

# Khunjerab National Park



## General features

<b>Country:</b>	Pakistan, Hunza-Nagar District
<b>Date of establishment:</b>	1975
<b>Area:</b>	4,455 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Geographic location:</b>	Latitude: 36°30'N; Longitude: 75°30'E
<b>IUCN category:</b>	IV

## Overview

Khunjerab National Park (KNP) is located in the extreme north of Pakistan. The high-altitude park covers about 4,445 km<sup>2</sup>, making it Pakistan's third largest national park. It was set up to protect rare and unique species of the Pamir and Tibetan Plateau. The elevation within the park ranges from 3,200 to 7,700 masl. Khunjerab Pass, the gateway to China via the Karakoram Highway, lies at 4,934 masl.

## People

Tajik and Brushu

## Flora

Due to the protected area's high elevation, floral species diversity is relatively low, but the area is rich in alpine species such as cushion plants adapted to high and dry habitats. Species include *Thylacospermum caespitosum*, *Sibbaldia tetrandra*, *Androsa cetapete*, *Psychogeton poncinsii*, *Leontopodium nanum*, *Saussurea thordii*, and *Saussurea subulata*. The area is dominated by dry alpine scrub type

vegetation, with *Juniper* spp., *Rosa webbiana*, and *Polygonum* spp. occurring on dry slopes, and *Myricaria germanica* and *Hippophae rhamnoides* along stream beds. Broadleaf species mainly consist of *Salix* sp. and *Betula utilis*.

## Fauna

Fourteen mammalian species have been recorded in the park, of which three are critically endangered and two are endangered. Marco Polo sheep (*Ovis ammon polii*), cape hare (*Lepus capensis*), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), grey long-eared bat (*Plecotus austriacus*), common red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), field mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*), Himalayan ibex (*Capra sibirica*), long-tailed marmot (*Marmota caudata*), large-eared pika (*Ochotona macrotis*), migratory hamster (*Cricetulus migratorius*), blue sheep (*Pseudois nayaur*), brown bear (*Ursus arctos*), snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*), and Indian wolf (*Canis lupus pallipes*). The park has some of the most diverse avifauna in mountain regions, with 48 avian species having been recorded in the park.

## Threats

- Decline of Marco Polo sheep population, largely as a result of hunting and general disturbance from the Karakoram Highway which runs through the park.
- Overgrazing leading to a reduction in species diversity, habitat degradation, and soil erosion in rangeland ecosystems.
- Degradation of vegetation cover as a result of commercial logging and overexploitation of forests.



**International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development**

GPO Box 3226, Kathmandu, Nepal **Tel** +977-1-5275222 **Email** [info@icimod.org](mailto:info@icimod.org) **Web** [www.icimod.org](http://www.icimod.org)

*Photos: Tao Zhang, Zhang Lixun*