

# SANJAY GANDHI NATIONAL PARK

*"City Forest"*



Forest view of SGNP



**B**orivali National Park is the miraculously preserved green oasis in the center of urban sprawl. This national park is "one of the very few" that is surrounded by a metropolis like Mumbai, yet sustaining sizable population of big cats like Panthers. It is hard to believe that the Park is within just less than an hour and half from Gateway of India, one is transported from hectic and fast life of Mumbai city to a serene and tranquil atmosphere of pleasing verdant wilderness. This city forest is remarkable because of its location and rich biodiversity it hosts. Besides, the forests of SGNP and surrounding forests are vital catchments as they supply drinking water to the city of Mumbai.



Common Leopard *Panthera pardus*





Common Leopard *Panthera pardus*



## Flora

The park is a delight to the tree lover's delight in all seasons with the great amount of bio-diversity, ranging from *Adina cordifolia* (Kadamb), *Albizia lebbek* (Shirish), *Pongamia pinnata* (Karanj), *Tectona grandis* (Teak), *Dalbergia latifolia* (Shisam) to *Acacia*, *Zizyphus* and evergreen patches of *Euphorbia*. In the dry month of February to May, spectacular flowering of *Butea monosperma* (Flame of Forests) is a real feast to eye. Flowering of *Bombax malabaricum* (Semal) and *Erythrina indica* (Indian Coral Tree) add colour. There are large patches of Bamboo, which make the feel of the jungle even better. The forest has a lot of Lianas (Woody Climbers), a remnants from wetter evergreen past, many species of orchids and a large variety of shrubs. Every monsoon is a riot of colors from Violet of Zingiberaceae species to the stark white of *Costus* species. Among the many spectacular sights one that is definitely most worthy, is seven years mass flowering of *Strobilanthus* species (Karvi). Thousands and thousands of these flowers cover the hill slopes giving purple touch to this beautiful landscape.

## Fauna

This is home to more than 274 species of birds, 35 species of mammals, 78 species of reptiles and amphibians, 170 species of butterflies. The National Park is a bird watcher's paradise. From the tiny Tickell's Flower Pecker (a small bird in India), many species of Sunbirds to the majestic White-bellied Sea Eagle, it is virtual visual feast with birds like Paradise Flycatcher, the elusive Trogon, many species of Kingfishers, Woodpeckers and Drongos. The continuous calling of Large Green Barbet, the wildly screeching Parakeets, the metallic calls of the Racket-tailed Drongo, the musical call of the Blue Flycatcher or the extremely melodious Malabar Whistling Thrush or the familiar refrain of the Spotted Babbler are just a few facets of nature's symphony in this forest. The Reptilian world is well represented from Crocodiles in Tulsi Lake to Monitor Lizards to Pythons, Cobras, Russell's Viper, Bamboo Pit Viper and the extremely rare Ceylon Cat Snake which was recently discovered by the staff of Bombay National History Society. Smaller reptiles add to the wonder of this part. The invertebrate world from Crabs to Spiders to Insects, Giant Wood Spiders, Signature Spiders, Black Wood Spider with their large webs in monsoon are a real treat. The insect world from Silk Cotton Bugs to Beetles to various kinds of Mantis. The Butterfly world is represented in such a fascinating range of sizes and colours, from the spectacular Blue Mormon to the phenomenal artist of camouflage the Blue Oak leaf, the bright Jezebel and Large Yellow and White Orange Tips, Monarch, Egglies, Sailers are some of the many attractive butterflies one can find here.



*Entada rheedii*



*Hibiscus lobatus*



## Krishnagiri Upvan, Borivali (KUB)

KUB is the area which hosts the entire basic tourism infrastructure and is accessible to the public during the working hours of SGNP.

### The Nature Information Centre (NIC)

The NIC is your gateway to the urban wilderness of SGNP. The centre is a mix of illustrations, models, photographs and interactive media all coming together to educate, inform and inspire public about the various aspects of biodiversity and also about its conservation and protection. NIC conducts varied and multifaceted activities like overnight camps, workshops, guided nature trails, bird-watching trails, children's workshops and other activities.

### Overnight Camps

To enhance nature experience of visitors, SGNP has a well-planned, comfortable tented campsite consisting of family tents and dormitories. These tents can be rented by contacting NIC to enjoy camping in the wilderness. Overnight camps can be organised for a group of ten or more. These camps can be tailored to include star gazing sessions, nature trails and other activities.

### Guided Nature Trails and Bird-watching

NIC organises guided nature trails, bird-watching excursions, butterfly watching walks and forest treks led by well-trained naturalists. Prior bookings are necessary.

### Kanheri Caves

A 2,000 year old 'Buddhist' cave complex is nestled within the sylvan surroundings of the SGNP forests. This protected archaeological site houses more than 100 caves cut out of volcanic rock. The word 'Kanheri' is derived from Sanskrit word 'Krishnagiri', which literally means 'black mountain'. View the magnificent relics of Buddha and the Bodhisattvas and walk along the pillared corridors of the prayer halls.

### Lion and Tiger Safari

Get up-front and close with the big cats at Tiger and Lion safari cages. The expansive safari cages enable the visitors to watch these big cats from the safety of a closed vehicle and in its wild landscape.

### Bicycles on Hire

To aid your movement in the national park, you can hire bicycles from near the main gate. This will of course cut down some unwanted vehicle pollution in the park and help you stay fit as well.

### Boating

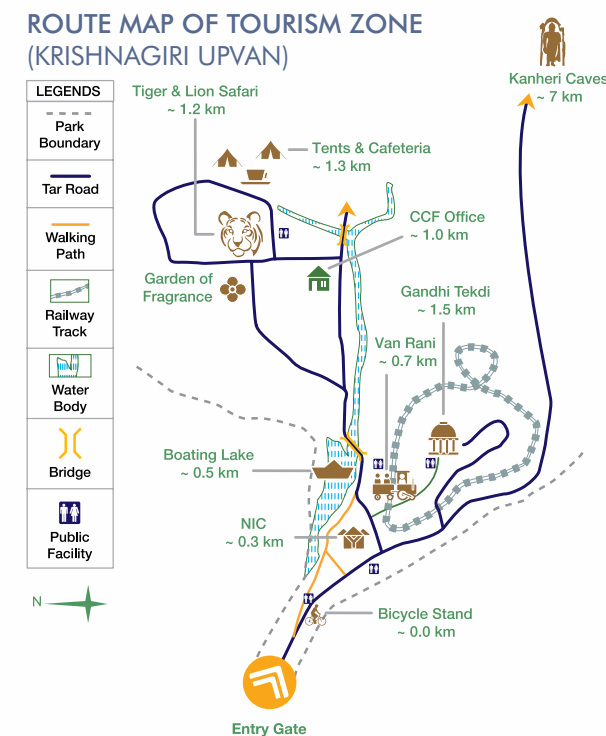
Just a stone's throw away from the main gate is the idyllic artificial water body which allows one to use the pedal boats and go around the scenic lake.

### Gandhi Tekdi

A memorial dedicated to the 'father of the nation'. Enjoy beautiful views of the surrounding forest and the city at the same time! You can either walk or drive up to Tekdi by taking the forest road or the stairs.

### Van Rani

Literally meaning the jungle queen, this toy train facility is one of the oldest attractions in SGNP. Go chugging along the circuitous narrow gauge, route covering the perimeter of the Gandhi Tekdi hillock.



View of SGNP (Tulsi Lake and Vihar Lake)





## SANJAY GANDHI NATIONAL PARK



**How to Reach :**  
**By Air :** Mumbai - 15kms.  
**By Rail :** Mumbai to Borivali is 30 kms by train on western railway route. Sub urban trains to Borivali are available on Western Railway on every 5 minutes.  
**By Road :** Borivali is near Mumbai octrail post on Mumabi - Ahemdabad highway.

