

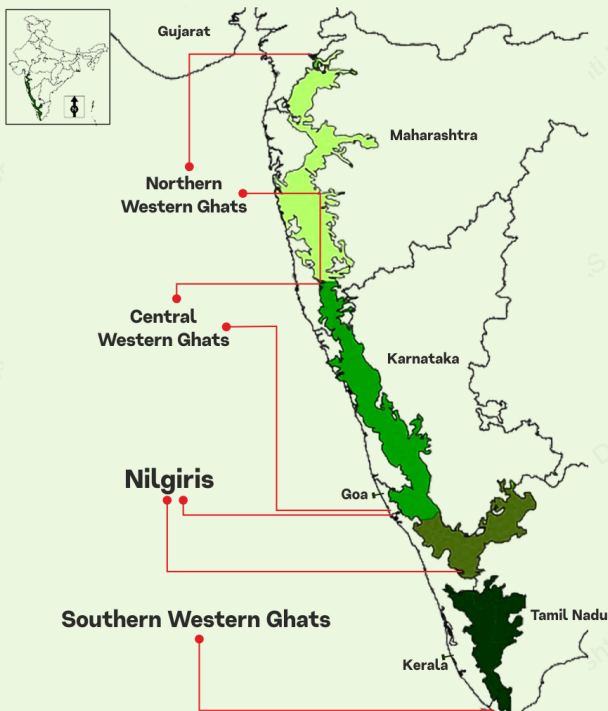


Western Ghats

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Western Ghats

One of the four biodiversity hotspots of India; recognised as a UNESCO WHS (2012)



Names

- Sahyadri - northern Maharashtra; Sahya Parvatham - Kerala

Diverted views about Mt. type

- View 1: Block Mt. formed due to down warping of a part of land into Arabian Sea
- View 2: Not true mt. rather the faulted edge of Deccan Plateau

Major Rocks

- Basalt, granite gneiss, khondalites, metamorphic gneisses, crystalline limestone, iron ore

Geographical Extent

- Satpura (in north) to the end of TN at Kanyakumari (in south)

Mt. Ranges

- Nilgiri ranges, Shevaroy and Tirumala range
- Highest peak - Anamudi (Kerala)

Rivers (originating)

- West-flowing: Periyar, Bharathappuzha, Netravati, Sharavathi, Mandovi
- East-flowing: Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri, Tunga, Bhadra, Bhima, Malaprabha, Ghataprabha, Hemavathi, Kabini

Endemic Species

- Nilgiri tahr (IUCN Status - EN)
- Lion-tailed macaque (IUCN Status - EN)

Imp Protected Areas

- Biosphere Reserves - Agasthyamala and Nilgiri
- NP - Silent Valley, Bandipur, Eravikulam, Wayanad-Mudumalai, Nagarhole
- TR - Kalakad-Mundanthurai, Periyar

Imp Passes

- Thal Ghat Pass (Kasara Ghat)
- Bhor Ghat Pass
- Palakkad Gap (Pal Ghat)
- Amba Ghat Pass
- Naneghat Pass
- Amboli Ghat Pass

Significance

- Hydroelectricity production
- Influences Indian monsoon weather patterns
- Carbon sequestration (neutralise ~4 MT of carbon every year)
- One of the 8 global hottest hotspots of biodiversity (due to richness in species and endemism)
- Rich in iron, manganese and bauxite ores, timber, pepper, cardamom, oil palm and rubber
- Sizeable indigenous population (including PVTGs)
- Important tourism/pilgrimage centres

Major Threats

- Mining, Industrialisation
- Massive extraction of forest produce
- Human-wildlife conflict, encroachment, illegal hunting
- Livestock grazing, deforestation
- Large hydropower projects
- Climate change

Imp Committees

- Gadgil Committee (2011) (Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel)
 - » Recommendation: All of WG be declared as Ecological Sensitive Area (ESA) with only limited development allowed in graded zones.
- Kasturirangan Committee (2013)
 - » Recommendation: Instead of whole, only 37% of the total area of WG be brought under ESA + complete ban on mining, quarrying and sand mining be imposed in ESA.

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