



# FOREST FLING

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**K**arnataka's wildlife reserves are an untamed paradise, where every visit feels like stepping into nature's own theatre. From the tiger-rich jungles of Bandipur to the mystical elephants of Nagarhole, Karnataka's forests are alive with wonders. Bhadra, a birder's paradise, showcases vibrant avian species, while Dandeli's crocodile-infested rivers promise a thrill. These sanctuaries offer more than sights; they're a chance to reconnect with nature, witness rare flora, and embrace the untamed. As the cool season sets in, the misty mornings and crisp air add a magical touch—an experience you don't want to miss! Here are our top five picks for your next "wild getaway".

## Kabini & Nagarhole National Park

Arguably one of the best tiger reserves in Karnataka, the Nagarhole National Park or Rajiv Gandhi National Park is a great way to understand the flora and fauna of the Western Ghats. Spread over Kodagu and Mysore districts, the park encompasses forests, hills, the Kabini River and more. The moist deciduous forest is home to the tiger, leopard, dhole, jackal, elephant, gaur, and deer, among several other species. The park also has recorded over 250 species

## Karnataka's lush wilderness, covering 55% of its land, beckons nature lovers to explore its vast, untamed beauty this winter

of birds. If you do a safari from Kabini, you can also enjoy a boat safari apart from the traditional jeep safari. Incidentally, if you are lucky, you can spot large herds of elephants on the river bank.

### Daroji Sloth Bear Sanctuary

The first sanctuary for the conservation of the sloth bear in Asia, the Daroji Sloth Bear Sanctuary is in Bellary District close to the ruins of the UNESCO world heritage site of Hampi. Spread over 82 sq. km. There are regular safaris run by the forest department in the morning and evening when you are taken inside the sanctuary to sight the bears. There are large rocky structures where the bears make an appearance as the forest officials usually put some food as well. There are watch point towers where you can wait for the bears and observe their movements. The sanctuary is also home to the painted sandgrouse, kingfisher, peacocks, mongoose and more. If you are very lucky, you could even see a leopard!

### Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary

With its mix of deciduous and

evergreen trees, Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary is a haven for the wild and a favourite with serious nature lovers. Apart from the elusive tiger, this sanctuary is home to species like the Indian Pangolin Sloth Bear, Malabar Giant Squirrel, and Barking Deer, among others. The adjoining Anshi National Park is also part of the sanctuary and it is said to be home to the rare black panther that has been sighted a few times here. With the Kali River snaking its way through the forest, the adjoining region is also known for adventure activities especially, white water rafting. Avian lovers will enjoy this forest as it is home to over 200 species including the Great Pied Hornbill, Blue-Throated Barbet, Peregrine falcon, Malabar Pied Hornbill, Malabar Trogon and more.

### Bandipur National Park

Bandipur National Park located within the Western ghats biosphere connects the cities of Mysore and Ooty and has a national highway running through the park. Well known for one of its most famed residents, the elephant, the park is home to four-horned antelopes, rock

pythons, leopards, tigers, chital, mouse deer as well as the elusive flying lizard. The landscape here is dotted with bamboo, a favourite with the elephants and has meandering streams and a lush forest cover. If you are driving through the highway, you can often see spotted deer, elephants, peacocks and if lucky, the gaur as well. The jeep safari by the forest department is a great way to understand the jungle and its residents and happens twice in the morning and afternoon. Heavy rains usually are the only time when the safari is cancelled.

### BRT Wildlife Sanctuary

Declared as a tiger reserve in 2011, BRT Wildlife Sanctuary is a newer tiger reserve in the Biligiri Ranganatha Betta premises. The hill is home to the famed Biligiri Ranganatha Swamy temple and the sanctuary is close to 540 sq. km. in size. The forest is inhabited by the tribal Soliga tribe and has a champaka tree believed to be thousands of years old. Home to over 250 species of birds, the sanctuary has tropical evergreen and semi evergreen forests. Apart from the tiger, leopard, wild dog, and deer, the forest is home to the Lesser cat and Civet cat as well as the Giant flying squirrel. Keep your eyes peeled for the Yellow-throated bulbul, Nilgiri wood pigeon, Rufous bellied hawk eagle and Peregrine falcon, known to be sighted in the region.

## OTHER WILDLIFE SANCTUARIES

- Kaveri Wildlife Sanctuary, Chamarajanagar, Mandya and Ramanagara districts
- Adichunchanagiri Wildlife Sanctuary, Mandya district
- Arabithittu Wildlife Sanctuary, Mysore district
- Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary, Chikamagaluru and Shimoga districts
- Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary, Kodagu district
- Malai Mahadeshwara Wildlife Sanctuary, Chamarajanagar district
- Melkote Temple Wildlife Sanctuary, Mandya district
- Mookambika Wildlife Sanctuary, Udupi district
- Nugu Wildlife Sanctuary, Mysore district
- Pushpagiri Wildlife Sanctuary, Kodagu district
- Ranebennur Blackbuck Sanctuary, Haveri district
- Sharavathi LTM Wildlife Sanctuary, Shimoga district
- Shettihalli Wildlife Sanctuary, Shimoga district
- Someshwara Wildlife Sanctuary, Udupi district
- Talakaveri Wildlife Sanctuary, Kodagu district

## BIRD SANCTUARIES

- Pied kingfisher, (Ceryle rudis), in Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary
- Attiveri Bird Sanctuary, Uttara Kannada district
- Gudavi Bird Sanctuary, Shimoga district
- Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary, Mandya district
- Mandagadde Bird Sanctuary, Shimoga district
- Kokrebellur Bird Sanctuary, Mandya district
- Magadi Bird Sanctuary, Gadag district
- Bankapura Peacock Sanctuary, Haveri district
- Bonal Bird Sanctuary, Yadgir district.
- Ramadevarabetta Vulture Sanctuary, Ramanagara
- Ghataprabha Bird Sanctuary, Belgaum district

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