

Shuklaphanta National Park

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[IUCN](#) category II ([national park](#))

Rani Tal, a lake inside Shuklaphanta National Park

Location [Nepal](#), [Province No. 7](#)

Nearest city [Bhimdatta](#)

Coordinates [28°50′25″N 80°13′44″E](#)

Area 305 km² (118 sq mi)

Established 1976 (2017 - National Park)

Governing body [Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation](#)

Website [Shuklaphanta National Park](#)

The **Shuklaphanta National Park** is a protected area in the [Terai](#) of the [Far-Western Region](#), [Nepal](#). It covers the area of 305 km² (118 sq mi). The area is covered by open grassland, forests, riverbeds and tropical [wetlands](#). It is at an [altitude](#) of 174 to 1,386 m (571 to 4,547 ft).^[1] It was established in 1976 as *Royal Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve*. A small part of the reserve is in the northern side of the [East-West Highway](#). It is there to create a path for seasonal [Migration](#) of [wildlife](#) into the [Sivalik Hills](#). The Syali River forms the eastern boundary of this national park. The international border with [India](#) makes the national park's southern and western boundary.^[2]

The Indian Tiger Reserve [Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary](#) is in the southern part of this reserve. It is a protected area of 439 km² (169 sq mi). It represents the *Tiger Conservation Unit (TCU) Sukla Phanta-Kishanpur*. It covers a 1.897 km² (0.732 sq mi) [block](#) of [alluvial](#) grasslands and [subtropical moist deciduous forests](#).^[3]

The protected area is part of the [Terai-Duar savanna and grasslands ecoregion](#). It is one of the best-conserved examples of [floodplain](#) grassland.^[4] It is included in the [Terai Arc Landscape](#).^[5]

History

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Map of Sukla Phanta Wildlife Reserve and Bufferzone, Nepa

The area was a hunting ground for Nepal's ruling class. It was [declared](#) a Royal Hunting Reserve in 1969. In 1973, the area was changed into *Royal Sukla Phanta Wildlife Reserve*. At first it had an area of 155 km² (60 sq mi). The area was made bigger to its present size in the late 1980s.^[6] A buffer

zone of 243.5 km² (94.0 sq mi) was added in May 2004.^[1] In 2017, the status of the protected area was changed to a national park.

The name *Suklaphanta* comes from one of the grasslands found inside the protected area.^[7] The main grassland called *Sukla Phanta* is the largest [patch](#) of continuous grassland in Nepal. It covers an area of about 16 km² (6.2 sq mi).^[2]

The jungles of the Shuklaphanta National Park were once the area of an ancient kingdom. Ruins of that kingdom can still be seen in some places. Near Rani Tal, a lake in the park, a brick [girdle](#) is still there. The girdle measures 1,500 m (59,000 in) in [Circumference](#). It is considered by locals to be the remains of the [fort](#) of [Tharu](#) king Singpal.^[8]

Climate

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The climate of the region is [subtropical monsoonal](#). The mean annual rainfall in this area is 1,579 mm (62.2 in). The rainfall occurs from June to September and is highest in August. The winter months of December and January are fairly cold. The daytime [temperatures](#) during this time of year is 7–12 °C (45–54 °F). Sometimes [frost](#) can also be seen. From February onwards temperatures rise up to 25 °C (77 °F) in March. The temperature reaches upto 42 °C (108 °F) by end of April. When the first pre-[monsoon](#) rains reach the area in May, [humidity](#) increases.^{[6][7]}

Plants

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Imperata cylindrica is one of the main grass species found in the park's *phantas*

Around 700 species of plants are there in the park. They include 553 [vascular plants](#), 18 [pteridophytes](#), 410 [dicots](#) and 125 [monocots](#).^[1] Grassland covers almost half the reserve's [vegetation](#). The main grass species are *Imperata cylindrica* and *Heteropogon contortus*. [khagra reed](#) (*Phragmites karka*) and *Saccharum spontaneum*. They grow in the [marshes](#) around the seven small lakes. The main forest type is [sal](#). [Khair](#) and [sissoo](#) grow by the side of rivers. The grassland being covered by trees is a major threat to the long-term existence of the main plants. Trees cover any grasses growing under them, mainly those that need more sunlight. Tree seeds are spread all over the grasslands. They mostly [germinate](#) near existing trees. Also, trees help in the growth of [shade-loving](#) grasses and prevent the growth of sun-loving species. This process of [succession](#) usually converts grassland into woodland over time.^[2]

Animals

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Monitor lizard

Swamp deer

Yellow-eyed babbler

A grey-headed fish eagle

The open grasslands and wetlands covers large area around the lakes. This area is home to different kinds of animals.^[6] In the rivers, lakes and ponds 28 [fish](#) species and 12 [reptile](#) and [amphibian](#) species were recorded.^[1] These include [mahseer](#) and [rohu](#), [mugger crocodile](#), [Indian rock python](#), [monitor lizard](#), [Indian cobra](#), [common krait](#) and [Oriental ratsnake](#).^[2]

Mammals

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Current checklists include 46 [mammal](#) species. Among them 18 are protected under [CITES](#) such as the [Bengal tiger](#), [Indian leopard](#), [sloth bear](#), [swamp deer](#), [elephant](#) and [hispid hare](#). [Great one-horned rhinoceros](#) were moved from [Chitwan National Park](#).^{[1][6]}

The gathering of swamp deer in the park's grasslands is the largest in the world. The population of hispid hare may be of international [significance](#).^[2] As of 2013, there were 2170 swamp deer in the reserve.^[9] In spring 2016, a [rusty-spotted cat](#) was photographed by a [camera-trap](#) for the first time in the protected area.^[10]

Birds

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A total of 423 bird species has been recorded. The park supports the highest population of [Bengal floricans](#) in Nepal. It is the western limit of [swamp francolin](#), [Jerdon's bushchat](#), [rufous-rumped grassbird](#), [chestnut-capped babbler](#) and [Jerdon's babbler](#). For [yellow-eyed babbler](#) it is the north-western limit and it is the eastern limit of [Finn's weaver](#). It is also the most important regular wintering site of [Hodgson's bushchat](#). Forest birds include [spot-bellied eagle owl](#), [dusky eagle owl](#), [rufous-bellied eagle](#) and [Oriental pied hornbill](#). The forests are also important for [great slaty woodpecker](#) and [white-naped woodpecker](#). The [white-rumped vulture](#), [slender-billed vulture](#), [lesser adjutant](#), [grey-headed fish eagle](#), [darter](#) and rufous-rumped grassbird are [breeding residents](#). [Sarus crane](#), [painted stork](#) and [bristled grassbird](#) are summer visitors. [Greater racquet-tailed drongo](#), [white-capped water](#)

[redstart](#), [rusty-tailed flycatcher](#) and [rufous-gorgeted flycatcher](#) are winter visitors but they are not common.^[2]

During a [Survey](#) carried out in January 2005, a total of 19 Hodgson's bushchats were recorded. A year later in 2006 only 8 males were recorded.^[11]

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Other websites

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