

# Aralam: India's First Butterfly Sanctuary - A Hidden Gem in the Western Ghats

The **Western Ghats**, known for their green hills and misty charm, are a dream destination for nature lovers and trekking enthusiasts. And now, there's something even more magical to explore — **India's first-ever butterfly sanctuary!**

On **June 18**, the **Kerala State Wildlife Board** officially renamed the **Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary** in Kannur as the **Aralam Butterfly Sanctuary**. This is a huge moment for conservation — for the first time, an entire protected forest in India is dedicated just to butterflies!

## Why is this Important?

This wasn't just a sudden change. It took **25 years** of hard work, regular surveys, and the dedication of forest officials, local naturalists, and wildlife lovers to make this dream come true. Their goal? To make sure that even the smallest creatures — like butterflies — have a safe home.

## A Colourful Wonderland

Spread across **55 square kilometers** of rich tropical and semi-evergreen forests, Aralam is now a safe space for over **266 butterfly species** — that's more than **80% of all butterflies found in Kerala!** Some species are **rare, endangered**, and **only found here**.

Between **October and February**, something magical happens — thousands of butterflies migrate from the lower slopes of the Western Ghats to Aralam. This season, often called the **"Common Albatross season"**, turns the sanctuary into a fluttering rainbow of colours. Butterflies dance through the tall trees, orchids, and wildflowers — it's like stepping into a dream!

## More Than Just Butterflies

Did you know Aralam was established in **1984**? Since then, it's been a favorite for researchers. For over 20 years, the **State Forest Department** and **Malabar Natural History Society** have been organizing annual **Butterfly Migration Studies** to better understand these pollinators and raise awareness about their conservation.

And Aralam isn't just about butterflies! The forest is also home to:

- **Elephants**
- **Giant squirrels**
- **Leopards**

- **Dozens of bird species**

Visitors can take part in **guided treks** along the **Butterfly Safari Trail**, where they'll learn about butterfly behavior, host plants, and how we can protect this vibrant ecosystem.

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## What Makes Aralam Special for Students?

- ☐☐ It's **diving classroom** about biodiversity and conservation.
- ☐☐ You can **see science in action** — real-time migration, field studies, and more.
- ☐☐ It offers a peaceful, refreshing escape from screens and textbooks.

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