

MELGHAT TIGER RESERVE

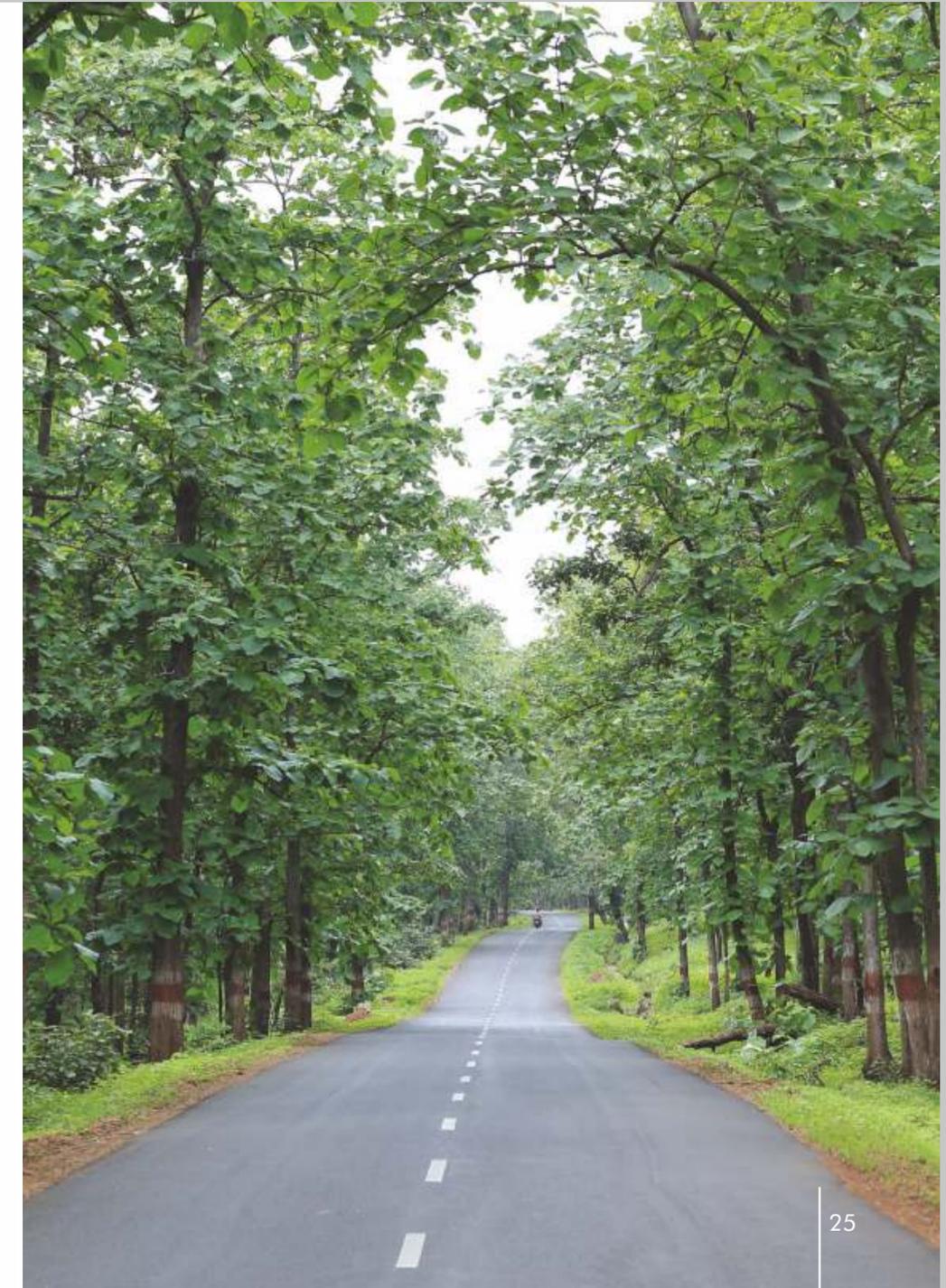
Gugamal National Park, Melghat Wildlife Sanctuary, Narnala Wildlife Sanctuary, Wan Wildlife Sanctuary, Ambabarwa Wildlife Sanctuary



The abode of tiger and tribal called fondly as 'Kipling Country', Melghat forests form an integral part of the Satpuda-Maikal Ranges where the land creates mystifying landscapes of high hill and deep valleys. The hills come alive with the songs of birds and the roars of tigers. Melghat Tiger Reserve is one of the first 9 Tiger Reserves of the country declared in February, 1974. It is one amongst the largest tiger reserves of India. The vibrant hamlets with typical huts arranged in a liner fashion dotting the Melghat landscape are predominantly inhabited by the tiger revering culturally colorful Korku tribe. Melghat Tiger Reserve consists of the Gugamal National Park, Melghat, Wan, Ambabarwa and Narnala sanctuaries and the reserve areas falls in Amravati, Akola and Buldhana districts. Amravati district supports most of area in Melghat Tiger Reserve.



Forest Owlet *Athene blewitti*



Gugamal National Park

Vast track of Gugamal National Park has no villages and is completely free from any kind of human disturbance. As a result, this area has become a true representative of a 'nature reserve' where nature is at its best. Unlike other Reserves entry is strictly restricted for humans here. Contiguity of forests provides great importance to this area for the long-term conservation goals at landscape level.



Tiger *Panthera tigris*

Narnala Wildlife Sanctuary

Narnala Sanctuary is a continuation of Gawilgarh range of Satpuda hills as a corridor between the Melghat Sanctuary and Wan Sanctuary. In fact, it acts as a gateway of Melghat from the southern side. The hill of Narnala situated at about 1000 meter above MSL the Narnala fort consists of 3 separate forts of Jaffrabad in the east, Narnala in the centre and Telyagarh in the west.

The fort covers 392 acres of land with a wall perimeter of 24 miles (36Kms). It is said to have 22 gates and 36 buruj towers or bastions. The area has an excellent rain water harvesting and drainage system built on the fort plateau which is worth admiration. A total of 22 large tanks and numerous smaller tanks are connected in such a manner that the overflow of water from tanks situated at a higher elevation goes into tanks at lower elevation and so on, thus ensuring that no drop of rain water is allowed to go waste. The area is having valuable endemic species like Sandal and the Medicinal plants like Safed Musli, Shatawari etc. Most of the major mammals which are sighted in Narnala include Tiger, Leopard, Sloth Bear, Sambar, Chital etc. The bird life is also very rich with a large number of migratory waterfowls seen in the perennial water bodies situated on the Narnala plateau. A large number of raptors are also seen on the crags and cliffs.



Narnala Fort



Sloth Bear *Melursus ursinus*



Common Leopard *Phalanta phalantha*



Wan Wildlife Sanctuary

Wan Sanctuary includes outer slopes of Satpura with all its floral and faunal attributes. It comes under the 6 E Satpura Maikal range of the Deccan peninsula biogeographic zone. It is an extension of the Melghat Tiger Reserve and provides an important corridor between Akola, Amravati and Buldhana districts. It connects the Melghat Sanctuary with Narnala Sanctuary and Ambabarwa Sanctuary, providing a large contiguous stretch of protected areas. It has a rich repository of biodiversity with all the major animals of central highlands being found here. Some of the rare and endangered carnivores seen in Wan Sanctuary are Tiger, Leopard, Wild Dogs, Sloth Bear, Leopard Cat, Rusty Spotted Cat, Desert Cat, Ratel etc. The common herbivores include Chowsinga, Sambar, Chital, Nilgai, Wild Pigs and Barking Deer. Few number of Gaur also stray from the adjoining Melghat Sanctuary thus emphasizing the importance of Wan as an extended buffer of Melghat Tiger Reserve now included as in core area of Melghat Tiger Reserve. The list of birds, reptiles, insects and other invertebrates are equally long and impressive. There has been a significant increase in the aquatic life forms after the commissioning of the Wan Dam. The list of aquatic avifauna has also gone up considerably in and around the Wan reservoir, especially in winters when flocks of migratory waterfowl arrive, thus making the area a paradise for bird watchers. The common birds seen in the reservoir area are Collared Scops Owl, Mottled Wood Owl, Brahminy Ducks, White-necked Storks, White Ibis, Spot Bills, Common Teals, etc.

The floral composition is also extremely varied with representatives of Southern Tropical Dry Deciduous Forests under the sub group 5 A (Southern Tropical Dry Deciduous Forests) of the Champion and Seth classification. Most of the species found in Melghat are also seen in Wan with the only difference being in their abundance. A large number of plants have medicinal importance, thus making the area important from medicinal plant conservation point of view. The *Rosha* grass occurs in abundance in the area.

The area has a large number of unique geological and religious features. The Mahadev cave temple at Dhargad is a unique geological structure that has assumed religious importance over the years. It is the scene of a massive pilgrimage during the Shrawan mas. The area forms a major catchment of Wan river and has assumed greater significance since the construction of Wan Dam at Wari.



Ambabarwa Wildlife Sanctuary

Ambabarwa Sanctuary nestles at the foothills of the Satpuda ranges and has all the flora and fauna typical of the central highlands. It serves as an important corridor between forests of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. It has a rich repository of biodiversity with endangered mammals. The floral composition is also extremely varied with representatives of Southern Tropical Dry Deciduous Forests under the sub group 5 A-C 16 of the Champion and Seth classification. Most of the species found in Melghat are also seen in Ambabarwa with the only difference being in their abundance. The main species is teak and its associates. Bamboo forms the under storey and the ground is covered by a large number of herbs & shrubs.

The area is very sensitive from the protection point of view owing to its proximity to the Madhya Pradesh. Also, the large numbers of villages on the southern side result in very high biotic pressure on the Sanctuary.



Flora

The entire area of the Melghat Tiger Reserve is under the cover of forest. Natural grassy openings are almost non-existent. *Tectona grandis* (Teak) is the most dominant species. The associates of *Tectona grandis* differ depending upon latitude, gradient and other physiographic features of the habitat. However its most common associates in almost all localities are *Lagerstroemia parviflora*, *Lannea coromandelica*, *Embllica officinalis*, *Terminalia tomentosa*, *Anogeissus latifolia*, and *Ougenia oojainensis*. At the lower elevations other associates of Teak are *Boswellia serrata*, *Wrightia tinctoria*, *Cassia fistula*, *Miliusa tomentosa*, *Bauhinia raemosa*, *Butea monosperma* etc. And in higher elevation and in more moist localities other associates are mainly *Mitragyna parviflora*, *Adina cardifolia*, *Schleichera oleosa*, *Albizia procera* etc. There are 90 species of trees, 66 of shrubs, 316 of herbs, 56 of climbers and 99 species of the grasses.

Avifauna

The checklist included 253 species of birds which was published by Project Tiger Reserve. The present study raised this total to 263 species. As many as 16 orders, 9 subfamilies and 167 genera are represented here. Out of these birds five species viz. Indian White-backed Vulture, Indian Long-billed Vulture, Osprey, Indian Peafowl and Forest Owlet are falling under Schedule I, Part III (Birds) and Grey Jungle Fowl under Schedule II, Part II of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Further Green Munia (Family: Estrildidae) is endemic to Central India and is also recorded from Melghat.

Other Key Fauna

The area of Melghat being thickly forested and less populated, harbors myriad of faunal components. It has 80 species of mammals. The Common Langur, Rhesus Monkey, Gaur, Tiger, Panther, Jungle Cat, Hyaena, Jackal, Fox, Wild dogs, Sloth Bear, Ratel, Wild Pig, Hare, Porcupine, Mongoose, Otter, Sambar, Chital, Barking Deer, Blue Bull, Four Horned Antelope are common in Melghat Forests.

Systematic list of Reptiles prepared after sightings and few collections of specimens yielded a total of 54 species. This includes Loricata (Crocodylia), 1 sp., Testudines (Chelonia) 4 sp., Squamata (Lacertilia) (Lizards), 22 species; Serpents (Ophidia) snakes, 27. 8 species of Amphibian are available, included under 7 genera and 4 families.



Gaur *Bos gaurus*



Sipna River



Tourism Zone, Important Tourist Spots and Facilities :

Chikaldara-Vairat Plateau
Scenic beauty, Gavilgarh Fort, Bheemkund / Keechak Dara, Panchpol and Vairat Plateau

Semadoh
Semadoh Museum and Information Centre, Jungal Safari, Film show at Nature Interpretation Centre

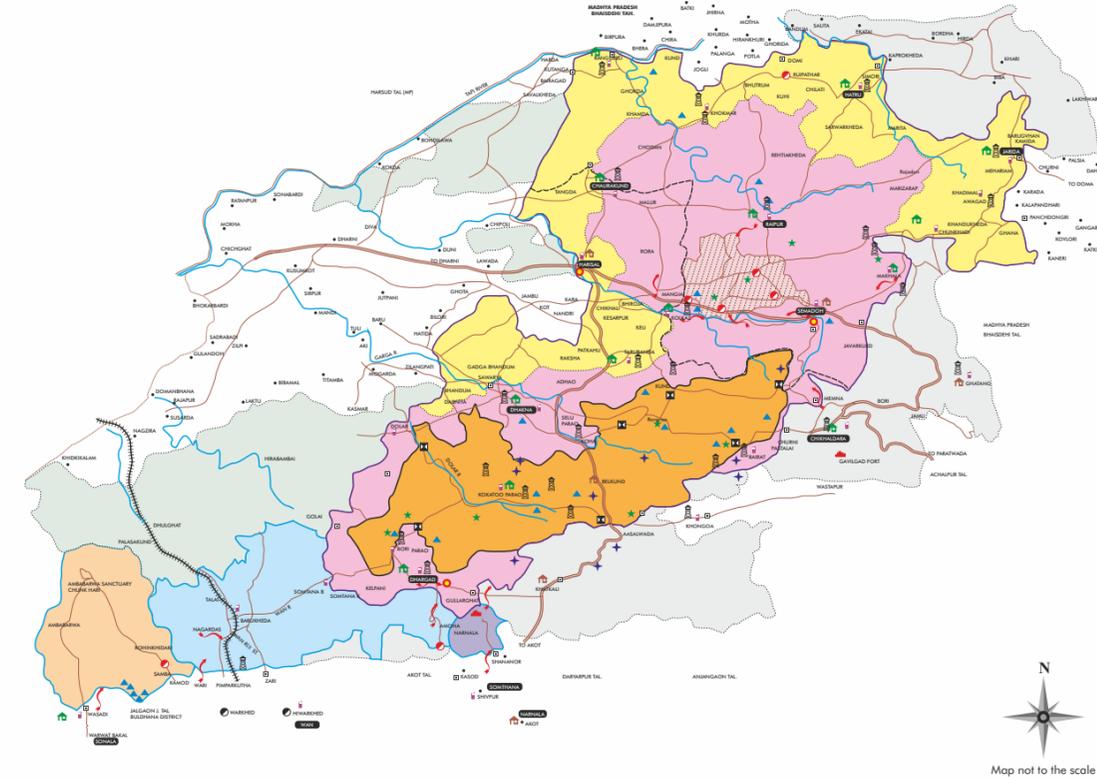
Harisal
Tribal Culture and Wildlife Viewing, Harisal Eco-Tourism Centre

Shahanoor-Narnala Fort
Gullarghat Eco-tourism Complex, Narnala Fort, Shahanoor, Sulai Nala

Adventure sports at Shahanoor, Eco-tourism Complex, Souvenir shop at Semadoh and Shahanoor, Cafeteria at Semadoh and Shanoor



MELGHAT TIGER RESERVE



Legend

- Gugamal National Park (361.28 sq.km)
- Melghat Sanctuary (788.75 sq.km)
- Multiple Use Area (526.90 sq.km)
- Narnala Sanctuary (12.35 sq.km)
- Wan Sanctuary (211.00 sq.km)
- Ambabarwa Sanctuary (127.11 sq.km)
- Total MTR : 2027.39 sq.km.**

- Road
- Check Nacka : Permanent ● Temporary ●
- Rest House : Forest 🏠 PWD 🏠
- Wireless Station 📶
- Unmanned Gate 🚪
- Anicut ▲
- River 🌊 Waterfalls ⚡
- Watch Tower 🗼
- Nature Trail 👣 Hide ★
- Nature Interpretation Center 📍
- Entry Fee Naka 📄
- Division Boundary : Div. 1 Paratwada ----
Div. 2 Paratwada ---- & ----
Akot Div. ----
- Territorial Division : West Melghat
 East Melghat



How to Reach :
Melghat Tiger Reserve -
By Air : Nagpur – 240km.
By Rail : Badnera Junction 110Km.
By Road : Regular buses via Paratwada to Dharni and Burhanpur.

Wan Wildlife Sanctuary -
By Road : From Akot by road. Akot is 45 km. away from the Akola railway station on the Mumbai-Howrah rail route.

Ambabarawa Wildlife Sanctuary -
By Road : The entry gate of Wasali lies in Buldhana district, 70 km. from the Akola railway station on the Mumbai-Howrah rail route.

Narnala Wildlife Sanctuary -
By Road : The entry gate at Shahanur is 15 km. from Akot.