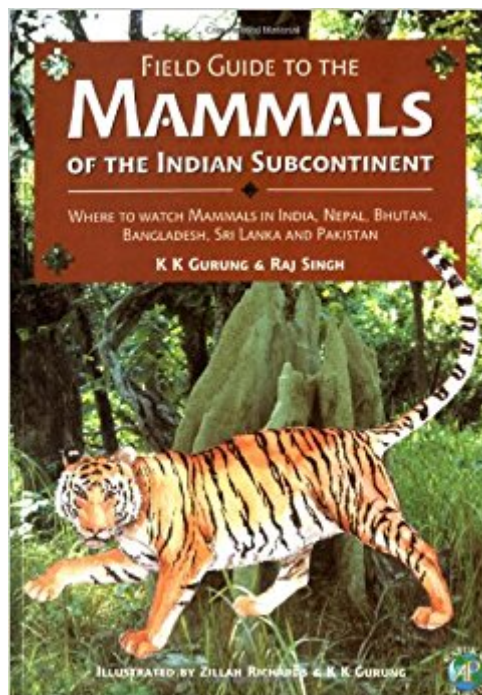




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Field Guide To The Mammals Of The Indian Subcontinent: Where To Watch Mammals In India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, And Pakistan (Natural World)



Synopsis

This book is a field guide to the mammals of this unique subcontinent and includes the best places to watch them. It describes each of the 100 plus species that can be recognized in the field, including identification, habitat, range, behavior, diet, breeding, status, and similar species. The Field Guide also contains color illustrations of each mammal as well as tracks of the more prominent species, and mammal lists and maps for each national park. Key Features* The only current guide to mammals of the region* Contains color pictures and full text on the 106 larger species likely to be encountered* Includes drawings of tracks of key species to aid identification* Presents full details of 23 parks and reserves, with location maps, visiting details and species lists for each* An authoritative and beautifully illustrated field guide to the larger mammals of the Indian subcontinent.* Includes almost all the species that can be identified in the field easily.* Concise descriptions of each species, including identification, habitat, range, behaviour, diet, breeding, status, and similar species.* Describes and maps all the finest national parks and protected areas in the subcontinent, specially chosen for superior mammal watching.* Tracks of a selection of mammals to aid their identification in the field

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Customer Reviews

* An authoritative and beautifully illustrated field guide to the larger mammals of the Indian subcontinent.* Includes almost all the species that can be identified in the field easily.* Concise descriptions of each species, including identification, habitat, range, behaviour, diet, breeding, status, and similar species.* Describes and maps all the finest national parks and protected areas in

the subcontinent, specially chosen for superior mammal watching.* Tracks of a selection of mammals to aid their identification in the field.

K.K. Gurung has a keen interest in the mammals of the Indian subcontinent and is the author of *Heart of the Jungle*, the definitive book on the wildlife of Royal Chitwan National Park, Nepal. Raj Singh has led natural history tours in the Indian subcontinent since the mid 1970s and is a regular visitor to its natural parks. He is the author of *Bird and Wildlife Sanctuaries of India, Nepal, and Bhutan*.

I have to concur with the first reviewer, this book was a big disappointment. I was looking for a resource that would allow me to identify mammals in the field. This book does not do that. If you have even the most rudimentary knowledge of animals (e.g. you can identify an elephant) then you can probably get by without this book. The plates are few and of poor quality. Maybe the authors just tried to do too much, but the format leaves a lot to be desired and most of the material either needs to be removed or expanded upon (removal might be preferable: the 3 page list of what is on the 9 color plates is silly, a better index would work fine). While it is small and sturdy as a good field guide should be, the overall information probably won't help you much in identifying mammals. I saw three species of sheep in the Indian Himalaya and only one was listed in the guide. Similarly, I saw two species of pika and I am still not sure if they are the two described and illustrated. I actually liked the section towards the back regarding where to look for animals. However, that this more of a reference or travel planning source, and it is only a brief overview at that. Allowing that it accounts for about 40% of the entire guide, it is a lot to carry around for little information. The bottom line is that I would never carry this book into the field again.

This book covers the land mammals of the Indian Subregion or in other words it covers: India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan. However, it also does exclude the smaller and often inconspicuous mammals like bats, shrews, and most rodents. A number of small but often conspicuous mammals are included. For instance both squirrels and pikas are included. In total it depicts and describes 106 species in detail. It starts in the typical manner with an introduction to the region, mammals, and mammal observing. This section is highly useful to the unexperienced reader, but will probably seem quite boring to most, as it is short and only mentions the most basic things. The next forty pages are devoted to the mammal species themselves. This means that there is 2-3 species per page. About each species the book describes identification, habitat,

range (no range maps!), behavior, diet, breeding, status, and similar species. The text is not for pleasure reading, but it is highly useful in the field. A thing to remember - not mentioned in the book - is that the status refers to subregion only, not the entire world. An example is the Red Deer (*Cervus elaphus*) which is described as endangered. The next pages are assigned to 12 colour plates with drawings of the mammals. The drawings are not especially beautiful, but all the important details useful in identification are remembered. The next 12 plates are devoted to animal tracks. The last third of the book describes 23 national parks/reserves in the region including the famous Chitwan NP and Sunderbans NP. These pages are the highlight of the book. In this part there is a map of each park and a quite thorough description of access, accommodation facilities, season to go there, larger mammals of the area etc. Sadly similar chapters in other books have been shown to go quickly out of date. At the end of the book there is a chapter called "further reading" which obviously seems equal to bibliography. In total the book seems to be good in the field, but there are quite a few large lacks. For instance a number of large species known in the area are not mentioned at all. An example is the Tonkean Macaque (*Macaca sinica*). The Slender Loris (*Loris tardigradus*) is mentioned only briefly in "similar species" of the Slow Loris (*Nycticebus coucang*). This seems strange as the Slender loris occurs in a much larger part of the subregion. Sadly this is also a fact with a number of other species. They also use a number of outdated Latin names. An example is the use of the genus *Felis* for all the smaller cats. In the beginning of the book they mention that the reason for the use of "old names" is because they are more familiar to people! But they are still incorrect in my opinion (I know other people don't find them to be so). It is however still a very good and useful companion when watching wildlife in the region.

I found this book to be overall pretty disappointing. First off, the illustrations are horrible. They look like children's cartoon drawings. Why don't the editors of mammal-books hire the same artists who do bird guides? The latter are generally really good. Secondly, there is a lot of important information lacking. For example the book states that it describes "almost all the species that can be identified in the field easily". I was hoping for a book to 'the mammals of the Indian subcontinent' (ALL of them) not a book of 'the mammals of the Indian subcontinent that can be easily identified'. The whole section at the end on 'Where to Watch mammals' is pretty useless. I'll get that info from the 'Lonely Planet', thanks. That space should have been spent instead on descriptions (and better illustrations) of more species.

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