

Rakchham Chitkul Wildlife Sanctuary

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Rakchham Chitkul Wildlife Sanctuary Latest News

Himalayan brown bear sightings in Rakchham-Chitkul Wildlife Sanctuary have revived conservation interest after a female bear and her cubs were photographed recently.

About Rakchham Chitkul Wildlife Sanctuary

- It is located in the Kinnaur district of **Himachal Pradesh**.
- The sanctuary is also referred to as `**Sangla Wildlife Sanctuary**`.
- It is spread over an area of 30.98 sq.km.
- It is situated at an elevation ranging from **3200 to 5486 meters** above sea level.
- It is a part of the **Western Himalayan range**.
- It is **surrounded by snow-capped mountains**, lush green valleys, and **gushing rivers**.
- The perilous **Lamkhanga Pass** is one of the many trekking routes that pass through this sanctuary.
 - This pass **connects** the **Himachal Pradesh province of Kinnaur to the Uttarakhand region of Gangotri**.

- Unlike the climate of other sanctuaries in Himachal Pradesh, the sanctuary is **located in a dry zone**; hence it does **not experience monsoons**.
- **Vegetation: Sub-Alpine Forests, Dry Broadleaf and Coniferous Forests**, Dry Temperate Forests and Dry Alpine Scrubs and Pastures.
- **Flora:** Some of the common flora found in the sanctuary include **rhododendrons, oak trees, pine trees**, and medicinal herbs.
- **Fauna:** It is also home to various species of wildlife, such as **snow leopards, Himalayan black bears, musk deer**, and numerous bird species.

Key Facts about Himalayan Brown Bear

- It is the **largest mammal** found in the **high-altitude regions of the Himalayas**.
- It is one of the most ancient brown bear lineages.
- Scientific Name: *Ursus arctos isabellinus*
- It is also known as the **“Himalayan Red Bear”** and the **“Isabelline Bear”**. It is known as **Denmo** in the **Ladakhi** language.
- It is believed by some that the bear’s **ability to walk upright** probably **gave rise to the legend of the Yeti** or **“Abominable Snowman.”**
- **Distribution:**
 - They are found in the **northwestern and central Himalayas**, including **Pakistan, India, Nepal**, the **Tibetan** Autonomous Region of China, and Bhutan.
 - They are found **above the timberline**, between 3,000 and 5,500 meters above sea level.
 - In India, this species exists in small isolated populations in the fragmented alpine and subalpine habitats of **Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand**.
- **Features:**
 - **Males** are **larger than females**, with an average length of 1.9 m and weight of 135 kg, in comparison to the female averages of 1.6 m and 70 kg.
 - It has **thick fur**, which is most often **sandy or reddish-brown** in colour.
 - **Food: Omnivorous**, eating grasses, roots, bulbs, and other plants, insects, and small mammals such as marmots, pikas, and voles.
 - They **hibernate in dens** during the winter.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - IUCN Red List: **Critically Endangered**

Source: **IE**

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