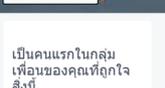




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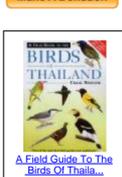
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Bang Poo

(Updated 04/09/14)

Introduction

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Bang Poo, in Samut Prakarn province, is owned and managed by the Thai military and at first seems a strange place to go bird watching; it is scrappy area of offices, ponds, mudflats, mangroves and wasteland where locals go for a picnic, to do tai chi, to release crabs for merit making, to feed the gulls and to dine at the restaurant. However, by poking around the whole site quite an amazing number of birds can be seen, particularly during migration, and I have personally seen over one hundred species here.



(Photo by Nick Upton)

It is for shorebirds that most people will visit and this means that the months between October and May are the best for bird watching and the site's close proximity to Bangkok makes it an ideal location for a half day trip by taxi; or make a whole day of it by going to [Muang Boran Fish Ponds](#) in the morning and then move on to Bang Poo for lunch and afternoon birding.

Bang Poo can get exceptionally crowded at weekends so it is a good idea to schedule your visit for a weekday if you appreciate peace and quiet whilst birding or if you are there at the weekend, just join the locals in the gull-feeding!



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Birding Highlights



Brown-headed Gull (Photo by Nick Upton)

From mid October to the end of April, two to three thousand Brown-headed Gulls are normally to be seen at Bang Poo with small numbers of Black-headed Gulls nearly always present within the flock. This large gull flock is easily observed, with many locals feeding the birds scraps of food, and it is worth checking for less common species; Slender-billed Gull is usually annual here as are Heuglin's Gull; most of the gull rarities from Thailand have been recorded here including Little Gull, Mew Gull and Sooty Gull.

Terns are also a feature here, Whiskered is the most numerous and most of the other Thai species often turn up here.

Bang Poo is also a good place to see waders on the mudflats at low tide and on the inland pools at high tide. Inspecting the wader flocks can reveal some interesting birds with Grey-tailed Tattler sometimes found here in April and May and Asian Dowitcher sometimes amongst the large flock of Eastern Black-tailed Godwits.

Bang Poo doesn't at first appear as if it would be an ideal birding venue, but it is one of those sites that often turns up rare migrants, particularly for those who watch the site on a regular basis - Baillon's Crane, Glossy Ibis, Christmas Island Frigatebird & Crested Myna have all been found here.

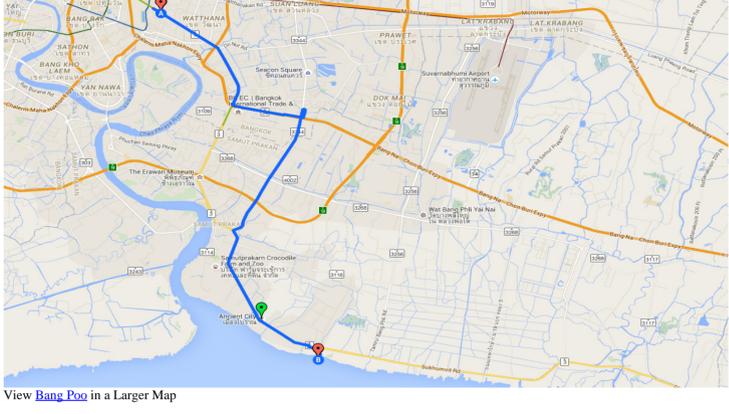
Apart from these highlights, any walk around Bang Poo will afford good views of many commoner species such as Collared Kingfisher, Brahminy Kite, Egrets, Plain-backed Sparrow, Common Iora and Golden-bellied Gerygone, and a seafood lunch in the restaurant at the end of the pier is a non-birding highlight of any visit to Bang Poo!

A checklist of the birds for this location can be found here - [Bang Poo](#)

Bird Watching Trips:
 If you need help organizing a bird watching trip to Thailand, take a look at the suggested itineraries for ideas on creating a tailor-made trip and contact me for advice: [Thailand bird tours](#).

Travel Information

Use the interactive map below to plan your route to Bang Poo. The blue line shows the route from Sukhumvit Road in downtown Bangkok (Red Pin) to Bang Poo (Blue Pin) via Muang Boran (Green Pin).



View [Bang Poo](#) in a Larger Map

The first time I tried to visit Bang Poo I got completely lost and ended up at Samut Prakarn Docks, not one of the world's ornithological hotspots. The mistake I made was trying to get there by bus, which involves changing at Samut Prakarn and a walk between buses: I would not recommend this method at all as the distance between buses is considerable and finding the correct connection is difficult.

The best method is to take a taxi and tell the driver SaTarn Tee Tark A-Kart Bang Poo or if that is a bit too tricky to get your tongue around show the taxi driver the [Bang Poo Thai Script](#). Most taxi drivers seem to know it, but you may have to help them as you get nearer to the site. On the meter the cost should be about 3-400 baht from Bangkok city centre and taxis for the return journey are easily obtained by walking the short distance back to the main road and waiting for one to come along.

The alternative method is to drive yourself if you have already hired a vehicle for your holiday; follow Sukhumvit road from central Bangkok all the way to the Bang Na intersection and turn left into Bang Na - Trad Road. Shortly after passing Central department store turn left onto Sri Nakarin Road towards Samut Prakarn; to do this you must turn left after passing under the road NOT before. After turning onto Sri Nakarin Road continue until it finishes in a T-junction and turn left. Continue along here until seeing a sign for Muang Boran; a few kilometres after this you will see sign posts for Bang Poo which is on your right - you must do a little u-turn to make the turning. This route is very busy and frequently subject to traffic jams; my recommendation is to leave before sunrise for an easy drive or, if timing your visit for the tide, leave central Bangkok at least 1.5 hours before your desired arrival time.

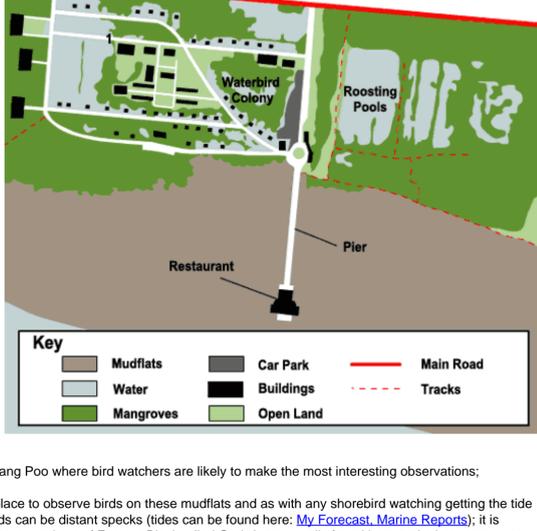
Finding Birds

A large number of species can be found at Bang Poo at the right time of year, and due to the small size of the site most of these can be easily found. There is always potential to add to the site list, with unusual migrant species showing up every year with some surprising species having been seen over the years.

Most bird watchers come here to see shorebirds and indeed many species are easily observed on the mudflats at low tide (viewing them from the pier is the best tactic) and on the inland pools at high tide.

However, it is also worth taking a walk around the site where a lot of common open-country species can be found as well as a number of interesting migrant species. The Spring migration tends to produce the richest pickings in terms of unusual migrants here, with Grey-tailed Tattler often seen in small numbers in April and early May as well as Blue-winged Pitta passing through.

Golden-bellied Gerygone is very numerous here and its high-pitched whistle can often be heard coming from any of the many mangrove fragments. It can be quite a difficult species to observe due to its tiny size and colouration, but be patient and you are sure to eventually obtain good views.



There are a number of spots around Bang Poo where bird watchers are likely to make the most interesting observations:

Mudflats: The pier provides the best place to observe birds on these mudflats and as with any shorebird watching getting the tide at the right time is important or the birds can be distant specks (tides can be found here: [My Forecast, Marine Reports](#)); it is important to have a telescope here. Large numbers of Eastern Black-tailed Godwit are usually found here and other commoner shorebirds here include Pacific Golden Plover, Common Redshank, Kentish Plover, Marsh Sandpiper and Common Greenshank.



Striated Heron



Pacific Golden Plover



Kentish Plover



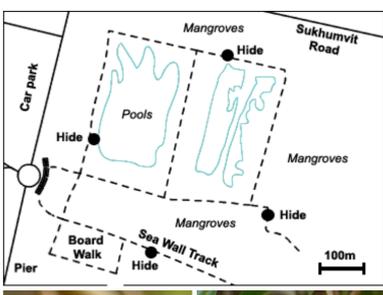
Marsh Sandpiper (Photos by Nick Upton)

Terns can be observed closely from the pier too as they either roost on mudflats or fish over the shallow waters. In April it is a great place to get really close views of Whiskered and White-winged Terns in breeding plumage.

Lines of bamboo poles encourage sedimentation and prevent erosion and these are appreciated by roosting gulls, terns and Collared Kingfishers as well as Black-capped Kingfisher during the dry season. Great and Little Egrets are common on the mudflats as are Striated Herons and a Brahminy Kite or two can usually be seen.

Although the Gulf of Thailand has few seabirds other than gulls and terns, in recent years boat trips into the Gulf in April/May have discovered some species of interest and with the right winds the pier at Bang Poo may be a good spot to look for such birds - I have seen Great Cormorant out to sea here and Bridled Tern at this migratory time of year.

Waterbird Colony: In a clump of mangrove trees is a colony of Black-crowned Night Herons, Little and Indian Cormorants with small numbers of Egrets, all of which can be observed at close range. Some good photo opportunities here!



Oriental White-eye



Golden-bellied Gerygone (Photos by Nick Upton)

A large flock of Eastern Black-tailed Godwits always gather here at high tide and sometimes it is possible to find one or two Asian Dowitchers within their midst - their thick, black bill stands out in the crowd. Species such as Wood Sandpiper and Long-toed Stint favour this habitat at all times, rarely venturing out onto the mudflats. Other shorebird species that can be seen at close range here, while roosting, include Curlew Sandpiper, Red-necked Stint, Marsh Sandpiper, Pacific Golden Plover, Common Sandpiper and breeding Black-winged Stilt.

The trails and the new mangrove boardwalk in this area allow birders to look for small passerines such as Oriental White-eye, Dusky Warbler, Ashy Minivet and Golden-bellied Gerygone; a number of other species may be found during migratory times including some great birds such as Yellow-rumped Flycatcher and Blue-winged Pitta.

A track also goes along the sea wall here and it is a good place to sit quietly as the tide comes in and watch the shorebirds as they gradually get closer; there is a hide here to help birders with this.

Point 1: In this area Plain-backed Sparrows can be found; listen out for their call which has a subtle difference from that of the ubiquitous Eurasian Tree Sparrow. Although this is a scruffy little patch of habitat a few other passerines of interest can usually be found here too including Chestnut Munia, Golden-bellied Gerygone and Common Iora.

Facilities

Book a Bangkok hotel through thaibirding.com



Gull silhouette (Photo by Anoop Sukumaran)

In theory it would be possible to find a small hotel locally, there are certainly a few in the town of Samut Prakarn but why would you want to stay in one of these grubby little places beats me; a much better idea would be to make this a day trip from your hotel in Bangkok: [Bangkok Hotel Reservations](#); hotels based near Suvarnabhumi airport are not so far away.

In terms of refreshments there are plenty available to revive you if the heat becomes too much; a number of small kiosks around the gate to the pier have cold drinks and snacks for sale, sometimes food such as barbecued chicken is available here too. The real treat though is the restaurant at the end of the pier which specialises in seafood. Lunch or dinner here after watching the birds is a good way to relax and the menu is in English and Thai making it easy to order - the friendly staff will do all they can to help you order something good. There is also a small restaurant near the gate to the pier which serves simple, cheap and tasty dishes.

For those who are interested, there are a number of vendors on the pier that sell food to feed to the gulls; it can help to draw them near and spot a rarity!

This location is not a National Park and you will not be charged to go birding here.



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Photo Galleries

Select the thumbnail photos to see larger images.



Bird Watching Trips:
 Bang Poo is a good site for a half-day of birding and makes a nice final stop on any birding itinerary finishing in Bangkok; great for close-up photos of gulls and there is always the chance of a rarity here.
 View suggested itineraries, [Thailand bird tours](#), or contact me for more information: nickupton@thaibirding.com.

Related Blog Entries

- [Bang Poo](#) - posted 19/11/13
- [Wetland and Forest Birds in July](#) - posted 27/07/09
- [Bang Poo Site 119, Bang Poo & Muang Boran Fishponds](#) - posted 12/07/08
- [1 Day, 3 Sites, Lots of Birds](#) - posted 28/04/08
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