

# Science Tourism in Jammu and Kashmir

**Mr Hilal Ahmad Mir**



Scientific tourism is conceived as a bridge between the world of science and tourism

Science tourism refers to a type of travel where people visit destinations primarily to learn about science, explore scientific landmarks like museums, laboratories, observatories, and universities, or participate in scientific events like observing a solar eclipse, essentially combining tourism with the pursuit of scientific knowledge, and understanding. It can also include opportunities to engage in hands-on scientific research depending on the location and program offered.

### Key points about science tourism:

1. Focus on learning: The primary goal is to gain scientific knowledge through visits to research facilities, exhibitions, and interactive experiences.
2. Diverse attractions: This can include visiting historical scientific sites, natural phenomena like geological formations, wildlife observation areas, and even participating in citizen science projects.
3. Educational aspect: Science tourism aims to educate the public about scientific concepts and current research happening in different fields.
4. Potential for engagement: Some programs allow tourists to actively participate in scientific research, like data collection or assisting with experiments.

### Examples of science tourism activities:

- A. Visiting a planetarium to learn about astronomy
- B. Taking a tour of a marine research centre to observe marine life
- C. Exploring a geological park to see unique rock formations
- D. Attending a science festival or conference
- E. Visiting a historical scientific site like the birthplace of a famous scientist.

Scientific tourism is conceived as a bridge between the world of science and tourism, bringing together inhabitants of the territories and their visitors, of all nationalities and cultures, motivated by the advancement of human knowledge. This tourism is based on the scientific method and the advancement of knowledge to contribute to the understanding and resolution of environmental and social challenges of territories attractive for tourism.

Science tourism is a niche form of travel that focuses on the exploration and appreciation of scientific and technological landmarks, research facilities, and natural phenomena. It enables travellers to engage with scientific concepts, participate in educational activities, and gain a deeper understanding of the natural world and human innovation.



## DACHIGAM NATIONAL PARK

Dachigam National Park is in the Zabarwan Range of the Western Himalayas. It is the highest elevated reserve of India and best known for Hangul deer.



Dachigam National Park is the northernmost reserve of India which is located 22 km from Srinagar (Jammu and Kashmir) and highest elevation reserve. Dachigam was named after the ten villages that were relocated to make way for this park. The park is divided into two sections known as the Upper and Lower Dachigam sectors and it is best known for being the home of the Hangul deer. Since 1910, this park has been a protected area, initially under the supervision of the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir and then under the relevant government authorities and in 1981, it was upgraded and designated as a National Park.

This National Park is home to a number of lakes, rivers, flowery meadows, waterfalls, and dense coniferous forests. Its appearance changes with the change of season. In the winter, temperature goes below zero degree Celsius, and the park is covered in a white snow, while in the spring, the park's main attraction is its blossoming flowers and fruit trees. In the summer, temperature reaches to 14 degrees Celsius, leading to melting of snow, revealing waterfalls and streams. As autumn approaches, the leaves of the trees change to vibrant hues of red, gold, yellow colour. Throughout the year, Dachigam National Park remains unpolluted and colourful. The Dagwan River, flows from Marsar Lake, is a well-known fishing spot.

### Topography

Volume 01 | Issue 01

Zabarwan Range of the Western Himalayas is home to Dachigam National Park. Its topography ranges from 5,500 to 14,000 ft above sea level. Because of the wide range of terrain, the park is divided into uneven sections, with terrain ranging from gently sloping grasslands to sharp cliffs. A portion of the park lies above the treeline, where its beauty is enhanced by rocky mountains and crevices.



### Climate

The temperature in Dachigam National Park remains moderate throughout the year. Summers in Dachigam are short lived and snowfall lasts the entire winter season. Temperatures begin to rise in April and continue to rise until June. Light showers are common in July and August. In the summer, the maximum and minimum temperature ranges from 14 to 8 degrees Celsius respectively. In the winter, the maximum temperature rises to only 4 degrees Celsius, with a minimum temperature of about -2 degrees Celsius. The month of December marks the beginning of snowfall.

### Flora

Dachigam National Park contains approximately 500 species of herbs, 50 species of trees, and approximately 20 species of shrubs. This park is lush with flowers, greenery, meadows, and grasslands, apart from the winter season when it is covered with snow. The scenic beauty portrayed by blue poppy flowers is a sight to behold. Pear, Apple, Chestnut,

Walnut, Willow, Oak, Poplar, Birch, Chinar, Pine, Peach, Apricot, and Elm trees adorn the park. Some of the main tree species are *Pinus graffiti*, *Abies pindrow*, *Morus alba*, *Ulmus wallichiana*, *Betula utilis*, *Salix spp*, *Populus spp*, *Prunus armeniaca*, *Quercus robur*, *Aesculus indica* etc. Prominent shrub species found here are *Berberis spp*, *Desmodium tiliaefolia*, *Indigofera heterantha*, *Parrotiopsis jacquemontiana* etc.

### Fauna

Dachigam National Park is famous for the Hangul also known as Kashmir Stag. They can be easily spotted in the winter, when they congregate in the lower valleys. Some of the important mammal species found in Dachigam national park are Kashmiri Stag, Musk Deer, leopards, Himalayan Grey Langurs, Leopard Cats, Himalayan Black Bear, Himalayan Weasel, Yellow-throated Martens, Jungle Cat, Long Tailed Marmots, Yellow-throated Marten, Jungle Cat, Himalayan Brown Bear, The Otter, Himalayan Fox, Serow etc. There are also numerous rare birds such as Black Bulbuls, Cinnamon sparrows, Himalayan Monals, Kashmir Flycatchers, and colourful pheasants such as the crimson tragopan, iridescent monal pheasant, blood pheasant, and koklass pheasant.



Dachigam National Park is in the Himalayan Mountain range and is adorned with natural beauty. This park is teeming with beautiful animals and fruit bearing trees. This is a place where one can experience beautiful scenery beyond

imagination. The Park is well-known for its diverse wildlife and bird species and is home to the world's last viable Hangul population. Large part of the park is covered with coniferous forests and the mountainside is densely forested with wild trees. It is home to more than 500 species of herbs, 50 species of trees, and approximately 20 species of shrubs.

It was designated as a Wildlife Sanctuary in 1951 and in 1981, it was declared as a National Park.

### OVERA-ARU WILDLIFE SANCTUARY PAHALGAM



The Overa-Aru Wildlife Sanctuary is situated near Pahalgam, one of the districts in Jammu and Kashmir. The sanctuary is spread in a wide area, and it covers more than 500 sq. km. Those who are planning to visit this place can visit the mountains in this area, and if we talk about the height of those peaks then they are up to 5,400 m. The sanctuary is home to rare and endangered species such as the musk deer, brown bear and snow leopard. These species are conserved by the state and the central government. Tourists from different parts of the country visit his place for the sight of such beautiful and exotic species of birds and animals. If you ever plan to visit Kashmir, then you must visit this wildlife sanctuary for the everlasting experience.



Ideal for: Family and friends

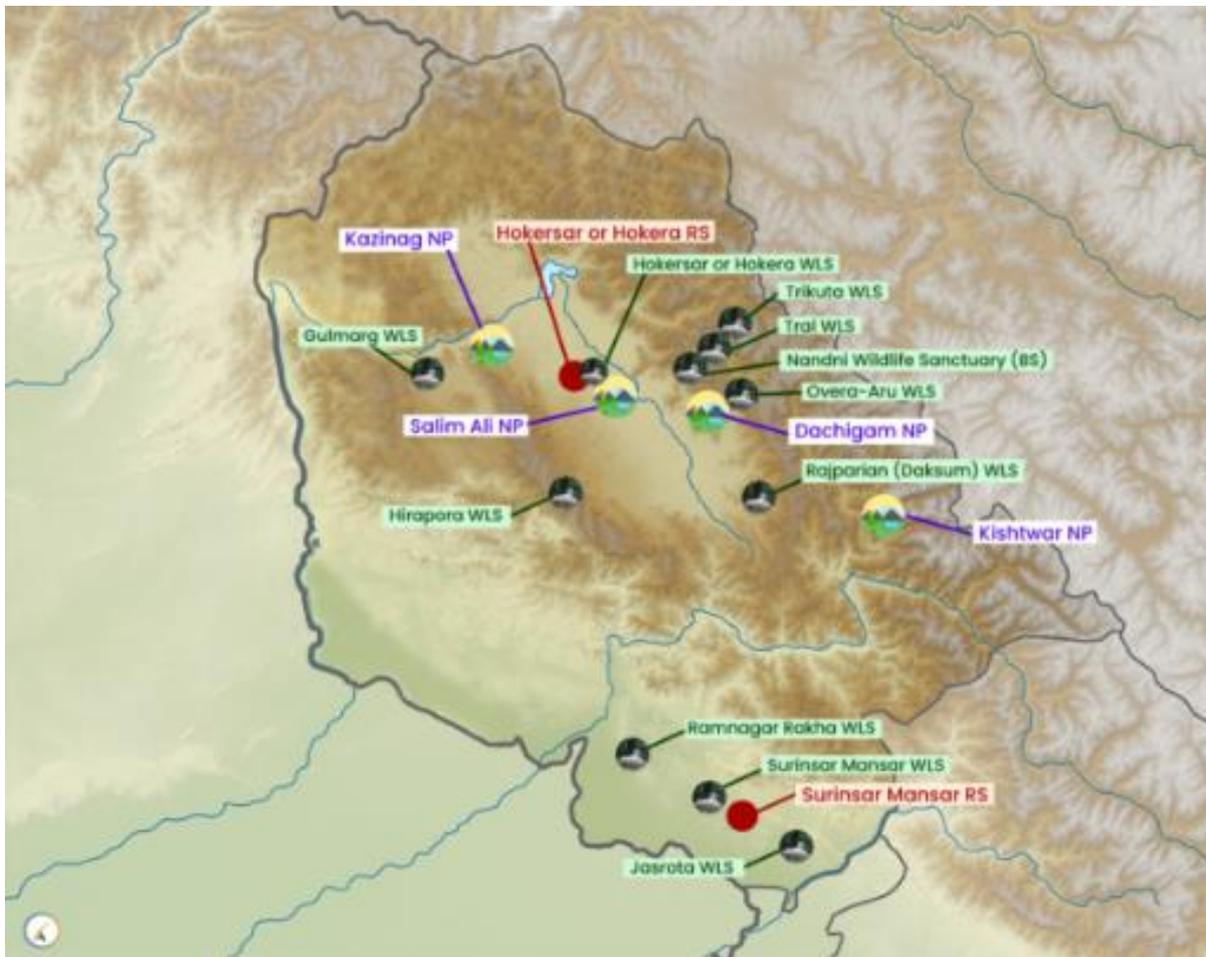
Ideal trip duration: 2-4 hours

Location: Forest Block, Jammu and Kashmir 192126

Best time to visit: May to August

How to reach: By road transport

In Jammu & Kashmir there are various botanical Gardens; biological museums, national parks, wildlife sanctuaries that contributes tourism rather attracts the tourists to visit such awesome destinations. In district Anantnag there exists many botanical Gardens and wildlife sanctuaries that are famous in the world for their immense natural setting and scenic beauty. Botanical Garden Kokernag Botanical Garden, Verinag Botanical Garden, Achabal and Daksum Wildlife Sanctuary and Pahalgam Wildlife Sanctuary and the likes are those places, tourists love to visit.



*Mr Hilal Ahmad Mir is a teacher by profession and can be reached at [hilalahmadmir302@gmail.com](mailto:hilalahmadmir302@gmail.com)*