



## Kharai Camel

**Source: DTE**

Despite repeated interventions by the [National Green Tribunal \(NGT\)](#), Gujarat's **Kachchh region** continues to witness rampant mangrove destruction, threatening the existence of the rare, swimming **Kharai camel**.

- **Kharai Camel:** It is indigenous to the [Kachchh region](#), the Kharai camel is known for its rare ability to swim long distances and graze on mangroves.
  - The word '**Kharai**' comes from '**Khar**', meaning **saline**, pointing to the camel's ability to live in coastal saline ecosystems. It thrives in brackish water and estuarine ecosystems, not in confined pastures.
  - **Kharai Camels have webbed feet** for swimming and strong digestive systems to tolerate salty vegetation.
  - The Kharai camel is classified as **endangered** by the [International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#).
- **Ecological and Cultural Significance:** Integral to the **Maldhari community**, traditional camel herders who treat them as part of their pastoral heritage.
  - Kharai Camel is recognised as a **genetically distinct breed** and listed as a **threatened animal by the National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR)**.
- **Threats:** Rapid expansion of salt pans, cement factories, and other industrial activities in **Coastal Regulation Zone- I** areas has led to massive loss of mangrove forests.
  - Populations have declined significantly, with loss of habitat and access to food being the primary reasons.



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