

## AWAY FROM THE CROWD TO THE CALL OF THE WILD



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North Bengal Wild Animals Park popularly known as Bengal Safari is destinations for them who love the wild and would have some quality time spending far away amidst the fauna to get them know better. It is a safari park near Salugara Military Station in the outskirts of Siliguri city. Earlier it was known as an ordinary picnic spot called the sorian park As I searched in Google's found that this park concept "is the brain child of Dr B R Sharma, the then Member Secretary, WBZA & Sri U K Bhattacharjee, AO.North Bengal Wild Animals Park (Bengal Safari), Siliguri is spread in an area of 297 hectares" and "The Park is developed in its natural habitat of Sal with its associated species. The Park presently has two large safaris that is the Mixed Herbivore Safari (91 ha), Tiger Safari (20 ha). & Zoo parts. The visitors shall be taken to these safaris in specially designed vehicles. Tiger Safari inaugurated by Hon'ble Chief Minister of West Bengal Srimati Mamata Banerjee on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2017.Since then the park has become almost a tourist spot where visitors throng to holiday out here to have a glimpse of the animals ,birds, as also who are

interested in botany can spend their time out in the nursery where medicinal and herbal plants in the form of bonsai are kept for the onlookers. These trees are of many years old and have inhabited the earth before we were born.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of February Sunday we set out for our journey in Bengal Safari to have a ride in the van and watch the deer, peacock, peafowl, black bear and the tigers to observe how they react when we reach to them. We first met the alligator who seemed lazy on a spring morning. They were basking in the sun. We set out our ride to watch the lovely spotted deer who mused among the green foliage, at times eating the leaves while the other astonished to see us watching them. They seemed to enjoy that we have come in their space to have a glimpse of them. Animals are very sensitive and that is what I sensed or perceived. Or why the deer enjoyed when the bus drove along the roads. I even waved at a deer who stared at me very surprised that we the humans have come in their life. They must have wondered who we are, where we live, what we do and so on.

The peacock was indeed very overjoyed to see us, as it started to dance even if clouds did not hover around the sky to forecast the spell of rains. The peacock dance was indeed a great scene of delight for us.

Monkeys are always fun-loving. These monkeys were spotted running and chasing the deer for their amusement and provided us a kind of comic entertainment with their mischievous games jumping from one branch of the tree to another, chasing a deer who is afraid and run away from the ape that make faces.

Our van drove through the dense forests to let us move where the black bear was found busy eating. It did not even bother to look at us. It was left all alone lonely. This is what struck me with pain. If we humans cannot live alone, seek company then why not the bear? The bear too needs a companion. They are our friends as they too feel the pleasure and pain, they too have their joys and sorrows. They too smile and laugh which we can perceive if ponder on their eyes. I do not know how the lonely bear can live in the dense forests with no friend of its own.

Next we moved on to for what our eyes eagerly looked for; the big cats or the royal Bengal tiger with its royal posture. The van drove and we peeped out through the closed glass windows to see the first royal Bengal tiger named "Asish" who was resting and as he heard the sound of the van he jumped up and turned round to show us his glamorous looks. We were very anxious to see the big leopard named "Snehasish" who was resting with his back turned to a tree. Snehasish perhaps wanted to jump on the van but knew it was not possible so he maintained a position to pounce on us but did not.

Our ride to the jungle safari ended with the tiger visit, but we got down to move towards the lesser cats who were a few in numbers and were all alone. We don't know how these lonely animals can survive. We moved on to watch the macaws of the parrot species, the red macaw, white peacock and peahen, peafowl, green Indian parrots, white pigeons all showed their energetic attitude to let us smile at them.

The animals and birds in Bengal Safari need much care and attention. They too have feelings like us and shower love for the human beings who meet them in their enclosures. They too deserve love and for that mere food will not help but attention of the people who care for them as well as need companions of their own species to allow them the space of comfort love joy and happiness.