



CHINNAR WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

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A review & information about eco-tourism
in Chinnar Wildlife sanctuary
Kerala



KERALA GEOGRAPHIC ADVENTURES

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Geographical Location and physical features:

Co-ordinates: Between 10° 15' to 10° 21' N latitude 77° 05' to 77° 16' E longitude. It is spread across Marayur and Kanthallor Panchayat in devikulam Taluka of Idukki district, bordering Tamil Nadu State. Pampar, and its tributaries, one of the east flowing rivers of Kerala is the main drainage of the sanctuary. Chinnar- Mangayar drainage is flowing through its North West boundary. The terrain of the sanctuary is undulated, characterised by deep gorges, grasshills, peaks, hillocks, table land etc. The land was extensively exploited through ages for agriculture, timber and hunting. The lower areas of the sanctuary was a Megalithic settlement.

Constitution:

Constituted as a sanctuary in August 1984

Administration : Department of Forest & Wildlife, Kerala State

Total Area: 90.44sqkm

Administration:

Department of Forest & Wildlife, Kerala State. Under the supervision of Munnar Wildlife Division, office at Office of Wildlife Warden, Near Munnar Panchayat Office, Munnar

Weather:

Since the sanctuary is in the leeward of South Western Ghats, lower areas of the sanctuary experiences dry climate with low humidity, moisture and rainfall, where as peaks and slope associated with Anamalais and Palani are getting high rainfall characterised by 'tropical temperate climate'. Climate of the tourism zone of Chinnar is totally under rain shadow and experiences dry monsoon and wet winter. The sanctuary is getting an average of 780ml rain a year.

Best Season:

Best season for visit to the sanctuary for animals and birds is between November and March. November to January is the wet season due to North East Monsoon, but a high season for life in the sanctuary. The savannah type grassland, table lands and hill slopes are breeding ground for animals, including Asiatic Elephants.

Forests:

The altitude variation, position under rain shadow, dry monsoon etc influenced the characteristics of forest type of Chinnar. Chinnar posses the following type of forests as per the floral structural studies of many authorities. The forests of tourism zone of the sanctuary are dry deciduous, riparian and thorny scrub jungle.

1. Shola or Montane (Southern Wet temperate) & Grassland
2. Riparian forest with evergreen and dry forest species
3. Tropical dry deciduous characterised by deciduous trees
4. Thorny Scrub jungle, characterised by xyrophytic bushes and trees.

Getting there:

Chinnar is located in Munnar-Udumalpet state High Way. It is well connected by road to Munnar and Udumalpet (Bangalore|Madurai). Chinnar boundary is about 180kms from Cochin airport, 45kms from Munnar. It is also accessible from Coimbatore (90kms), Udumalpet (24km). There are buses from Munnar, Bangalore, Udumalpet, Pollachi, Coimbatore etc passing thorough Chinnar. The nearest town is Marayur (10km to Alampatty EDC, 18km to Chinnar Amenity centre).

Visiting arrangements:

The sanctuary is opened throughout the year for tourism activities like walking safaris; watch tower view, overnight camping etc. For day visitors the sanctuary provides nature trails and watchtower hike (only at Chinnar). Walking safaris and overnight camping is available in two Service Centres, one at Alampatty (South range, 10kms from Marayur), and the other at Chinnar Forest office. There is no need for prior

booking.

Nature Trails:

The nature trails are available from 7am to 3.30pm and Watchtower hike from 7am to 5.30pm. There is no need of advance booking for nature trails. Nature trails are guided walk escorted by tribal guards. Nature trails in Alampatty are trek to Thoovanam waterfalls, and Rock art sites inside the forest.

Overnight camping and walking tour

Overnight camping and walking tour are packages offered by the park in tourism zone. The camps are in log house and tree house, guided by tribal trekkers. It needs prior booking at the office of Wildlife Warden. The camps are basic and not maintaining tourism standards. Inbound tourists are advised to have an English speaking guide, camp gears, extra food and water etc to enjoy the camp.

Where to Stay:

The sanctuary offers dormitory, Forest IB, and Jungle camp for stay in its property. No electricity in any of these stays. Those who are looking for comfortable accommodation can stay in Hotel/homestay/Lodges etc in Marayur. No star category hotels available in Marayur.

Mammals: 29 species of mammals, including Grizzled giant squirrel are recorded from the sanctuary

Birds: The sanctuary harbours 225 species of birds

Reptiles: Chinnar possess high reptilian diversity with 57 species.

Others: 15 species of Amphibians, 157 species of butterflies in 5 families, 15 species of fishes and one species of brine shrimp also reported. Recently species found in high torrential waters of Chinnar shows similarities with Malayan torrential water species. One species of Palm civet with unusual coat is discovered in 2004. Many individuals of same are found later in Alampatty region.

Floral Structures: The sanctuary has high diversity of plants with 963 species.

Cultural remains:

The sanctuary possesses the largest rock art corpus in Kerala. The cave arts in various colors and types are discovered from the sanctuary. Typology of Megaliths found in this sanctuary is not studied yet. The sanctuary possess largest number of intact dolmen , cist etc in Kerala.

Packages

Kerala Geographic Adventures offers guided standardised tour packages , walking safaris, jungle camp etc from Cochin, Munnar and Marayur. We provides all camping gears, customised menu and English speaking naturalists for the treks and camps.



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Kerala Geographic Adventures, Ground Floor,
manjamkuzy Shopping Complex, Kolenchery Post, Kerala-
682311. Base Office at Marayur valley Tours, -
kgatours@gmail.com +91 9447223872, +91 9497423872

benny@keralawildlife.com