

MURLIMENON

I am writing this after a close encounter with one of nature's miracles. I have just returned after spending a day with millions of migratory birds from Siberia, who migrate to Nal Sarovar Lake which is located 70 km. away from Ahmedabad. I woke up at 4:00 a.m. to drive to the lake in order to sight more of our feathered friends, who prefer to venture out of their nests at dawn and dusk.

I chose an open boat and set off to the innermost corners of the lake, as the first rays of light brighten the sky. Nature rewards patience and after an hour long wait

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Air-show in action



A large group of flamingoes sighted at close quarters



Visitors from Siberia

Close encounter with Nature's miracle at Nal Sarovar Lake

at the centre of the lake, one can see a delightful formation of migratory birds at the far end of the horizon

Birds like the white stork, Brahmany duck and Saras crane can be easily sighted here. Groups of avocets, heron curlews, pelicans, swallows, eagles, pigeons, spoonbills, flamingos and jacanas can be found all around the lake. There are no motorised boats at Nal Sarovar and paddling slowly over the placid waters of this translucent lake is an extremely de-stressing experience.

As the boat makes its way to the interiors of this giant lake, one can see several species of birds resting on the tree-tops, or taking off into the skies in formation. As one flock takes off into the skies, one can see another group, gliding down to land.

The most beautiful sight at Nal Sarovar, is to watch a large flock of pink necked flamingos, huddling together to provide a picture postcard view.

One can see several birds taking a dip in the waters, as if purifying themselves before they make their flight. Most of these migratory birds have flown several thou-

sand miles, landing in Nal Sarovar from early December till late February. While, some of the birds like the Brahminy duck arrive here from Northern Tibet, others have reached here from Nor-

trance forming experience. The synchronicity in their flight and the even distance they keep away from one another gives an illusion as if each bird is tied to the other by invisible strings. They seem to be

guided by a divine force. If you want to experience the power of our Creator, one can just watch these feathered friends!

As the morning turns into noon, more and more birds start emerging from their nests and hover around the boat. A few of the more adventurous birds even plonk themselves on the edge of the boat.

It is quite a challenge identifying the species of bird seen, as the number and variety of birds are many. Also many of the birds resemble each other and an expert ornithologist may also find it difficult to zero in on the exact name of the bird sighted.

The sound of the birds is extremely musical to the ears and one can shut one's eyes and identify the bird based on its call. Also, one has to spend time in the interiors of the lake, trying to spot the smaller, more elusive birds.

Watching hundreds of flamingos fly over one's head is a once in a lifetime experience. One group is followed by another in a never ending cascade. Its time to be in the present and absorb this soulful experience. It can take almost five hours of slow paddling to cover the interiors of this giant lake to get the opportunity to watch these foreign visitors at close quarters.

These birds are extremely sensitive to sounds and one has to paddle in pin drop silence. A small whisper is enough to scatter a flock of birds resting in the waters.

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Another squadron takes to the air

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way, Siberia, Northern China and Denmark! It's incredible to even estimate, how these migratory birds land up at Nal Sarovar every winter without fail.

Watching these birds in full flight is a

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