Yamuna Nature Trails

This note has been prepared by the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), which organizes Nature walks. It gives an idea of the range of possibilities for enjoying the natural habitats along the River Yamuna in Delhi.

This website is only providing information to interested persons but the Monitoring Committee is not organizing any nature trail. For this the BNHS or the Bio-Diversity Park Division of the Delhi Development Authority may be contacted directly.

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The URL of the DDA Biodiversity Parks Authority is:
https://dda.org.in/greens/biodiv/yamuna-biodiversity-park.html

The River Yamuna

The Yamuna is a spiritual place for some, and a dirty drain for others. Birdwatchers visit the river, especially near Wazirabad and Okhla. If restored, the river has great potential to rebound as a natural entity which the people of India can enjoy. However, there is a need to amalgamate the various interactions people have with the river. Yamuna was once the lifeline of the city, but now is just an afterthought remembered on a few religious occasions.

Children and young people in cities are known to suffer from ‘Nature Deficit Syndrome’. They are not exposed to Nature and tend to forget our interconnectedness with it.
Image: Purple Swamphens spar on the Yamuna
The following nature trails connected to Yamuna can be held monthly with the express purpose of sensitising the people of Delhi to biodiversity and richness of the Yamuna. These walks will be aimed not only at viewing wildlife but also creating aesthetic, environmental and educational values.

Walks can be carried out once a month, year-round.

Locations for trails

1. Yamuna Ghat from Ramp no. 3

The Yamuna Ghat area is on the banks of the river, near Kashmere Gate ISBT. During the migratory bird season (December- April) this place is a delight. It teems with Gulls, Terns and Shoveller ducks. A boat ride is possible and typifies the ‘river experience’. Walk on the sides of the bank is also possible. The river seems to come to life in the migratory season. Migratory birds stay till April.
Image: Pied Kingfisher seen near the Yamuna
2. Yamuna Khadar

The Yamuna Khadar area is in Wazirabad, near the Yamuna Biodiversity Park run by the DDA. It comprises the classic river flood plain area, as the word ‘Khadar’ suggests. The land use area is agricultural fields. This area also represents the cleaner section of the Yamuna river.

Rare species of raptor or birds of prey like Peregrine falcon, Shaheen falcon, Ospreys, and Short-eared owls are found here. One can also see striated babblers. The area is amenable for long bird walks and several of the activities mentioned below can be held here.

*Image: Crow Pheasant sighted in the Yamuna area*
3. Hindon Ghat
   The Hindon Ghat is in Ghaziabad, near Hapur road. Owing to a barrage on the river Yamuna, several birds are found here throughout the year. Moorhen, Ducks, Geese, Waders are found here all year round, apart from migratory birds.

4. Garhi Mandu City Forest
   The Garhi Mandu city forest is in North East Delhi, Seelampur tehsil. It is on the Yamuna flood plain. Bird walks, forest immersion and bird counts can be held here.

1. Okhla Bird Sanctuary
   Okhla bird sanctuary may be Delhi’s biggest migratory bird hotspot. It is easily accessible. Resident birds are there all year round. Flamingos, whistling ducks and a host of migratory birds can be seen here. Nature trails are already laid out and several walks are possible.
Image: Greater Flamingos, migratory Ruffs and Waders
Thematic Ideas, which can be adapted for each trail:

1. **Migratory Bird Walk:** The program gives you an opportunity of watching migratory birds of Yamuna. This is an opportunity to soothe senses with sights and sounds of the birds.
   - Introduction to migratory birds
   - Walk
   - Talk on Migratory Birds
   - Field Activity

2. **Water Bird Census:** This walk includes a walk and counts all resident and migratory birds of Yamuna.
   - Introduction
   - Walk
   - Bird Census techniques and methods
   - Field Activity: birdwatching, walking transects and conducting counts

3. **Habitat Restoration and Conservation Walk:** A walk on wetland conservation and participants will be sensitized on restoration of river Yamuna.
   - Introduction to trophic levels
   - Walk
   - Field Activity: learning to distinguish restored patches and understanding the riparian plant communities of the Yamuna

4. **Butterflies of Yamuna:** Nature lovers, butterfly enthusiasts will be excited to know that our city is home to more than 115 species of butterflies. During this walk we will explore butterflies of Yamuna and surrounding areas.
   - Introduction- butterflies as indicators of climate
   - Talk on Butterfly
   - Walk
   - Field Activity
5. **Dragonfly Walk**: Dragonfly and Damselfly are beautiful predator insects and are indicators of healthy wetland habitats. This walk will help to explore more about the amazing world of dragonflies.

- Introduction- dragonflies of the Yamuna
- Talk on Dragonfly- dragonflies as bio-control agents
- Walk and Field Activity

**Further Examples of Field Activities**

- Sound Map
- Bird Feeder and Bird Nest
- Point Count
- Block Count
- Tree Game
- Caterpillar Walk
- Forest Sense
- Nature Art
- Pond Dipping

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