



Himalayan Red Panda Phototrip

Imagine photographing the breathtaking landscapes and extraordinary wildlife in one of the most biologically diverse areas in the world. This is a unique opportunity to explore and connect with the cloud forests and communities of the red panda's Himalayan habitat.

Join the Red Panda Network (RPN), Molly Ferrill and Rafael Salvador, to express your love and enthusiasm for the natural world while also improving your photography skills. You will work alongside RPN's Forest Guardians to find and photograph wild red pandas (RPN currently has a 100% success rate of locating wild red pandas during each ecotrip!) and other unique forest species like the Clouded Leopard, Common Leopard, Himalayan Black Bear, Yellow Throated Marten, Bengal Fox, Golden Jackal, Assam Macaque and more than 120 bird species including the Wood Snipe, Satyr Tragopan, Common Teal, Fire-tailed Myzornis, Maroon-backed Accentor, Rufous-throated Wren Babbler, and the Rusty-fronted Barwing

Dates: April 3-11, 2023

Location: Dobato, Ilam district, eastern Nepal.

Cost: \$2,350 USD / per person

What's included?

- All airport transfers, meals and lodgings, domestic (in-country) flight, car and jeep transport, guides and porters in Kathmandu and the field.



- Professional, full-time photo instruction from lead photographers Rafael Salvador and Molly Ferrill
- Lodgings are in rustic teahouses and homestays. Hotel accommodation in Kathmandu and tea gardens.
- We cater for everyone – Vegetarian and Non Vegetarian
- Participants can voluntarily appear in a 2-minute promotional video which will allow them to keep a memory of their trip for the rest of their life.

What's not included?

- Your international airfare to Nepal and visa fees
- Bottled and alcoholic beverages
- Personal expenses

Group size is limited to 6 people, sign up to secure your place at redpandanetwork.org/phototrip

Questions? Send them to phototrip@redpandanetwork.org



Phototrip Itinerary



Day One (Monday, April 3):

Arrival in Kathmandu (1400m) and transfer to hotel accommodations. Explore the historic cultural and religious sites and meet with the RPN team for welcome dinner and trip briefing.

Photography mission of the day: *hone your travel photography skills! Capture some of the most iconic Nepali locations and learn how to make your architectural shots look imposing and different. Take amazing memories of your adventures back home!*

Day Two (Tuesday, April 4):

In the late morning, a 45-minute domestic flight to Bhadrapur, with spectacular views of the Himalayas including Mt. Everest, Mt. Kangchenjunga, Mt. Lhotse, and Mt. Makalu. Then we travel by road to Ilam (3 hours) and begin our journey north into the mountains, passing tea gardens and rural communities. Overnight hotel stay in Ilam, overlooking tea gardens.

Photography mission of the day: *This day is packed with dozens of UNIQUE landscape photography opportunities. Learn how to use bracketing -a photography technique- and apply filters (polarisers, neutral density filters...) to your wide angle lenses. You will also*



learn other landscape photography techniques with your wide angle and telephoto lens. In addition you will master how to shoot from a vehicle using a telephoto lens.

Day Three (Wednesday, April 5):

Leave Ilam after breakfast and bird watch while traveling up the mountain by road (3:30 hours) as we ascend higher into prime red panda habitat. In the late afternoon, we arrive at Dobato – the village closest to red panda habitat and our base for the next three nights. Light hike in the evening to visit the local community. Overnight homestay in Dobato village (2600 m). RPN's Forest Guardians will start tracking red pandas on the same day.

Photography mission of the day: *You will learn how to prepare yourself properly for your next travel photography shoot so you spend more time shooting and less time scrambling. Travel photography becomes more exciting - but also more complicated - when it involves bird and wildlife photography opportunities AND when you are trying to take a photo during a hike. A good day of photography planning will help you capture hundreds of quality photos.*

Day Four and Five (Thursday & Friday April 6 & 7):



The next two days we will wake up early to begin tracking red pandas in the alpine temperate forests with Forest Guardians. We will also likely see other mammal and bird species throughout the day. We will stop in local homes for lunch and hot refreshments and immerse ourselves in



the community with fun tasks including traditional Nepali cooking lessons in the evenings. These three nights we will stay in homestays in Dobato.

Photography mission of the day: *The real adventure begins now! Learn how to track wildlife: Patience, blending with nature, and respect for the animal that you are trying to photograph are key attributes. The local Nepali people will share their knowledge of the mountains with you. We will wake up early and stay until the end of the day to capture the beautiful sunrise and sunset light falling on the Himalayas.*

Day Six (Saturday, April 8):

After breakfast, continue red panda tracking with Forest Guardians in Dobato forest in morning. In the afternoon, depart to see beautiful Sandakpur (1.5 hour drive) – the highest peak in Ilam district (3,636 m) – with breathtaking sunsets over Mt Kangchenjunga and Mt Everest. Overnight stay in Sandakpur. Depart after an early morning breakfast.

Photography mission of the day: *Many people own a telephoto lens but not everyone knows how to use all of their features. We will provide a specialized training where we will teach action photography skills (how to shoot from a tripod, panning, zoom burst, flash and slash, etc). Birds are one of the most challenging subjects in wildlife photography — they are fast and sometimes very small — but you will receive unique training to make sure that you capture pictures of them in flight.*

Day Seven (Sunday, April 9):

Early rise (still dark out); we make our way to vantage points for the panoramic view of the impressive Himalayas with the rising sun. After breakfast, we take a light hike down (2 hour) to reach Kalapokhari. After lunch, leave for Jaubari (1.5 hour drive - small town at the Nepal-India border). Light hike in the evening to see beautiful landscape and one of RPN's red panda habitat restoration site. Overnight stay in Jaubari (2890m).



(Note: On April 8, store extra luggage at Kalapokhari and pick the next day while departing for Jaubari. So, Participants don't need to take all luggages to Sandakpur).

vehicle (4 hours) to reach Jaubari **Photography mission of the day: BECOME A PRO LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHER!** *Everyone knows how to take landscape photos with a wide angle lens, but telephoto lenses can help you in your landscape shots as well. In addition, you will learn about polarisers, graduated and neutral density filters, L-brackets, etc Lastly, you will learn landscape compositional skills and how to make sure that your landscape photos are always sharp, from the beginning to the end of your frame.*



Day Eight (Monday, April 10):

Early breakfast, pack up and leave for Choyatar village (2-hour hike down). Bird watching on the way and have lunch at Choyatar homestay. Drive back to Ilam (3-hour) and night stay at Ilam hotel.

Photography mission of the day: *this is similar to the previous day, BUT we will focus on sunrise and sunset landscapes. We will visit the Nepali communities and enhance our skills to tell a travel photography story with our cameras.*

Day Nine (Tuesday, April 11):

Our last day: After breakfast at Ilam, we leave for our scenic drive to reach Bhadrapur airport (3-hour) and fly back to Kathmandu and enjoy a group farewell dinner in the evening.



Trip Leaders

Rafael Salvador

Our trip leader, Rafael Salvador, has worked with National Geographic Explorers in wildlife photography projects and has coordinated several wildlife photography workshops in the United Kingdom, Costa Rica and Thailand.

He has been trip leader in the previous phototrips organised by the Red Panda Network in Nepal. On the 2023 phototrip, he is partnering again with Molly Ferrill, National Geographic explorer, to guarantee that all participants receive the best possible experience while honing their photography skills.

Follow this link to see some of his work:

<https://stock.adobe.com/es/contributor/207048004/rafaphotofox>

Molly Ferrill

Molly Ferrill is a photographer, filmmaker, and National Geographic Explorer dedicated to documenting the changing relationship between people and nature. Collaborating with forest rangers, conservation biologists, wildlife crime investigators, government officials, and local communities in the field, she strives to spread compassion and a greater appreciation of animals and the natural world through storytelling.

Molly has covered stories across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Molly's photography and writing have been featured in National Geographic Magazine, and she has also contributed to National Geographic



Television, The Discovery Channel, National Geographic News, Voice of America, and the BBC. She has hosted videos on environmental topics and presented on conservation issues at film festivals, universities, community centers, and National Geographic events in Mexico, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Russia, and the United States.

Molly is looking forward to working with Rafa and the Red Panda Network to bring participants into the field and help them hone their photography skills while connecting with the beautiful nature and wildlife of eastern Nepal.

RECOMMENDED GEAR

Note that you can complete this photography trip with only a telephoto lens, a wide angle lens and a tripod. The trip leaders can teach all sorts of techniques, from basic to pro-level, and can adapt to your needs.

If you consider yourself a professional or an advanced photographer, please contact rafael@redpandanetwork.org and he will provide an advanced gear list that meets your level of experience, as well as further information.