

Narora

A Guide for Eco-tourists



About Narora

Narora, a small town in district Bulandshar in U.P., has always been a favourite of a large number of migratory birds. Famous for India's fifth atomic power station — Narora Atomic Power Station (NAPS)—Narora is home to about 200 species of bird, both resident and migratory. Come November and large flocks of migratory birds start landing at Narora and stay there mostly up to mid-February.

Narora is an international "Important Bird Area" (IBA), a designation given by the BirdLife International for "global network of sites for the conservation of the world's birds and other biodiversity" and also an international 'Ramsar Site', i.e. an internationally important wetland. Besides NAPS, Narora is also famous for north India's large irrigation system — Narora Barrage, river Ganga, which is visited by hundreds of devout for a 'holy bath'.



A view of Narora Atomic Power Station comprising two pressurized heavy water reactor (PHWR) units, each of 220 MWe

Compilation and Photographs :
by A.I. Siddiqui, NPCIL



The following are some of the ecological hot spots in and around Narora:

Water-Front Trail (Boat Ride) / Ganga River Up-stream

A boat ride in river Ganga up-stream, starting from eastern embankment after crossing about 900-meter-long Ganga Barrage, brings the viewer face to face with a large group of aquatic birds.

Duration: About 40 to 90 minutes, depending on cruise length.

What to expect: A large variety of aquatic birds both resident and migratory. Of special interest could be the threatened species like White-necked Stork, Indian Skimmer and migratory birds like Red-crested Pochard.

The birds likely to be seen include: Little Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Little Cormorant, Great Cormorant, Darter, Little Egret, Intermediate Egret, Large Egret, Cattle Egret, Grey Heron, Purple Heron, Pond Heron, Striated Heron, Painted Stork, Asian Openbill, Black Ibis, Eurasian Spoonbill, Greylag Goose, Bar-headed Goose, Common Shelduck, Ruddy Shelduck, Common Teal, Garganey, Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Shoveller, Northern Pintail, Indian Spot-billed Duck, Tufted Duck, Common Pochard, Red-crested Pochard, Black Kite, Eurasian Coot, Purple Swamphen, Common Moorhen, Black-winged Stilt, Avocet, Red-wattled Lapwing, White-tailed Lapwing, River Lapwing, Eurasian Golden Plover, Little Ringed Plover, Kentish Plover, Eurasian Curlew, Black-tailed Godwit, Common Redshank, Common Greenshank, Wood Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Little Stint, Greater Black-headed Gull, Caspian Tern, River Tern, Indian Skimmer, Barn Swallow, Red-rumped Swallow, Grey-throated Sand-martin, Marsh Harrier, and White Wagtail.



White-necked Storks on the fencing of the exclusion zone of NAPS



Ganga Embankment Drive

Spot several terrestrial birds on the embankment, about 2 km from the eastern end of barrage.

Duration: About 30 minutes to 1 hour.

What to expect: Watch on the right side of embankment for small ponds, which are homes to Purple Moorhen, pheasant-tailed Jacana, Indian-Moorhen, etc.

About a half-a-kilometer away is a series of trees, many of them wilted but best spots to watch parakeets and spotted owlets. Several other small birds can be spotted on the grass blades like Black Drongo, Green Be Eaters, Munia, etc.

Ganga Barrage : Sun-bathing turtles, often several dozen on a small rock, a few varieties of aquatic birds, especially cormorants and darters can be seen in river Ganga while viewing from the barrage.

Gumti Talao

Gumti Talao (Lake Gumti) on the east end of the barrage with over a 100-year-old tower, reminiscent of the original barrage that was constructed way back in 1878, is a nice spot for birders.

Duration: About 30 minutes to 1 hour.

What to expect: A variety of aquatic birds, crocks, turtles etc.

The following birds that can be spotted at Gumti talao: Purple Gallinule, Moorhen, Spotbilled Duck, Dabchick or Little Grebe, Indian Reed Warbler, Grey Heron, Purple Heron, and perhaps Sarus Crane.



A Juvenile black-necked Stork in the exclusion zone
Wetland of NAPS



Ganga Canal Safari

A road connects Narora with Ramghat, passing through the Exclusion Zone* of NAPS and along the Ganga Canal. Permission from NAPS authorities (see this brochure elsewhere) is needed to cross over the Exclusion Zone and carry out any photography.

Village Ramghat is at the other end of the passage. A few kilometers' drive takes you to a very old banyan tree, home to large number of monkeys and several bird species.

Duration: About an hour.

What to expect: Several crocodiles basking on the boundary wall of NAPS and often bathing in the outfall of the Plant. You can also spot a variety of small birds. If you are lucky, you can watch several pairs of threatened Saras Cranes.

Be on the lookout for Brown Crake, White-tailed Stonechat, Bluethroat, Common Starling and Striated Babbler.

*Exclusion Zone is a 1.6-km-radius area around the Nuclear Plant mostly used for green belt development and where no public entry is allowed.



Indian Skimmert on one of the sand islands in river Ganga



Exclusion Zone Wetland

This wetland, within the Exclusion Zone of NAPS, is a well-protected wetland. Security permission is needed to enter the exclusion zone. You may first have a breathtaking view of the wetland from the watchtower constructed by NAPS for the purpose, before entering the wetland.

Duration: About 60 minutes to 90 minutes.

.What to Expect: Several species of aquatic and terrestrial birds.

The birds that can be seen on this stretch include: Little Cormorant, Intermediate Cormorant, Great Cormorant, Darter, Little Egret, Intermediate Egret, Large Egret, Cattle Egret, Grey Heron, Purple Heron, Pond Heron, Striated Heron, Painted Stork, Asian Openbill, Black-necked Stork, Wolly-necked- or White-necked Stork, White Ibis, Black Ibis, Eurasian Spoonbill, Common Teal, Gadwall, Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Shoveller, Northern Pintail, Indian Spot-billed Duck, Shikra, Eurasian Coot, Purple Swamphen, Common Moorhen, Brown Crake, Ruddy-breasted Cranke, Black-winged Stilt, Red-wattled Lapwing, White-tailed Lapwing, Common Redshank, Common Greenshank, Wood Sandpiper, Green Sandpiper, Ruff, Marsh Sandpiper, Common Sandpiper, Barn Swallow, Marsh Harrier, White-breasted Kingfisher, Common Kingfisher, Grey Wagtail, Striated Babbler, Baya Weaverbird and Red Munia.



Saras Cranes can be spotted in this exclusion zone



Exclusion Zone Jungle Trail

NAPS has planted in a scientific manner over 400,000 trees of different species in its exclusion zone, which have grown into a thick jungle.

Duration: About 1 hour.

What to Expect: A variety of birds, particularly babblers, partridges (Francolin) quails, kites, kestrel, etc. can be spotted in the jungle. There are a few spots inhabited by one or two varieties of partridges (Francolin). If luck permits, you can spot a few threatened species like White-rumped Vulture. Peafowl or peacocks are abundant but their dancing – an extravagant show of nature – is a matter of chance. Also be on the lookout for Blue-bulls, Black-bucks and Wild Boars.

Other birds that can be seen include: Oriental Honey Buzzard, Large Cuckoo Shrike, Jungle Babbler, Golden Oriole, Indian Robin, Common Francolin and Purple Sunbird.

Blue-Bulls provide ample photo-opportunities



NAPS Guesthouse and Township

NAPS Guesthouse is a good place to watch for a variety of birds. The flowering plants, a variety of trees and its close proximity to river Ganga attracts many birds. Several species of birds play in the sprawling lawns. The species include wagtails, babblers, hoopoe, sparrows, myna, bushchat, drongo, dove, etc. A morning walk within the lawns of guesthouse takes you closer to lapwing, grey-hornbill, kites, etc. Other areas of interest in township include NAPS hospital and the area behind it.

Best Season to Visit

Mid-November to mid-February is the best season to visit Narora, when several species of migratory birds arrive here.

Climate: Narora is in the temperate zone and the temperatures vary from a high of about 39°C during peak summer (May and June) to near-zero during peak winter (December-January). The feel-like temperature is even low during winter due to northern winds especially after snowfall in the Himalayan region.



A crocodile basking
inside the exclusion zone



When on Nature Trail

Protect yourself from the climate – cold or hot. Have proper gear, suitable clothes, hat/cap, etc.

Pick shoes suitable for the kind of trail.

Put on natural-colour clothing, bright colours and whites are a 'must-not'.

Avoid all kinds of fragrances, perfumes, etc.

Keep binoculars and field guides handy.

Maintain silence; speak only when necessary – almost to the level of whispering.

Avoid excitement and hurried actions on spotting a bird.

Avoid smoking during all trails; smoking is prohibited during exclusion-zone jungle trail.

Don't go close to the birds, don't disturb them.

Avoid flash photography.

Keep enough water/juice, medicine, food as trail warrants.

Don't leave any trash behind, don't litter.

Practice trace-free eco-tourism. Leave only your foot-prints, carry back only memories.



For further details on
Avian - Life at Indian Nuclear Power Plants and
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Preliminary Checklist of Birds Seen at Narora

| Sr. No. | Common Name | Scientific Name | Ganga | EZ Wetland | Forest/Agriculture |
|---------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-------|------------|--------------------|
| 1. | Little Grebe | <i>Podiceps ruficollis</i> | + | -- | -- |
| 2. | Crested Grebe | <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> | + | -- | -- |
| 3. | Large Cormorant | <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> | + | + | -- |
| 4. | Indian Shag | <i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i> | + | + | -- |
| 5. | Little Cormorant | <i>Phalacrocorax niger</i> | + | + | -- |
| 6. | Darter | <i>Anhinga melanogaster</i> | + | + | -- |
| 7. | Grey Heron | <i>Ardea cinerea</i> | + | + | -- |
| 8. | Purple Heron | <i>Ardea purpurea</i> | + | + | -- |
| 9. | Indian Pond Heron | <i>Ardeola grayii</i> | + | + | -- |
| 10. | Cattle Egret | <i>Bubulcus ibis</i> | + | + | -- |
| 11. | Large Egret | <i>Ardea alba</i> | + | + | -- |
| 12. | Little Egret | <i>Egretta garzetta</i> | + | + | -- |
| 13. | Intermediate Egret | <i>Egretta intermedia</i> | -- | + | -- |
| 14. | Striated Heron | <i>Butorides striata</i> | -- | + | -- |
| 15. | Chestnut Bittern | <i>Ixobrychus cinnamomeus</i> | -- | + | -- |
| 16. | Yellow Bittern | <i>Ixobrychus sinensis</i> | -- | + | -- |
| 17. | Painted Stork | <i>Mycteria leucocephala</i> | + | + | -- |
| 18. | Asian Openbill | <i>Anastomus oscitans</i> | + | + | -- |
| 19. | Wooly-necked Stork | <i>Ciconia episcopus</i> | -- | + | -- |
| 20. | Black-necked Stork | <i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i> | -- | + | -- |
| 21. | White Ibis | <i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i> | -- | + | -- |
| 22. | Black Ibis | <i>Pseudibis papillosa</i> | + | + | -- |
| 23. | Spoonbill | <i>Platalea leucorodia</i> | + | + | -- |
| 24. | Greylag Goose | <i>Anser anser</i> | + | -- | -- |
| 25. | Bar-headed Goose | <i>Anser indicus</i> | + | -- | -- |
| 26. | Lesser Whistling Duck | <i>Dendrocygna javanica</i> | -- | + | -- |
| 27. | Brahminy Duck | <i>Tadorna ferruginea</i> | + | -- | -- |
| 28. | Common Shelduck | <i>Tadorna Tadorna</i> | + | -- | -- |
| 29. | Common Teal | <i>Anas crecca</i> | + | + | -- |
| 30. | Spot-billed Duck | <i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i> | + | + | -- |



| Sr. No. | Common Name | Scientific Name | Ganga | EZ Wetland | Forest/Agriculture |
|---------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|------------|--------------------|
| 31. | Northern Pintail | <i>Anas acuta</i> | + | + | -- |
| 32. | Gadwall | <i>Anas strepera</i> | + | + | -- |
| 33. | Garganey | <i>Anas querquedula</i> | + | -- | -- |
| 34. | Northern Shoveller | <i>Anas clypeata</i> | + | + | -- |
| 35. | Common Pochard | <i>Aythya ferina</i> | + | -- | -- |
| 36. | Red-crested Pochard | <i>Netta rufina</i> | + | -- | -- |
| 37. | White-eyed Pochard | <i>Aythya nyroca</i> | + | -- | -- |
| 38. | Tufted Duck | <i>Aythya fuligula</i> | + | -- | -- |
| 39. | Black-winged Kite | <i>Elanus caeruleus</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 40. | Oriental Honey Buzzard | <i>Pernis ptilorhynchus</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 41. | Black Kite | <i>Milvus migrans</i> | + | -- | + |
| 42. | Brahminy Kite | <i>Haliastur indus</i> | + | -- | -- |
| 43. | Shikra | <i>Accipiter badius</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 44. | Marsh Harrier | <i>Circus aeruginosus</i> | + | + | -- |
| 45. | Short-toed Snake Eagle | <i>Circaetus gallicus</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 46. | Common Kestrel | <i>Falco tinnunculus</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 47. | Grey Francolin | <i>Francolinus pondicerianus</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 48. | Indian Peafowl | <i>Pavo cristatus</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 49. | Sarus Crane | <i>Grus antigone</i> | -- | + | -- |
| 50. | Ruddy-breasted Crake | <i>Porzana fusca</i> | -- | + | -- |
| 51. | Brown Crake | <i>Amauornis akool</i> | -- | + | -- |
| 52. | White-breasted Waterhen | <i>Amauornis phoenicurus</i> | + | + | -- |
| 53. | Common Moorhen | <i>Gallinula chloropus</i> | + | + | -- |
| 54. | Purple Swamphen | <i>Porphyrio porphyrio</i> | + | + | -- |
| 55. | Coot | <i>Fulica atra</i> | + | + | -- |
| 56. | Pheasant-tailed Jacana | <i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i> | -- | + | -- |
| 57. | Bronze-winged Jacana | <i>Metopidius indicus</i> | -- | + | -- |
| 58. | Black-winged Stilt | <i>Himantopus himantopus</i> | + | + | -- |
| 59. | White-tailed Lapwing | <i>Vanellus leucurus</i> | + | + | -- |
| 60. | Red-wattled Lapwing | <i>Vanellus indicus</i> | + | + | -- |
| 61. | Little Ringed Plover | <i>Charadrius dubius</i> | + | -- | -- |



| Sr. No. | Common Name | Scientific Name | Ganga | EZ Wetland | Forest/Agriculture |
|---------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|------------|--------------------|
| 62. | Black-tailed Godwit | <i>Limosa limosa</i> | + | + | -- |
| 63. | Common Redshank | <i>Tringa totanus</i> | + | + | -- |
| 64. | Marsh Sandpiper | <i>Tringa stagnatilis</i> | + | + | -- |
| 65. | Common Greenshank | <i>Tringa nebularia</i> | + | + | -- |
| 66. | Green Sandpiper | <i>Tringa ochropus</i> | + | + | -- |
| 67. | Wood Sandpiper | <i>Tringa glareola</i> | + | + | -- |
| 68. | Common Sandpiper | <i>Tringa hypoleucos</i> | + | + | -- |
| 69. | Common Snipe | <i>Gallinago gallinago</i> | -- | + | -- |
| 70. | Little Stint | <i>Calidris minuta</i> | + | + | -- |
| 71. | Temminck's Stint | <i>Calidris temminckii</i> | + | -- | -- |
| 72. | Ruff & Reeve | <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> | + | + | -- |
| 73. | River Tern | <i>Sterna aurantia</i> | -- | + | -- |
| 74. | Black-bellied Tern | <i>Sterna acuticauda</i> | + | -- | -- |
| 75. | Rock Pigeon | <i>Columba livia</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 76. | Ring Dove | <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 77. | Little Brown Dove | <i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 78. | Rose-ringed Parakeet | <i>Psittacula krameri</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 79. | Crow-pheasant | <i>Centropus sinensis</i> | -- | + | + |
| 80. | Pied Kingfisher | <i>Ceryle rudis</i> | + | + | -- |
| 81. | Common Kingfisher | <i>Alcedo atthis</i> | + | + | -- |
| 82. | White-breasted Kingfisher | <i>Halcyon smyrensis</i> | + | + | -- |
| 83. | Little Green Bee-eater | <i>Merops orientalis</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 84. | Indian Roller | <i>Coracias benghalensis</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 85. | Hoopoe | <i>Upupa epops</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 86. | Barn Swallow | <i>Hirundo rustica</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 87. | Golden Oriole | <i>Oriolus oriolus</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 88. | Black Drongo | <i>Dicrurus macrourus</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 89. | Brahminy Myna | <i>Sturnus pagodarum</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 90. | Pied Myna | <i>Sturnus contra</i> | -- | + | + |
| 91. | Common Myna | <i>Acridotheres tristis</i> | + | + | + |
| 92. | Bank Myna | <i>Acridotheres ginginianus</i> | + | -- | -- |



| Sr. No. | Common Name | Scientific Name | Ganga | EZ Wetland | Forest/Agriculture |
|---------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|------------|--------------------|
| 93. | House Crow | <i>Corvus splendens</i> | + | -- | + |
| 94. | Thick-billed Crow | <i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i> | + | -- | -- |
| 95. | Large Cuckoo Shrike | <i>Coracina macei</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 96. | Red-vented Bulbul | <i>Pycnonotus cafer</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 97. | Striated Babbler | <i>Turdoides earlei</i> | + | + | -- |
| 98. | Large Grey Babbler | <i>Turdoides malcolmi</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 99. | Jungle Babbler | <i>Turdoides striatus</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 100. | Ashy Wren Warbler | <i>Prinia socialis</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 101. | Tailor Bird | <i>Orthotomus sutorius</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 102. | India Reed Warbler | <i>Acrocephalus stentoreus</i> | -- | + | -- |
| 103. | Bluethroat | <i>Erithacus svecicus</i> | + | + | -- |
| 104. | Magpie Robin | <i>Copsychus saularis</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 105. | Black Redstart | <i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i> | + | + | + |
| 106. | Stone Bushchat | <i>Saxicola torquata</i> | + | + | -- |
| 107. | White-tailed Stone Chat | <i>Saxicola leucura</i> | -- | + | -- |
| 108. | Pied Bush Chat | <i>Saxicola caprata</i> | -- | + | -- |
| 109. | Indian Robin | <i>Saxicoloides fulicata</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 110. | Yellow-headed Wagtail | <i>Motacilla citreola</i> | + | + | -- |
| 111. | Grey Wagtail | <i>Motacilla cinerea</i> | + | + | -- |
| 112. | White Wagtail | <i>Motacilla alba</i> | + | + | -- |
| 113. | Large Pied Wagtail | <i>Motacilla maderaspatensis</i> | + | -- | -- |
| 114. | Purple Sunbird | <i>Nectarina asiatica</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 115. | House Sparrow | <i>Passer domesticus</i> | -- | -- | + |
| 116. | Baya Weaver | <i>Ploceus philippinus</i> | -- | + | -- |
| 117. | Red Munia | <i>Amandava amandava</i> | -- | + | -- |

+ = present -- = absent (Based on the two-day trip report of Dr A R Rahmani, Director BNHS India to NPCIL, December 2005)

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