BUNDALA NATIONAL PARK IN A DAY!

Posted on



Hambantota District is only a two-and-a-half-hour drive from Colombo via the Southern Expressway, it allows you to enjoy the sights and sounds of Bundala National Park in a day.

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Bundala National Park is an important habitat for migratory birds. Bundala was recognized as a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 2005. It is the only such coastal reserve in Sri Lanka. The landscape is of the dry zone scrub jungle with sand dunes, and the National Park has four brackish water lagoons. Due to its location and

natural environment, Bundala is home to about 230 indigenous and migrant bird species, including many wetland species, crocodiles, deer, elephants, and much more.

Driving along the gravel roads of the Park, we were able to see Purple Swamphens appearing near the water holes, striking against the lush green- ery. Up in the sky, birds soared as they enjoyed their freedom. A Spot- billed Pelican rested on a tree, not even glancing our way, soon to take flight to venture farther away. Painted Storks stood tall, creating a pictur- esque sight. The soothing cooling breeze from the lakes and ponds mo- mentarily made us forget the heat of the day.

An Indian Darter with a group of Black Cormorants seemed to enjoy a moment of camaraderie. A beautiful peacock with its vibrant colors stut- tered across, and farther away, peahens gathered together. A group of Torque Macaques was grooming the young, while some of the older ones' running to and fro. A juvenile Brahminy Kite perched on a dry branch ever alert on its surroundings.



Lesser Whistling Ducks paddled along, emerging out of water the mo- mentarily camouflaged. The sur- roundings were enchanting as we drove ahead, looking here and there, searching for the wildlife of Bundala. A couple of Greater Thick-knee birds were relaxing in the afternoon light when one did a peculiar movement with his feet. Bright green bee-eaters were highlights on broken branches and mounds of soil on the ground. Upon us approaching, they would hurriedly fly away to once again land on a nearby branch.

Gradually the birds were coming out as afternoon became evening. The sounds of birds were mesmerizing, giving us a hint that though they could not be seen, they were defi- nitely around. We could see two cute Rose-ringed Parakeets, also known

in Sinhala as Mala Girawa, on the branch of a tree. They were bright spots of green against the brown of the tree.

Bundala is bordered by the sea, and there is a beautiful location with rich red soil, almost copper-like in color. The cliff drops into the ocean, and the waves lash onto its surface below. The view is mesmerizing, and you can see far out to sea.

As we headed our way back to the main entrance, we passed again the lush aquatic bulrush plants that swayed to the rhythm of the wind. Large wild buffaloes were either soaking themselves in the water or were leisurely walking along the road. Our attention was suddenly directed towards a massive crocodile relaxing on the small bund of the lake. Another short distance away had its mouth wide open, basking in the sun.

We had enjoyed a few hours in the Bundala National Park and had ob- served many birds and animals. We were soon back on the road returning to Colombo. It is indeed possible to visit Bundala in a day and enjoy the beauty of nature.







ımphen with a prey in its beaks.



Duck posing against the lush greenery.



th a group of Cormorants.





as Mala Girawa in Sinhala.



ɪminy Kite on alert.



ɔchful in the afternoon sun.



The beautiful Painted Stork.