

VIBRANT GANGA 

नमामि गंगे



breeding
birds
of
ganga
river



National Mission
for Clean Ganga



भारतीय वन्यजीव संस्थान
Wildlife Institute of India

Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation

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The Ganga River, our National River, the lifeline of Indian civilization with deep rooted religious and cultural belief, is one of the largest living river systems in the world. The main stem of the river flows through 5 states of India however the entire catchment provides water to 11 states. Apart from nurturing over 500 million Indians, the river basin is important habitat for numerous amphibians, reptiles like turtles, gharial and mugger crocodiles; migrating waterfowls, wetland and wetland associated birds and mammals including Gangetic river dolphins.



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Black bellied tern (*Sterna acuticauda*)

IUCN: Endangered, CITES: Not listed, IWPA: Schedule IV, Population Trend: Decreasing

Distributed in major river systems throughout India. Found in middle and lower stretches of the Ganga River. A small bird (33 cm), adults have orange bill, black cap and nape, dark grey breast and blackish belly and vent. It skims over the surface of water and ground to pick up insects and plunges at an angle into the water to feed on crustaceans, tadpoles and fish.

Breeding Interval: Once in a year.

Breeding Season: February to April.

Nest site/ type: Island nester on sandy beaches of mid-river islands.

Clutch size: 2-3

Major threats: Alteration of breeding habitat, river bank and river island agriculture, sudden release of water from dams, water pollution, nest predation by cats, dogs and corvids.



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Indian sarus crane (*Antigone antigone*)

IUCN: Vulnerable, CITES: Appendix II, IWPA: Schedule IV, Population Trend: Decreasing

Distributed in Northern and central India. Found in the upper, middle and lower stretches of the Ganga River. Largest crane of India (156 cm), with naked red head and upper neck, grey plumage, greenish horny bill, and red legs. Omnivorous and feeds on aquatic plants such as tubers of sedges, invertebrates, grains, small vertebrates and insects.

Breeding Interval: Once in a year.

Breeding Season: June- September.

Nest site/ type: Nests on agricultural land and dry grassland. Nests look like islands as they are built with reeds and grasses which can reach roughly 2 m high above the water surface.

Clutch Size: 2-3

Incubation Period: 28-31 days.

Major threats: Loss and degradation of wetlands, as a result of drainage and conversion to agriculture, ingestion of pesticides.



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Indian skimmer (*Rynchops albigollis*)

IUCN: Vulnerable, CITES: Not listed, IWPA: Not listed, Population Trend: Decreasing

Distributed in large rivers of western and eastern India, coastal estuaries. Found in middle and lower stretches of the Ganga River. This tern-like bird (40 cm) has unique bill with much longer lower mandible, deep orange in colour with yellow tip, black and white plumage, black upper body, white underpart, bright red legs. Skims over water surface, feeds on surface-dwelling fish, small crustaceans and insect larvae.

Breeding Interval: Once in a year.

Breeding Season: February-May.

Nest site/ type: Colonial, island nester on sandy beaches of mid-river islands.

Clutch Size: 3-4

Major threats: Alteration and degradation of habitats in rivers and lakes through dams, fishing, sand mining, agriculture, grazing and pollution from agricultural and industrial chemicals. Also there are reports of nest flooding due to water release from dams, predation by corvids, presence of stray and domestic dogs.

