



NAVAN KHANDLARI/SANCTUARY

The Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the Bhandara district in the northeastern corner of Maharashtra. The small reserve covering 152 sq. km. is an important corridor that links the southern and central forested areas like the Tadoba-Andhari and Kanha Tiger Reserves. Nagzira is often referred to as the “Green Oasis” of Vidharba. The Mahadeo temple at Pongezara, bordering the Sanctuary attracts huge crowds during Mahashivaratri.

Flora and fauna

The reserve consists of semi-mountainous terrain with altitudes ranging from 30 m. to about 560 m.

Sloth bears are known to occur in the lowlands forests across the Indian subcontinent. Yet, they are very rarely spotted.

The slopes form a part of the Gaikhuri hills of the southern Satpuras. Diverse vegetation ranging from dry mixed forests to moist forests characterise this reserve. Nearly 200 plant species thrive here. The middle layer comprises smaller trees, shrubs and herbs while smaller herbs and grasses dominate the undergrowth soon after the monsoon. Tiger, leopard, jackal, jungle cat and the sloth bear are some of the animals in the reserve. Chital, chousingha, gaur, nilgai, sambar, wild boar and muntjac are the primary prey species. There is also an astonishing variety of butterflies and an interesting amphibian and reptilian population at Nagzira. Reptiles like the Indian rock python, dhaman, Indian cobra, Russel’s viper, checkered keelback and common monitor have made these forests their home. Yet, with over 166 species, birdlife is one of the main highlights of the Sanctuary. Cormorants and egrets are usually seen in mixed colonies. Barbets, woodpeckers, hornbills, pittas, larks,

shrikes, warblers, flycatchers and swallows are all found here, adding to the enormous diversity.

Best season

February to May is the best season for a visit.

Accommodation

Clean, comfortable forest guest houses within the reserve provide modest accommodation. Food is also available within the reserve. Contact the Deputy Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) Bhandara. The Youth Hostel at Tadoba is also a viable option.

How to get there

By Air: Nagpur (122 km.) is the nearest airport.

By Rail: Gondia (45 km.) is the closest railhead.

By Road: A three-hour taxi-ride from Nagpur (122 km.) or a one-hour drive from Gondia (45 km.) would take you to the reserve. Sakoli (22 km.) on National Highway 6 and the district headquarters at Bhandara (60 km.) are also connected by road to the reserve. The nearest bus-stand is at Sakoli.