Rural Traveller reserves the right to revise the tour price.

However, marginal revision in tour price will be absorbed by us.

- To book the above tour, please write to Sumantha Ghosh at [vanghat@gmail.com](mailto:vanghat@gmail.com). We will be happy to tailor - make a bird tour to suit the number of days that you may have.
- Do write to us if you want us to pick you up from Delhi airport, make arrangements for accommodation in Delhi, taxi and organize guided tours in Delhi or Rajasthan.



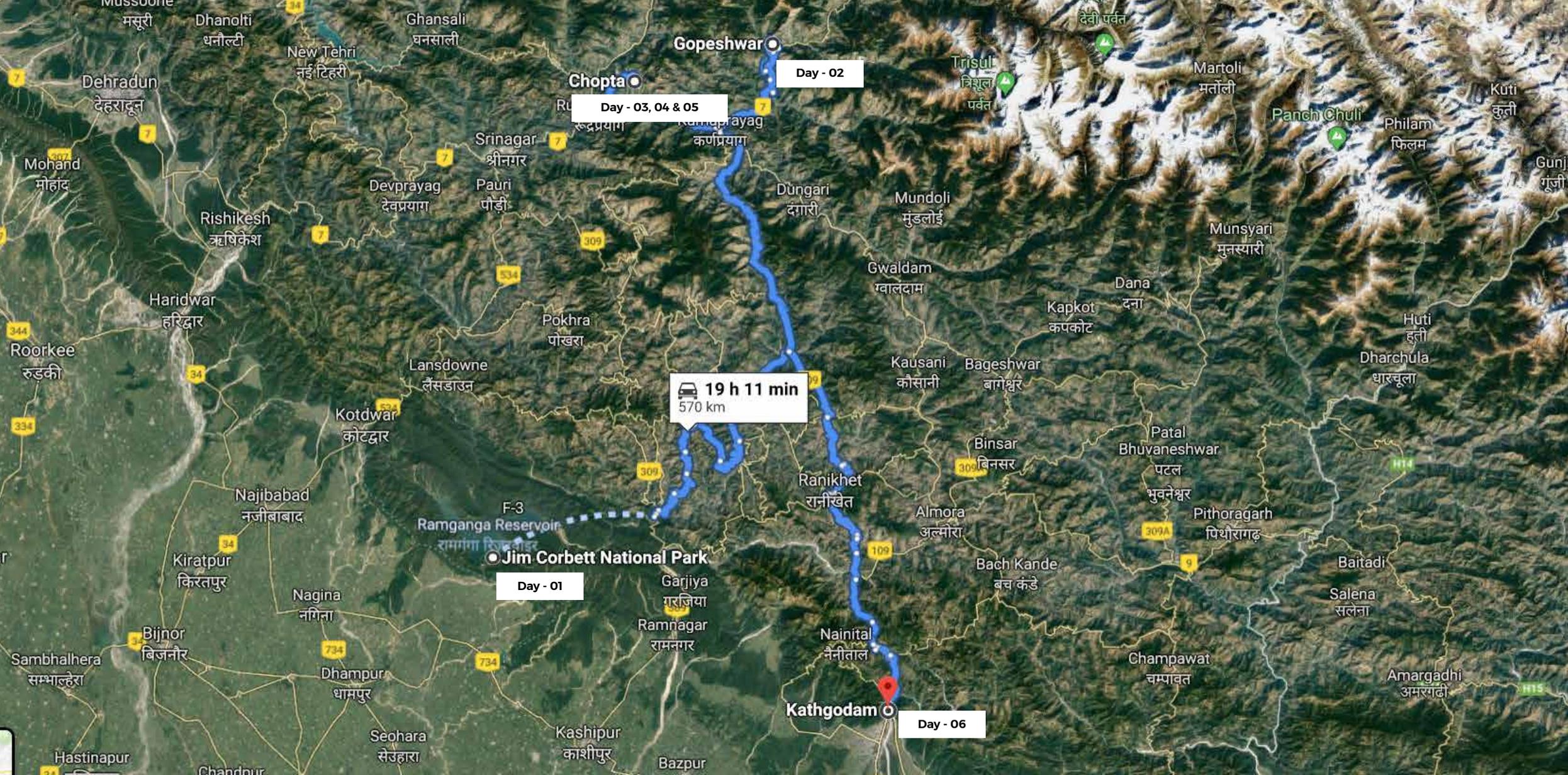
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## Things To Carry:

Binoculars, personal medicines, insect repellent, camera, film rolls, batteries, flashlight, clothing in Jungle colors such as beige, brown, khaki and green as they are least disturbing to the environment, shoes made for easy walking and sandals for wading in the river, sun hats, sweaters and heavy jackets for the winter months, light cottons for the summer months, rain gear for monsoons.



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Gopeshwar

Day - 02

Chopta

Day - 03, 04 & 05

19 h 11 min

570 km

Jim Corbett National Park

Day - 01

Kathgodam

Day - 06

Ramganga Reservoir

रामगंगा रिजर्वायर

F-3

Nagina

नागिना

Dhampur

धामपुर

Seohara

सेउहारा

Kashipur

काशीपुर

Bazpur

Nainital

नैनीताल

Ramnagar

रामनगर

Garjiya

गरजिया

Kiratpur

किरतपुर

Najibabad

नजीबाबाद

Kotdwar

कोटद्वार

Lansdowne

लैंसडाउन

Pokhra

पोखरा

Devprayag

देवप्रयाग

Srinagar

श्रीनगर

Pauri

पौड़ी

Rishikesh

ऋषिकेश

Haridwar

हरिद्वार

Mohand

मोहांद

Dehradun

देहरादून

New Tehri

नई टिहरी

Ghansali

घनसाली

Dhanolti

धनोल्ती

Mussorie

मसूरी

Gopeshwar

Trisul

त्रिशूल

Devi Pर्वत

देवी पर्वत

Martoli

मर्तोली

Panch Chuli

पंचचुली

Philam

फिलम

Kuti

कुती

Gunj

गुंजी

Munsiyari

मुनस्यारी

Gwaldam

ग्वालदाम

Dana

दना

Kapkot

कपकोट

Huti

हुती

Dharchula

धारचूला

Kausani

कौसानी

Bageshwar

बागेश्वर

Patal

पटल

Bhuvaneshwar

भुवनेश्वर

Pithoragarh

पिथौरागढ़

Binsar

बिनसर

Almora

अल्मोरा

Bach Kande

बच कंडे

Baitadi

बाइताडी

Salena

सलेना

Champawat

चम्पावत

Amargadhi

अमरगढी

Hastinapur

हास्तिनापुर

Chandpur

चण्डपुर

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Chopta landscape

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