

Khijadiya Wildlife Sanctuary

Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary (KBS) is a unique wetland ecosystem located in Jamnagar district on the southern coast of the Gulf of Kutch, of Gujarat state. KBS is one of the Important Bird Area (IBA) from Gujarat state.

Khijadiya Wildlife Sanctuary was listed as one of the Ramsar sites of India on the occasion of World Wetland Day 2022 (2nd February 2022).

About Khijadiya Wildlife Sanctuary

- Khijadiya Wildlife Sanctuary joins with Marine National Park on one side and on the other Dhunvav river empties fresh water in it.
- The sanctuary is having a unique habitat with fresh water on one side and salt pans on another side.
- Also, on the northern side is a large creek that flows from the Gulf of Kutch. This supports mangroves and marine diversity.
- There are two freshwater lakes (reclamation dam) located in the Sanctuary.
- Many migratory birds stop here during the winter.
- This sanctuary provides a nesting and breeding ground for migratory birds.
- The sanctuary is located at the watershed of Ruparel and Kalindri river in the North East coastal region of Jamnagar district in the Gulf of Kutch.

Ecosystem of the Sanctuary

- Khijadiya wetland in Jamnagar District has a unique geographical peculiarity and is a combination of a sweet water lake and coastal saline water marshland.
- It is a bird sanctuary of international fame and known as safe haven for birds.
- Both the parts are very high-value biodiversity areas. Around 300 species of birds visit this wetland every year.
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- The wetland hosted eight bird species falling under “Globally Threatened/ Nearly Threatened” as per criteria of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)/ BirdLife International.

- The wetland ecosystem of Khijadiya is a wintering ground for migratory waterfowls from the Palacarcitic region and serves as an important wintering and breeding ground for many species of wetland birds.

Wetland Area	Important Biodiversity
Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wintering Waterfowls • Endemic <i>Cyperus dwarakensis</i> and <i>Tephrosia jamnagensis</i>.

Conservation of Khijadiya Wildlife Sanctuary

- It is necessary to conserve and protect the area, the extent and boundaries around the protected area of Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary as an Eco-sensitive Zone from an ecological and environmental point of view by habitat management.
- The conservation efforts should aim at
 - Improving and preserving the genetic resources of the said protected area,
 - Reintroduction and rehabilitation of local species,
 - Promotion of environmental education and ecological research and
 - To prohibit industries or class of industries and their operations and processes in the Eco-sensitive Zone of the sanctuary.

Other Wetlands of International Importance in Gujarat

- The Khijadiya Lake and the Bird Sanctuary forms a part of the wetland ecosystem of Gujarat state, which has 36% of the total wetland area of the country.
- Gujarat State has eight Wetlands of national importance listed under the National Wetland Conservation and Management Programme (NWCMP), which include
 - Nal Sarovar,
 - Thol Lake,
 - Khijadiya Lake,
 - Wadhvana Lake,
 - Great Rann of Kachchh (GRK),
 - Little Rann of Kachchh (LRK),
 - Pariej Lake and
 - Nani Kakrad

- Thol Lake Wildlife Sanctuary, Wadhvana Wetland, Nal Sarovar and Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary are Ramsar Sites in Gujarat.
- There are also 19 other wetlands not identified but deserved to be wetlands of national importance as per the report of the Gujarat State Biodiversity Board, Gandhinagar.

