Your Guide to Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park

Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park is one of the largest urban parks in central Singapore, covering a full 62 hectares of unique waterways and greenery. Under PUB’s Active, Beautiful and Clean (ABC) Waters programme, the old concrete canal has been deconcretised and naturalised into a beautiful 3km meandering river with lush banks of wildflowers. The river is now home to a wide array of interesting fauna and flora. Its transformation has created a seamless blue-green recreational network which is well-integrated with nearby residential areas.

With the Pond Gardens and River Plains, the park offers a variety of spaces for the community to enjoy. It is a popular choice for cycling, jogging and family gatherings, with the open lawns and gently sloping grassy banks along either side of the river. There are spots for the individual to explore and learn.

If you do not have that much time, you can also explore Pond Gardens and the River Plains separately. Each trail will take about an hour.

Tips for a safe and enjoyable trip

- Dress comfortably and wear suitable footwear.
- Wear a hat, put on sunglasses and apply sunscreen to shield yourself from the sun.
- Spray on insect repellent if you are prone to insect bites.
- If you are intending to let your children play at the water playground, bring extra clothing and towels.
- Drink ample fluids to stay hydrated.
- Walk along the designated paths to protect the natural environment of the park.
- Dispose of rubbish at the nearest bin.
- Activities such as poaching, releasing and feeding of animals, damaging and removal of plants, and those that cause pollution are strictly prohibited.
- Clean up after your pets and keep them leashed.
- Camping is not allowed.
- The flashing of the red and yellow lights by the river signals that the water levels will rise rapidly. Please move to higher ground and do not go past the red marker.
START POINT

1. Dog Run
Man’s best friend needs to stretch its legs once in a while. This is a dog run area, approximately 2100 sqm, where pet dogs can get their dose of exercise. With wide open spaces sheltered by shade-providing trees, pet dogs can run freely and safely within the boundaries of this area.

2. Event Lawns
You will be passing by our event lawns, namely Grand Lawn I and Grand Lawn II. For booking details, please refer to our website at www.nparks.gov.sg.

3. Naturalised River
The Kallang River that used to flow inside a concrete canal has been transformed into a naturalised, meandering river that flows through the park. The enhancement of this waterway is part of PUB’s Active, Beautiful, Clean (ABC) Waters Programme. Take a stroll along the river or across the stepping stones to enjoy its beauty and serenity.

If you observe quietly, you may spot the Common Scarlet Dragonfly (Crocothemis servilia). The male is bright red in colour while the female is yellow-brown. It has an amber patch at the base of its hindwing and a distinctive black stripe that runs along the abdomen to the tail. It preys on smaller insects such as flies or mosquitoes.

There are also interesting plants to observe. The Sessile Joyweed (Alternanthera sessilis ‘Red’) has dark reddish-purple leaves, providing colour contrast in a mostly green landscape. Tea prepared from its leaves is thought to improve blood circulation and reduce cholesterol and blood sugar levels. The leaves may also be consumed as a vegetable.

The wildflower Townsville Stylo (Stylosanthes humilis) is used in the park as groundcover to help reduce soil erosion. It is sometimes also planted as a cover crop in agricultural fields to prevent the growth of weeds.

4. Recycle Hill
Made from concrete slabs salvaged from the old Kallang canal, Recycle Hill provides a good vantage point to view the entire park. Sitting atop the hill is the award-winning sculpture, An Enclosure for a Swing, created to represent the fusion of nature and design.

5. Swamp Tea Tree (Melaleuca cajuputi)
A hardy tree that grows rapidly and is able to withstand waterlogged soil, it is often planted along river banks. The leaves give a typical ‘tea tree’ smell when crushed. The tree is also the source of the medicinal oil called cajuput oil, which has antiseptic properties.

6. Viewing Point
Stop by the bridge for a photo with picturesque views of the river as your backdrop. You can also have an overview of the length of the river, the fishes and bright pink apple snail eggs on the rocks. If you need some refreshments, a food and beverage outlet is just round the corner.

7. Riverside Gallery
Located by the naturalised river, the Riverside Gallery is where you can sit and relax. Next to it is the Promenade, which is suitable for holding events and gatherings. Go to www.nparks.gov.sg to book.

See whether you can spot the Purple Heron (Ardea purpurea). This is a large bird that can stand up to 90cm in height. It has ash grey plumage at the base of its neck, upper body and wings. Its head and neck are reddish-brown with a black stripe running from the base of its gape to its belly. Preferring to hunt alone in the early morning or at night, this shy but elegant bird can be spotted at the river looking for food. Despite its slender beak and neck, the Purple Heron is strong enough to kill large snakes.

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The cleansing biotope is a series of specially engineered wetland cells that offers effective water treatment. It helps to treat river water naturally while maintaining a beautiful and natural-looking environment. Incoming water from the river and surface run-off from the park are filtered through layers of substrates of varying sizes. The treated water from the cells is then channelled into the large pond and used for the water playground.

A variety of plants can be found at the cleansing biotope. The Scouring Rush (Equisetum hyemale) is best grown in wet soil under full sun, making it a good plant choice for the cleansing biotope. The rough bristles are traditionally used to scour and clean pots. It can also be used to shape the reed of reed instruments.

The Umbrella Plant (Cyperus alternifolius) is a rush-like aquatic species with its leaves arranged on the stems like an umbrella. It has the ability to absorb nitrogen and phosphorous rapidly, and is also able to accumulate copper and manganese.

The Frog Fruit (Phyla nodiflora) is native to South America and can easily be found in tropical Singapore. Its flowers have a rich purple centre encircled by small white-pink petals. The leaves of the Frog Fruit are sometimes used to make tea, giving the drink a grassy flavour.

With its glossy emerald green leaves, the Elephant Ear Taro (Alocasia macrorrhizos) is a massive plant with arrow-shaped leaf blades pointing upwards, reaching 1m in length.

The Lemongrass (Cymbopogon citratus), which is native to India. Cultivated in Southeast Asia, Africa and America as an aromatic medicinal herb and perfume, it is also widely used as a culinary herb in Southeast Asian cuisine. Freshly cut stems are often crushed and used to prepare lemongrass tea. It is grown along the swales as a repellent to the mosquitoes.

If you see a delicate grass with tiny bamboo-like leaves, chances are that this is the Baby Bamboo Grass (Pogonatherum crinitum). The Baby Bamboo Grass has long been used as a remedy in the treatment of inflammatory diseases, especially in Taiwan.

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Water Playground

Children can learn to appreciate the value of water at this playground. They can manoeuvre sluice gates to control the flow of water and even soak their feet and splash around in the water castle. Water running through the playground is recycled. It is treated by the phyto remediation system (the use of living plants to remove impurities from contaminated soil). The children’s water playground operates on weekends and public holidays, from 8am to 11am and 4pm to 8pm.

Landscape Pond

Spanning more than two hectares, the landscape pond used to be an old commercial fishing area. Three bridges span across the length of the pond to provide more accessibility around the park and offer a vantage point for photography. The vegetated island at the centre of the pond provides perfect sunning spots for the non-native Red-eared Sliders (Trachemys scripta elegans) or fishing look-out points for the neighbouring kingfishers. The pond flows through a series of cascades into the river.

Red-eared Slider

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The Purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*) has thick fleshy stalks and its flowers have a variation of colours, blooming only in the day. The plant can efficiently accumulate copper and remove endocrine disruptors from water. Its leaves are known to be used in salads as a substitute for spinach.

Usually found on the margins of ponds and banks of rivers, the Dwarf Papyrus (*Cyperus haspan*) has round brush-like balls on the end of each stalk. It can quickly absorb nitrogen and phosphorus.

The Melati Air (*Echinodorus palaefolius*) is commonly used as an aquatic plant. With its string of white flowers, it is known to be one of the more beautiful and robust aquarium species.

**Adventure Playground**

Discover the exhilarating experience of climbing a tree and swinging from one trunk to the next as you watch the world from above. Run, hide, climb, dangle, swing and slide as you wish. Seek your adventure as you explore the climbing facilities in this playground.

**Lotus Garden**

Stroll along the bridges and admire the pond with its beautiful picturesque view of lotuses. The pond is also home to a healthy population of dragonflies and a wide array of birds. The White-breasted Waterhen (*Amaurornis phoenicurus*) can be spotted here. It is a dark slaty bird with a clean white face, breast and belly. This bird is often heard before it is seen and is also named ‘Ruak Ruak’ because of its loud calls. There is a family of waterhens at the Lotus Garden where they can be seen walking on the lotus leaves and among the shrubs on the banks. If you are lucky, you might be able to catch a glimpse of the black fluffy waterhen chicks striding playfully across their lotus playground.

See if you can spot residents such as the Collared Kingfisher (*Todiramphus chloris*). It varies from blue to green above while the underparts can be white or buff. There is a white collar around the neck, giving the bird its name. The large bill is black with a pale yellow base to the lower mandible. Females tend to be greener than the males. Immature birds are duller than the adults with dark scaly markings on the necks and breasts. It is commonly spotted along the river in the park and among the trees near the lotus pond. The Collared Kingfisher has six to seven different calls; the most distinctive one is its ‘krek krek krek’ call.

The Common Bluetail (*Ischnura senegalensis*) is easy to find throughout Singapore and is the first damselfly to colonise Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park’s riverbanks. This tiny damselfly can be found perched on the knee-high vegetation adjacent to the water. The males have green and black stripes on their bodies and azure blue segments on their abdomens. The females are duller in appearance and change from a bright red to beige in colour as they mature. It will not be difficult to spot the Common Parasol (*Neurothemis fluctuans*), a pretty red-winged dragonfly, around at open ponds. The male is red but the female is a dull brown or yellow. The male has a brownish-red thorax and abdomen. The wings are almost entirely brownish-red except for the tips and a thin tapering clear band around the hind margin from about its midpoint. The female is light dull brown (greyish when old) with dark streaks along the abdomen and has clear wings with a slight yellow tint at its base. The wings of the female are unmarked.

One of the ways to differentiate a dragonfly from a damselfly is to look at its wings. The damselfly has its wings closed, pressed together and held over its body when perching. In contrast, the dragonfly’s wings are always open, and are either horizontal or downward and away from the body.

**Forest Walk**

The forest walk is a 300m stretch of towering Khaya and Cannonball trees. The thick canopy created by the trees is an attempt to imitate the environment in the nearby nature reserve. Understorey layers have been planted to recreate the forest environment. Occasional visitors from the nature reserves can sometimes be spotted in this section of the park.

If you are lucky, you might catch a glimpse of the rare Spotted Wood Owl (*Strix seloputo*) with its distinctive orange-brown facial disc, topped by a dark brown crown with whitish spots, swooping through the canopy in search of its dinner, or hear the mystical call of the Greater Racket-tailed Drongo (*Dicrurus paradiseus*).

We hope you have enjoyed exploring Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park. For another park experience, embark on the trail at Sengkang Riverside Park.

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