



The majestic home of the King...
Gir National Park!



Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary

Gir today is the only place in the World outside Africa where a lion can be seen in its natural habitat.

The Gir lion is a majestic animal, averaging 2.75 meters in length, and with a bigger tail tassel, bushier elbow tufts and prominent belly folds than his African cousin which has a larger mane. He is shaggier and a lighter brown colour than the African lion, but the two have similar habits - resting in the shade by day and hunting for food after dusk. Hunting is usually done by the lioness.



A rich variety of flora and fauna makes Gujarat home to 40 species of mammals and 425 species of birds - an absolute treat for nature lovers! In India, it is the only nesting ground for the Asiatic Lions who dwell in the Gir National Park. The Gir forests were set aside for protection by the Nawabs of Junagadh when Lord Curzon brought it to their notice that the lion population was on the decline. This makes Gir one of the oldest protected areas in India. Welcome to a regal and memorable experience!

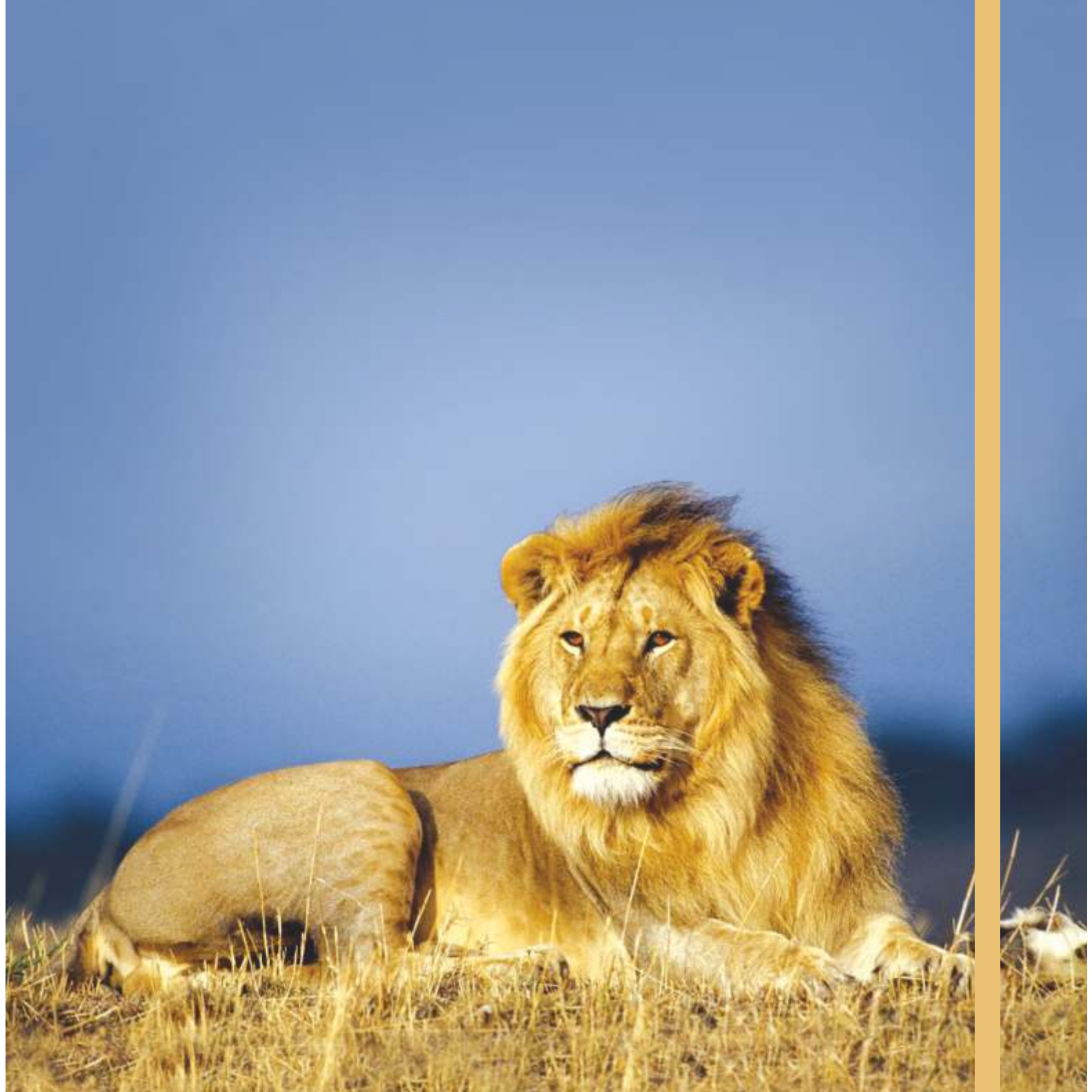
Major attractions:



Animals: The Gir forests are a tapestry of deciduous forests, scrub jungles, evergreen and semi-evergreen flora, grasslands, rocky areas and wetlands. According to the 2011 census, Gir was inhabited by 411 Asiatic lions and more than 300 leopards. Two species of deer are abundant in Gir. The Sambar is the largest Indian deer which stands about 150 cm at the shoulder, with large spreading antlers.

The largest Indian antelope, Nilgai or Blue Bull, also resides in Gir. Standing over 130 cm at the shoulder, this antelope is usually seen in more open areas of the wildlife reserve.



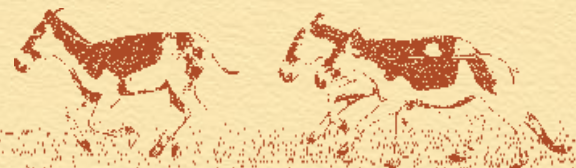


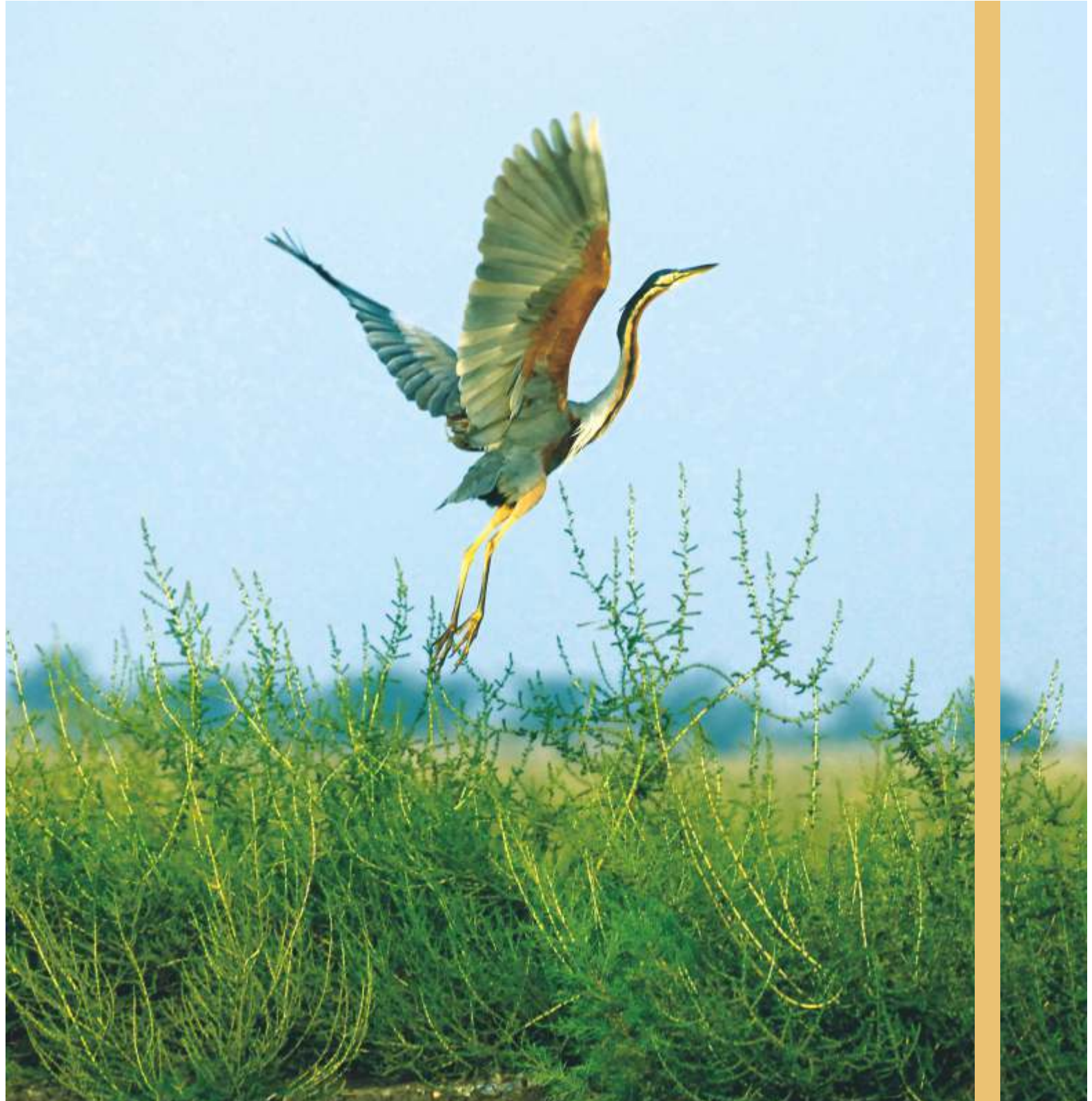
Gir is also an important area for the Chowsingha, the world's only four-horned antelope. The graceful Indian Gazelle or Chinkara frequents the open grasslands of Gir. The Jackal, the Jungle Cat, Striped Hyena and Indian Fox are some of the smaller carnivores seen in the Gir. The sanctuary also has the Rusty-Spotted Cat, one of the smallest wild cats of the world. Other mammals often seen on the drivable routes are the Wild Boar, the Small Indian Mongoose and the Indian Hare. The Pangolin, the Ratel and the Indian Porcupine are also sighted, though rarely.

Birds: Gir houses a variety of more than 250 birds and has been declared an 'Important Bird Area' by the Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN). It is also the habitat of Raptors like the critically endangered White-backed and Long-billed Vultures, the near-threatened Red-headed Vulture, the Egyptian Vulture, the Vulnerable Greater Spotted Eagle and the endangered Pall's Fish Eagle. The Crested Serpent Eagle, the Changeable Hawk Eagle and other birds of prey breed in the forests of Gir. Birds usually seen while driving around Gir are the Asian Paradise Flycatcher, the Black-hooded Oriole, the Blossom-headed Parakeet, the Painted Francolin, the Painted Sandgrouse, the Copper-smith Barbet, the Flameback, the Black and Grey Drongos, the Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, the Red-breasted Flycatcher, the Fantail, the myriad warblers, etc. The water bodies like Kamleshwar Dam are also good sites for birdwatchers. Darter, Painted Stork, Woolly-necked Stork, motley species of ducks and waterfowls can also be seen at this dam and at other wetlands of Gir. The Vulnerable wetland birds like the Indian Skimmer, Spot-billed Pelican and Baer's Pochard are also known to visit the water bodies in the sanctuary. The endangered Lesser Florican has been known to breed in the Gir grasslands and the Vulnerable Saras Crane is also present.



Reptiles: Gir has about 40 species of reptiles and amphibians. The Marsh Crocodile can be seen in large numbers at Kamleshwar, a large reservoir in the sanctuary, and at the rivers. The Monitor Lizard is often seen and there are many species of snake including venomous ones like the Indian Cobra, the Russell's Viper, the Saw-scaled Viper and the Krait. The Star Tortoise and freshwater turtles could also be seen in the sanctuary. The crocodile hatchery at Sasan is also interesting.





Gir Interpretation Zone, Devaliya: This enclosed area of the Sanctuary offers a good opportunity for visitors to experience a cross-section of Gir habitats during minibus tours. A good variety of wildlife can be seen here in a 20 to 30 minute tour of the area including the Asiatic Lion. This is a good area for grassland birds like larks and warblers, and the hunting ground of harriers and other Raptors. The Long-billed, the Red-headed, the White-backed and the Egyptian Vultures are also seen in this area.



What to see and do: A permit for entering the park can be obtained at the Sinh Sadan Orientation Centre, open from 07.00 am - 11.00 am and 03.00 pm - 5:30 pm. A 35-40 km driving route through the park is maintained for visitors. The forest has extremely rugged and hilly terrain and with luck it is possible to sight the rare Asiatic Lions, the leopards and the jackals in their natural habitat. The Park remains closed on Wednesdays.

How to reach here:

By Road: Gir National Park is 60 km from Junagadh and 360 km from Ahmedabad.

By Rail: One can travel to Junagadh from Ahmedabad or Rajkot.

By Air: The nearest airport is Rajkot.

Where to Stay: The Gir Jungle Lodge, Hotel Anil Farmhouse, the Lion Safari Camp, the Fern Gir Forest Resort and the Amidhara Resorts.

When to Visit: Gir is accessible from mid-October to mid-June.

Gir Safari online permit Website: www.girlion.in

For further detail: Forest department no.: +91 2877 285541





