|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Central Province | | |
| Eco system Type | Name | Details |
| Strict Nature Reserve | Hakgala | **Hakgala Strict Nature Reserve** is one of the three [strict nature reserves](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nature_reserve) in [Sri Lanka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka), the only one in the [wet zone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_Sri_Lanka#Ecological_zones). The reserve is an important although isolated [cloud forest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cloud_forest) which supports a number of faunal species including some endemics. The area was designated a strict nature reserve on 25 February 1938. The reserve is adjacent to and contiguous with the [Hakgala Botanical Garden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hakgala_Botanical_Garden" \o "Hakgala Botanical Garden) which was founded in 1860.  **Physical Features**  The Hakgala reserve covers an area of 11.42 square kilometres (4.41 sq mi) the altitude of which ranges from 1,650 metres (5,410 ft) to 2,178 metres (7,146 ft) at the summit of Hakgala peak. The reserve receives 2,400 millimetres (94 in) of mean annual rainfall with rain falling on 211 days of the year.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hakgala_Strict_Nature_Reserve#cite_note-Green_1990-1) The soil of the reserve consists of red-yellow [podsols](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podsol" \o "Podsol) this is due to the bookly. The reserve is situated on the south bank of Sita-Eliya and includes most of the Hakgala massif. The name of this range is derived from several of the peaks being said to have the shape of an elephant's jaw. In the [Sinhala](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinhala_language) language *Hak* is jaw and *Gala* is rock.  **Flora**  Vegetation of the reserve consists of [montane cloud forests](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_montane_rain_forests). These forests are noted for endemic archaic *[Hortonia floribunda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hortonia_floribunda" \o "Hortonia floribunda)* and many [orchids](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orchidaceae). Endemics of *[Calophyllum walkeri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calophyllum_walkeri" \o "Calophyllum walkeri)*, *[Syzygium rotundifolium](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syzygium_rotundifolium" \o "Syzygium rotundifolium)*, *Elaeocarpus montanus* are the common floral species of the reserve. In the [undergrowth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Undergrowth) many *[Strobilanthes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strobilanthes" \o "Strobilanthes)* species are common. According to height, the forest is categorised into two types; dwarf forests which is dominated by low growing *Osbeckia buxifolia* while taller forests featured by [*Rhododendron zeylanicum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhododendron_arboreum) and *Actinodaphne speciosa*.  **Fauna**  The reserve harbours many species of endemic mammals such as [purple-faced langur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purple-faced_langur), [toque macaque](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toque_macaque), [mayor's mouse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mayor%27s_mouse), [Ohiya rat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ohiya_rat" \o "Ohiya rat), [Kelaart's long-clawed shrew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kelaart%27s_long-clawed_shrew" \o "Kelaart's long-clawed shrew), [Sri Lankan long-tailed shrew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_long-tailed_shrew), and [Pearson's long-clawed shrew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pearson%27s_long-clawed_shrew). Some of these mammals are strictly endemic to this region. [Sri Lanka leopard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_leopard), [fishing cat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fishing_cat), [wild boar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_boar), [Sri Lankan sambar deer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_sambar_deer), [grizzled giant squirrel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grizzled_giant_squirrel), [red giant flying squirrel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_giant_flying_squirrel), and [pungent pipistrelle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pungent_pipistrelle) are some of the other mammals found in the reserve. The [Sri Lankan elephant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_elephant) was reported to be present in 1939.  Avifauna of the reserve exhibits a high degree of variety and endemicity.Some of the noteworthy species include [mountain hawk-eagle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_hawk-eagle), [Sri Lanka junglefowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_junglefowl), [Sri Lanka wood pigeon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_wood_pigeon), [jungle nightjar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jungle_nightjar), [Sri Lanka blue magpie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_blue_magpie), [yellow-eared bulbul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow-eared_bulbul), [brown-capped babbler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown-capped_babbler), [orange-billed babbler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orange-billed_babbler), [dull-blue flycatcher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dull-blue_flycatcher), [Sri Lanka bush warbler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_bush_warbler), [Sri Lanka whistling thrush](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_whistling_thrush), [spot-winged thrush](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spot-winged_thrush), [common blackbird](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_blackbird), and [Sri Lanka white-eye](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_white-eye). All five species of bird which are strictly endemic to this ecoregion are present in the reserve. Common birds are [scarlet minivet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scarlet_minivet), [small minivet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Small_minivet), [black bulbul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_bulbul), [Sri Lanka scimitar babbler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_scimitar_babbler), [grey-headed canary-flycatcher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey-headed_canary-flycatcher), [pied bushchat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pied_bushchat), and [Sri Lanka scaly thrush](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_scaly_thrush). [Indian pitta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_pitta), [Asian brown flycatcher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_brown_flycatcher), [Kashmir flycatcher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kashmir_flycatcher), [Indian blue robin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_blue_robin), [pied thrush](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pied_thrush), [black-throated munia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-throated_munia), and [large-billed leaf warbler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Large-billed_leaf_warbler) are amongst the large number of migratory species.  Many endemic amphibians including *[Adenomus kelaartii](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adenomus_kelaartii" \o "Adenomus kelaartii)*, *[Polypedates cruciger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polypedates_cruciger" \o "Polypedates cruciger)*, *[Philautus microtympanum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philautus_microtympanum" \o "Philautus microtympanum)*, *[Philautus schmarda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philautus_schmarda" \o "Philautus schmarda)*, *[Ramanella palmata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramanella_palmata" \o "Ramanella palmata)*, and *[Microhyla zeylanica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microhyla_zeylanica" \o "Microhyla zeylanica)* together with *[Fejervarya limnocharis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fejervarya_limnocharis" \o "Fejervarya limnocharis)* and [bronzed frog](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bronzed_frog) inhabit the reserve.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hakgala_Strict_Nature_Reserve#cite_note-Green_1990-1) Notable reptiles include *[Uropeltis melanogaster](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uropeltis_melanogaster" \o "Uropeltis melanogaster)*, *[Rhinophis blythii](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhinophis_blythii" \o "Rhinophis blythii)*, *Aspidura brachyorrhos*, *A. trachyprocta*, *[Hypnale nepa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypnale_nepa" \o "Hypnale nepa)*, [geckos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gecko) such as *[Calotes nigrilabris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calotes_nigrilabris" \o "Calotes nigrilabris)*, *[Cophotis ceylanica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cophotis_ceylanica" \o "Cophotis ceylanica)*, [rhino horn lizard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhino_horn_lizard), and [skink](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skink) species *[Sphenomorphus striatopunctatum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sphenomorphus_striatopunctatum" \o "Sphenomorphus striatopunctatum)*.  **Conservation**  Hakgala reserve is an important and isolated [cloud forest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cloud_forest), which supports a number of endemics; however, its small size and isolation is jeopardizing its long-term survival. [Illegal logging](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illegal_logging) by the farmers and [dieback of the forest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forest_dieback) are the two major threats to the reserve. The reserve is one of the sites where [academic research](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Research) is conducted.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hakgala_Strict_Nature_Reserve#cite_note-FAO_1997-4) One study conducted within the reserve has revealed that [soil toxicity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soil_acidification) is a probable cause of forest dieback. In addition to the above factors it is known that up to 25 percent of the area of the reserve has been encroached upon. |
| National Park | Hortan Plains | **Horton Plains National Park** is a [protected area](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protected_areas_of_Sri_Lanka) in the central highlands of [Sri Lanka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka) and is covered by montane grassland and [cloud forest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cloud_forest). This plateau at an altitude of 2,100–2,300 metres (6,900–7,500 ft) is rich in [biodiversity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biodiversity) and many species found here are [endemic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endemism) to the region. This region was designated a [national park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_park) in 1988. It is also a popular tourist destination and is situated 8 kilometres (5.0 mi) from [Ohiya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ohiya" \o "Ohiya), 6 kilometres (3.7 mi) from the world-famous Ohiya Gap/Dondra Watch and 32 kilometres (20 mi) from [Nuwara Eliya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuwara_Eliya).  The Horton Plains are the [headwaters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Source_(river_or_stream)) of three major Sri Lankan rivers, the [Mahaweli](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahaweli_River), [Kelani](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kelani_River" \o "Kelani River), and [Walawe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walawe_river). In [Sinhala](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinhala_language) the plains are known as Maha Eliya Plains (මහ එළිය තැන්න). [Stone tools](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stone_tool) dating back to [Balangoda culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balangoda_Man" \o "Balangoda Man) have been found here. The plains' vegetation is grasslands interspersed with montane forest and includes many endemic [woody plants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woody_plant). Large herds of [Sri Lankan sambar deer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_sambar_deer) feature as typical mammals and the park is also an [Important Bird Area](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Important_Bird_Area) with many species not only endemic to Sri Lanka but restricted to the Horton Plains. [Forest dieback](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forest_dieback) is one of the major threats to the park and some studies suggest that it is caused by a natural phenomenon.  The sheer precipice of [World's End](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World%27s_End,_Sri_Lanka) and [Baker's Falls](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baker%27s_Falls) are among the tourist attractions of the park.  In 20th century there are some records of elephants again in the park.  **Physical Features**  Horton Plains is located on the southern plateau of the central highlands of Sri Lanka.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horton_Plains_National_Park#cite_note-iwmi-2) The peaks of [Kirigalpoththa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kirigalpoththa" \o "Kirigalpoththa) (2,389 metres (7,838 ft)) and [Thotupola Kanda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thotupola_Kanda" \o "Thotupola Kanda) (2,357 metres (7,733 ft)), the second and the third highest of Sri Lanka, are situated to the west and north respectively. The park's [elevation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elevation) ranges from 1,200–2,300 metres (3,900–7,500 ft).[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horton_Plains_National_Park#cite_note-Jayalal_2007-3) The rocks found in the park belong to the Archaean age and belong to the high series of the [Precambrian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Precambrian) era and are made up of [Khondalites](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khondalite" \o "Khondalite), [Charnockites](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charnockite" \o "Charnockite) and granitic gneisses.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horton_Plains_National_Park#cite_note-green-4)[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horton_Plains_National_Park#cite_note-5) The [soil type](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soil_type) is of the red-yellow [podsolic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podsol" \o "Podsol) group and the surface layer is covered with decayed organic matter.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horton_Plains_National_Park#cite_note-green-4)  The mean annual rainfall is greater than 2,000 millimetres (79 in). Frequent cloud cover limits the amount of sunlight that is available to plants. The mean annual temperature is 13 °C (55 °F) but the temperature varies considerably during the course of a day, reaching as high as 27 °C (81 °F) during the day time, and dipping as low as 5 °C (41 °F) at night. During the [southwest Monsoon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monsoon) season, the wind speed sometimes reaches [gale force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beaufort_scale). Although some rain falls throughout the year, a dry season occurs from January–March. The ground [frost](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frost) is common in February. [Mist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mist) can persist in the most of the day during the wet season.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horton_Plains_National_Park#cite_note-de_Silva-6) Many pools and waterfalls can be seen in the park, and Horton Plains is considered the most important [watershed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drainage_basin) in Sri Lanka.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horton_Plains_National_Park#cite_note-iwmi-2) The Horton Plains are the [headwaters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Source_(river_or_stream)) of important rivers such as the [Mahaweli](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahaweli_River), [Kelani](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kelani_River" \o "Kelani River), and [Walawe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walawe_river).[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horton_Plains_National_Park#cite_note-iwmi-2) The plains also feeds Belihul Oya, Agra Oya, Kiriketi Oya, Uma Oya, and Bogawantalawa Oya.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horton_Plains_National_Park#cite_note-de_Silva-6) Due to its high elevation, [fog](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fog) and cloud deposit a considerable amount of [moisture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moisture) on the land. Slow moving streams, [swamps](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swamp), and waterfalls are the important wetland habitats of the park.  **Flora**  The vegetation of the park is classified into two distinctive groups, 2,000 hectares (7.7 sq mi) of wet *patana* (Sinhalese for "[montane grasslands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montane_grasslands_and_shrublands)") and 1,160 hectares (4.5 sq mi) of subtropical montane evergreen forests. Nearly 750 species of plants belonging to 20 families have been recorded from the park. The forest [canopy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canopy_(biology)) reaches the height of 20 metres (66 ft) and features *[Calophyllum walkeri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calophyllum_walkeri" \o "Calophyllum walkeri)*, forming communities with varieties of [Myrtaceae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myrtaceae" \o "Myrtaceae) species such as *[Syzygium rotundifolium](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syzygium_rotundifolium" \o "Syzygium rotundifolium)*, and *S. sclerophyllum*, and [Lauraceae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lauraceae" \o "Lauraceae) members including *[Litsea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Litsea" \o "Litsea)*, *[Cinnamomum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinnamomum" \o "Cinnamomum)*, and *Actinodaphne speciosa*. The [undergrowth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Undergrowth) layer is characterised by *[Strobilanthes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strobilanthes" \o "Strobilanthes)* spp. The thickness of the *Strobilanthes* vegetation hinders the development of a herb layer. Dwarf bamboo species such *[Indocalamus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indocalamus" \o "Indocalamus)* and *[Ochlandra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ochlandra" \o "Ochlandra)* also found in the undergrowth layer. *[Rhodomyrtus tomentosa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhodomyrtus_tomentosa" \o "Rhodomyrtus tomentosa)* bushes specially grow in [forest margin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woodland_edge) and near the mountain peaks. Species such as *[Gordonia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gordonia_(plant)" \o "Gordonia (plant))* and [*Rhododendron arboreum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhododendron_arboreum) have spread to Sri Lanka, along the [Western Ghats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Ghats) of [South India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_India) from the [Himalayas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Himalayas) and are now common. Nearly 54 [woody plant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woody_plant) species have been recorded from the park, of which 27 (50%) are endemic to Sri Lanka.  Frequent fire and [grazing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grazing) characterises [Plagioclimax communities](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagioclimax_community) of the grassland flora. Grasslands are dominated by *Arundinella villosa* and *Chrysopogon zeylanicus*. Waterlogged [swamps](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swamp) or slow moving streams are found in low-lying areas, and [macrophytes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macrophyte) such as *Aponogeton jacobsenii*, [sedge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyperaceae) species *Isolopis fluitans* and *[Utricularia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utricularia" \o "Utricularia)* spp. are found near the slow moving streams. The [bamboo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bamboo) *Chimonobambusa densifolia* thrive along the banks of the streams, and near the swampy areas grass species such as *Juncus prismatocarpus*, *Garnotia mutica*, *[Eriocaulon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eriocaulon" \o "Eriocaulon)* spp. and *Exacum trinervium* are common. [Tussock grasses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tussock_(grass)) such as *Chrysopogon zeylanicus* and *Cymbopogon confertiflorus* are found in the wet hollows.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horton_Plains_National_Park#cite_note-green-4) [Herbaceous flora](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbaceous_plant) of the grasslands include temperate species including [*Ranunculus*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ranunculus), [*Pedicularis*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pedicularis), [*Senecio*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Senecio), [*Gentiana*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gentiana) and [*Alchemilla*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alchemilla) and also tropical species such as *[Eriocaulon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eriocaulon" \o "Eriocaulon)* and *Ipsea speciosa* (a rare endemic daffodil orchid). The most widespread [boreal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiga) herbaceous plants of the park are [*Viola*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viola_(plant)), [*Lobelia*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lobelia), [*Gaultheria*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaultheria), [*Fragaria*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fragaria), and *[Plantago](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plantago" \o "Plantago)*.  Tree trunks and branches are ornamented with many species of [ferns](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fern), [*Lycopodium*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lycopodium), [lichens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lichen), and [orchids](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orchid" \o "Orchid).Old man's beard ([*Usnea barbata*](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Usnea_barbata&action=edit&redlink=1)) hanging from branches adds to the beauty of the forests. About 16 of the orchid species being endemic. Other notable plants include shrubs such as *[Rhodomyrtus tomentosa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhodomyrtus_tomentosa" \o "Rhodomyrtus tomentosa)*, [*Gaultheria fragrantissima*](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Gaultheria_fragrantissima&action=edit&redlink=1), herbs, *[Exacum trinervium](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Exacum_trinervium&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Exacum trinervium (page does not exist))*, *E. walkeri*, *[Drosera indica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drosera_indica" \o "Drosera indica)*, and [tree ferns](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyatheales) *[Cyathea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyathea" \o "Cyathea)* spp.[*Anzia*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anzia), a foliose lichen genus belonging to the family [Parmeliaceae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parmeliaceae" \o "Parmeliaceae), which had not been recorded in Sri Lanka before, was discovered here in 2007.There are conflicting views on how the grasslands of the park came into being, whether man-made or natural. It is now believed that the grasslands on the dry slopes were created by forest clearance and fires while grasslands in low-lying areas were naturally created by wet conditions, [frost](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frost) and [soil erosion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erosion).  **Fauna**  The vertebrate fauna of the region includes 24 species of mammals, 87 species of birds, nine species of reptiles and eight species of amphibians. The [Sri Lankan elephant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_elephant) disappeared from the region in the 1940s at the latest. At present, the largest and the most commonly seen mammal is the [sambar deer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_sambar_deer). Some research findings estimate the population of sambar deer to be around 1500 to 2000, possibly more than the carrying capacity of the plains.Other mammal species found in the park include [Kelaart's long-clawed shrews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kelaart%27s_long-clawed_shrew" \o "Kelaart's long-clawed shrew), [toque macaques](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toque_macaque), [purple-faced langurs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purple-faced_langur), [rusty-spotted cat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rusty-spotted_cat), [Sri Lankan leopards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_leopard), [wild boars](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_boar), [stripe-necked mongooses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stripe-necked_mongoose), [Sri Lankan spotted chevrotains](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_spotted_chevrotain), [Indian muntjacs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_muntjac), and [grizzled giant squirrels](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grizzled_giant_squirrel). [Fishing cats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fishing_cat) and [European otters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_otter) visit the wetlands of the park to prey on aquatic animals. A subspecies of [red slender loris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_slender_loris), the Horton Plains slender loris (*Loris tardigradus nycticeboides* formerly sometimes considered as *Loris lydekkerianus nycticeboides*) is found only in highlands of Sri Lanka and is considered one of the world's most endangered primates.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horton_Plains_National_Park#cite_note-Nekaris-10)[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horton_Plains_National_Park#cite_note-11) In July 2010 a group of researchers from the [Zoological Society of London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zoological_Society_of_London) was able to photograph the mammal for the first time.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horton_Plains_National_Park#cite_note-telegraph-12)  In 2016, [rusty-spotted cats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rusty-spotted_cat) (*Prionailurus rubiginosus*) were recorded in Horton Plains National Park for the first time, at altitudes of 2,084–2,162 m (6,837–7,093 ft).  Along with [Ohiya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ohiya" \o "Ohiya), Pattipola and [Ambewela](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ambewela" \o "Ambewela), Horton Plains forms one of the [Important Bird Areas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Important_Bird_Area) (IBAs) in Sri Lanka.Together with the adjacent [Peak Wilderness Sanctuary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peak_Wilderness_Sanctuary), Horton Plains contains 21 bird species which occur only on Sri Lanka. Four, [Sri Lanka blue magpie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_blue_magpie), [dull-blue flycatcher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dull-blue_flycatcher), [Sri Lanka white-eye](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_white-eye), and [Sri Lanka wood pigeon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_wood_pigeon), occur only in Horton plains, while other endemic species include [Sri Lanka spurfowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_spurfowl), [Sri Lanka junglefowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_junglefowl), [yellow-fronted barbet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow-fronted_barbet), [orange-billed babbler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orange-billed_babbler), [Sri Lanka bush warbler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_bush_warbler), and [Sri Lanka whistling-thrush](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_whistling-thrush). Many birds [migrate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bird_migration) here in winter including [swiftlets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collocalia), and [alpine swift](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alpine_swift). [Crested serpent eagle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crested_serpent_eagle), [mountain hawk-eagle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_hawk-eagle), [black-winged kite](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-winged_kite), and [peregrine falcon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peregrine_falcon) are among the [birds of prey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bird_of_prey) found in Horton Plains. [Harriers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harrier_(bird)) are among the migratory raptors.This is a key wildlife area. All six highland endemic birds are found here, including dull-blue flycatcher, Sri Lanka white-eye, Sri Lanka wood pigeon, and Sri Lanka bush warbler. [Yellow-eared bulbul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow-eared_bulbul) and [black-throated munia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-throated_munia) are widespread throughout the highlands.  Sri Lanka is considered a herpetological paradise in the world.Possibly about 15 amphibian species inhabit the park. Among them are *[Microhyla zeylanica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microhyla_zeylanica" \o "Microhyla zeylanica)*, *[Ramanella palmata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramanella_palmata" \o "Ramanella palmata)*, *[Fejervarya greenii](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fejervarya_greenii" \o "Fejervarya greenii)*, [*Rana gracilis*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hylarana_gracilis), *[Philautus alto](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philautus_alto" \o "Philautus alto)*, *[Philautus femoralis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philautus_femoralis" \o "Philautus femoralis)*, *[Philautus frankenbergi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philautus_frankenbergi" \o "Philautus frankenbergi)*, *[Philautus microtympanum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philautus_microtympanum" \o "Philautus microtympanum)*, *[Philautus schmarda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philautus_schmarda" \o "Philautus schmarda)*, and *[Polypedates eques](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polypedates_eques" \o "Polypedates eques)*. De Silva has observed six endemic reptiles from the plains. They are *[Calotes nigrilabris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calotes_nigrilabris" \o "Calotes nigrilabris)*, [rhino horn lizard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhino_horn_lizard), *[Cophotis ceylanica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cophotis_ceylanica" \o "Cophotis ceylanica)*, *[Lankascincus taprobanensis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lankascincus_taprobanensis" \o "Lankascincus taprobanensis)*, [common rough-sided snake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aspidura_trachyprocta), and [rat snake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rat_snake). Two fish species found in the park, [common carp](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_carp) and [rainbow trout](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_trout); both are [introduced species](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Introduced_species).Horton Plains is also home to many endemic [crustaceans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crustacean) including *[Caridina singhalensis](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Caridina_singhalensis&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Caridina singhalensis (page does not exist))* and *[Perbrinckia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perbrinckia" \o "Perbrinckia)* species. The endemic freshwater shrimp *Caridina singhalensis* is found only in streams that have a temperature of less than 15 degrees C and is now restricted to only a stretch of 10 km of one stream.  **Conservation**  Horton Plains was a part of a large system of plains and forest cover that included Agra-Bopats, Moon Plains and Elk Plains.Between 1831 and 1948, it became a Sambar deer hunting ground. Elephants and Wild Boar were also hunted to a lesser extent. During this period lower slopes were cleared initially for coffee and then for [tea plantations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tea_production_in_Sri_Lanka). As a result, Horton Plains and Peak Wilderness became isolated from other forest and grassland areas. Potatoes were cultivated in the grasslands but planting ceased in 1977. After being declared a National Park, these areas were reinstated as grasslands. Tourism-related issues such as plant removal, littering, [fires](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildfire) and noise pollution are major conservation issues.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horton_Plains_National_Park#cite_note-iwmi-2) Gem mining, [timber logging](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illegal_logging), the collection of plants for ornamental and [medicinal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbalism) purposes, encroachment, [poaching](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poaching) and vehicle traffic are the other threats. The spread of [invasive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invasive_species) alien species such as gorse (*[Ulex europaeus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulex_europaeus" \o "Ulex europaeus)*), Mist Flower (*[Ageratina riparia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ageratina_riparia" \o "Ageratina riparia)*), Crofton Weed (*[Ageratina adenophora](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ageratina_adenophora" \o "Ageratina adenophora)*), (*[Austroeupatorium](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austroeupatorium" \o "Austroeupatorium)*), Blue Stars (*[Aristea ecklonii](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristea_ecklonii" \o "Aristea ecklonii)*), [brackens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bracken), and *[Pennisetum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pennisetum" \o "Pennisetum)* spp. threaten the native flora. The introduced rainbow trout may have affected endemic species of fish, amphibia and crustaceans. |
| Sanctuaries | Udawatta Kele | [**Udawattakele Forest Reserve**](https://www.wiowiki.com/enjoy-sri-lanka/admire-wildlife/udawattekele-bird-sanctuary)**,** often spelled as Udawatta Kele, is a historic forest reserve on a hill-ridge in the city of [Kandy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kandy). It is 104 hectares (257 acres) large. During the days of the [Kandyan kingdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Kandy), Udawattakele was known as "Uda Wasala Watta" in [Sinhalese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinhala_language) meaning "the garden above the royal palace". The sanctuary is famous for its extensive [avifauna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bird). The reserve also contains a great variety of plant species, especially lianas, shrubs and small trees. There are several giant lianas. Many of small and medium size mammals that inhabit Sri Lanka can be seen here. Several kinds of snakes and other reptiles might be seen. Udawattakele was designated as a forest reserve in 1856, and it became a sanctuary in 1938.  The Sri Lanka Forest Department has two offices in the reserve, one of which (at the southeastern entrance) has a nature education centre with a display of pictures, posters, stuffed animals, etc. Being easily accessible and containing a variety of flora and fauna the forest has a great educational and recreational value. Groups of school children and students regularly visit the forest and the education centre. The forest is also popular with foreign tourists, especially bird watchers. Scientific nature research has been carried out in the forest by researchers. The forest is of religious importance as there are three Buddhist meditation hermitages and three rock shelter dwellings for Buddhist monk hermits.  **Flora**  The vegetation of the park comprises dense forest, mostly abandoned plantations and [secondary formations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secondary_forest).According to Hitanayake, perhaps basing himself on Karunaratne (1986, Appendix XIII) 460 plant species were growing in the forest, 135 tree and shrub species and 11 are [lianas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liana). These include 9 endemic species.  In 2013, a survey identified 58 indigenous tree species (7 endemic), 61 indigenous shrub and small tree species (7 endemic), 31 indigenous herbs (3 endemic) of which 12 are orchids, and 57 indigenous lianas, creepers and vines (4 endemic). The forest features an [emergent layer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emergent_layer), a [canopy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canopy_(ecology)) and an [understory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Understory). Because of the dense two upper layers, understory is not present everywhere, especially in areas with the invasive [balsam of Peru](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balsam_of_Peru) tree, (*[Myroxylon balsamum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myroxylon_balsamum" \o "Myroxylon balsamum)*), Mahogany trees, (*[Swietenia macrophylla](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swietenia_macrophylla" \o "Swietenia macrophylla)*) and Devil's Ivy (see Threats section below).  A great variety of plant species are found in the relatively unspoilt northern and eastern sides of the forest. Some common indigenous tree and shrub species are *[Acronychia pedunculata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acronychia_pedunculata" \o "Acronychia pedunculata)* (Sinhalese: "ankenda"), *[Artocarpus nobilis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artocarpus_nobilis" \o "Artocarpus nobilis)* ("wal del"), *[Artocarpus heterophyllus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artocarpus_heterophyllus" \o "Artocarpus heterophyllus)* ("kos"), *[Caryota urens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caryota_urens" \o "Caryota urens)* ("kitul"), [*Aglaia elaeagnoidea*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aglaia_elaeagnoidea) ("puwanga"), [*Bombax ceiba*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bombax_ceiba) ("katu imbul"), *[Canarium zeylanicum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canarium_zeylanicum" \o "Canarium zeylanicum)*, *[Cinnamomum verum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinnamomum_verum" \o "Cinnamomum verum)* ("kurundu", cinnamon), *[Ficus virens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ficus_virens" \o "Ficus virens)*, *[Filicium decipiens](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Filicium_decipiens&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Filicium decipiens (page does not exist))* ("pihimbiya"), [Aphananthe cuspidata](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Aphananthe_cuspidata&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Aphananthe cuspidata (page does not exist)) ("wal-munamal"), *[Goniothalamus gardneri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goniothalamus_gardneri" \o "Goniothalamus gardneri)*, *[Haldina cordifolia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haldina_cordifolia" \o "Haldina cordifolia)*, *[Hunteria zeylanica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hunteria_zeylanica" \o "Hunteria zeylanica)*, *[Mallotus tetracoccus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mallotus_tetracoccus" \o "Mallotus tetracoccus)*, *[Mesua ferrea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mesua_ferrea" \o "Mesua ferrea)* ("na", iron-wood), *[Michelia champaca](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelia_champaca" \o "Michelia champaca)* ("sapu"), *[Mangifera zeylanica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mangifera_zeylanica" \o "Mangifera zeylanica)* ("atamba"), *[Neoclitsea cassia](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Neoclitsea_cassia&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Neoclitsea cassia (page does not exist))* ("dawul kurundu”, wild cinnamon), [*Glycosmis pentaphylla*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glycosmis_pentaphylla) (orangeberry, doda-pana), *[Litsea quinqueflora](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Litsea_quinqueflora" \o "Litsea quinqueflora)*, *[Micromelum minitum](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Micromelum_minitum&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Micromelum minitum (page does not exist))* ("wal karapuncha"), *[Pavetta blanda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pavetta_blanda" \o "Pavetta blanda)*, *[Psychotria nigra](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Psychotria_nigra&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Psychotria nigra (page does not exist))*, [*Vitex pinnata*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vitex_pinnata) ("milla") and *[Walsura gardneri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walsura_gardneri" \o "Walsura gardneri)*.[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Udawattakele_Forest_Reserve#cite_note-23)[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Udawattakele_Forest_Reserve#cite_note-24)  There are many climber and liana species growing in the Udawattakele forest, most notable is the giant Sea Bean climber [*Entada rheedii*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entada_rheedii) ("Pus Wel"). Some other species are *[Anamirta cocculus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anamirta_cocculus" \o "Anamirta cocculus)* ("Tittawel”), *[Diploclisia glaucescens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diploclisia_glaucescens" \o "Diploclisia glaucescens)*, *[Hiptage bengalensis](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Hiptage_bengalensis&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Hiptage bengalensis (page does not exist))*, *[Hypserpa nitida](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Hypserpa_nitida&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Hypserpa nitida (page does not exist))* ("Niriwel"), *[Morinda umbellata](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Morinda_umbellata&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Morinda umbellata (page does not exist))* ("Kiri-wel"), and *[Paramignya monophylla](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Paramignya_monophylla&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Paramignya monophylla (page does not exist))*. The Udawattakele contains many full-grown rattan palms, [''Calamus'' (palm)](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=%27%27Calamus%27%27_(palm)&action=edit&redlink=1), of which there are two species. Some of the climbing palms here are over 25 meters long, growing up and over trees. Elsewhere in Sri Lanka rattan palms are often cut down when young for making rattan.  Orchid species, mostly epiphytic, include [*Cymbidium bicolor*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cymbidium_bicolor), [*Luisa teretifolia*](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Luisa_teretifolia&action=edit&redlink=1), *[Polystachya concreta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polystachya_concreta" \o "Polystachya concreta)*, *[Thrixspermum pulchellum](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Thrixspermum_pulchellum&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Thrixspermum pulchellum (page does not exist))*, *[Tropidia curculigoides](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Tropidia_curculigoides&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Tropidia curculigoides (page does not exist))* and [*Vanda testacea*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vanda_testacea).  The sanctuary is home to many species of non-flowering plants, [pteridophytes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pteridophyte), such as the many kinds of ferns growing on steep banks along the shady road on the eastern side of the hill ridge.The invasive glossy maidenhair fern (*Adiantum pulverulentum*) is said to crowd away native fern species, some of which are rare and not recorded elsewhere in Sri Lanka.  About half of the forest, mostly on the southwestern side, is heavily invaded by exotic tree and creeper species. In these areas very little native vegetation and fauna is able to survive; see the Threats section below. In total 16 exotic tree species grow in the forest (7 of which are invasive), as well as 6 exotic shrub species (one, Coffea, is invasive), 6 exotic liana and creeper species (of which three are invasive), and 6 exotic herbs (one of which is invasive).  **Fauna**  Udawattakele is a famous [birdwatching](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birdwatching) site. About 80 bird species have been recorded in the sanctuary.The endemic bird species are [Layard's parakeet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Layard%27s_parakeet), [yellow-fronted barbet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow-fronted_barbet), [brown-capped babbler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown-capped_babbler) and [Sri Lanka hanging parrot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_hanging_parrot) . The rare [three-toed kingfisher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oriental_dwarf_kingfisher) *Ceyx erythacus* has been observed occasionally at the pond. [Common hill myna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_hill_myna), [golden-fronted leafbird](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden-fronted_leafbird), [blue-winged leafbird](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue-winged_leafbird), [spotted dove](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spotted_dove), [emerald dove](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emerald_dove), [Tickell's blue flycatcher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tickell%27s_blue_flycatcher), [white-rumped shama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White-rumped_shama), [crimson-fronted barbet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crimson-fronted_barbet), [brown-headed barbet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown-headed_barbet) [crested serpent eagle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crested_serpent_eagle), and [brown fish owl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown_fish_owl) are regularly seen and heard in the forest.  Despite the forest reserve being completely surrounded by Kandy and its suburbs, there are many kinds of mammals, most of which are nocturnal. Endemic mammals that live in the sanctuary are the pale-fronted [toque macaque](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toque_macaque) (*Macaca sinica aurifrons*), [golden palm civet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_palm_civet), [mouse deer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_spotted_chevrotain) (*Moschiola meminna*), [slender loris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slender_loris), and the [dusky palm squirrel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Funambulus_sublineatus). Other mammals are the [Indian muntjac](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_muntjac), [Indian boar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_boar), [porcupine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_crested_porcupine) (*Hysterix indica*), [Asian palm civet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_palm_civet), [small Indian civet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Small_Indian_civet), [ruddy mongoose](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruddy_mongoose), [Indian giant flying squirrel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_giant_flying_squirrel), [greater bandicoot rat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_bandicoot_rat), [Indian pangolin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_pangolin), [greater false vampire bat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_false_vampire_bat), and [Indian flying-fox](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_flying-fox).  Several kinds of reptiles and amphibians, including endemic species, inhabit the forest. There are snakes such as the common hump-nosed pit viper (*[Hypnale hypnale](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypnale_hypnale" \o "Hypnale hypnale)*), green vine snake (*[Ahaetulla nasuta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahaetulla_nasuta" \o "Ahaetulla nasuta)*), green pit viper (*[Trimeresurus trigonocephalus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trimeresurus_trigonocephalus" \o "Trimeresurus trigonocephalus)*), banded kukri (*[Oligodon arnensis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oligodon_arnensis" \o "Oligodon arnensis)*), Boie's rough-sided snake (*[Aspidura brachyorrhos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aspidura_brachyorrhos" \o "Aspidura brachyorrhos)*) Sri Lanka cat snake (*[Boiga ceylonensis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boiga_ceylonensis" \o "Boiga ceylonensis)*), Oriental ratsnake (*[Ptyas mucosus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ptyas_mucosus" \o "Ptyas mucosus)*) and spectacled cobra (*[Naja naja](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naja_naja" \o "Naja naja)*). Lizards that can be seen include the green forest lizard (*[Calotes calotes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calotes_calotes" \o "Calotes calotes)*), Sri Lanka kangaroo-lizard (*[Otocryptis wiegmanni](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otocryptis_wiegmanni" \o "Otocryptis wiegmanni)*) and the whistling lizard (*[Calotes liolepis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calotes_liolepis" \o "Calotes liolepis)*). Many species of skinks, geckos, frogs and toads also inhabit the forest.  Some Sri Lanka wet zone butterflies are present. Other invertebrate include giant forest scorpions *[Heterometrus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heterometrus" \o "Heterometrus)* spp., spiders such as the poisonous Sri Lankan ornamental tarantula (*Poecilotheria fasciata*), fireflies, beetles, jewel bugs, bees and wasps. At least nine species of endemic land snails such as the large *[Acavus superbus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acavus_superbus" \o "Acavus superbus)* live in the forest. |
| Eastern Province | | |
| Eco System Type | Name | Details |
| National Park | Lahugala | **Lahugala Kitulana National Park** ([Sinhala](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinhala_language): ලාහුගල-කිතුලාන ජාතික වනෝද්‍යානය) is one of the smallest national parks in [Sri Lanka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka). Despite its land area, the park is an important habitat for [Sri Lankan elephant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_elephant) and endemic birds of Sri Lanka. The national park contains the reservoirs of Lahugala, Kitulana and Sengamuwa and they are ultimately empties to Heda Oya river. Originally it was designated as a [wildlife sanctuary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildlife_refuge) on July 1 of 1966. Then the protected area was upgraded to a national park on October 31 of 1980. Lahugala Kitulana is situated 318 km east of [Colombo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colombo).  **Flora**  The national park's vegetation is classified into [Sri Lanka dry-zone dry evergreen forests](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_dry-zone_dry_evergreen_forests).Dominant grass species *Sacciolepis interrupta* is a main food source for elephants. Common floral species of the park include *Drypetes sepiaria*, *[Manilkara hexandra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manilkara_hexandra" \o "Manilkara hexandra)*, *[Berrya cordifolia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berrya_cordifolia" \o "Berrya cordifolia)*, [*Vitex pinnata*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vitex_pinnata), *Chloroxylon swietenia*, and the [golden shower tree](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cassia_fistula).  **Fauna**  This national park is traditionally used by elephants as a feeding ground. A herd of 150 individuals is attracted by *Sacciolepis interrupta* grass which is common around the Lahugala tank. Endemic [toque macaque](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toque_macaque), [tufted gray langur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tufted_gray_langur), [sloth bear](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sloth_bear), [golden jackal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_jackal), [rusty-spotted cat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rusty-spotted_cat), [fishing cat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fishing_cat), [Sri Lanka leopard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_leopard), [wild boar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_boar), [Indian muntjac](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_muntjac), [Sri Lankan axis deer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_axis_deer), [Sri Lankan sambar deer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_sambar_deer), [Indian pangolin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_pangolin) and [Indian hare](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_hare) are the other mammals found in the park.  Many wetland birds found in Lahugala Kitulana include [great white pelican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_white_pelican), [purple heron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purple_heron), [painted stork](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Painted_stork), [lesser adjutant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lesser_adjutant), [*Anas*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anas) spp., [white-bellied sea eagle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White-bellied_sea_eagle), [grey-headed fish eagle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey-headed_fish_eagle), [common kingfisher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_kingfisher), [stork-billed kingfisher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stork-billed_kingfisher), [white-throated kingfisher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White-throated_kingfisher).[Spot-billed pelican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spot-billed_pelican), [Asian openbill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_openbill) and [woolly-necked stork](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woolly-necked_stork) are also recorded visiting the wetland. The last recorded sighting of [knob-billed duck](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knob-billed_duck), now thought be extinct in Sri Lanka, occurred in here. [Red-faced malkoha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red-faced_malkoha) and [Sri Lanka spurfowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_spurfowl) are two endemic birds that reside in the park.  Endemic *[Bufo atukoralei](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bufo_atukoralei" \o "Bufo atukoralei)*, *[Fejervarya limnocharis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fejervarya_limnocharis" \o "Fejervarya limnocharis)*, *[Polypedates maculatus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polypedates_maculatus" \o "Polypedates maculatus)*, [Banded bull frog](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banded_bull_frog), and *[Microhyla rubra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microhyla_rubra" \o "Microhyla rubra)* are among the amphibians of the national park. [*Python molurus*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Python_molurus), [Rat snake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rat_snake), *[Chrysopelea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chrysopelea" \o "Chrysopelea)* spp. *[Boiga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boiga" \o "Boiga)* spp., *Dryophis* spp., and [Russell's viper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daboia) are among the notable reptiles. *[Melanochelys trijuga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melanochelys_trijuga" \o "Melanochelys trijuga)* and *[Lissemys punctata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lissemys_punctata" \o "Lissemys punctata)* are two freshwater turtles that inhabit in the tank of Lahugala. Endemic fish species *[Clarias brachysoma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clarias_brachysoma" \o "Clarias brachysoma)* is also dwell in the tank.  **Conservation**  The Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society is initiated a project to establish an [electric fence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electric_fence) to protect four villages adjacent to the southern boundary of the park.[Poaching](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poaching), [logging](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logging), fuelwood collection, [grazing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grazing) are the prominent threats to the park.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lahugala_Kitulana_National_Park#cite_note-Green_1990-2) Development of lower Uva basin is a potential threat to the park as it would increase the cultivated area in turn it would isolate park and its elephant herd. A [jungle corridor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildlife_corridor) is being proposed to link the park with [Gal Oya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gal_Oya_National_Park) and [Kumana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kumana_National_Park" \o "Kumana National Park) National Parks. [Environmentalists](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmentalism) protested against a proposed canal which would have run within the park. They pointed that it is unlawful to allow the construction not just within the park but beyond one kilometre from the park as well. |
|  | Maduru oya | **Maduru Oya National Park** ([Sinhala](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinhala_language): මාදුරු ඔය ජාතික වනෝද්‍යානය, romanized: *Māduru Oya Jātika Vanōdyānaya*; [Tamil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamil_language): மாதுரு ஓயா தேசிய பூங்கா, romanized: *Māturu Ōyā Tēciya Pūṅkā*) is a national park of Sri Lanka, established under the Mahaweli development project and also acts as a [catchment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drainage_basin) of the [Maduru Oya Reservoir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maduru_Oya_Reservoir" \o "Maduru Oya Reservoir). The park was designated on 9 November 1983. Providing a sanctuary to wildlife, especially for elephants and protecting the immediate catchments of five reservoirs are the importance of the park. A community of [Vedda people](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vedda_people), the indigenous ethnic group of Sri Lanka lives within the park boundary in [Henanigala](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Henanigala&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Henanigala (page does not exist)). The park is situated 288 kilometres (179 mi) north-east of [Colombo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colombo).  **Flora**  The park lies entirely in the dry zone although the park's southern boundary is near the intermediate zone. The [climax community](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Climax_community) of the area is [tropical dry mixed evergreen forests](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_dry-zone_dry_evergreen_forests) characterized by *[Drypetes sepiaria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drypetes_sepiaria" \o "Drypetes sepiaria)*, *[Chloroxylon swietenia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chloroxylon_swietenia" \o "Chloroxylon swietenia)*, *[Manilkara hexandra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manilkara_hexandra" \o "Manilkara hexandra)*, *[Pterospermum canescens](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Pterospermum_canescens&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Pterospermum canescens (page does not exist))*, wood apple [*Feronia limonia*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limonia_(plant)), [*Cassia fistula*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cassia_fistula), and *[Dimorphocalyx glabellus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dimorphocalyx_glabellus" \o "Dimorphocalyx glabellus)*. However a majority of the forests within the park had been severely exploited for [shifting cultivation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shifting_cultivation). This has effected in [secondary forests](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secondary_forest) and vast stretches of open plains dominated by grasses. The herbaceous stage is succeeded by shrubs and the thicket stage is characterized by *[Trema orientalis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trema_orientalis" \o "Trema orientalis)*. Among the first trees to appear is *Pterospermum canescens*, *Drypetes sepiaria*, and *Manilkara hexandra*. Maduru Oya Dam is surrounded by parkland, kept by periodic fires. A number of [woody plants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woody_plant) occur around the reservoir.A rare and endemic tree *[Vatica obscura](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vatica_obscura" \o "Vatica obscura)*, the only [Dipterocarpaceae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dipterocarpaceae" \o "Dipterocarpaceae) species to occur in the dry zone, is found in limited locations on the banks of the Maduru Oya and Gallodai Aru. Exotic [teak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teak) *Tectona grandis* is included in the north-eastern region of the park.  **Fauna**  The importance of the park's fauna is its richness, which includes a number of endemic species.Threatened mammal species include [elephant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_elephant) *Elephas maximus*, of which there were 150-200 before the establishment of the park, [sloth bear](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sloth_bear) *Melursus ursinus*, [leopard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leopard) *Panthera pardus*, and [water buffalo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_buffalo) *Bubalus bubalis*. A 2007 study showed that the current elephant population was around 150 to 200. Other mammals are [toque monkey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toque_macaque) *Macaca sinica*, [common langur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tufted_gray_langur) *Presbytis entellus*, [jackal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_jackal) *Canis aureus*, [fishing cat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fishing_cat) *felis viverrina*, [wild boar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_boar) *Sus scrofa*, [Indian muntjac](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_muntjac) *Muntiacus muntjak*, [spotted deer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chital) *Cervus axis*, and [sambar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sambar_(deer)) *C. unicolor*. Small mammals include [porcupine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_crested_porcupine) *Hystrix indica*, [black-naped hare](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_hare) *Lepus nigricollis*, [Indian pangolin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_pangolin) *Manis crassicaudata*, squirrels, rats and mice.[European otter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_otter) *Lutra lutra* has also been reported in the park. Maduru Oya National Park is one of the recorded habitats of the [grey slender loris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey_slender_loris) *Loris lydekkerianus*.  The park's diverse aquatic avifauna includes [painted stork](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Painted_stork) *Mycteria leucocephala*, [white-bellied sea eagle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White-bellied_sea_eagle) *Haliaeetus leucogaster*, [grey pelican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spot-billed_pelican) *Pelecanus philippensis*, [great cormorant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_cormorant) *Phalacrocorax carbo*, and [little cormorant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_cormorant) *P. niger*. Notable forest species are endemic [Sri Lanka junglefowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_junglefowl) *Gallus lafayetii*, the rare [broad-billed roller](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broad-billed_roller) *Eurystomus glaucurus* (possibly the only dry zone haunt), [common tailorbird](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_tailorbird) *Orthotomus sutorius*, [shama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White-rumped_shama" \o "White-rumped shama) *Copsychus malabaricus*, [black-hooded oriole](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-hooded_oriole) *Oriolus xanthornus*, and [woodpecker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown-capped_woodpecker) *Dendrocopos nanus*. Endemic red-faced malkoha (*[Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phaenicophaeus_pyrrhocephalus" \o "Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus)*) also occurs. The reservoirs harbor several species of bird including [Oriental darter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oriental_darter) *Anhinga melanogaster*, [spot-billed pelican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spot-billed_pelican) *Pelecanus philippensis*, [Asian openbill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_openbill) *Anastomus oscitans*, [black-headed ibis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-headed_ibis) *Threskiornis melanocephalus*, and [Eurasian spoonbill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurasian_spoonbill) *Platalea leucorodia*.  Park reptiles include the [Indian star tortoise](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_star_tortoise) (*Geochelone elegans*), [common monitor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varanus_bengalensis) (*Varanus bengalensis*), [water monitor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varanus_salvator) (*Varanus salvator*), [black-tailed python](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Python_molurus) (*Python molurus*), krait (*Bungarus* spp.), [common cobra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naja_naja) (*Naja naja*), [mugger crocodile](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mugger_crocodile) (*Crocodylus palustris*), and [estuarine crocodile](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crocodylus_porosus) (*Crocodylus porosus*). Other reptiles associated with aquatic habits are [Indian black turtle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melanochelys_trijuga) (*Melanochelys trijuga*) and [Indian flap-shelled turtle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lissemys_punctata) (*Lissemys punctata*). Of fishes [barbs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbus) (*Barbus* spp.), [giant gourami](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giant_gourami) (*Osphronemus goramy*), [snakeheads](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snakehead_(fish)) (*[Channa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Channa" \o "Channa)* spp.), [catfish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catfish) (Siluriformes) and exotic [tilapia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oreochromis_mossambicus) (*Tilapia mossambica*) are predominant in the reservoirs.  **Conservation**  Encroachment of the wetland area, [poaching](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poaching), [illegal timber felling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illegal_logging) are serious problems within the national park. The park has been invaded by [alien species](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Introduced_species) [*Lantana camara*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lantana_camara). The Nilgala [jungle corridor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildlife_corridor) has been proposed to link Maduru Oya National Park with [Gal Oya National Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gal_Oya_National_Park) which would provide a more contiguous wildlife habitat. Unplanned colonisation of land in the park by persons expecting to obtain land deeds to land under the Mahaweli development project is showing an increase.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maduru_Oya_National_Park#cite_note-Green-2) This has resulted in a considerable disturbance to the wildlife of the park. Since then the [squatter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squatting) number about 1500 has been resettled in established Mahaweli settlements. As part of Mahaweli Project [Vedda people](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vedda_people) from several villages have been resettled in Henanigala. The removal of Veddas has been widely publicised. Feared effects of the Accelerated Mahaweli Development Programme include conflicting interests between wildlife and settlers in the areas of the park that are bordering the development area: elephants and wild boars raid and damage crops, while cattle and other domesticated animals tress into the park. Constructing dam, tunnels and roads has caused badly scattered landscapes in few villages. Maduru Oya reservoir is covered with the harmful floating weed [*Salvinia molesta*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvinia_molesta). |
|  | Pigon Islands | Pigeon Island National Park is one of the two marine national parks of Sri Lanka. The national park is situated 1 km off the coast of Nilaveli, a coastal town in Eastern Province, encompassing a total area of 471.429 hectares. The island's name derives from the rock pigeon which has colonized it. The national park contains some of the best remaining coral reefs of Sri Lanka.Pigeon Island was designated as a sanctuary in 1963. In 2003 it was redesignated as a national park. This national park is the 17th in Sri Lanka. The island was used as a shooting range during the colonial era.Pigeon Island is one of the several protected areas affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004.  **Flora and Fauna**  The large pigeon island's coral reef fauna is dominated by Acropora spp. with some Montipora spp.Faviidae, Mussidae and Poritidae species dominate the coral reef around the rocky islets. Areas with soft corals such as Sinularia, Lobophyton, and Sarcophyton can also be observed. The coral reef harbors many vertebrates and invertebrates.Many of the 100 species of corals and 300 coral reef fishes recorded around the Trincomalee area are found in the national park. Juvenile and adult blacktip reef shark are seen around the shallow coral areas. Hawksbill turtle, green turtle and olive ridley are the visiting sea turtles of the coral reef. The island is important breeding ground for the rock pigeon.  **Conservation**  Fishing and ornamental fish collection are the main economic usages of the coral reef. The pigeon island is also used as a [scuba diving](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scuba_diving) site. Uncontrolled tourism has resulted in [reef degradation](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Reef_degradation&action=edit&redlink=1) and [loss of biodiversity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loss_of_biodiversity) and fish density. Scientific research was hindered due to the [civil war](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_Civil_War) in the past two decades. A proposed pier between the mainland coast and the island has attracted criticism. |
|  | Kumana  (Yala-East) | **Kumana National Park** in [Sri Lanka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka) is renowned for its [avifauna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bird), particularly its large flocks of migratory [waterfowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waterfowl) and [wading birds](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wader). The park is 391 kilometers (243 mi) southeast of [Colombo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colombo) on Sri Lanka's southeastern coast.Kumana is contiguous with [Yala National Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yala_National_Park" \o "Yala National Park). Kumana was formerly known as **Yala East National Park**, but changed to its present name on 5 September 2006.  The park was closed from 1985 to March 2003 because of the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam) attacks. It was also affected by the [Boxing Day tsunami](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2004_Indian_Ocean_earthquake) in 2004.  **Flora**  The park's wetland areas are surrounded by [dry zone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_Sri_Lanka#Ecological_zones) tropical thorn forest. The inland forest's flora is dominated by *[Manilkara hexandra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manilkara_hexandra" \o "Manilkara hexandra)* ([Sinhalese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinhalese_language) "palu"), *Hemicyclea sepieria*, *Bauhinia racemosa*, [*Cassia fistula*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_shower_tree) ("ehela"), *[Chloroxylon swietenia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chloroxylon_swietenia" \o "Chloroxylon swietenia)* ("burutha"), and *[Salvadora persica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvadora_persica" \o "Salvadora persica)* species.The dominant tree of the Kumana villu is *Sonneratia caseolaris*, while [*Typha angustifolia*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Typha_angustifolia) is the dominant reed. [*Terminalia arjuna*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terminalia_arjuna) trees dominate the riverine forests along the Kumbukkan Oya. The common [aquatic plants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aquatic_plant) of the swamp are colourful *[Ludwigia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwigia_(plant)" \o "Ludwigia (plant))* spp., *[Nelumbo nucifera](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nelumbo_nucifera" \o "Nelumbo nucifera)*, [*Nymphaea pubescens*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nymphaea_pubescens), *[Aponogeton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aponogeton" \o "Aponogeton)* spp. and *[Neptunia oleracea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neptunia_oleracea" \o "Neptunia oleracea)*.  **Fauna**  Kumana Bird Sanctuary, declared in 1938, is included within the Kumana National Park. Kumana is one of the most important bird nesting and breeding grounds in [Sri Lanka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka). 255 species of birds have been recorded in the national park.From April to July tens of thousands of birds [migrate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bird_migration) to the Kumana swamp area. Rare species such as [black-necked stork](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-necked_stork), [lesser adjutant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lesser_adjutant), [Eurasian spoonbill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurasian_spoonbill), and [great thick-knee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_thick-knee) are breeding inhabitants.Waders belonging to families [Scolopacidae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scolopacidae" \o "Scolopacidae) and [Charadriidae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charadriidae" \o "Charadriidae) are among the visitors to the area along with [waterfowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anatidae). [Pintail snipes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pintail_snipe) migrate here flying 9,000 kilometres (5,600 mi) to 11,000 kilometres (6,800 mi) from [Siberia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siberia).[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kumana_National_Park#cite_note-Daily_News_03-06-21-6) [Asian openbill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_openbill), [glossy ibis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossy_ibis), [purple heron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purple_heron), [great egret](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_egret), [Indian pond heron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_pond_heron), [black-crowned night heron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-crowned_night_heron), [intermediate egret](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intermediate_egret), [little egret](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_egret), [spot-billed pelican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spot-billed_pelican), [Indian cormorant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_cormorant), [little cormorant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_cormorant), [common moorhen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_moorhen), [watercock](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Watercock), [purple swamphen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purple_swamphen), [white-breasted waterhen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White-breasted_waterhen), [pheasant-tailed jacana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pheasant-tailed_jacana), [black-winged stilt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-winged_stilt), [lesser whistling duck](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lesser_whistling_duck) and [little grebe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_grebe) are the bird species migrate here in large flocks.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kumana_National_Park#cite_note-Senarathna_2004-7) Among the rare birds that migrate to the swap are the [yellow-footed green pigeon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow-footed_green_pigeon), [greater racket-tailed drongo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_racket-tailed_drongo), [Malabar trogon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malabar_trogon), [red-faced malkoha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red-faced_malkoha), and [sirkeer malkoha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sirkeer_malkoha" \o "Sirkeer malkoha). [Pacific golden plover](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_golden_plover), [greater sand plover](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_sand_plover), [lesser sand plover](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lesser_sand_plover), [grey plover](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey_plover), [ruddy turnstone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruddy_turnstone), [little ringed plover](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_ringed_plover), [wood sandpiper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wood_sandpiper), [marsh sandpiper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marsh_sandpiper), [common redshank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_redshank), [common sandpiper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_sandpiper), [curlew sandpiper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curlew_sandpiper), [little stint](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_stint), [common snipe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_snipe), and pintail snipe are the common wading birds of the park.  [Tilapia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tilapia) and [mullet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mullet_(fish)) are the commonly fished varieties in the area while *Channa* spp. are also caught occasionally. [Mugger crocodile](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mugger_crocodile), [Indian flap-shelled turtle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lissemys_punctata) and [Indian black turtle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melanochelys_trijuga) are the common reptiles inhabiting the park. Mammals such as [golden jackal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_jackal), [wild boar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_boar), [Sri Lankan elephant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_elephant), [European otter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_otter), and [fishing cat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fishing_cat) also visit the swamp to feed. The number of elephants roaming in the Kumana is estimated at 30–40.  **Physical Features**  Kumbukkan Oya forms the southern boundary of the national park.Some 20 lagoons and tanks support the extensive birdlife of the national park.The lagoons are shallow with depths less than 2 metres (6.6 ft). Kumana villu is subject to occasional inundation with seawater. The elevation of the area ranges from sea level to 90 metres (300 ft). The mean annual temperature is 27.30 °C (81.14 °F) and the area receives 1,300 millimetres (51.18 in) of annual rainfall. |
| Uva Province | | |
| Eco System Type | Name | Details |
| National Park | Udawalawa | Udawalawe National Park lies on the boundary of Sabaragamuwa and Uva Provinces, in Sri Lanka. The national park was created to provide a sanctuary for wild animals displaced by the construction of the Udawalawe Reservoir on the Walawe River, as well as to protect the catchment of the reservoir. The reserve covers 30,821 hectares (119.00 sq mi) of land area and was established on 30 June 1972.Before the designation of the national park, the area was used for shifting cultivation (chena farming). The farmers were gradually removed once the national park was declared. The park is 165 kilometres (103 mi) from Colombo. Udawalawe is an important habitat for water birds and Sri Lankan elephants. It is a popular tourist destination and the third most visited park in the country.  **Ecology**  The habitat surrounding at the reservoir includes [marshes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marsh), the Walawe river and its tributaries, [forests](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forest) and [grasslands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grassland). Dead trees standing in the reservoir are visual reminders of the extent of forest cover before the construction of the [Udawalawe Dam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Udawalawe_Dam" \o "Udawalawe Dam). [Green algae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_algae), including [*Pediastrum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pediastrum) and [*Scenedesmus*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scenedesmus) spp., and [blue green algae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyanobacteria) species such as *Microsystis*, occur in the reservoir. Areas of open grassland are abundant as a result of former chena farming practices. There is a plantation of [teak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teak) beyond the southern boundary, below the dam, which was planted before the declaration of the park. Species recorded from the park include 94 plants, 21 fish, 12 amphibians, 33 reptiles, 184 birds (33 of which are migratory), and 43 mammals. Additionally 135 species of butterflies are among the [invertebrates](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invertebrate) found in Udawalawe.  **Flora**  [*Hopea cordifolia*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hopea_cordifolia), *[Memecylon petiolatum](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Memecylon_petiolatum&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Memecylon petiolatum (page does not exist))*, [*Erythroxylon zeylanicum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Erythroxylon_zeylanicum&action=edit&redlink=1), and [*Jasminum angustifolium*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jasminum_angustifolium) are endemic floral species recorded from the park.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Udawalawe_National_Park#cite_note-iwmi.org-2) *Hopea cordifolia* is found along the river along with [*Terminalia arjuna*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terminalia_arjuna).[*Panicum maximum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panicum_maximum) and *[Imperata cylindrica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperata_cylindrica" \o "Imperata cylindrica)* are important food sources for the elephants. *[Chloroxylon swietenia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chloroxylon" \o "Chloroxylon)*, *[Berrya cordifolia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berrya_cordifolia" \o "Berrya cordifolia)*, [*Diospyros ebenum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diospyros_ebenum), [*Adina cordifolia*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haldina), [*Vitex pinnata*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vitex_pinnata), *[Schleichera oleosa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schleichera_oleosa" \o "Schleichera oleosa)*, and [*Diospyros ovalifolia*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diospyros_ovalifolia) are the common taller trees. [*Terminalia bellirica*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terminalia_bellirica) and [*Phyllanthus emblica*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phyllanthus_emblica) are plants of [medicinal value](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbalism) found in the forest. [*Cymbopogon confertiflorus*](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cymbopogon_confertiflorus&action=edit&redlink=1) grass species and *[Grewia tiliifolia](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Grewia_tiliifolia&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Grewia tiliifolia (page does not exist))* bushes are common in the grasslands.  **Fauna**  **Mammals**  Udawalawe is an important habitat for [Sri Lankan elephants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_elephant), which are relatively hard to see in its open habitats. Many elephants are attracted to the park because of the Udawalawe reservoir, with a herd of about 250 believed to be permanently resident. The [Udawalawe Elephant Transit Home](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Udawalawe_Elephant_Transit_Home" \o "Udawalawe Elephant Transit Home) was established in 1995 for the purpose of looking after abandoned elephant calves within the park. A total of nine calves, on two occasions in 1998 and 2000, with another eight calves in 2002, were released in the park when old enough to fend for themselves.  The [rusty-spotted cat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rusty-spotted_cat), [fishing cat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fishing_cat) and [Sri Lankan leopard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_leopard) are members of the family [Felidae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felidae) present in Udawalawe. The [Sri Lankan sloth bear](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_sloth_bear) is seldom seen because of its rarity. [Sri Lankan sambar deer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_sambar_deer), [Sri Lankan axis deer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_axis_deer), [Indian muntjac](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_muntjac), [Sri Lankan spotted chevrotain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_spotted_chevrotain), [wild boar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_boar) and [water buffalo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_buffalo) are among other mammal species. [Golden jackal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_jackal), [Asian palm civet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_palm_civet), [toque macaque](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toque_macaque), [tufted grey langur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tufted_grey_langur) and [Indian hare](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_hare) also inhabit the park. A study conducted in 1989 found that considerable numbers of [golden palm civets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_palm_civet) inhabit the forests of Udawalawe.Five species of [mice](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mouse) also have been recorded from the park. The endemic [Ceylon spiny mouse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ceylon_spiny_mouse), known from [Yala National Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yala_National_Park" \o "Yala National Park), was recorded in Udawalawe in 1989. [Indian bush rat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_bush_rat) and three species of [mongoose](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mongoose) are also recorded in the national park.  **Birds**  Udawalawe is also a good [birdwatching](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birdwatching) site. Endemics such as [Sri Lanka spurfowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_spurfowl), [red-faced malkoha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red-faced_malkoha), [Sri Lanka grey hornbill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_grey_hornbill), [brown-capped babbler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown-capped_babbler), and [Sri Lanka junglefowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_junglefowl) are among of the breeding resident birds. [White wagtail](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_wagtail) and [black-capped kingfisher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-capped_kingfisher) are rare migrants. A variety of water birds visit the reservoir, including [cormorants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cormorant), the [spot-billed pelican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spot-billed_pelican), [Asian openbill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_openbill), [painted stork](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Painted_stork), [black-headed ibis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-headed_ibis) and [Eurasian spoonbill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurasian_spoonbill).  The open parkland attracts [birds of prey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bird_of_prey) such as [white-bellied sea eagle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White-bellied_sea_eagle), [crested serpent-eagle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crested_serpent-eagle), [grey-headed fish eagle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey-headed_fish_eagle), [booted eagle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Booted_eagle), and [changeable hawk-eagle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Changeable_hawk-eagle). Landbirds are in abundance, and include [Indian roller](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_roller), [Indian peafowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_peafowl), [Malabar pied hornbill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malabar_pied_hornbill) and [pied cuckoo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pied_cuckoo).  **Reptiles and Fish**  [Oriental garden lizards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oriental_garden_lizard), [painted-lip lizards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calotes_ceylonensis), [mugger crocodiles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mugger_crocodile), [Asian water monitors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_water_monitor), [Bengal monitors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal_monitor) and 30 species of [snake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snake) are found in the park. *Garra ceylonensis* is an endemic fish species recorded in park. Introduced [*Oreochromis*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oreochromis) spp., [giant gourami](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giant_gourami), [catla](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catla" \o "Catla), and [rohu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rohu) are important food fish species found in the reservoir.  **Conservation**  Clearing [natural forests](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natural_forest) and planting monospecies cultures such as [pine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pine) and [eucalyptus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eucalyptus) are causing reduced water levels in the Walawe river.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Udawalawe_National_Park#cite_note-iwmi.org-2) Encroachment by human settlements, [poaching](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poaching), [illegal logging](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illegal_logging), gem mining, [overgrazing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overgrazing) and chena farming are major threats to the park. [*Lantana camara*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lantana_camara) and *Phyllanthus polyphyllus* are invasive weeds affecting the food plants of the elephants. Occasions of elephants being shot with illegal [muzzleloader](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muzzleloader) guns has been reported. |
|  | Lunugamwehera | **Lunugamvehera National Park** ([Sinhala](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinhala_language): ලුණුගම්වෙහෙර ජාතික වනෝද්‍යානය) in [Sri Lanka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka) was declared in 1995, with the intention of protecting the [catchment area](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drainage_basin) of the [Lunugamvehera reservoir](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Lunugamvehera_reservoir&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Lunugamvehera reservoir (page does not exist)) and wildlife of the area. The [national park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_park) is an important habitat for water birds and elephants. The catchment area is vital to maintain the water levels of the five tanks in the down stream of [Kirindi Oya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kirindi_Oya" \o "Kirindi Oya) and [wetland characteristics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wetland) of [Bundala National Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bundala_National_Park). This national park also serves as a [corridor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildlife_corridor) for elephants to migrate between [Yala National Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yala_National_Park" \o "Yala National Park) and [Udawalawe National Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Udawalawe_National_Park" \o "Udawalawe National Park).The national park is situated 261 km (162 mi) southwest from [Colombo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colombo). After being closed because of the [Sri Lankan civil war](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_civil_war), the national park is now open to the general public.  **Physical Features**  Lunugamvehera is in the [Dry zone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_Sri_Lanka#Ecological_zones) of Sri Lanka, therefore the park is exposed to annual [drought](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drought), relieved by the [south western monsoon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monsoon#South_Asian_monsoon). The elevation of the park is 91 metres (299 ft). Out of 23,498 hectares of total land area 14 percent, that is 3283 ha, is land under the reservoir. Another 50 ha are two smaller reservoirs. Nearby [Thanamalvila](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thanamalvila_Divisional_Secretariat" \o "Thanamalvila Divisional Secretariat) area receives a 1,000 millimetres (39 in) of annual rainfall. Rainfall decreases from North to South and West to East across the national park. Mean annual temperature of Lunugamvehera is 30 °C (86 °F).  **Flora**  The forest of Lunugamvehera national park characterized by several [forest layers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainforest#Layers). Mosaic of [scrubland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scrubland) and [grassland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grassland) make up these forests. Some of the plant species of the forest are *Drypetes sepiaria*, *[Manilkara hexandra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manilkara_hexandra" \o "Manilkara hexandra)*, *Schleichera oleosa*, *Lannea coromandelica*, *Diospyros ovalifolia*, *Polyalthia korinti*, *Carmona microphylla*, *Croton lacciterus*, and *Coffea wightiana*. Grassland area contains several species of grasses. *Chloris montana*, *[Cynodon dactylon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cynodon_dactylon" \o "Cynodon dactylon)*, [*Panicum maximum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panicum_maximum), *[Imperata cylindrica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperata_cylindrica" \o "Imperata cylindrica)*, [*Lantana camara*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lantana_camara), *[Chromolaena odorata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chromolaena_odorata" \o "Chromolaena odorata)*, [*Mimosa pudica*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mimosa_pudica), *Carmona microphylla*, and *Securinega leucopyrus* are common in abandoned [chena](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chena_(root)) lands. [Teak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teak) and [eucalyptus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eucalyptus) plantations are now common in the forest.  **Fauna**  Fauna of the park includes 21 fish species, 12 amphibians, 33 reptiles, 183 birds and 43 mammals.[Sri Lankan elephant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_elephant), [water buffalo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_buffalo), [Sri Lankan sambar deer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_sambar_deer), [wild boar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_boar), [Sri Lankan spotted chevrotain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_spotted_chevrotain), [grizzled giant squirrel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grizzled_giant_squirrel), [Sri Lankan axis deer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_axis_deer), and [Asian palm civet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_palm_civet) are some of the common mammals.[*Bufo atukoralei*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bufo_atukoralei), and *[Fejervarya pulla](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fejervarya_pulla" \o "Fejervarya pulla)* are endemic among amphibians found in the forest.[Mugger crocodile](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mugger_crocodile) is one of the aquatic reptiles. Large water birds such as [grey heron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey_heron), [black-headed ibis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-headed_ibis), [Asian openbill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_openbill), [painted stork](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Painted_stork), and [spot-billed pelican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spot-billed_pelican) live here.  **Conservation**  Lunugamvehera is one of the [protected areas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protected_area) where [tufted gray langur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tufted_gray_langur) can be found in the wild. It has been reported that several [translocated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translocation_(wildlife_conservation)) elephants are starved to death. |
|  | Galoya | **Gal Oya National Park** in [Sri Lanka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka) was established in 1954 and serves as the main [catchment area](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drainage_basin) for Senanayake Samudraya, the largest reservoir in Sri Lanka. Senanayake Samudraya was built under the Gal Oya development project by [damming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dam) the Gal Oya at Inginiyagala in 1950. An important feature of the Gal Oya National Park is its [elephant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_elephant) herd that can be seen throughout the year. Three important herbs of the [Ayurveda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayurveda) medicine, [triphala](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triphala" \o "Triphala): [*Terminalia chebula*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terminalia_chebula), [*Terminalia bellirica*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beleric) and *[Emblica officinalis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_gooseberry" \o "Indian gooseberry)* are amongst the notable flora of the forest. From 1954 to 1965 the park was administrated by the Gal Oya Development Board until the [Department of Wildlife Conservation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Department_of_Wildlife_Conservation_(Sri_Lanka)) took over administration. The national park is situated 314 km (195 mi) from [Colombo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colombo).  **Physical Features**  The elevation of the park varies from 30 m to about 900 m. Danigala, Nilgala, and Ulpotha are the mountains of the park. Rain is received during the North-eastern monsoon with average annual rainfall of 1,700 millimetres (66.93 in).  Crossing the Senanayake Samudraya by boat from Inginiyagala is an alternative method of accessing the National Park. Bird’s Island in the reservoir is an island used by birds for nesting. Where Gal Oya falls to the reservoir, water flows in a natural tunnel known as Makara Kata (Sinhalese for dragon's mouth) or simply Makara. Thousands of pilgrims visit [Dighavapi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dighavapi" \o "Dighavapi) stupa annually which is also situated in the area. The stupa was built in the 2nd century BC on the site where [Buddha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddha) is supposed to have meditated on his third visit to Sri Lanka. Danigala has a historic importance as it was the home to the [Henebadde Veddas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vedda_people" \o "Vedda people). A rock near the Henebedde cave contains [Brahmi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Br%C4%81hm%C4%AB_script) inscriptions.  **Flora and Fauna**  The vegetation of the forest is of three types: [forest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forest), [shrub](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shrub) and [grassland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grassland" \o "Grassland).The national park contains a substantial area of [savannah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Savannah) grasslands known as thalawa in [Sinhalese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinhala_language) and mountainous grasslands known as pathana. Thalawa grassland is dominated by [rough grass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rough_pasture) species, [*Cymbopogon nardus*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cymbopogon_nardus) ("mana") and *[Imperata cylindrica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperata_cylindrica" \o "Imperata cylindrica)* ("iluk"). The burnt thalawa grasslands are known as the Damana grasslands and are used for cattle [grazing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grazing) by villagers. Rare plants of [medicinal value](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbalism) such as [*Pterocarpus marsupium*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pterocarpus_marsupium), *[Careya arborea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Careya_arborea" \o "Careya arborea)*, and [*Cassia fistula*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_shower_tree) are also found in the forest. *[Berrya cordifolia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berrya_cordifolia" \o "Berrya cordifolia)*, [longan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longan" \o "Longan), *[Mangifera zeylanica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mangifera_zeylanica" \o "Mangifera zeylanica)*, [*Diospyros*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diospyros) spp., [*Ziziphus*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ziziphus) spp. and *Mallotus repandus* ("wal keppetiya") are the common floral species.  32 terrestrial mammals have been recorded in the park.The [Sri Lankan elephant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_elephant), [Sri Lankan axis deer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_axis_deer), [muntjac](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_muntjac), [water buffalo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_buffalo), [Sri Lankan sambar deer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_sambar_deer), [Sri Lanka leopard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_leopard), [toque monkey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toque_macaque) and [wild boar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_boar) are among them. Included amongst the reptile species of the park are the [mugger crocodile](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mugger_crocodile) and [star tortoise](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_star_tortoise). More than 150 species of birds have been recorded in Gal Oya. The [lesser adjutant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lesser_adjutant), [spot-billed pelican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spot-billed_pelican) and [red-faced malkoha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red-faced_malkoha) are some of the park's resident birds. The [Indian cormorant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_cormorant), [Oriental darter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oriental_darter), [grey heron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey_heron), and [lesser whistling duck](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lesser_whistling_duck) are among the common water birds of the Senanayake reservoir. The [white-bellied sea eagle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White-bellied_sea_eagle), and [grey-headed fish eagle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey-headed_fish_eagle) are the notable [raptors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bird_of_prey) of the area. Gal Oya National Park's butterfly species include the endemic [lesser albatross](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appias_wardii).  **Threats and Conservation**  [Illegal logging](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illegal_logging) has cleared 30 acres (120,000 m2) of the forest. Smuggling of medicinal plants also has been recorded. Inadequate [ranger staff](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Park_ranger) has made it difficult to prevent these crimes. The actions of the [Department of Wildlife Conservation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Department_of_Wildlife_Conservation_(Sri_Lanka)) themselves came under criticism after the department failed to send a [veterinary surgeon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veterinary_surgeon) to attend an injured elephant. A [jungle corridor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildlife_corridor) has been proposed between Gal Oya and Maduru Oya National Parks. |
| Biosphere Reserve | Nilgala Conservation Forest Area | Nilagala Forest lies bordering Gal Oya National Park and covers a catchment area of Senanayake Samudraya. Gal Oya which is one of the main water sources of Senanayake Samudraya falls to reservoir from the Nilgala.  ‘Nilgala’ literally means ‘blue rock’. According to Gunatilleke & Gunatilleke (1990) the major vegetation type is lowland tropical dry mixed evergreen forest. The general climatic conditions in the Nilgala area can be described as moderately cool, turning humid during the northeast monsoon season. The Nilgala forest comes under both Department of Wildlife Conservation and the Department of Forest Conservation. About 9000 hectares in the Eastern region comes under the Wildlife Department. This area is accessible to general public. About 13,000 hectares of the forest belong to the Forest Department and no road network or facilities exists to enter this area. The total area of the Nilagala Forest including the surrounding savanna grasslands is around 26,000 hectares.  The access to the Nilagala Forest is between Bibile – Inginiyagala Road. The turn off is at Bulupitiya which is 42 kms from Inginiyagala and 21 km from Bibile town.  The forest office maintains 4 camping sites. Seenukgala Camping Site which is close to the forest office, Mahadorowwa camp site and Paraviyan Ara camp site and the Makara camping site.  There is also bungalow which comes under Gal Oya National Park located at Lokgaloya. This bunglow has a capacity for 10.  Nilgala has 3 jeep tracks. One from Nilgala to Makara, another to Pothuliyadda through Mullegama, Thumbarenuwa and Kebellabokka and the third to Mahawela through Dimbuldena and Kotabowa.  The place which the Gal Oya river disappear the Senanayake Samudraya is called Makara. That name has its origin in the fact that there is a natural tunnel located at this place. Legend has it that the original name was “Makara Kata” or Dragon’s Mouth, coined because the water goes through the tunnel. The Makara Kata had become simply Makara with time. There is no Makara Kata to be seen now, since the sand where the Kakara Kata was located has all been washed away around five years ago. Now all you can see are huge rocks, between 20 and 50 feet tall and the place where the Makara Kata used to be. Makara is also accessible by boat starting from the Senanayake Samudraya dam.  the major vegetation type of the Nigala Forest is lowland tropical dry mixed evergreen forest. Commonly found trees include Aralu (Terminalia chebula), Bulu (Terminalia bellirica) and Nelli (Phyllanthus emblica). Other  trees such as Kumbuk (Terminalia arjuna), Kon (Schleichera oleosa) and Kaluwara (Diospyros ebenum) are also present. Savana grassland areas consist of Kudumberiya, Kukurumana, Pangirimana, Mana, Iluk and similar.  The forest consists of its share of larger animals from elephants to dear to Buffaloes, the park is more popular with bird watchers.  This forest consist of 4 main peaks Nilgala, Danigala, Yakunnahela, Kahata Aththa Hela and Makadakanda. The Nilgala peak stands out of the rest with its odd shape.  No study has been done on the archaeological value of the Nilgala Forest so far. Some of the know remains consist of a part of a ancient structure which stumps of about 25 stone pillars and the Mukkaru Sohona which can be seen on the Makara Route.  Andagala is another location where ruins of a possible castle has been located. A bed carved from a rock gives its name and you can see works with massive granite blocks including part of a protective wall is scattered every where. Equally prominent are the works of the treasure hunters who has had a free ride among these ruins.  The ruins of a ancient cave temple at Kahata Aththa Hela known as Kahata Aththa Hela Purana Gal Ge is another archaeological site in the forest. Around this lena you will see more ruins scatted around.  At Andayampola remains of a possible ancient fortress can be also seen. Unfortunately no formal archaeological study has been carried out on these sites other than by treasure hunters. |
| North Central | | |
| Eco System Type | Name | Details |
| Strict Nature Resever | Ritigala |  |
| National Park | Kaudulla | **Kaudulla National Park** is a [national park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_park) on the island of [Sri Lanka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka) located 197 kilometres (122 mi) away from the largest city, [Colombo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colombo). It was designated a national park on April 1, 2002 becoming the 15th such area on the island. In the 2004–2005 season more than 10,000 people visited the National Park, generating an income of Rs.100,000 from entrance fees. Along with [Minneriya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minneriya_National_Park" \o "Minneriya National Park) and Girithale [BirdLife International](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BirdLife_International" \o "BirdLife International) have identified Kaudulla as an [Important Bird Area](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Important_Bird_Area).  Historically Kaudulla was one of the 16 [irrigation tanks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irrigation_tank) built by King [Mahasen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahasena_of_Sri_Lanka" \o "Mahasena of Sri Lanka). Following a period of abandonment it was reconstructed in 1959. It now attracts and supports a variety of plant and animal life, including large mammals, fish and reptiles.  **Physical Features**  The region receives an annual rainfall of 1,500–2,000 millimetres (59–79 in) including rain from the north-east [monsoon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monsoon). A dry period persists from April to October. Temperature ranges from 20.6 °C (69.1 °F) to 34.5 °C (94.1 °F). Many plant and grass species grow well during the rainy season whilst an abundance of food and water, even in the dry period, attracts a large number of [herbivorous](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbivore) mammals to the park.  **Flora**  The vegetation of the park represents Sri Lanka's [dry evergreen forests](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_dry-zone_dry_evergreen_forests). Chena cultivation and grasslands surround the tank area.The community of [phytoplankton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phytoplankton) in the Kaudulla tank includes [blue green algae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyanobacteria), [*Microcystis*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microcystis)*spp.* and [diatoms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diatom) such as *[Melosira](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Melosira&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Melosira (page does not exist)) spp.*. *[Manilkara hexandra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manilkara_hexandra" \o "Manilkara hexandra)*, *[Chloroxylon swietenia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chloroxylon" \o "Chloroxylon)* and *Vitex altissima* are the dominant tree species in the forest surrounding the tank. Bushes such as *Randia dumetorum*, and [*Calotropis gigantea*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calotropis_gigantea) and grasses such as *[Imperata cylindrica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperata_cylindrica" \o "Imperata cylindrica)*, and [*Panicum maximum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panicum_maximum) are abundant in some areas.  **Fauna**  The faunal species recorded in the park include 24 species of mammals, 25 species of reptiles, 26 species of fish, and 160 species of bird.  In the drought period [Sri Lankan elephants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_elephant) move to the [Minneriya tank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minneriya_tank" \o "Minneriya tank) to drink and feed. Around the month of September the elephants move to the Kaudulla tank in search of more water and food.Despite the escalating human-elephant conflict, the number of elephants increased in the dry zone and 211 individuals have been counted in Kaudulla as recently as 2008.  [Sri Lankan sambar deer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_sambar_deer), [Sri Lankan axis deer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_axis_deer), [chevrotain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moschiola), [wild boar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_boar), [Sri Lankan leopard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_leopard), and [sloth bear](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sloth_bear) are other mammals found in the park. Kaudulla National Park is also one of the sites in which the [gray slender loris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gray_slender_loris) is reportedly found in Sri Lanka.Following the discovery of a two-month-old [albino](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albinism) [Sri Lankan axis deer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_axis_deer) calf abandoned by her mother, it is supposed that Kaudulla is probably the only national park in Sri Lanka to have albino axis deer.  Large water birds such as [spot-billed pelican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spot-billed_pelican) and [lesser adjutant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lesser_adjutant) visit the Kaudulla tank. Fish species in the tank include the freshwater [*Oreochromis mossambicus*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oreochromis_mossambicus). *[Fejervarya pulla](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fejervarya_pulla" \o "Fejervarya pulla)* is an endemic amphibian to Sri Lanka that inhabits the National Park.Freshwater turtles, [Indian flap-shelled turtle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_flap-shelled_turtle) and [Indian black turtle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melanochelys_trijuga) are the noteworthy reptiles.  **Conservation**  It is reported that the spread of [invasive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invasive_species), [alien](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Introduced_species) species such as [*Lantana camara*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lantana_camara) is posing a threat to the wildlife of the park.The Kaudulla-Minneriya [jungle corridor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildlife_corridor) linking Kaudulla to [Minneriya National Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minneriya_National_Park" \o "Minneriya National Park) was declared a Wildlife Sanctuary in 2004. |
|  | Minneriya | **Minneriya National Park** ([Sinhala](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinhala_language): මින්නේරිය ජාතික වනෝද්‍යානය, romanized: *Minnēriya Jātika Vanōdyānaya*; [Tamil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamil_language): மின்னேரியா தேசிய வனம், romanized: *Miṉṉēriyā Tēciya Vaṉam*) is a [national park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_park) in [North Central Province](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Central_Province,_Sri_Lanka) of [Sri Lanka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka). The area was designated as a national park on 12 August 1997, having been originally declared as a [wildlife sanctuary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildlife_refuge) in 1938.The reason for declaring the area as protected is to protect the [catchment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drainage_basin) of [Minneriya tank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minneriya_tank" \o "Minneriya tank) and the wildlife of the surrounding area. The tank is of historical importance, having been built by King [Mahasen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahasena_of_Sri_Lanka" \o "Mahasena of Sri Lanka) in third century AD. The park is a dry season feeding ground for the [elephant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_elephant) population dwelling in forests of [Matale](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matale_District" \o "Matale District), [Polonnaruwa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polonnaruwa_District), and [Trincomalee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trincomalee_District) districts. The park earned revenue of Rs. 10.7 million in the six months ending in August 2009.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minneriya_National_Park#cite_note-Sriyananda_2009-2) Along with [Kaudulla](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaudulla_National_Park" \o "Kaudulla National Park) and Girithale, Minneriya forms one of the 70 [Important Bird Areas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Important_Bird_Area) (IBAs) of Sri Lanka.The park is situated 182 kilometres (113 mi) from [Colombo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colombo).  **Physical Features**  The area is situated in [dry zone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_Sri_Lanka#Ecological_zones) of Sri Lanka and receives an average rainfall of 1,500–2,000 millimetres (59–79 in).The lowest temperature and highest of the park are 20.6 °C (69.1 °F) and 34.5 °C (94.1 °F) respectively.The main sources of water for the tank are a diversion of Amban River and Elahera canal. The wet season lasts during the north eastern monsoon from October to January and from May to September considered as the dry season. The main habitats of Minneriya are of several types, including [low-canopy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canopy_(biology)) montane forests, intermediate high-canopy [secondary forests](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secondary_forest), [scrublands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shrubland), abandoned [chena](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shifting_cultivation) lands, [grasslands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grassland), [rocky outcrops](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outcrop), and [wetlands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wetland).  **Flora**  [*Terminalia arjuna*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terminalia_arjuna), *[Manilkara hexandra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manilkara_hexandra" \o "Manilkara hexandra)*, [neem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neem) *(Azadirachta indica)*, [sacred fig](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacred_fig) *(Ficus religiosa)* and *[Piliostigma racemosum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piliostigma_racemosum" \o "Piliostigma racemosum)* are commonly found in the area around the Minneriya tank. [*Chloroxylon swietenia*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chloroxylon_swietenia), [*Vitex altissima*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vitex_altissima), *[Berrya cordifolia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berrya_cordifolia" \o "Berrya cordifolia)*, [*Diospyros quaesita*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diospyros_quaesita), and *[Drypetes sepiaria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drypetes_sepiaria" \o "Drypetes sepiaria)* are dominant plant species in Minneriya.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minneriya_National_Park#cite_note-Senaratna_2004-4) *[Randia dumetorum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Randia_dumetorum" \o "Randia dumetorum)*, [crotons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Croton_(plant)), and [*Calotropis gigantea*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calotropis_gigantea) are common in abandoned [chena](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amorphophallus_paeoniifolius) cultivations and scrublands. Plantations of [eucalyptus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eucalyptus) and [teak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teak), established by the [Department of Forest Conservation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Department_of_Forest_Conservation_(Sri_Lanka)), can be seen within the park. [Monocots](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monocotyledon) and grass species include *[Bambusa bambos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bambusa_bambos" \o "Bambusa bambos)*, Ceylon date palm *(*[*Phoenix pusilla*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phoenix_pusilla)*)*, *[Imperata cylindrica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperata_cylindrica" \o "Imperata cylindrica)*, and [*Panicum maximum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panicum_maximum).  **Fauna**  The national park's faunal species include 24 species of mammals, 160 species of birds, 9 species of amphibians, 25 species of reptiles, 26 species of fish, and 75 species of butterflies.  **Elephant Gathering**  Large numbers of [Sri Lankan elephants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_elephant) are attracted to grass fields on the edges of the reservoir during the dry season.The Minneriya tank contributes to sustain a large herd. Elephants gathered here is numbering around 150-200.Some reports account number of elephants to as high as 700.They migrate here from [Wasgamuwa National Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wasgamuwa_National_Park" \o "Wasgamuwa National Park) and benefit from food and shelter of the park's forest. Tourists visit Minneriya largely because of elephants, especially in dry season.  **Other Animals**  The park is an important habitat for the two endemic [monkeys](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_World_monkey) of Sri Lanka: [purple-faced langur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purple-faced_langur) and [toque macaque](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toque_macaque).[Large](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megafauna) [herbivorous mammals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbivore) such as [Sri Lankan sambar deer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_sambar_deer) and [Sri Lankan axis deer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_axis_deer) frequent the park. Rare and endangered species such as [Sri Lankan leopard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_leopard) and [Sri Lankan sloth bear](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_sloth_bear) inhabit in Minneriya. Minneriya is one of the areas where the [gray slender loris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gray_slender_loris) is reportedly found in Sri Lanka.  The Minneriya reservoir is an important habitat for large water birds such as [lesser adjutant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lesser_adjutant), [painted stork](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Painted_stork), and [spot-billed pelican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spot-billed_pelican). Minneriya is a [dormitory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dormitory) for many resident as well as migrant bird species. Flocks of 2000 [little cormorants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_cormorant) have been reported.[Great white pelican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_white_pelican), [ruddy turnstone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruddy_turnstone), and [grey heron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey_heron) are the other water birds here. Among the endemic birds are [Sri Lanka junglefowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_junglefowl), [Sri Lanka hanging parrot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_hanging_parrot), [brown-capped babbler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown-capped_babbler), [Sri Lanka grey hornbill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_grey_hornbill), [black-crested bulbul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-crested_bulbul) and [crimson-fronted barbet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crimson-fronted_barbet). The number of [threatened](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Threatened_species) birds recorded from this national park is 11.  Amphibians of *[Fejervarya pulla](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fejervarya_pulla" \o "Fejervarya pulla)* and *[Polypedates cruciger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polypedates_cruciger" \o "Polypedates cruciger)* have been recorded from the area. There are eight species of endemic reptiles, and all of them are considered threatened.[Painted-lip lizard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calotes_ceylonensis) and *Lankascincus fallax* are among them. [Saltwater crocodile](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saltwater_crocodile), [Indian python](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Python_molurus), [Asian water monitor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_water_monitor), and [Bengal monitor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal_monitor) are among the other reptiles. Four of the fresh water fishes recorded from Minneriya are endemic to Sri Lanka.  **Conservation and Threats**  The main threat to the park's forest is clearance for [firewood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Firewood) and the practice might be resulted in decreasing the levels of water of the reservoir. [Water pollution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_pollution) in bathing areas, encroachment, illegal agricultural practices, [overfishing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overfishing), [poaching](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poaching) are the other threats caused by man. Spread of [invasive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invasive_species) [*Lantana camara*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lantana_camara) is a natural threat. The area is also part of Minneriya-Giritale Nature Reserve which declared in four stages from 1988 to 1997. Conservative measures including habitat restoration and removing livestock from the area, have been proposed. |
|  | Somawathiya | **Somawathiya National Park** is one of the four [national parks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_park) designated under the [Mahaweli River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahaweli_River) development project.[Somawathiya Chaitya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somawathiya_Chaitya), a [stupa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stupa) said to be containing a [relic of the tooth of the Buddha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Relic_of_the_tooth_of_the_Buddha), is situated within the park.The park was created on 2 September 1986, having been originally designated a wildlife sanctuary on 9 August 1966.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somawathiya_National_Park#cite_note-Green-4) The park is home to many [megaherbivores](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megafauna).The national park is located 266 kilometres (165 mi) north-east of [Colombo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colombo).  **Physical Features**  Somawathiya National Park lies in the [deltaic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_delta) [flood plains](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Floodplain) of the [Mahaweli River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahaweli_River) and contains the junction where it is forked into two branches.The two branches are the Mahaweli River, which flows north into Koddiyar bay and the lesser Verugal Oya which flows north-east into the sea. The central riparian flood plain is featured by many old river channels and contain dispersed 'villus', the waterfilled basins around among the grassy plains. There are 20 such villus is located in the park.Somawathiya and Flood plains national parks are important protected areas for the wetland system of Mahaweli River flood plains. The high-quality habitat of fertile alluvial underlying layer supports a plentiful wildlife.  **Flora**  The waterfilled basins in the central flood plain are featured by the richness and predominance of the water-tolerant grasses and [aquatic plants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aquatic_plant). The distribution of floral species in the villus shows a pattern, which is related to the period of [inundation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flood) and the depth of flooding. On the edges, where wet conditions are temporary and with mild levels of flooding, there are creeping grasses such as *[Cynodon dactylon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cynodon_dactylon" \o "Cynodon dactylon)*. Further towards the centre of the villus where the flooding is lengthier and truly hydrophytic species such as [*Alternanthera sessilis*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alternanthera_sessilis), [*Polygonum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polygonum) spp., *[Jussiaea repens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludwigia_hexapetala" \o "Ludwigia hexapetala)*, [*Ipomoea aquatica*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ipomoea_aquatica), *Monochoria hastata*, and *Scirpus grossus* appear. The most widespread grass species include *Hygroryza aristata*, *Brachiaria mutica*, *[Echinochloa colonum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Echinochloa_colona" \o "Echinochloa colona)*, *Paspalum vaginatum*, *Digitaria longiflora*, and *[Paspalidium](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paspalidium" \o "Paspalidium)* spp. In a little deeper water, floating aquatic plants occur along with *[Nelumbo nucifera](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nelumbo_nucifera" \o "Nelumbo nucifera)*. Still in deeper water an association of manel [*Nymphaea stellata*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nymphaea_nouchali) and the submerged aquatic plant *[Ceratophyllum demersum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ceratophyllum_demersum" \o "Ceratophyllum demersum)* present. Some floating plants are common in all zones of the villus. Some tree species occur in the edges of the villus are [*Terminalia arjuna*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terminalia_arjuna), *[Madhuca longifolia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhuca_longifolia" \o "Madhuca longifolia)*, *[Barringtonia asiatica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barringtonia_asiatica" \o "Barringtonia asiatica)*, *[Mitragyna parvifolia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitragyna_parvifolia" \o "Mitragyna parvifolia)*, [*Erythrina variegata*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erythrina_variegata), and [*Hibiscus tiliaceus*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hibiscus_tiliaceus). In the northern region of the park, the forest trees teeming with species such as *Drypetes sepiaria*, *[Berrya cordifolia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berrya_cordifolia" \o "Berrya cordifolia)*, *Diospyros ovalifolia*, *Dimorphocalyx glabellus*, *Pterospermum canescens*, *[Manilkara hexandra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manilkara_hexandra" \o "Manilkara hexandra)* and *[Mitragyna parvifolia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitragyna_parvifolia" \o "Mitragyna parvifolia)*.  **Fauna**  The importance of ecology of the park is due mainly to the wide occurrence of [elephants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_elephant) *Elephas maximus* estimated at about 400 within the protected area and adjacent surroundings and the rich avifauna. Although a 2007 study showed a much smaller herd of elephants in Somawathiya, 50-100 of individuals.Other notable mammalian species include [jackal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_jackal) *Canis aureus*, [fishing cat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fishing_cat) *felis viverrina*, [rusty-spotted cat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rusty-spotted_cat) *felis rubiginosa*, [leopard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leopard) *Panthera pardus*, [wild boar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_boar) *Sus scrofa*, [sambar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sambar_(deer)) *Cervus unicolor*, [water buffalo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_buffalo) *Bubalus bubalis*, [porcupine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_crested_porcupine) *Hystrix indica*, and [black-naped hare](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_hare) *Lepus nigricollis*.  The flood plain marshes are rich with avifauna.Around 75 migrant species winter in the marshes. Usual migrants include [garganey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garganey) *Anas querquedula*, [marsh sandpiper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marsh_sandpiper) *Tringa stagnatilis*, [wood sandpiper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wood_sandpiper) *T. glareola*, [pintail snipe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pintail_snipe) *Gallinago stenura*, [whiskered tern](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whiskered_tern) *Chlidonias hybridus*, and [black-tailed godwit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-tailed_godwit) *Limosa limosa*. Resident birds are [painted stork](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Painted_stork) *Ibis leucocephala*, [openbill stork](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_openbill) *Anastomus oscitans*, [little egret](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_egret) *Egretta garzetta*, [cattle egret](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cattle_egret) *Bubulens ibis*, [pond heron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_pond_heron) *Ardeola grayii*, [pheasant-tailed jacana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pheasant-tailed_jacana) *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*, [purple gallinule](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purple_swamphen) *Porphyrio porphyrio*, [white ibis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-headed_ibis) *Threskiornis melanocephalus*, and [black-winged stilt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-winged_stilt) *Himantopus himantopus*. Within the forest area the following birds are seen, [crimson-fronted barbet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crimson-fronted_barbet) *Megalaima haemacephala*, [common peafowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_peafowl) *Pavo cristatus*, [Malabar pied hornbill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malabar_pied_hornbill) *Anthracoceros coronatus*, [thick-billed flowerpecker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thick-billed_flowerpecker) *Dicaeum agile*, [common iora](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_iora) *Aegithina tiphia*, [junglefowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_junglefowl) *Gallus lafayetii*, and [golden-fronted leafbird](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden-fronted_leafbird) *Chloropsis aurifrons*. While [barred buttonquail](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barred_buttonquail) *Turnix suscitator* frequents the open areas, marshy northern area is visited by [woolly-necked stork](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woolly-necked_stork) *Ciconia episcopus*, [crested hawk eagle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Changeable_hawk-eagle) *Spizaetus cirrhatus*, [grey-headed fish eagle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey-headed_fish_eagle) *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus*, [pied kingfisher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pied_kingfisher) *Ceryle rudis*, [crested serpent-eagle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crested_serpent-eagle) *Spilornis cheela*, and [painted stork](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Painted_stork) *Ibis leucocephala*.  **Conservation**  Although the park area has been greatly exploited once the human activity is removed the regeneration will be quick, because of the [moisture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moisture) and high [carrying capacity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carrying_capacity) of the villus.Both [Flood Plains National Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flood_Plains_National_Park) and Somawathiya National Park are excessively important for migratory and resident [waterfowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waterfowl). In general, the park has been much neglected. Although an overall systems plan is in place for protected areas within the Mahaweli Region. Until the area was incorporated into the Mahaweli Environment Project was unmanaged and unprotected to a great extent. The forests of the area have been cleared for cultivation, following the move in of the tobacco cultivators with their cattle. Tobacco cultivators enters annually with several heads of cattle. [Deforestation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deforestation) has been more extensive since the mid-1970s. [Illegal logging](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illegal_logging), tobacco cultivation and [grazing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grazing) by cattle was scheduled to reduce gradually with the declaration of the park. |
|  | Wasgamuwa | **Wasgamuwa National Park** is a natural park in [Sri Lanka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka) situated in the Matale and Polonnaruwa Districts . It was declared to protect and to make a refuge for the displaced wild animals during the [Mahaweli Development Project](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahaweli_Development_programme) in 1984 and is one of the four National Parks designated under the Project.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wasgamuwa_National_Park#cite_note-Senarathna_2004-1) Originally it was designated as a [nature reserve](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nature_reserve) in 1938, and then in the early 1970s the area was regraded as a strict nature reserve. Wasgamuwa is one of protected areas where [Sri Lankan Elephants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_Elephant) can be seen in large herds. It is also one of the [Important Bird Areas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Important_Bird_Area) in Sri Lanka. The name of the Wasgamuwa has derived through the words "Walas Gamuwa". "Walasa" is [Sinhala](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinhala_language) for [sloth bear](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sloth_bear) and "Gamuwa" means a wood. The park is situated 225 km away from [Colombo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colombo).  **Physical Features**  The National Park's annual daily temperature is 28 °C (82 °F) and has a [dry zone climate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_Sri_Lanka#Ecological_zones). Annual rainfall ranges between 1650–2100 mm. Rain is received during the north-eastern monsoon, from October to January. July–September is the dry season. Highest elevation of the National Park is Sudu Kanda (White mountain), which is 470 metres (1,540 ft) of height. The soil of the national park contains [quartz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quartz) and [marble](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marble). The forests of Wasgamuwa represent [Sri Lanka dry-zone dry evergreen forests](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_dry-zone_dry_evergreen_forests). The park consists of [primary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old-growth_forest), [secondary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secondary_forest), riverine forests and [grasslands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grassland).  **Flora**  Wasgamuwa National Park exhibits one of the highest [biodiversity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biodiversity) among the protected areas in Sri Lanka. More than 150 floral species have recorded from the park. *[Cryptocoryne walkeri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cryptocoryne_walkeri" \o "Cryptocoryne walkeri)* and *[Munronia pumila](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Munronia_pumila&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Munronia pumila (page does not exist))* are two plants with [economic value](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_botany). Reservoirs and riverine forests support large number of fauna species. The forest consists of several layers. *[Chloroxylon swietenia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chloroxylon_swietenia" \o "Chloroxylon swietenia)*, *[Manilkara hexandra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manilkara_hexandra" \o "Manilkara hexandra)*, *[Elaeodendron glaucum](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Elaeodendron_glaucum&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Elaeodendron glaucum (page does not exist))*, *[Pterospermum canescens](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Pterospermum_canescens&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Pterospermum canescens (page does not exist))*, [*Diospyros ebenum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diospyros_ebenum), *[Holoptelea intergrifolia](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Holoptelea_intergrifolia&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Holoptelea intergrifolia (page does not exist))*, *[Pleurostylia opposita](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pleurostylia_opposita" \o "Pleurostylia opposita)*, [*Vitex altissima*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vitex_altissima), *[Drypetes sepiaria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drypetes_sepiaria" \o "Drypetes sepiaria)*, and *[Berrya cordifolia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berrya_cordifolia" \o "Berrya cordifolia)* are dominant trees in the emergent layer. *[Polyalthia korinti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polyalthia_korinti" \o "Polyalthia korinti)*, *[Diplodiscus verrucosus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diplodiscus_verrucosus" \o "Diplodiscus verrucosus)*, *[Limonia acidissima](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limonia_acidissima" \o "Limonia acidissima)*, [*Cassia roxburghii*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cassia_roxburghii) and *[Strobilanthes stenoden](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Strobilanthes_stenoden&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Strobilanthes stenoden (page does not exist))* are common in other strata. Some 1,700 years old tamarind tree, "Oru Bendi Siyambalawa" (Sinhala for Canoes-Moored-[Tamarind](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamarind)) was situated in the park.  **Fauna**  Wasgamuwa National Park is home to 23 species of [mammals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mammal). The park is inhabited by a herd of 150 [Sri Lankan elephants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_elephant). Marsh elephant (*Elephas maximus vil-aliya*) roams in the Mahaweli river area. Both monkeys found in the park, [purple-faced langur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purple-faced_langur) and [toque macaque](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toque_macaque), are endemic to Sri Lanka. While [water buffalo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_buffalo) and [Sri Lankan axis deer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_axis_deer) are common to observe, [Sri Lanka leopard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_leopard) and [sloth bear](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sloth_bear) are rare. Small [golden palm civet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_palm_civet) is another rare endemic mammal.  The number of bird species recorded from the park is 143. This includes 8 endemic species. Endemic [red-faced malkoha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red-faced_malkoha) is a resident bird in this national park. [Sri Lanka junglefowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_junglefowl) is another endemic bird inhabits the park. [Lesser adjutant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lesser_adjutant), [yellow-fronted barbet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow-fronted_barbet), and [Sri Lanka spurfowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_spurfowl) are the species that visit the reservoirs and streams of the national park. [Peafowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peafowl), [painted stork](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Painted_stork), [black-headed ibis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-headed_ibis) and [Eurasian spoonbill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurasian_spoonbill) are the park's other aquatic birds. Rare [Sri Lanka frogmouth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_frogmouth) can be found here. Another rare species, [chestnut-winged cuckoo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chestnut-winged_cuckoo), is seen near the Mahaweli river.  Endemic and [endangered](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endangered_species) *[Fejervarya pulla](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fejervarya_pulla" \o "Fejervarya pulla)* is one of the eight species of amphibians of the park. Of 17 reptile species recorded in the park, five species are endemic. [Water monitor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Varanus_salvator) and [mugger crocodile](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mugger_crocodile) are common in the waterbodies of the park. Skinks *[Lankascincus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lankascincus" \o "Lankascincus)* spp., lizards *[Calotes ceylonensis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calotes_ceylonensis" \o "Calotes ceylonensis)* and *[Otocryptis wiegmanni](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otocryptis_wiegmanni" \o "Otocryptis wiegmanni)*, and serpent *[Chrysopelea taprobanica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chrysopelea_taprobanica" \o "Chrysopelea taprobanica)* are the endangered reptile species. Endemic *[Garra ceylonensis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garra_ceylonensis" \o "Garra ceylonensis)* and [combtail](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belontia_signata" \o "Belontia signata) are among the 17 fish species reside in the aquatic habitats of the park. Of the park's 50 butterflies, eight species are endemic.  **Conservation**  There is a possibility that wild animals might catch diseases by coming into contact with domestic [cattle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cattle), which are released to park's [grasslands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grassland) by the villagers. Wild animals have to [compete](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Introduced_species) with these cattle as they have occupied the [grazing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grazing) lands and water pools. These cattle also damage the park's [electric fence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electric_fence). [Illegal logging](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illegal_logging) is a major threat and preventing it has been a difficult issue. Elephants damage the properties of the villagers and fatal attacks on them have reported from the park. An elephant transit home is being proposed in the Wasgamuwa National Park. Environmentalists raised concern over proposed resettlement of displaced people from the construction of Moragahakanda reservoir. It is suggested that this resulted in escalating the elephant-human clash. |
|  | Wilpattu | **Wilpattu National Park** (Willu-pattu; Land of Lakes) is a park located on the island of [Sri Lanka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka). The unique feature of this park is the existence of "Willus" (Natural lakes) - Natural, sand-rimmed water basins or depressions that fill with rainwater. Located in the Northwest coast lowland dry zone of Sri Lanka. The park is located 30 km west [Anuradhapura](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anuradhapura) and located 26 km north of [Puttalam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puttalam) (approximately 180 km north of Colombo). The park is 1,317 square kilometers (131, 693 hectares) and ranges from 0 to 152 meters [above sea level](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Above_mean_sea_level). Nearly one hundred and six lakes (Willu) and tanks are found spread throughout Wilpattu. Wilpattu is the largest and one of the oldest [National Parks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_park) in Sri Lanka. Wilpattu is among the top national parks world-renowned for its [leopard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leopard) ([*Panthera pardus kotiya*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_leopard)) population. A remote camera survey was conducted in Wilpattu from July to October 2015 by the Wilderness & Wildlife Conservation Trust. A sample of forty nine individual leopards were photo-captured in the surveyed area and the core area density was between that of [Yala National Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yala_National_Park" \o "Yala National Park)'s Block I and [Horton Plains National Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horton_Plains_National_Park).  From December 1988 to March 16, 2003, the park was closed due to security concerns surrounding the [Sri Lankan Civil War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_Civil_War), before being reopened to visitors 16 years later. Visitor access is currently limited to approximately 25% of the park, the remainder of which is dense forest or scrub. Popular visiting periods spans between the months of February and October, although there are a number of private [eco-tourism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecotourism) groups that conducts [safaris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safari) year round.  **Flora**  There are many types of vegetation to be found in Wilpattu, including littoral vegetation, such as [salt grass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_grass) and low scrub monsoon forest with tall emergents, such as palu (*[Manilkara hexandra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manilkara_hexandra" \o "Manilkara hexandra)*), and satin (*[Chloroxylon swietenia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chloroxylon_swietenia" \o "Chloroxylon swietenia)*), milla ([*Vitex altissima*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vitex_altissima)), weera (*Drypetes sepiaria*), ebony ([*Diospyros ebenum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diospyros_ebenum)) and wewarna (*[Alseodaphne](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alseodaphne" \o "Alseodaphne) semecapriflolia*).  **Fauna**  31 species of [mammals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mammals) have been identified within Wilpattu national park. Mammals that are identified as [threatened species](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Threatened_species) living within the Wilpattu National Park are the [elephant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_elephant) (*Elephas maximus maximus*), [sloth bear](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_sloth_bear) (*Melursus ursinus inornatus*), [leopard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_leopard) (*Panthera pardus kotiya*) and [water buffalo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_buffalo) (*Bubalus bubalis*). [sambhur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_sambar_deer" \o "Sri Lankan sambar deer) (*Rusa unicolor unicolor*), [spotted deer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_axis_deer) (*Axis axis ceylonensis*), mongoose, mouse and shrew are more of Wilpattu's residents.  **Birds**  The [painted stork](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Painted_stork), the open bill, [little cormorant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_cormorant), [Sri Lankan junglefowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_junglefowl) (*Gallus lafayetii*) along with many species of owls, terns, gulls, eagles, kites buzzards are to be found at Wilpattu National Park. Wetland bird species that can be seen in Wilpattu are the [garganey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garganey) (*Anas querquedula*), pintail ([*Anas acuta*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_pintail)), whistling teal (*[Dendrocygna javanica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lesser_whistling_duck" \o "Lesser whistling duck)*), spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*), [black-headed ibis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-headed_ibis) (*Threskiornis malanocephalus*), large white egret (*Egretta alba modesta*), [cattle egret](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cattle_egret) (*Bubulcus ibis*) and [purple heron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purple_heron) (*Ardea purpurea*).  **Reptiles**  The most common reptiles found in the park are the monitor lizard ([*Varanus bengalensis*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bengal_monitor)), [mugger crocodile](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mugger_crocodile) (*Crocodylus palustris*), common cobra (*[Naja naja](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_cobra" \o "Indian cobra)*), rat snake (*[Ptyas mucosus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ptyas_mucosus" \o "Ptyas mucosus)*), Indian python ([*Python molurus*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_python)), pond turtle (*Melanonchelys trijuga*) and the soft shelled turtle (*Lissemys punctata*) which are resident in the large permanent Villus. |
| Sanctuary | Mihinthale | The Mihintale Wildlife Sanctuary, which is believed to be the first sanctuary in the world, is today in a rather neglected state. There are no proper borders demarcating the sanctuary and no measures have been taken to protect its biodiversity. However, the Government has now taken steps to restore this sanctuary to its former state, in connection with the 2550th Buddha Jayanthi celebrations.  Buddhism has a strong link with trees and the environment, with the Buddha being born, attaining Enlightenment and Parinibbana(passing away), all under the shade of trees. By paying His gratitude to the bo tree, which helped Him attain Enlightenment, through the Animisa Lochana pooja, the Buddha displayed the importance of trees, to the whole world.  The first lesson on protecting animals and trees was given to the world by the Buddha. Through the first pansil ‘Panathipatha Veramani Sikkhapadan Samadiyami’, He showed the importance of protecting all living beings. In the Vana Ropa Sutra, the Buddha has explained the importance of planting trees and forests, and the benefits thus accruing.  As a solution to all these problems, a programme has been designed by the Environment Ministry and Biodiversity Unit to conserve these sanctuaries in connection with the 2550th Buddha Jayanthi. Today (June 11) the area will be declared as a highly protected zone, and a monument too will be erected by the Ministry officials.  As a first step, the issue of their boundaries will be resolved. The Biodiversity Unit is also taking steps to name the area as the first sanctuary and to set up a special environmental monument there. Steps will then be taken to conserve and further enhance the biodiversity and environmental diversity of the area.  This project has given us an opportunity to display the glory of our culture and environment to the whole world. 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| Southern Province | | |
| Eco System Type | Name | Details |
| Strict Nature Reserves | Yala Block II |  |
| National Park | Yala | **Yala (යාල) National Park** is the most visited and second largest [national park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_park) in [Sri Lanka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka), bordering the [Indian Ocean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Ocean). The park consists of five blocks, two of which are now open to the public, and also adjoining parks. The blocks have individual names such as, **Ruhuna National Park** (Block 1), and [Kumana National Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kumana_National_Park" \o "Kumana National Park) or 'Yala East' for the adjoining area. It is situated in the southeast region of the country, and lies in [Southern Province](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_Province,_Sri_Lanka) and [Uva Province](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uva_Province" \o "Uva Province). The park covers 979 square kilometres (378 sq mi) and is located about 300 kilometres (190 mi) from [Colombo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colombo). Yala was designated as a [wildlife sanctuary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildlife_refuge) in 1900, and, along with [Wilpattu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilpattu_National_Park" \o "Wilpattu National Park) was one of the first two national parks in Sri Lanka, having been designated in 1938. The park is best known for its variety of wild animals. It is important for the conservation of [Sri Lankan elephants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_elephant), [Sri Lankan leopards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_leopard) and aquatic birds.  There are six national parks and three wildlife sanctuaries in the vicinity of Yala. Among the largest is [Lunugamvehera National Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lunugamvehera_National_Park" \o "Lunugamvehera National Park). The park is situated in the [dry semi-arid climatic region](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_Sri_Lanka#Climate) and rain is received mainly during the [northeast monsoon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monsoon). Yala hosts a variety of [ecosystems](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecosystem) ranging from moist monsoon forests to freshwater and marine [wetlands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wetland). It is one of the 70 [Important Bird Areas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Important_Bird_Area) (IBAs) in Sri Lanka. Yala harbours 215 bird species including six endemic species of Sri Lanka. The number of [mammals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mammal) that has been recorded from the park is 44, and it has one of the highest [leopard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leopard) densities in the world.  The area around Yala has hosted several ancient civilizations. Two important pilgrim sites, **Sithulpahuwa** and **Magul Vihara**, are situated within the park. The [2004 Indian Ocean tsunami](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2004_Indian_Ocean_earthquake_and_tsunami) caused severe damage on the Yala National Park and 250 people died in its vicinity. The number of visitors has been on the rise since 2009, after the security situation in the park improved.  **Physical Features**  The Yala area is mostly composed of [metamorphic rock](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metamorphic_rock) belonging to the [Precambrian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Precambrian) era and classified into two series, Vijayan series and Highland series. Reddish brown soil and low [humic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humus" \o "Humus) grey soil are prominent among six [soil types](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soil_type). Yala is situated in the lowest [peneplain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peneplain) of Sri Lanka, which extends from Trincomalee to Hambantota. Topographically the area is a flat and mildly undulating plain that runs to the coast with elevation is 30 metres (98 ft) close to the coast while rising in the interior to 100–125 metres (328–410 ft). The national park is situated in the [dry semi-arid climatic region](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_Sri_Lanka#Climate) and rain is received mainly during the [northeast monsoon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monsoon). The mean annual rainfall ranges between 500–775 millimetres (19.7–30.5 in) while the mean temperature ranges between 26.4 °C (79.5 °F) in January to 30 °C (86 °F) in April. It is windier in Yala, during the southwest monsoon compared to the wind during the northeast monsoon with wind speeds from 23 kilometres per hour (14 mph) to 15 kilometres per hour (9.3 mph).  Water is abundant after the northeast monsoon, but during the dry season surface water becomes an important factor. The bodies of surface water appear in the forms of [streams](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stream), tanks, waterholes, rock pools, and [lagoons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lagoon). Waterholes occur in low lying places while rock pools of varying size are capable of containing water year-round, and are hence an important source of water for elephants. For many water birds and [water buffaloes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_Buffalo) natural waterholes are ideal habitats. Such reservoirs are largely concentrated to the Block I followed by Block II. Several tanks are there including, Maha Seelawa, Buthawa, Uraniya, and Pilinnawa tanks. Many rivers and streams flow in a southeasterly direction, originating in the highlands of adjacent Uva and central hills. Kumbukkan Oya in the east and Menik River and its tributaries in the west flow across the park, and provide an important water source in the dry season to wild animals of the park. Normally the streams of the park are dry during the [drought](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drought) season. These rivers and streams exhibit a degree of [runoff](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surface_runoff) fluctuations between wet and dry seasons. Kumbukkan Oya [discharges](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discharge_(hydrology)) seven times as much water in the rainy season than in the dry season. A number of lagoons are situated along the coast line of the park.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yala_National_Park#cite_note-iwmi-3) There are several routes to get to Yala from [Colombo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colombo), while the route via [Ratnapura](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratnapura" \o "Ratnapura) and [Tissamaharama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tissamaharama) is the shortest with 270 kilometres (170 mi).  **Flora**  Yala National Park has a variety of [ecosystems](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecosystem) including [moist monsoon forests](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_lowland_rain_forests), [dry monsoon forests](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_dry-zone_dry_evergreen_forests), [semi deciduous forests, thorn forests](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deccan_thorn_scrub_forests), [grasslands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grassland), marshes, marine [wetlands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wetland), and sandy beaches. The area under forest cover mainly consists of Block I and [rangelands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rangeland) of open parkland (*Pelessa* grasslands) including some extensive grasslands. The forest area is restricted to around the Menik River while rangelands are found towards the sea side. Other habitat types of the Block I are tanks and water holes, lagoons and [mangroves](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mangrove) and [chena lands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shifting_cultivation). The mangrove vegetation in the Buthuwa lagoon is largely *Rhizophora mucronata* while *[Avicennia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avicennia" \o "Avicennia)* spp. and *[Aegiceras](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aegiceras" \o "Aegiceras)* spp. are less abundant. The vegetation of Block II is similar to those of Block I, and Yalawela, once a fertile [paddy field](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paddy_field), represents *Pitiya* grasslands. The mangroves of Block II occur around the estuary of Menik River, which extent to 100 hectares (0.39 sq mi). The common mangrove plants are *Rhizophora mucronata*, *Sonneratia caseolaris*, *Avicennia* spp., and *Aegiceras corniculatum*. The lagoons of Pilinnawa, Mahapothana, and Pahalapothana are also located in this block. The other common mangrove species are *Sonneratia caseolaris*, *Acanthus ilicifolius*, *Excoecaria agallocha*, and *Lumnitzera racemosa*. In the bare sand *Crinum zeylanicum* is found.  In the Blocks III, IV, and V, forests are more widespread. The [canopy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canopy_(biology)) of the forest mainly contains *Drypetes sepiaria* and *[Manilkara hexandra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manilkara_hexandra" \o "Manilkara hexandra)* plant species. The *Pitiya* grasslands are important for [grazing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grazing) animals. *Cynodon barberi* is the common grass in *Pitiya* grasslands while [*Zoysia matrella*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zoysia_matrella) becomes dominant near the beach. Among 300 odd floral species are *[Manilkara hexandra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manilkara_hexandra" \o "Manilkara hexandra)*, *Drypetes sepiaria*, [Ceylon Satinwood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chloroxylon), [*Terminalia arjuna*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terminalia_arjuna), [limonia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limonia_(plant)" \o "Limonia (plant)), *[Berrya cordifolia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berrya_cordifolia" \o "Berrya cordifolia)*, *Randia dumetorum*, *Pleurostylia opposita*, *[Gymnema sylvestre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gymnema_sylvestre" \o "Gymnema sylvestre)*, [Bell mimosa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dichrostachys_cinerea), [Neem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neem), [Banyan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ficus_benghalensis), [Toothbrush tree](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvadora_persica), *Schleichera oleosa*, [*Vitex pinnata*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vitex_pinnata), [Indian blackberry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jambul), *Gmelina asiatica*, [*Carissa spinarum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carissa_spinarum), *Euphorbia antiquorum*, and *Acacia eburnea*.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yala_National_Park#cite_note-Senaratna_2009-2) In the seasonally flooded areas of Block II, a wild species of [rice](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oryza) is found. *[Glenniea unijuga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glenniea_unijuga" \o "Glenniea unijuga)* is an endemic plant species found around the wetlands of the park. *Munronia pumila*, *Salacia reticulata*, and [*Asparagus racemosus*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asparagus_racemosus) are some [medicinal plants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbalism).  **Fauna**  **Birds**  Yala is one of the 70 [Important Bird Areas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Important_Bird_Area) (IBAs) in Sri Lanka. Of 215 bird species of the park, seven are endemic to Sri Lanka. They are [Sri Lanka grey hornbill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_grey_hornbill), [Sri Lanka junglefowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_junglefowl), [Sri Lanka wood pigeon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_wood_pigeon), [crimson-fronted barbet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crimson-fronted_barbet), [black-capped bulbul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-crested_bulbul), [blue-tailed bee-eater](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue-tailed_bee-eater) and [brown-capped babbler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brown-capped_babbler). The number of waterbirds inhabiting wetlands of Yala is 90 and half of them are [migrants](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bird_migration).[Waterfowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waterfowl) ([lesser whistling duck](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lesser_whistling_duck), [garganey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garganey)), cormorants ([little cormorant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_cormorant), [Indian cormorant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_cormorant)), large waterbirds ([grey heron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey_heron), [black-headed ibis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-headed_ibis), [Eurasian spoonbill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurasian_spoonbill), [Asian openbill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_openbill), [painted stork](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Painted_stork)), medium-sized waders *[Tringa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tringa" \o "Tringa)* spp., and small waders *[Charadrius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charadrius" \o "Charadrius)* spp. are among the most common waterbirds. [Black-necked stork](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-necked_stork) and [lesser adjutant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lesser_adjutant) are many of the rare birds that can be seen in the park. The migrant [great white pelican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_white_pelican) and resident [spot-billed pelican](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spot-billed_pelican) are also have been recorded. Other waterbirds attracted to the Yala lagoons include [lesser flamingo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lesser_flamingo), [pelicans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pelican), and rare species such as [purple heron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purple_heron), [night herons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nycticorax), [egrets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egret), [purple swamphen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purple_swamphen), and [Oriental darter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oriental_darter). Thousands of waterfowls migrate to the lagoons of Yala during the northeast monsoon. They are [northern pintail](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_pintail), [white-winged tern](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White-winged_tern), [Eurasian curlew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurasian_curlew), [whimbrel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whimbrel), [godwits](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Godwit), and [ruddy turnstone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruddy_turnstone). The visiting species mingled with residing [lesser whistling duck](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lesser_whistling_duck), [yellow-wattled lapwing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow-wattled_lapwing), [red-wattled lapwing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red-wattled_lapwing), and [great stone-curlew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_stone-curlew). [Rock pigeon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rock_pigeon), [barred buttonquail](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barred_buttonquail), [Indian peafowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_peafowl), [black stork](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_stork), [black-winged stilt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-winged_stilt), and [greater flamingo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_flamingo) are among the other bird species. [Crested serpent eagle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crested_serpent_eagle) and [white-bellied sea eagle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White-bellied_sea_eagle) are the [raptors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bird_of_prey) of the park. The forest birds are [orange-breasted green pigeon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orange-breasted_green_pigeon), [hornbills](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hornbill), [Old World flycatchers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_World_flycatcher), [Indian paradise flycatcher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_paradise_flycatcher), [Asian barbets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megalaimidae), and [orioles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_World_oriole).  **Mammals**  Including [Sri Lankan elephant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_elephant), 44 species of mammals are resident in Yala National Park, and it has one of the highest [leopard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leopard) densities in the world.25 individual [leopards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_leopard) are estimated to roam in Block I. The elephant herd of Yala contains 300–350 individuals. The [Sri Lankan sloth bear](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_sloth_bear), leopard, elephant, and [wild water buffalo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wild_water_buffalo) are all threatened mammals that Yala harbours. Although water buffaloes are indigenous to Sri Lanka, most populations contain genes of the [domestic stock](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cattle) or have descended from [feral](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feral) populations. [Toque macaque](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toque_macaque), [golden palm civet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_palm_civet), [red slender loris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_slender_loris), and [fishing cat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fishing_cat) are among the other mammals that can be seen in Yala. The elephant population of the park varies seasonally.  **Reptiles**  The reptile fauna recorded from the park is 47 and six of them are endemic. [Sri Lankan krait](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_krait), [Boulenger's keelback](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boulenger%27s_keelback), [Sri Lankan flying snake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_flying_snake), [painted-lip lizard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Painted-lip_lizard), [Wiegmann's agama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiegmann%27s_agama" \o "Wiegmann's agama), and [Bahir's fan-throated lizard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahir%27s_fan-throated_lizard) are the endemic species. The coastal line of the park is visited by the all five globally [endangered sea turtles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endangered_sea_turtles) ([leatherback turtle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leatherback_turtle), [olive ridley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olive_ridley), [loggerhead sea turtle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loggerhead_sea_turtle), [hawksbill turtle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawksbill_turtle), and [green turtle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_turtle)) that visit Sri Lanka. The two breeding crocodile species of Sri Lanka, [mugger crocodile](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mugger_crocodile) and [saltwater crocodile](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saltwater_crocodile), inhabit the park. The [Indian cobra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_cobra) and [Russell's viper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daboia) are among the other reptiles.  **Amphibians**  There are 18 [amphibian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amphibian) species that have been recorded from Yala, while *[Bufo atukoralei](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bufo_atukoralei" \o "Bufo atukoralei)* and *[Adenomus kelaartii](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adenomus_kelaartii" \o "Adenomus kelaartii)* are endemic to Sri Lanka.  **Fish**  In the water courses of Yala, 21 [freshwater fish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freshwater_fish) are found. The fish population in the perennial reservoirs contain mostly [exotic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fish#Exotic_species) [food fish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fish_food) [Mozambique tilapia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oreochromis_mossambicus). The [stone sucker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stone_sucker) and *Esomus thermoicos* are endemic among other species. The [blackspot barb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puntius_filamentosus), [olive barb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puntius_sarana), [orange chromide](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orange_chromide) and [common spiny loach](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_spiny_loach) are the common fish species. Invertebrates [Crabs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crab) and [prawns](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prawn) include the fauna in the lagoons of the park.  A variety of butterfly species is found here. The [common bluebottle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graphium_sarpedon), [common lime butterfly](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papilio_demoleus), [crimson rose](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atrophaneura_hector), [common Jezebel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Delias_eucharis), and [common Mormon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_Mormon) are the common species.  **Threats and Conservations**  [Poaching](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poaching), gem-mining, [logging](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logging), encroachment by agriculture, and free-roaming domestic [livestock](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Livestock) are the main threats to the park. Three wardens have been killed in clashes with poachers. Gems are mined along the Menik River and holes created by gem mining, which extend up to 30 meters (98 ft), can be seen along the Kumbukkan Oya. In Blocks III and IV, the encroachment is severe as [chena cultivation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shifting_cultivation) and burning, to provide [grazing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grazing) in the dry season, collides with the boundary. A large grove of *Sonneratia caseolaris* is faced with [forest dieback](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forest_dieback) in the Menik River's estuary. Cultivation of tobacco, [noise](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noise_pollution) and [air](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Air_pollution) pollutions caused by uncontrolled tourism are the other [conservation issues](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_issue). The growth of [invasive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Invasive_species) [alien](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Introduced_species) species such as [*Lantana camara*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lantana_camara), [*Opuntia dillenii*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opuntia_stricta), *[Chromolaena odorata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chromolaena_odorata" \o "Chromolaena odorata)* is threatening the native plants.  Deep within the forest, [Ganja](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabis_(drug)) is cultivated in cleared areas. The wildlife is poached and disturbed by the fishermen at Patanangala. The turtles are caught in fishing nets and the fishermen also litter the beach with debris. They have also set traps inland and dig up turtle nests. In the absence of hand-weeding, which was practiced until the 1950s, the transformation of interior grasslands to [scrub jungle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shrubland) is unavoidable. The tourism has created problems in the past, such as vehicles harassing wild animals. The issue is most severe in Sithulpahuwa where thousands of pilgrims visit, leading to a great degree of commercialization. [Department of Wildlife Conservation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Department_of_Wildlife_Conservation_(Sri_Lanka)) has taken some conservation measures such as management of grazing lands, conservation of small water ponds, and eradication of invasive alien species. A 40 kilometers (25 mi) long [electric fence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electric_fence) was erected to prevent elephants from moving into nearby villages. |
|  | Hikkaduwa | Hikkaduwa National Park lies in the popular tourist destination of Hikkaduwa along its beach. The corral reefs on this marine park has made Hikkaduwa Beach one of the most sought after beaches of the country.  In 1940, the Ambalangoda/Hikkaduwa Rocky Islets were declared sanctuaries and was limited to the land boundaries of these rocky islets. The intention was to afford protection to seabirds nesting on the islands.  In 1961, 110 acres of territorial waters off Hikkaduwa were afforded protection under the Fisheries Ordinance. In 1979, the Hikkaduwa Marine Sanctuary was gazetted under the Fauna & Flora Protecton Ordinance. In 1998 it was upgraded to the status of a nature reserve and later to a national park . Hikkaduwa National Park is one of the only 2 marine national parks in Sri Lanka.  The primary purpose of the Hikkaduwa National Park is to protect the coral reefs. However human activity continues on the beaches of this park. The reef has suffered high degradation due to both natural and human activities. The live coral cover was decreased from 47 percent to 13 percent in a coral bleaching event in 1998,induced by the 1998 El Nino weather. |
| Rain Forest | Hiyare Rain Forest | The center can be reached through number of routes, the best being the Udugama Road through the Southern Expressway Access Road which would be the one you would be taking if traveling from Colombo on the Highway. Another is through the Deniyaya (A17) road and the third is through Labuduwa (B109 and B248).Considering its small size, Hiyare contains an amazing number of endemic species. There are over 150 species of fresh water fish, reptiles, amphibians, land snails and mammals making Hiyare home. Out of that number, over 60 are endemic to the 600 acres that comprise the Hiyare Reservoir and Rainforest area. If you include the endemic birds, dragonflies and butterflies, this is one of the highest concentrations of unique species found in one small rainforest anywhere in the world! And more undiscovered species are being found each year.  The center can be reached through number of routes, the best being the Udugama Road through the Southern Expressway Access Road which would be the one you would be taking if traveling from Colombo on the Highway. Another is through the Deniyaya (A17) road and the third is through Labuduwa (B109 and B248). |
| Western Province | | |
| Eco System Type | Name | Details |
| National Park | Horagolla | **Horagolla National Park** is one of the latest [national parks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_park) in [Sri Lanka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka). It is so called because of an abundance of [*Dipterocarpus zeylanicus*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dipterocarpus_zeylanicus) (*hora*) trees.The area was originally declared as a [wildlife sanctuary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildlife_refuge) on 5 September 1973 due to its rich [biodiversity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biodiversity). Later on 24 June 2004, Horagolla was elevated to national park status. Horagolla is the only [urban park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban_park) in the [Western Province](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_Province,_Sri_Lanka) of Sri Lanka.The park is situated close to Horagolla [Walauwa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walauwa" \o "Walauwa), the home of the [Bandaranaike](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S._W._R._D._Bandaranaike) family.The park is situated some 40 kilometres (25 mi) from [Colombo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colombo).  Horagolla is a [low-country evergreen forest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_lowland_rain_forests).The park has a [humus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humus) soil structure and hot temperature persists throughout the year. Many tree species are in abundance including [*Dipterocarpus zeylanicus*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dipterocarpus_zeylanicus) (*hora*), *[Canarium zeylanicum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canarium_zeylanicum" \o "Canarium zeylanicum)* (*kekuna*), *Dillenia retusa* (*godapara*), *[Caryota urens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caryota_urens" \o "Caryota urens)* (*kitul*), *[Pericopsis mooniana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pericopsis_mooniana" \o "Pericopsis mooniana)* (*nedun*), *[Mangifera zeylanica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mangifera_zeylanica" \o "Mangifera zeylanica)* (*atamba*), [sacred fig](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacred_fig), *[Alstonia scholaris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alstonia_scholaris" \o "Alstonia scholaris)* (*ruk attana*), *Acronychia pedunculata* (*ankenda*), [*Vitex pinnata*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vitex_pinnata) (*milla*), *[Mimusops elengi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mimusops_elengi" \o "Mimusops elengi)* (*moonamal*), [breadfruit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Breadfruit) and *Pterospermum canescens* (*Velang*). Also various [liana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liana) [*Entada rheedii*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entada_rheedii) (*pus-wel*) can be seen. In the forests of the park, [*Gmelina arborea*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gmelina_arborea) (*ethdemata*), *Filicium decipiens* (*pihimbiya*), [mahogany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahogany), [teak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teak) and [golden shower tree](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_shower_tree) (*ehela*) are predominant.  The mammals found in the park include [fishing cat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fishing_cat), [Sri Lankan spotted chevrotain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_spotted_chevrotain), [golden jackal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_jackal), and [grizzled giant squirrel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grizzled_giant_squirrel). Horagolla is considered a birdwatching site. The number of bird species recorded from the park is 68. The most common are parakeets, [black-crested bulbul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-crested_bulbul), barbets, and [Asian koel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_koel). Some of the other bird species seen in the park include [Sri Lanka grey hornbill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_grey_hornbill), [Sri Lanka hanging parrot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka_hanging_parrot), [Layard's parakeet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Layard%27s_parakeet) and [Oriental dwarf kingfisher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oriental_dwarf_kingfisher). The rare [clipper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parthenos_sylvia), [Ceylon birdwing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troides_darsius) and [blue Mormon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Papilio_polymnestor) are the butterflies known from the park. Many threatened species including [tortoises](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tortoise) are found in Horagolla. Pythons and cobras are among the many reptiles found in the park. |
|  |  |  |
| North Province | | |
| Eco System Type | Name | Details |
| Sanctuary | Vankalai | Vankalai, in the Mannar district, with its numerous bird species has been declared a sanctuary by the Department of Wild Life Conservation (DWLC), a first in the area since the armed conflict erupted in the north several decades ago.  This sanctuary, partly a Wetland, comprises Puliyantivu island, Tiruketiswaram, Pallimunai, Vankalai and the strips of land on either side of the causeway connecting the island of Mannar to the mainland. Covering about 4,800 hectares, it consists of arid-zone thorn scrubland and pastures, waterholes and tanks, sand dunes, mangroves, salt marshes, lagoons and sea-grass beds and maritime grasslands.  The sanctuary declared through a Gazette notification dated September 9, 2008, follows recommendations of the Ceylon Bird Club which has worked tirelessly towards making this a reality.  Many birds including the very rare migrants the Spot-billed Duck, the Comb Duck and the Gadwall; the rare migrant Long-toed Stint and the uncommon migrants the Peregrine Falcon, the Common-ringed Plover, Temminck’s Stint and the Red-necked Phalarope have been spotted at Vankalai, says Ceylon Bird Club Committee Member Udaya Sirivardana as has also the very rarely recorded ‘Eastern’ Black-tailed Godwit.  Explaining that the Spot-billed Duck may have crossed over from South India, he says that the Ceylon Bird Club has in its possession valuable photographs providing proof that it is in fact breeding in the Vankalai area. A recent rare photograph (see above) taken by a Ceylon Bird Club member shows a mother duck with a gaggle of ducklings behind her at Vankalai. Only about five Spot-billed Ducks had been spotted in the half century before 2003.  Thousands of migrant birds arrive in Sri Lanka, making landfall in the Mannar region including Vankalai. Similarly when leaving the country at the end of the season, they use Vankalai as their last staging point, according to Mr. Sirivardana.  The Ceylon Bird Club has recorded 149 species of birds at Vankalai, keeping numerous records and meticulous notes, going into the area with the cooperation of the army.  Pointing out that at one given time the Ceylon Bird Club has recorded many thousands of birds of one kind, Mr. Sirivardana says that in 2003, it has a record of 5,000 Greater Flamingos being there while the same year there were 95,000 Northern Pintails, 5,000 unidentified ducks, 3,000 Black-tailed Godwits and 10,300 unidentified shorebirds.  Explaining that Vankalai has an abundant bird life because many people cannot venture there, the Ceylon Bird Club — founded in 1943 by seven members including two of Sri Lanka’s foremost ornithologists, G.M. Henry and W.W.A. Phillips — calls upon the DWLC to continue to protect the area once normalcy returns as it was once notorious for duck shooting, although it is prohibited. |
| Sabaragamuwa Province | | |
| Eco System Type | Name | Details |
| Rain Forest | Sinharaja | The Sinharaja Forest Reserve, the best-known rainforest in Sri Lanka, is well worth a visit from anyone who is interested in the natural resources of this country. It has been declared a World Heritage Site, because of its unique and high biodiversity.  Sinharaja is also a Man and Biosphere Forest Reserve, and a large proportion of the flora in this forest is endemic to the country. Some species are endemic to the Sinharaja Forest itself. Sinharaja also has many species of endemic fauna.  Situated in the south-west lowland wet zone of Sri Lanka and falling into the Sabaragamuwa and Southern provinces, Sinharaja is surrounded by Napola Dola, Koskulana Ganga (north), Maha Dola, Gin Ganga (south-west), the Kalukandawa Ela, Kudawa Ganga (west), Beverley Tea Estate and Denuwa Kanda (east).  As a rainforest with its rich and complex diversity of vegetation, Sinharaja provides habitats for a variety of animals. Although dependent on plants for food, animals also carry out certain functions vital to the growth of some plants. Pollination and seed dispersal are two of these.  Sinharaja has two main forest types. One is the Dipterocarpus forests that occur in the valleys and on their lower slopes. Here almost pure stands of Hora (Dipterocarpus. Zeylanicus) and Bu Hora (Dipterocarpus. Hispidus) can be seen.  The other forest type is the secondary forest and scrub that now occurs where the original forest cover has been removed by shifting cultivation or other tree removal operations. In other places rubber and tea plantations have replaced the forest. Mesua-Doona (Shorea) forest, the climax vegetation over most of the reserve, covers the middle and upper slopes above 500m.  Sinharaja has the benefit of both monsoons. Rainfalls are regular during the south-west monsoons, May-July, the north-east monsoons and November-January, except February when the conditions are dry.  An IUCN – International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources – technical evaluation of Sinharaja states that ‘Sinharaja is the last extensive primary lowland tropical rain forest in Sri Lanka. It holds a large number of endemic species of plants and animals, and a variety of plants of known benefit to man.  Sinharaja Forest Reserve is the last viable remnant of Sri Lanka’s tropical lowland rain forest; over 60% of the trees are endemic and many of these are rare; and there are 21 endemic bird species, and a number of rare insects, reptiles and amphibians’. Endemism is high, particularly for birds with 19 (95%) of 21 species endemic to Sri Lanka present. Endemism among mammals and butterflies is also greater than 50%.  **Fauna**  **Mammals**  There is evidence that there have been elephants in parts of the Sinharaja and its surrounding forests. However, their numbers have gone down over time and now there are only a few animals on the Rakwana side of Sinharaja, especially in the Handapan Ella, Thangamalai and Deepdene areas. Before the logging project started in 1971, elephants were common in the periphery of the forest. They have not been seen in the western sector since 1974.  The other large mammals that are found in Sinharaja are the Leopard (Panthera pardus), Sambur (Cervus unicolor), Fishing Cat (Felis viverrina), Rusty Spotted Cat (Prionailurus rubiginosa), Barking Deer (Muntiacus muntjak), Mouse Deer (Tragulus meeminna). Jackal (Canis aureus) and Wild Boar (Sus scorfa).  The leopard is rarely seen but there is evidence of its presence through its scats (excreta). What is interesting is that the leopard here seems to eat crabs and small mollusks as well. There are no spotted Deer (Axis axis), which is one of its favoured prey, at this elevation. Therefore the adaptation to food resources that are available.  The Purple-faced Langur (Presbytis senex) is an endemic. The only other primate found is the Toque or Rhesus Monkey (Macaca sinica) but it is seen mostly in the peripheral forests.  Of the smaller mammals there are a number of species in Sinharaja. The two Small Squirrels (Funambulus layardi and F. sublineatus), one Giant Squirrel (Ratufa macroura) the smaller Flying Squirrel (Petynomys fuscocapillus), the Badger Mongoose (Herpestes vitticolis), the Brown Mongoose (Herpestes fuscus), the Ring-tailed Civet (Viverricula indica), the Golden Palm Civet (Paradoxurus zeylonensis) and the Porcupine (Hystrix indica). The Otter (Lutra lutra) is also found in Sinharaja. There are also reports of sightings of the Pangolin (Manis crassicaudata.) but it is rare.  There are a number of rats, the Bandicoot, shrews and bats inhabiting this rainforest.  The larger mammals that are threatened are the leopard and the elephant. The present status of the leopard in Sinharaja has not been studied closely and therefore the population of leopards is not known. Even the exact population of elephants in Sinharaja is not known. Since it is a large animal and quite visible, it seems that only a few animals are left from the large number reported earlier.  **Birds**  Sinharaja hosts a variety of birds. Over 147 species have been recorded. This variety of species is possible because of the availability of specific habitats that range from 300 to 1500 meters. There are many endemic birds such as Ceylon Lorikeet ((Loriculus beryllinus), Layard’s Parakeet (Psittacula calthropae), Ceylon Jungle Fowl (Gallus Lafayetti), Spur Fowl (Galloperdix bicalcarta), Ceylon White-headed Starling (Sturnus albofrontatus), Ceylon Wood Pigeon (Columba torringtoni), Grey Hornbill (Ocyceros gingalensis), Spotted-wing Thrush (Zoothera spiloptera), Rufous Babbler (Turdoides rufescens), Brown- capped Babbler (Pelleurneum fuscocapillum), Ashy-headed Laughing Thrush (Garrulax cinereifrons), Ceylon Blue Magpie (Cissa oronata), White Headed Starling (Sturnus albofrontatus), Green-billed Coucal (Centrophus chlororhynchus), Red-faced Malkoha (Phaenicophaeus pyrrhocephalus),Ceylon Hill Mynah or Grackle (Gracula ptilogenys) and Legge’s Flowerpecker (Dicaeum vincens) are some of the endemic birds found at Sinharaja.  The Serendib Scops Owl (Otus thilohoffmanni) was discovered for the first time in 2001 by Deepal Warakagoda and Nanda Senanayake in the Sinharaja forest. Of interest is the presence of Sri Lanka Broad-billed Roller (Eurystomus orientalis), sightings of which have decreased markedly in recent years.  A regular sight at Sinharaja is the flocks of birds of mixed species that go through the forest. It is a mutual relationship observed among birds, a method by which they improve the availability of feed. The food of one species does not necessarily interest another.  Another interesting feature is that there are different groupings of bird species foraging at the different levels of the forest. There are different species moving in the canopy, sub canopy, undergrowth and forest floor. A team from Massachusetts, Colombo and Sabaragamuwa Universities studied this aspect of bird activity.  **Reptiles**  There are records of 21 species of snakes, including the Python (Python molurus), found in Sinharaja. Five species of lizard found in Sinharaja are the arboreal Green Forest Lizard (Calotes calotes), the high-pitched whistling Whistling Lizard (Calotes liolepis), the Hump-nosed Lizard (Lyiocephalus scutatus) with its gular fold, the Earless Lizard (Otriocephalus scutatus) and the Rough Horned Lizard (Cerataphora aspera). The rare Horned Lizard is restricted to parts of Sri Lanka’s wet zone below 900m elevation.  The Water Monitor (Varanus monitor) is found in Sinharaja but the Land Monitor (Varanus bengalensis) has not been seen at this elevation.  **Amphibians**  There are many amphibians in this rain forest which provides an ideal habitat for them. Kelum Manamendra Arachchi, who has worked in Sinharaja for a long time says that ‘Half the number of amphibians in Sri Lanka are found in Sinharaja and half of the endemic amphibians are also from this forest.’  Kelum and Rohan Pethiyagoda have found many new species of frogs at Sinharaja and are likely to find more. It is also extremely likely that many species of amphibians have become extinct even before they were known to man. Kelum and Rohan have put out a very well researched book in Sinhala on our amphibians.  **Fish**  Some threatened freshwater fish found in Sinharaja are Comb Tail (Belontia signata), Smooth-breasted Snakehead (Channa orientalis), Black Ruby Barb (Barbus nigrofasciatus), Cherry Barb (Barbus titeya) and Red-tailed Goby (Sicydium halei).  **Flora**  Sinharaja has a complex vegetation structure. This is the same as in an intricate rain forest ecosystem. At first glance, the forest seems to be a chaotic muddle of vegetation. However, a closer look reveals that the vegetation can be categorized on the basis of several factors such as life-forms (trees, shrubs, herbs and woody climbers), a strata or groups of plants living under similar conditions of light and moisture with each group having its own “life-style”  There are many ‘layers’ of the forest – the canopy, sub canopy, under-storey, shrub layer and ground layer. Then there are the vegetation types like, stranglers, epiphytes, parasites and saprophytes. Emergents are trees that grow above the canopy layer of the forest.  The trees that form the canopy, or top layer of trees, usually reach heights of around 30 to 45 meters. The canopy is well packed with tree crowns and is usually devoid of emergent trees. The second layer of trees is the under storey which consists of trees that are not so tall. The shrubs make up the third layer of the complex forest vegetation.  Most plants can stand on their own in that they can get their nutrition made up of minerals from the soil and produce food using sunlight, water and carbon dioxide from the air. This process is called photosynthesis. There other plants that cannot stand on their own and are dependent on other hosts for food, water or support, like climbers, epiphytes and parasites  The plants could either be photosynthetic, thus nutritionally self sufficient or non-photosynthetic like the saprophytes; some, on the other hand, are semi or totally parasitic. Semi parasites take water from hosts plants i.e. Loranthus – Pilila in Sinhala, – while a full parasites absorb both water and nutrients – Cuscuta – aga mula nathi wal in Sinhala.  Epiphytes, orchids for example, are plants that cannot stand by themselves but are not dependent on the host plant for their food. The real objective of an epiphyte is to climb on to a big tree and get more sunlight for food production. Parasites need a host plant and take their food off the host plant as well. Saprophytes are those types of plants that live on the juices of dead plant and animal matter.  Stranglers are plants that start off being dependent on other plants for support but later establish their own support and tend to be detrimental to the original host. A good example is, though not from Sinharaja, the Nuga (Ficus bengalaensis), which starts off as an epiphyte on a host plant but grows steadily and completely chokes up the host plant. It grows into a massive tree leaving no trace or evidence of what was its host plant. In a rain forest vines too can be stranglers.  The plants could also represent several stages of maturity e.g. seedlings, saplings, poles, etc. As expected, the variety of combinations that could exist in the forest can be enormous. These are the factors that form the basis of the vegetation structure of the forest  A tree fall gap is a gap arising in the canopy due to the collapsing of an old tree. The thick canopy allows minimum sunlight to reach the ground level. Therefore seedlings and saplings wait for years on the forest floor before a gap appears .The moment it occurs, a hoard of young plants shoot up to take their place in the canopy. Tree fall gaps in Sinharaja have been studied by Yale University.  A variety of plants of known benefits to man are present in Sinharaja. One of which is the palm Kitul (Caryota urens) used to get jaggery, which is a substitute for sugar used widely in areas where this tree grows. Wewal (Calamus sp) is used in the cane industry, Cardamom (Elattaria ensal) a spice, Shorea sp. (for flour), dun Shorea sp. (for varnish and incense) and Weniwal (Coscinium fenestratum) for medicinal purposes, are used intensively by villagers. A list of 202 plants, together with their endemicity and uses has been drawn up.  Nimal and Savithri Gunatilleke in their many years of research in Sinharaja have found that of Sri Lanka’s 830 endemic species, 217 trees and woody climbers are found in the lowland wet zone. Of these, 139 (64%) have been recorded in Sinharaja, 16 of which are considered to be rare.  Other rare endemics are the palm Loxococcus rupicola and Atalantia rotundifolia, the latter being restricted to Sinhagala at 742m. Of 217 recorded species of trees and woody climbers, 40% have low population densities (less than 10 or fewer individuals per 25ha) and 43% have restricted distributions, rendering them vulnerable to further encroachments into the reserve.  In1968, a government directive was issued to extract timber for the plywood sawmill and chipwood complex established at Kosgama. Logging was carried out from 1971 until 1977, when logging was banned, largely due to public pressure brought about by the Wildlife and Nature Protection Society, which played a leading role in the protests and objections to this indiscriminate logging of a very important and valuable natural resource.  At present, the reserve has 6,500-7,000ha of unlogged forest. Since 1977, the Forest Department has given high priority to protecting the reserve and in 1978 began planting (Pinus caribaea) along the periphery to establish a live boundary. More recently, betel nut palm (Areca catechu) has been used for this purpose.  In order to ensure the strict protection of the reserve for scientific and aesthetic reasons, a scheme of zonation and management is proposed for areas outside the reserve. The creation and propagation of essential forest products, for sustained utilisation, in areas outside the reserve is intended to meet local needs and thereby eliminate former dependence on resources within the reserve  Of the many constraints to the protection of Sinharaja, encroaching cultivations are probably the biggest problem, particularly along the southern boundary. There are many socio-economic issues that need to be looked into. There are people and organisations in the immediate vicinity of the reserve, who are dependent of certain forest products for their livelihood. Alternate sources of these products have to be found for these people.  The most important traditional minor forest products used are Kitul, Cane and to a lesser degree medicinal plants.  These activities have now been restricted to forests surrounding the Sinharaja reserve. Illicit gem mining was once a serious problem in eastern parts of the reserve and was organised mostly by wealthy merchants from outside the Sinharaja region. This activity though reduced now has to be stopped completely.  The lack of a uniform land-use policy and the multiplicity of governmental and semi-governmental agencies involved in land-use planning in Sri Lanka are the major administrative constraints in evolving a suitable protection plan for Sinharaja. For the moment, transactions related to lands surrounding the reserve are suspended under presidential order until such time, as the conservation plan for the reserve is ready for implementation. |
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