



The Wild Side of Gujarat!

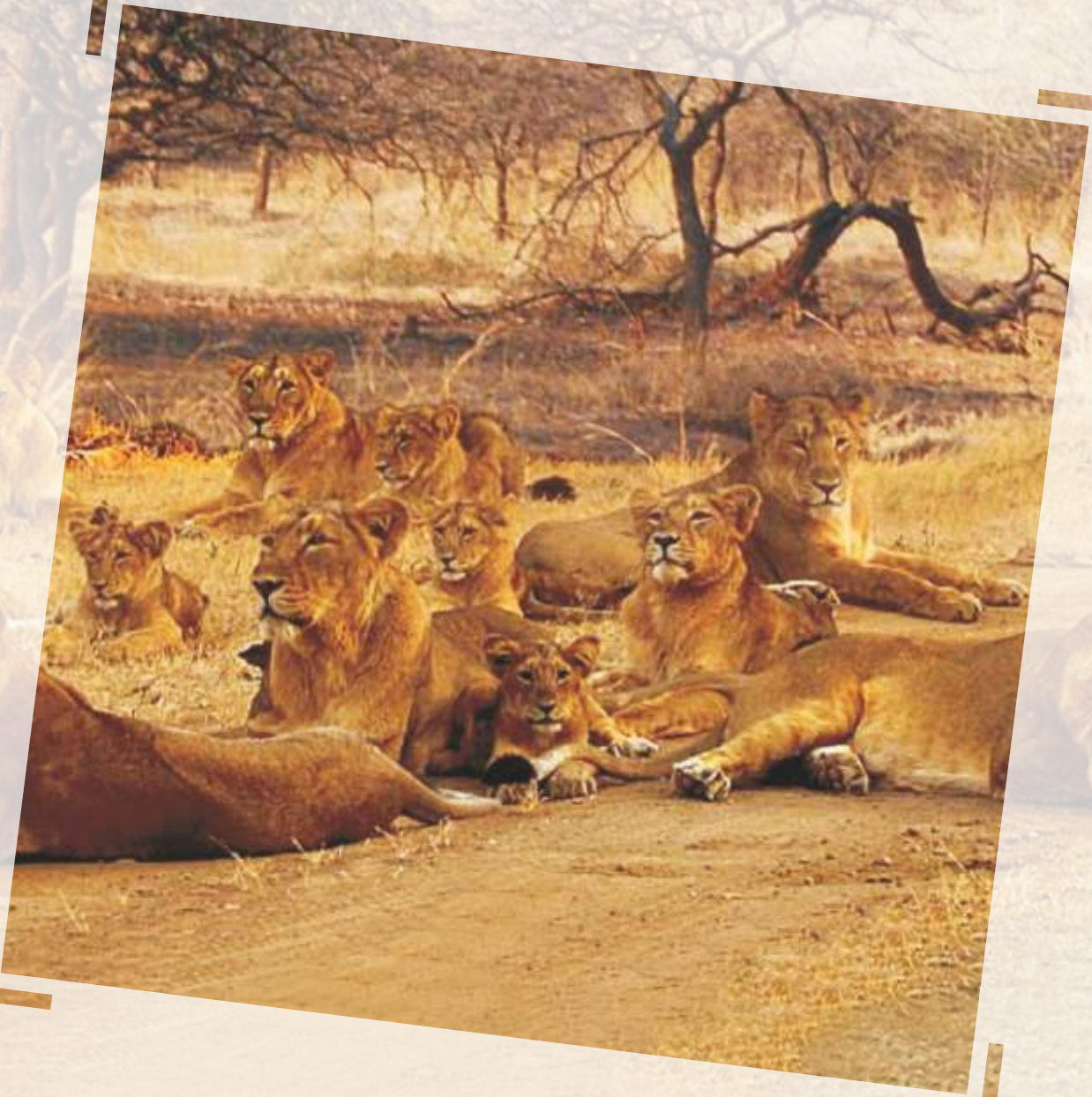


Experience the Wild!

The state is home to some of the rarest species of birds, animals, flora and fauna.

A rich variety of flora and fauna makes Gujarat home to 40 species of mammals and 425 species of birds - an absolute treat for nature lovers! In India, Gujarat is the only habitat of the Asiatic Lions who dwell in the Gir National Park and the large Flamingos along with the Wild Asses in the Rann of Kutch. The state boasts of a rich flora and fauna across its varied landforms ranging from dry and rich moist deciduous forests to majestic grasslands, wetlands and marine ecosystems. Asiatic Lion, Wild Ass, Black Buck, Four-horned Antelope and the Great Indian Bustard are some of the rare species preserved by the various wildlife sanctuaries in Gujarat. The best time to visit Gujarat is in the mild winter months from October to March. Although for the adventurous few, the monsoon season offers its own charm when the air is cool and the sky is overcast. Truly, the three national parks and twenty-one wildlife sanctuaries make for an enormous experience! All these attractions and the easy connectivity to the state by air, rail and road make Gujarat a much sought after tourist destination amongst nature lovers and adventure seekers.





Gir National Park

It is the home of the Asiatic lion, an endangered species. The sanctuary is internationally acclaimed for successfully saving this precious species from the brink of extinction. It was declared as a sanctuary in 1965, and an area of 258.71 sq km was subsequently declared a National park. Besides being the last abode of the Asiatic Lion, Gir forms a unique habitat for the Ratel, Rusty Spotted Cat, Pangolin, Ruddy Mongoose, Civets, Paradise Fly Catcher, etc.

What to see and do: A permit for entering the park can be obtained at the Sinh Sadan Orientation Centre, open from 07:00 am - 11:00 am and 03:00 pm - 05:30 pm. A 35-40 km driving route through the park is maintained for visitors. The Park remains closed on Wednesdays.

Gir Safari online permit website: www.girlion.in

Forest department no.: +91 2877 285541

How to reach:

By Road: Gir National Park is 60 km from Junagadh and 360 km from Ahmedabad.

By Rail: One can travel to Junagadh from Ahmedabad or Rajkot.

Where to Stay: Gir Jungle Lodge, Hotel Anil Farmhouse, Lion Safari Camp, The Fern Gir Forest Resort and Amidhara Resorts are some recommendations.

When to Visit: Gir is accessible from mid-October to mid-June.





Blackbuck National Park

What to see and do: The main species at Velavadar are the Blackbucks. They are exclusive south Asian antelopes with a successful conservation story. One can also spot the Nilgai (Blue Bull, the largest Asian antelope), Wolf, Jungle Cat and Jackal. The small wetland next to the gulf attracts birds such as the Pelican, Flamingoes, White Storks and the Sarus Crane. With luck one may come across the Lesser Florican, one of the 50 rarest birds in the world.

Location: Bhavnagar, Velavadar.

For further details: +91 2782 426425.



How to reach:

By Road: The nearest town Vallabhipur is 32 km away, Ahmedabad is 145 km away and Bhavnagar is 72 km away.

By Rail: Bhavnagar is the nearest railway station and flights land at Bhavnagar which is the nearest airport.

Where to Stay: The Blackbuck Lodge.

When to Visit: The Park is closed from mid-June to mid-October and can be visited any other time of the year.

Wild Ass Sanctuary

What to see and do: The Wild Ass Sanctuary virtually encircles the Little Rann of Kutch in a narrow band. The Sanctuary can be entered from three different places: Dhrangadhra, Range Bajana and Range Adeshwar. Range Bajana is the best if you are visiting during winter because it is very close to the wetlands and a variety of migratory birds nest in it. One can also spot the Blue Bull, Blackbuck, Wolf, Desert Fox, Jackal and few species of snakes. During winters one can spot spectacular birds like Flamingos, Pelicans, Falcons and Eagles in the Sanctuary.

Location: Mayur Nagar, Halwad Road, Dhrangadhra.

For further details: +91 2754 260716.

How to reach:

By Road: The Wild Ass Sanctuary is 130 km from Ahmedabad, 45 km from Viramgam, 175 km from Rajkot and 265 km from Bhuj.

By Rail: The nearest railway stations are 16 km from Dhrangadhra, 130 km from Ahmedabad and 175 km from Rajkot.

This is the only Sanctuary in the entire world, supporting the endangered species of the Indian Wild Ass which are 3000 in number in a 4953.71 sq. km area. The tough and extremely alert Wild Ass can run for a long distance at an average speed of 50 km/hr. Also called the Indian Zebra, its local name is Ghudkhar.

Where to Stay: Rann Riders, Royal Safari Camp.

When to Visit: The best time to visit is between November and March.



Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary

What to see and do: The Nal Sarovar Lake is a freshwater body that fills up during the rains and turns saline during the summer. This Lake gives shelter to more than 230,000 birds that include ducks, waders and waterfowl such as the Sarus Crane, Lesser and Greater Flamingo, Spoonbill, Glossy Ibis and Painted Stork. These birds travel tiring lengths from Central Asia, Europe and Siberia to escape from the severe and harsh winter there. There are 360 islets in the lake. The sheer number of birds that gather in this beautiful place leaves the birdwatchers spellbound.

It is thrilling to canoe through its shallow water and come very close to a flock of Pelicans, large groups of Flamingoes and a very alert gathering of Coots and different types of ducks.

Location: 60 km west of Ahmedabad.

For further details: +91 2717 223500

How to reach:

By Road: The nearest bus stations are at Ahmedabad 60 km, Viramgam 40 km and Sanand 42 km.

By Rail: The nearest railway stations are at Viramgam 40 km and Ahmedabad 64 km.

By Air: The nearest airport is Ahmedabad which is 64 km away.

The best time to view the birds is at dawn and dusk.

Where to Stay: Hotel Treatotel, Hotel Vice-President, Toran Tourist Complex Post. One can also stay in Ahmedabad.

Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary

What to see and do: Located 12 km from Jamnagar, Khijadiya is a unique wetland eco-system having two fresh water lakes. There are marshes, mangroves, creeks of the Gulf of Kutch and salt pans located in the adjoining area. This area falls in the Marine Sanctuary which is a must see.

Due to its high diversity of landscapes, the Sanctuary has the distinction of having a maximum bird species density in the state with more than 220 species in a relatively small area. Several globally threatened species such as Dalmation, Pelican, Asian open Bill Stork, Black necked Stork, Black headed Ibis, Eurasian Spoonbill, etc. are found here.

Location: Khijadiya village. 14 km from Jamnagar.

For further details: +91 28825 71810

How to reach:

By Road: Jamnagar is 92 km from Rajkot.

By Rail: Ahmedabad is the nearest station and flights land at Jamnagar and Ahmedabad.

Where to Stay: Hotel Aram, Hotel Express Residency and Hotel President.





Jessore Sloth Bear Sanctuary

What to see and do: Jessore has an excellent hiking trail though its hilly terrain and dense forest. The species of animals that can be spotted include Hanuman Langur, Leopard, Striped Hyena, Sloth Bear, Jackal, Mongoose, Four-horned Antelope and the Jungle Cat. This is also home to the venomous snakes like Saw-Scaled Viper, Cobra, Krait and the Bamboo Pit Viper besides the non-venomous snakes like Rat Snake, Red Sand Boa and Python. Also, the Sanctuary is home to over 150 species of birds which includes Partridge, Tailor Bird Quail, Grey Jungle Fowl, Common Babbler, Green Pigeon, Lesser Golden-Backed Woodpecker, Crested Serpent Eagle and Grey Jungle Fowl.

How to reach:

By Road: Mount Abu is 45 km away and Palanpur 65 km away.

By Rail and Air: Ahmedabad is the closest city.

Where to Stay: Balaram Palace Resort, Bhavani Villa.

Shoolpaneshwar Wildlife Sanctuary

What to see and do: The sanctuary is home to Leopards, Sloth Bears, Four-horned Antelope and Spotted Deer. Birds having affinities with the Himalayan and Western Ghats are common along with Pythons and the Flying Squirrel. The forest area rated as one of the best and thickest in the state is spread over an area which includes a major water shed, feeding two major reservoirs with the Rajpipla hills as the backdrop.

How to reach:

By Road: Bharuch, Rajpipla, Chanod and Dabhoi are accessible by buses.

By Rail: Bharuch is the nearest railway station and the closest airport is at Vadodara.

Where to Stay: Rajvant Palace Resort, Hotel President.





Thol Lake Bird Sanctuary

What to see and do: Thol is a great day trip from Ahmedabad. The scenic lake is a shallow freshwater reservoir speckled with reed beds that give it a distinct ambience and make it an ideal dwelling for varied species of birds. Surrounded by marshes, scrub forest and farmland, the lake provides plenty of food for many of the avian species that flock here. One can spot the Blue-Winged Teal, Pintail, Redhead Pochard, Flamingo and the graceful Sarus Crane which is the world's tallest flying bird.

How to reach:

By Road: Ahmedabad is 40 km away.

By Rail and Air: Ahmedabad is the closest city.

Where to Stay: Fortune Hotel Landmark, DRH Regency, Always Hotel Riverview.

Porbandar Bird Sanctuary

What to see and do: Located in the middle of the city of Porbandar is Gujarat's smallest bird sanctuary. The splendorous beauty of the place though not reflecting any emergent vegetation is enriched by the migratory birds visiting this area every year. The multihued, textured feathered creatures with their harmonious twitters and chirrups make this area a popular destination for ornithologists. This freshwater pond is a habitat for over 150 species of birds including Flamingoes, Spoonbills, Whistling Teals, Herons and Pelicans. Migratory birds make this zone a home and their nesting ground.

How to reach:

By Road: Porbandar is accessible from Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Dwarka, Veraval, Jamnagar and Junagadh.

By Rail: The Porbandar railway station is the closest.

By Air: The Porbandar airport is nearest.

Where to Stay: Hotel Lila's, Hotel Kuber, Toran Tourist Bungalow.

When to Visit: During the months of November and February is the most ideal time to visit.





Bird Watchers Trail

A feather in Gujarat's cap!

Gujarat is a veritable paradise for bird watchers as it hosts thousands of bird species. It is strategically located between two traditional bird migration routes, one from central and north Asia to East Africa and another from the Middle East and Europe to peninsular India. This makes the state an ideal meeting ground where birds of many feathers flock together. During the monsoon months from July to September the rain replenishes the lakes and ponds, regenerating grasslands thereby creating a perfect habitat for visiting birds. The Rann of Kutch is a breeding ground for Flamingoes, Pelicans and Avocets during the monsoon months. We have listed some of the lesser known bird sanctuaries and bird watching spots frequented by bird watching enthusiasts. One can make Ahmedabad and Vadodara as the base when exploring the following bird trails.

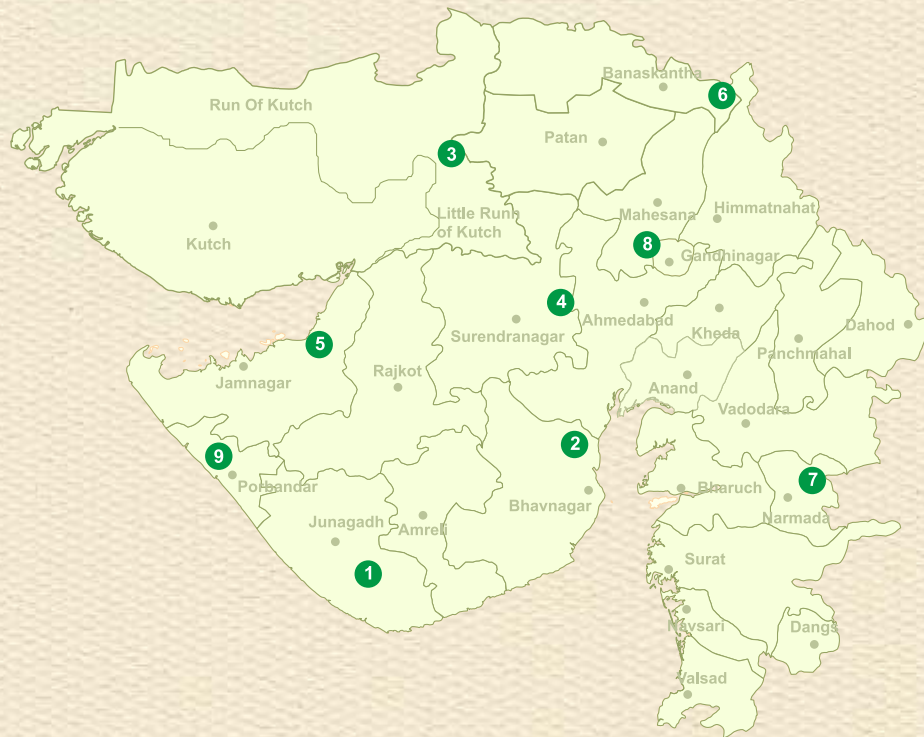
- **Vadhvana Wetlands** : 10 km from Dabhoi, 40 km from Vadodara
- **Pariej** : 25 km from Kheda, 60 km from Ahmedabad
- **Villa Kanewal Lake** : 40 km from Anand, 72 km from Ahmedabad
- **Mahi River Estuary** : 55 km from Anand, 75 km from Vadodara
- **Bhashkarpara** : 20 km from Viramgam
- **The Khijadia Bird Sanctuary** : 12 km from Jamnagar
- **Chhari Dhandh** : Banni Region 80 km from Bhuj

Visit: www.gujarattourism.com

Toll free No: 1800 233 7951

Email: marketing@gujarattourism.com





① Gir National Park

② Blackbuck National Park

③ Wild Ass Sanctuary

④ Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary

⑤ Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary

⑥ Jessore Sloth Bear Sanctuary

⑦ Shoolpaneshwar Wildlife Sanctuary

⑧ Thol Wildlife Sanctuary

⑨ Porbandar Bird Sanctuary



For further information contact:
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 Phone: 1800 200 5080 (Toll free)
 Website: www.gujarattourism.com

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