

WORLD WETLANDS DAY

World Wetlands Day
2 February 2022

WETLANDS
VALUE - MANAGE - RESTORE - LOVE

#ActForWetlands
#WorldWetlandsDay

Wetlands Action for People and Nature



World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on 2nd February. This day marks the date of adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2nd February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. It is an opportune event for promoting, creating awareness and ensuring positive actions for the conservation of wetlands. In 2021, the day was recognized as an official United Nations event.

The 2022 theme 'Wetlands Action for People and Nature' is a call to take action for wetlands. It is an appeal to invest financial, human and political capital to save the world's wetlands from disappearing and to restore those we have degraded. Healthy wetlands play a vital role through groundwater recharge, buffering floods, filtering wastewater, enhancing landscape aesthetics, providing income generation opportunities and ultimately supporting well-being. It is pertinent that these productive ecosystems and cradles of biological diversity are restored and conserved.



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February 2, 2022
Khijadia Wildlife Sanctuary



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KHIJADIA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Khijadia Wildlife Sanctuary is a complex of inland and coastal wetlands, located 12 Km of Jamnagar Town in the state of Gujarat.

These wetlands form the fringes of the watershed of seasonal rivers Ruparel River and Kalindri. The sanctuary is a mosaic of seasonal freshwater shallow lake, inter tidal mudflats, creeks, salt pans, saline land and mangroves.

Khijadia existed as a saline marsh till 1930's when an earthen embankment was constructed between Jamnagar and Navlakhi to reclaim parts of the marsh as storage area for freshwater. In the succeeding decades, the freshwater inundation regime created conducive conditions for colonization of hydrophytes as *Typha angustata*, *Hydrilla verticillata* and *Vallisneria spiralis*. While the monsoon runoff governs the hydrology of the inland zone, creeks from the Gulf carry sea water landward and reach the bunds of the fresh water lakes passing through intertidal mudflats, the salt pans and salt marshes.

AREA
5.11 km²

LOCATION
22°31'27" N Latitude; and
70°07'17" E Longitude

AVERAGE ANNUAL RAINFALL
1,100 mm

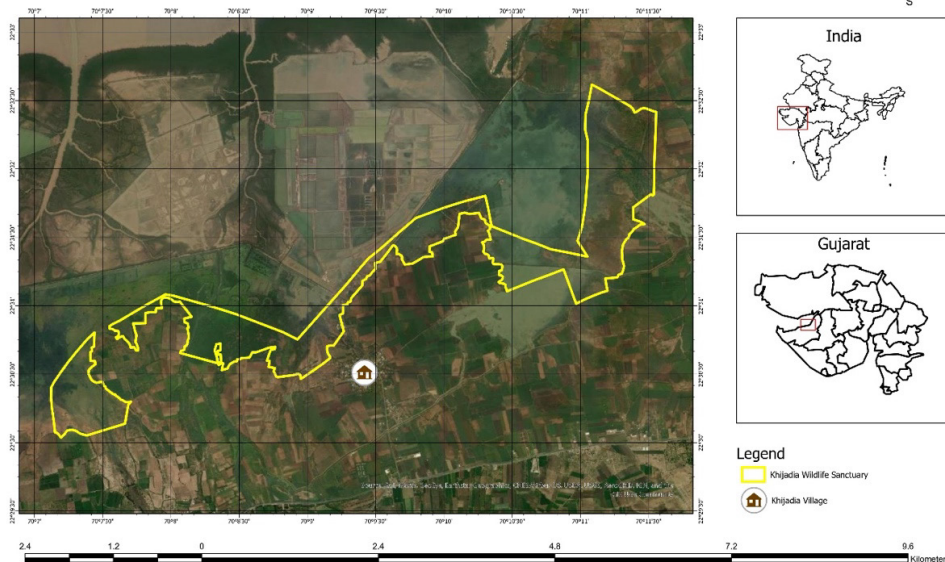
ELEVATION
1 metre

NEAREST TOWN
Jamnagar (12 km)

PARK TIMINGS
6:00 AM – 6:00 PM



Boundary Map of Khijadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Gujarat



KHIJADIA WAS DESIGNATED AS A BIRD SANCTUARY UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE INDIAN WILDLIFE PROTECTION ACT, 1972. IN 2021, THE SANCTUARY WAS DESIGNATED AS A RASMAR SITE.



BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEM SERVICES



The diversity of habitats of Khijadia Wildlife Sanctuary and its surroundings underpins spectacular species diversity in this Ramsar Site. At least 183 plant, 21 butterflies, 7 reptiles, 9 fishes and prawns, 300 birds including 125 waterbirds and 7 mammalian species have been recorded in here.

The Sanctuary falls in the Central Asian Migratory Flyway and teems with thousands of waterbirds in winter from Central Asia and Western Palearctic region. Large flocks of Greater Flamingo, Lesser Flamingo, Painted Stork, Common Crane, Demoiselle Crane, and shorebirds regularly visit the wildlife sanctuary. More than 1,65,000 waterbirds were counted in the 2021 mid-winter waterbird census.

The Sanctuary regularly supports more than 1% threshold population of 3 birds namely *Grus grus* (Common Crane), *Pelecanus crispus* (Dalmatian pelican), and *Anser*

(Greylag Goose). The wetland also supports globally threatened species, such as *Aythya ferina* (Common Pochard), *Calidris tenuirostris* (Great Knot), *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* (Palla's Fish Eagle) and *Rynchops albicollis* (Indian skimmer).

The importance of Khijadia also stems from its role in regulating local hydrology, as well as in economies and cultural milieu. Rainfall and runoff received in Khijadia recharges groundwater, and prevents salinity ingress in the region. The wetland is a popular tourist spot, and a wetland education center established by the Forest Department serves to make the visitors aware of the diverse values and benefits that this unique ecosystem provides. Academicians, researchers and students regularly visit this wetland to study various dimensions of wetlands and landscape interactions.

THREATS

Habitat fragmentation, disturbance, excessive grazing, invasive species are some of the major threats for Khijadia. The spread of invasive *Prosopis juliflora* in the national park is a matter of concern, however, at several instances, *Prosopis* patches used as habitats by certain bird species.

