

## There's a Tiger at the Bus Stop.

We had seen a TV programme on the Western Ghats and its wildlife so decided on a trip using AirFrance's new route to Bangalore.

During the three week trip we had an object lesson on never putting the camera down until back at the lodge.

This is the story as an edited extract from my journal.

To set the scene for what follows for those unfamiliar with this area the road from Kabini River Lodge to Nagarhole is a proper road with 'normal traffic' and indeed local buses.

**Friday 10th April.** An early morning call and away at 6.30. Lots of Elephant, Deer and Wildboar.

Nagarhole is a nice Park with fine scenery. Raptors were strangely absent but more birds were added to the list such as Parakeets etc., The Driver was not too keen on birds and had to be made to stop. After our drive we had left the park to return to the lodge and as most folks do we naturally relaxed and stood our eyes down from 'Red alert' to not quite "green"!

As we drove along these resting eyes suddenly shot out on stalks as there, lying beside the road, indeed next to a Bus stop, was a fine Tigress. She was quite calm and barely noticed as we skidded to a halt beside her. Amazing.



She allowed a few pictures before rising and crossing the road behind us where, after a backward glance, she went into the forest..



Just ahead another track joined ours at an angle and we guessed she may try to cross that also. So we drove up that minor road to see if we had guessed correctly.



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Sure enough she emerged, saw us, and went back a few feet and lay down.



We got more pictures but she was very hard to see through the viewfinder but quite apparent to the naked eye.



**Then the strangest thing I have ever experienced took place!**

We heard a bus draw up down at the "Bus Stop" we had just left and people were getting off.

The Tigress also pricked up her ears.

The passengers came up our road as there was small village in the distance and no doubt they were heading there. As they drew level with us we pointed out that there was a tiger watching them. Two boys climbed up onto our car and took a look but the rest just walked on by. They were within 30 yards of a full grown Tigress and did not bat an eyelid! Neither did the tiger.



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Our photos clearly show the big cat first looking at us, pricking up her ears at the sound of the bus and then looking at the people on foot very keenly. As they walked along you can see her head moving with them. But she made no attempt to do anything in either an aggressive or passive way.

She just lay there quietly watching.



Eventually she moved back into cover and we went off for a very late lunch.

Some questions remain unresolved. Did she often do this? Has she come to associate this place with strange human activity. Was the bus perhaps being checked as a possible future “meals on wheels” service?

We shall never know but I shall never forget the incident.