



RED PANDA

DOBATE AND HANGETHAM, SOUTH-EASTERN NEPAL

Resembling a racoon and growing to about the size of a fox, the red panda is characterised by its small features, thick reddish-brown coat, white snout, inner ears and cheeks, and big bushy ringed tail that it uses for balance in the trees and warmth in the winter. Like its namesake, the giant panda (taxonomists can't agree if the two are related), with whom it shares part of its range and its love of bamboo, red pandas are very rarely seen in the wild. In fact, now that wild giant pandas are being seen regularly in China's Qinling Mountains, wild red pandas are actually considered harder to track down, even though their natural habitat is much bigger, stretching across the remaining foothill forests of the Himalayas and across to the Qinling Mountains in the east.

Throughout this huge area the best chance of seeing one is in a tiny part of south-eastern Nepal, where scientists are researching the pandas, in association with the Red Panda Network (RPN). To get there it is necessary to fly to Kathmandu and onward to Bhadrapur, before travelling by jeep into the damp forests. Once here it is then necessary to hike the steep trails between the Sherpa hamlets of Dobate and Hangetham, visiting known feeding areas and roosting sites with expert forestry trackers.

Even though red pandas usually move around the forests alone at night in search of the best bamboo



Top: the red panda grows to the size of a domestic cat. Above: eastern Nepal where the shy red panda leads a solitary existence in high-altitude forests, foraging on bamboo and fruit

leaves and shoots, as well as fruits, nuts, eggs, flowers, and seeds, they have small territories of one to two square miles, and, given a few days, there is a fair chance of a small group of visitors seeing one.

COST: ★★★★★

SAMPLE PACKAGE TOUR: Red Panda Network offer 15-day tours to see red pandas in the wild, costing US\$2,999 (£1,882), which includes guides, food and accommodation. Flights from the UK to Nepal and internal flights are not included. Other wildlife on the itinerary includes bears, rare clouded leopards, wolves, and threatened bird species. www.redpandanetwork.org

GETTING THERE: From Nepal's capital city Kathmandu it's a 45-minute internal flight to Bhadrapur. From Bhadrapur it is about eight hours by road and track to Dobate, where there is small guesthouse. Beyond there it is necessary to camp.

VISA REQUIREMENTS FROM THE UK: Visas are required for travel to Nepal. To apply, contact the Nepalese Embassy at www.nepembassy.org.uk

TIPS & WARNINGS: Trekking in the mountains requires a reasonable level of fitness. You will need hot, wet and cold-weather clothing and need to be prepared to camp out at night when the temperature drops.

WHEN TO GO: Nepal's monsoon season usually lasts from June to September so the best time to look for red pandas is from October to May.

TOUR OPERATORS:

- RED PANDA NETWORK, Tel: 001 877 584 6056; www.redpandanetwork.org
- ROYLE SAFARIS, Tel: 0845 226 8259; www.royle-safaris.co.uk



RED PANDA NETWORK



5

trips to
take right
now

Looking for inspiration for your
spring or summer travels?
Nigel Wheatley selects five of
the best wildlife experiences
for the months ahead

WILD TRAVEL

THE WORLD'S MOST AMAZING WILDLIFE ENCOUNTERS

£4.20

BIG CAT COUNTRY

The secret to tracking jaguars and other stars of the jungle in the wetlands of Brazil's Pantanal

LAUNCH ISSUE

5 TRIPS to take right now

What are you waiting for? Start planning your wildlife travels for the months ahead

YOUR ESSENTIAL 40-PAGE GUIDE TO THE BEST OF BRITAIN'S WILDLIFE

Wild ISLES

PLUS

- Lower Zambezi river safari
- Saving Borneo's orangutans
- Europe's last remaining wildernesses



9 772048 248010 02
 USA \$9.75
 Europe €7.95
 Australia \$9.95
 New Zealand \$11.90



GALAPAGOS CRUISE:
We follow in Darwin's footsteps on a tour of the Galapagos Islands



BEAR NECESSITIES:
Everything you ever wanted to know about grizzly bears



Pick up a copy of our launch issue to read about life tracking the Marsh Lions on Kenya's Masai Mara

WILD TRAVEL

is published by Archant Specialist, Archant House, Oriel Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 1BB
Tel: 01242 211 080

SUBSCRIPTIONS

For our latest offers, go to www.subscriptionsave.co.uk

EDITOR Matt Havercroft
ASSISTANT EDITOR Vicky Sartain
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT Angharad Moran
DESIGNER Steve Rayner
ADVERTISING GROUP
SALES MANAGER Jamie Bolton
ADVERTISING MANAGER Graeme Asher
MEDIA SALES EXECUTIVES
 Serena Robertson, Tracy Jordan

PRODUCTION TEAM

Kevin Shelcott, Dave Hewitt,
Mikey Godden, Luke Tilsley

ARCHANT SPECIALIST
MANAGING DIRECTOR Miller Hogg
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR Mark Wright
PRINTING William Gibbons
 ISSN 2048-2485

© Archant Specialist 2012. All rights reserved.
 No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of Archant Ltd. Although every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this publication is correct at the time of going to press, we cannot accept any responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience however caused. For the latest travel and health information on all destinations covered in the magazine, go to www.fco.gov.uk

ARCHANT } **SPECIALIST**

Embrace your wild side



Welcome to this special sample edition of *Wild Travel*, a new magazine dedicated to helping you discover the world's most amazing wildlife and wildlife encounters. Whether you've always wanted to see lions on Kenya's Masai Mara, gorillas in the Congo or basking sharks off the Isle of Man then you've come to the right place. Over the coming pages there is a small selection of the content you'll find in every issue, which includes wildlife news, trip reports, destination guides, photography workshops, field guides to individual species and the lowdown on the latest conservation projects. Throughout the magazine you'll find recommendations from some of the most respected writers and tour operators in the business – all of whom can testify that you don't need to be an adrenaline-fuelled adventurer or a member of a wildlife documentary crew to enjoy many of nature's greatest spectacles.

If you like what you see you can order a copy of the launch issue of the magazine and save £1 off the usual cover price at www.subscriptionsave.co.uk/wild. See you at the check in desk!

Matt Havercroft, Editor