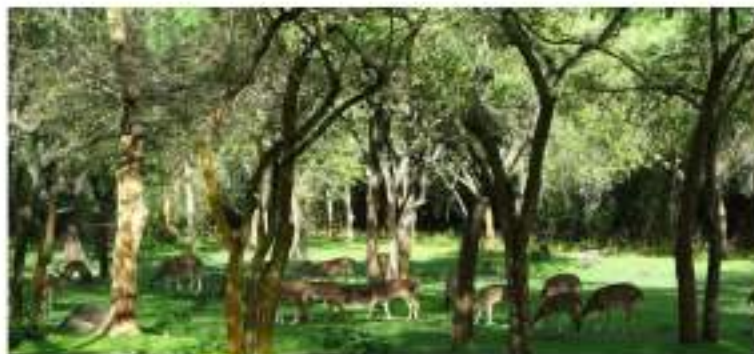


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## 5 unexplored wildlife sanctuaries in South India

by Anirban Laha (Lead Author) Apr 2016



There are plenty of sanctuaries in India that are not as popular but underneath lies a lot of beauty. [Photo courtesy: Pichayawachak/CC BY-NC 3.0](#)

Have you ever seen a tiger in his natural habitat? The wonder and amazement, followed by the thrill and happiness of spotting wildlife in their habitats are feelings that are best experienced.

Fortunately, in India, owing to its bio-diversity, one does not have to travel far. Popular wildlife sanctuaries like the Ranthambore National Park or the Corbett national parks have successfully drawn visitors from not just India, but outside as well. However, there are plenty of other sanctuaries in India that are not as popular but are equally beautiful.

The wildlife sanctuaries in South India fall in that category - beautiful, unspoilt and unexplored. The rich forest belt consisting of Mudumalai forests, Bandipur, Nagarhole and Wayanad offer some really unique and rare species of fauna. Some of these regions have been included under UNESCO. Add to these, belts of tropical forests, hills of Karnataka and river basins in Andhra Pradesh and you have a complete treasure trove for wildlife and nature lovers.

Here is a list of five such places in South India where you can enjoy some wildlife spotting.

### MASINAGUDI

Nestled amid the Nallur hills, Masinagudi is best described as a wildlife retreat at the foothills of Ooty. Part of the Mudumalai Forest reserve, Masinagudi boasts of thick forests, quietude and lovely wildlife. The forest department and the resorts here offer jeep safaris and night safaris but one does not have to go too far to catch the action. You are bound to bump into some deer or spot a few gazels on the roads to Masinagudi.

**Wildlife here:** tigers, elephants, red giant squirrels, grey langurs, sambar deer, pythons, wild boar and spectacled cobra.

#### Getting here:

Mysore (89km) is the nearest railway station.

Coimbatore (125km) is the nearest airport, with reasonable connectivity to the major cities of India.

**Best time to visit:** October to May

**Tip tip:** keep an extra day for the beautiful hill stations, Ooty and Coonoor. They make for a perfect day trip from Masinagudi, with a scenic and exhilarating drive along the Kalhatti Ghats and its 30 hairpin bends.

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Image courtesy: PhotoSavannah/ Shutterstock/ RF 66233

The best access to wildlife in the Nagarhole forests is along the banks of the river Kabini. Originally the hunting grounds for the Royal family of Mysuru (Mysore), this was later declared a tiger reserve and part of the Rajiv Gandhi National Park. It is not just the forest but the river here that has unique fresh water creatures like the huge Mahseer. It is not uncommon to find herds of elephants along the River Kabini. You might just also witness a duel between the crocodiles.

**Wildlife here:** Bengal tiger, leopards, spotted deer, four horned antelopes, peacocks, Asiatic elephants, crocodiles, pythons and spotted cobra.

**Getting here:**

The nearest railway station would be Mysore (50km)

Bengaluru (200km) is the closest airport

**Best time to visit:** October to May

**Top tip:** experience a boat safari along the river – perfect for spotting animals and winged beauties.

#### **BANDIPUR NATIONAL PARK**



Image courtesy: PhotoSavannah/ Shutterstock/ RF 66233

Another one of the private hunting grounds of the Royal family of Mysore, the Bandipur National park is now one of the most popular tiger reserves in the South India. The place has been growing in popularity owing to the frequent sightings of this majestic beast. It is not just the tiger enthusiasts that are drawn to this forest, but also, keen ornithologists. The Park is known to have over 300 bird species residing within, including rare ones like Malabar Grey Hornbill and the Blue Winged Parakeet.

**Wildlife here:** tigers, elephants, sloth bear, chital, flying squirrel, Indian python, cobra

**Getting here:**

Mysore (50 kms) is the closest railway station.

The closest airport is Bengaluru (200km)

**Best time to visit:** November to June

**Top tip:** visit the Himavad Gopalaswamy Betts, the highest peak in this region, for a bit of Nilgiri, a magnificent view of the valley and sighting of their regular visitors – the elephants.

#### **MUTHANDA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY**





Image courtesy: I foto Kubota Pictorica/CC BY 3.0

While you are on your way to the Muthanga Wildlife Sanctuary, don't be surprised if you are stuck on the road in a traffic jam, created by an elephant. Part of the Wayanad Wildlife reserve, this national park is known for its huge population of elephants all of whom roam around freely, even entering the urban landscapes. Besides the elephants, watch out for the little colourful winged beauties throughout the park.

**Wildlife here:** elephant, tigers, lion, panthers, barking deer, bee eaters, hornbill, woodpeckers

#### Getting here:

Kozhikode (100km), in Kerala is the nearest railway station as well as airport.

**Best time to visit:** October to February

**Top tip:** Try exploring the sanctuary on the backs of an elephant.

### DANDELI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY



Image courtesy: Pinar N. An. Suresh/CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the most beautiful nature parks in South India – with its gorgeous green valleys, gushing rivers and lovely hills. Famed not only for its wildlife, this National Park is dotted with beautiful topographic and heritage attractions like the Kavalo Caves and Syntheri Rocks.

**Wildlife here:** black panther, sloth bear, tigers, flying squirrels, deer, gaur hornbill, crocodiles

#### Getting here:

HUBLI (75km) is the closest airport.

Londa (49km) and Anagod (32km) are the closest railway stations.

The famous beach destination of India, Goa, is just 150km from here.

**Best time to visit:** October to May

**Top tip:** add a bit of adrenaline with some adventure sports like white water rafting, rappelling, nature treks and rock climbing.

**AUTHOR'S BIO:** Ami Bhal is a web-marketing professional, currently on a break to pursue full-time travel blogging. A travel enthusiast, who loves sports, photography and dancing with equal passion, Ami believes in planning a short escape for every long weekend that can come up through the year. And when she cannot travel physically, she travels virtually through words on her travel blog. More on: <http://www.thrillingtravel.in/>



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**Archana Kapoor**

April 7, 2016, 9:34:06 pm

This is such a lovely informative post for wildlife lovers! Thanks for sharing Arni... great work! <3  
Cheers, Archana - <http://www.travelwitharchana.com>

Reply



**rupam**

April 7, 2016, 11:49:03 pm

Awesome post, Thanks for sharing.

Reply



**2TravelDads**

April 8, 2016, 6:04:06 pm

What I'm most impressed with was the deer. Really amazing rack on such a beautiful animal. What incredible treasures India has!

Reply



**OurFamilyTravel**

April 8, 2016, 6:04:06 pm

Great article. We are hoping to go to India soon and hadn't considered an animal sanctuary. It looks wonderful.

Reply



**Kevin Wagar**

April 9, 2016, 1:05:08 am

First of all, congratulations on being published in LPI! Secondly, you're killing me with these wildlife photos! They are so great, and I would be giddy like a child at the chance to see some of these animals in the wild!

Reply



**Vyjay Rao**

April 8, 2016, 12:52:00 pm

Amazing places all and congrats for the publication on LPI... way to go!

Reply



**Utpati Ecom**

April 14, 2016, 12:21:00 pm

www.ww amazing place superb article thanks for sharing  
<http://www.utpatiecom.com>

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