

Pink flight

Tata Power's Bund welcomes flamingoes from Kutch every winter



Lesser Flamingos at Tata Power Thermal Power Station

Winter is extra special for Mumbai because that is when pink flocks of flamingoes start arriving to the wetlands from Gujarat's Kutch. Gorgeous and flamboyant, these unique winged-creatures can be seen across Mumbai at Bhandup pumping station, Sewri mudflats and Navi Mumbai wetland.

However, the Bund area of Tata Power's Trombay plant is one of their favourite spots in Mumbai.

"Every year, their numbers keep increasing. We have been seeing these birds since the 1980s," says employees of Trombay division who have spent more than 40 years in the organization. The Bund area of Tata Power is an isolated territory and except for security team and a few maintenance engineers, the area is prohibited for the entry of other people. This way, the area provides protection to the birds and they prefer it as a safe area for feeding and roosting (resting).

The local community of Mahul and Gavan village, in the Bund, calls the bird by name of 'Noyi'."



The legendary mythological bird phoenix is inspired from flamingoes

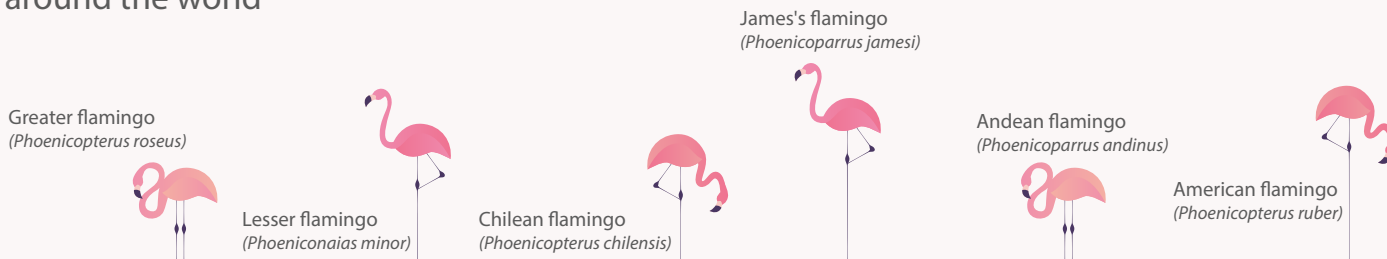
DID YOU KNOW?

I have been seeing this bird since my childhood. Earlier, local fishermen used to take tourists and birdwatchers flamingo-watching in their boats. After the 2009 terrorist attack, there are strict restrictions by the government for boat safari," says Kamalakar Hadsul, a 62-year-old resident of Mahul village.

"It was a fascinating experience for me to see more than 10,000 birds together. The whole Bund area turned reddish pink colour due to their presence," says Ashish Sood, Head - Security of Tata Power, who has joined the company recently, recalling the first time he saw the flamingoes.



There are **6 different varieties of flamingoes** around the world



Of them, two types of flamingoes are found in India – the Greater Flamingo and Lesser Flamingo. Both species can be found in the Tata Power Bund area. Almost 80 percent of species are Lesser Flamingoes which have more pink plumage on their wings/body and are shorter in height compared to Greater Flamingoes. Other than flamingoes, more than 100 varieties of bird species, including migratory and resident birds, like Painted Stork, Eurasian Curlew, Sandpipers, Egrets etc. have been seen on the premises of Tata Power.



Flamingo chicks, when hatched, are white in colour
DID YOU KNOW?

The flamingoes can be seen in the Bund are from November to May when they fly in from Rann of Kutch, where they have their breeding grounds. Although most flamingoes stay till May, there are exceptions when it comes to a few individual flamingoes. In some cases, they might be injured or unfit to fly back.



Lesser Flamingos Resting in Bund area of Tata Power Co.

Visually appealing and distinct in plumage, the flamingoes' diet contributes to its colours. Omnivorous in nature, they feed on algae, insect larvae and diatoms. The algae diet is rich in alpha and beta carotenoid pigments, including canthaxanthin, making the feather and legs pink.

Distribution & Habitat

- The lesser flamingo is the most numerous of all flamingo species, with an estimated population of 1.5 to 2.5 million individuals.
- The lesser flamingo is primarily an African species. Populations are found in eastern, southwestern, and western Africa and a sizable population nests in India.

Diet

- The Greater and Lesser Flamingoes share the same Habitat in India, However they have completely different feeding habits and food source to avoid competition.
- The Greater Flamingo is Omnivorous, feeding on larger algae, small crustaceans and insect larvae.
- The Lesser Flamingos breeds chiefly on algae & diatoms

Lesser flamingoes are on IUCN's near threatened red list. Conservation of mangroves and wetlands are necessary for the survival of this magnificent bird. Keeping this in mind to conserve the species and the biodiversity of the Thane Creek, the Maharashtra Government and State Mangrove Cell has declared the mangrove area in Thane as a flamingo sanctuary. It is India's first flamingo sanctuary.



In Egyptian culture, the flamingoes were a representation of 'Ra'- the sun god
DID YOU KNOW?