



KARAKORAM WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

The standing committee of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) recently approved five significant road stretches, including four that traverse the Karakoram Wildlife Sanctuary along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).



About

Karakoram (Nubra Shyok) WLS

1. Karakoram Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the easternmost reaches of the Karakoram Range in Leh District, Ladakh.
2. It is situated at high altitudes. The sanctuary is important as one of the few places in India where the Chiru or Tibetan Antelope migrates.
3. The sanctuary is bounded by the Nubra and Shayok Rivers and shares international borders with China and Pakistan.
4. It is named after the Karakoram Ranges, which line the north of the sanctuary.

Climatic Conditions

In certain elevations within this Wildlife Sanctuary, the average temperature during the warmest month is below 0 degrees Celsius, while in other areas, it stays under 10 degrees Celsius.

Major Peaks

Significant peaks within the sanctuary include Salto Kangri, Saser Kangri I, and K12.

Rivers

The Shyok and Nubra Rivers serve as the primary water sources for the sanctuary.



Vegetation

The riverine vegetation is divided into:

Natural Riverine Vegetation: Includes broad-leaved shrubs like *Rosia webbiana*, *Ephedra*, *Caragiana* and other bushes, primarily found along main riverbeds.

Artificial Vegetation: Consists of species such as *Salix* spp., *Populus euphratica*, *Juglans regia* (walnut), and *Prunus armanica* (wild apricot).

Flora

The flora comprises broad-leaved shrubs such as *Rosia webbiana*, *Ephedra*, *Caragana* and several other bushes.

Fauna

1. The sanctuary is home to 14 mammal species, including 10 rare and endangered ones like the Ibex, Ladakhi Urial, Argali, Chiru (Tibetan Antelope), Tibetan Gazelle, Shapo, Bharal (Blue Sheep), Wild Yak, Snow Leopard, Lynx, and Wolf. Bactrian camels are also found in nearby region.
2. Notable birds include eagles (Short-toed, Booted, Golden), Lemmargeir, Himalayan Griffon, Gadwall, Tufted Duck, Goosander, Himalayan Snow Cock, Grey Plover, Lapwing, Little Gull, Hill and Blue Rock Pigeons, and larks (Haepee, Small Skylark).

Ecological Significance

1. The sanctuary serves as a breeding centre and habitat for a wide range of rare and endangered wild animals and plant species.
2. The area's diverse vegetation is categorized based on dominant species, altitude, and habitat, adding to the region's ecological richness.
3. With its stunning landscapes and unique biodiversity, the Karakoram Wildlife Sanctuary is an important ecological reserve in India.