

Sunderbans Tiger Reserve (day 2) – 8 April 2017 – near Kolkata, India

Today was an eight-hour day on the water hunting the elusive Royal Bengal Tiger. I will kill the suspense right now and tell you we are still-hunting the Royal Bengal Tiger.

We boarded our very own private boat. At first we were a little disappointed there were no other travelers with us but when we saw several of the other boats and all the people on them we felt very lucky to have our own boat.



Our boat had its own toilet. Neither of us was brave enough to go inside to find out what the toilet provided.



The green table in the above photo was the serving table for breakfast and lunch. Both meals were warm, good and lots more food than we and the crew plus park guide could eat. Crew was a captain, 1st mate, and a women cook who spent most her time below.

Our first stop was the park entrance. Here our general guide bought our tickets and arranged for our park guide. Our guide's English was passable and I will add he self taught himself English. He also was good with the birds and carried the same bird guide we carry. A map of the park.



Our first animal – a crocodile.



We stopped for a 15-minute walk through the small museum. Nothing special but did provide good information on the history and wildlife of the park.

Next came three monkeys. The photograph is of a mother and baby. Yes, the fence is very high about 12' – this is to keep the tigers away from an easy meal. Anytime we were off the boat we were within an enclosure including walkways that had at least one fence of this height.



Note the parked truck under the sign.



The following photograph is pretty much what we say for seven hours on the water.



We did get to add a bird, the Buffy Fish Owl, to our life list. Photograph isn't as good as the look we had with our binoculars.



We saw several Spotted Deer. We saw these at the second of two walkways not the boat.



The only people allowed to walk the delta are villagers. Even the villagers must fill out paperwork on their walks. Walk is a poor description because what the

villagers are doing is collecting honey. Not only is this tough work but it dangerous. Our guide explained how a tiger killed his uncle while he was out collecting honey.

The honey collectors use boats to approach the islands and then jump into the water – remember the photo above of the crocodile – and walk into the jungle. During the hottest part of the day you see them resting in their boats.





May you do your honey collecting in the aisles of an air-conditioned store.

Oh yes, saw four of the possible eight kingfishers and a total of 21 bird species plus the crocodile, monkeys, spotted deer and a four foot long water monitor lizard.