

# Blackbuck

May 29, 2021

**In news**– According to the latest population census released recently by the Chief conservator of forest (wildlife), Odisha's blackbuck population has doubled in the last six years.

## ***More information-***

- The census was carried out by the state forest department in February, 2021 in Ganjam district only where Blackbucks are found in Odisha.
- It used to be sighted in the Balukhand-Konark Wildlife Sanctuary in Puri district till 2012-13, but now has vanished from the area.
- The antelopes numbered 7,358, out of which 4,196 are females, 1,712 are males and 1,450 young.
- The numbers were 6,875 in 2020, 4,082 in 2018, 3,806 in 2015 and 2,194 in 2011.
- The blackbuck is known in Odisha as Krushnasara Mruga.
- Improvement of habitats, protection given by the local people and forest staff are said to be some of the reasons for the increase of the population of the blackbuck.

## ***About the Blackbuck-***

- The blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*) is also known as the Indian antelope.
- It is a Schedule-1 animal according to the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and is considered as 'Vulnerable' according to the IUCN Red Data Book.
- It inhabits grassy plains and lightly forested areas with perennial water sources.
- It is the sole living member of the genus *Antelope* and was scientifically described by Carl Linnaeus in 1758.
- Males have 35–75 cm long, ringed horns, though females

may develop horns as well.

- The white fur on the chin and around the eyes is in sharp contrast with the black stripes on the face.
- The coats of males show a two-tone colouration – while the upper parts and outsides of the legs are dark brown to black, the underparts and the insides of the legs are white.
- Females and juveniles are yellowish fawn to tan.
  
- The blackbuck is active mainly during the day.
- It is a herbivore and grazes on low grasses.
- In India, hunting of blackbuck is prohibited under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972.
- The antelope is native to and found mainly in India, while it is extinct in Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- In Nepal, the last surviving blackbuck population inhabits the Blackbuck Conservation Area south of Bardia National Park.
- A few blackbucks are present in the Indian Institute of Technology Madras campus.
- It might have been a source of food in the Indus Valley civilization, whose bone remains have been discovered in sites such as Dholavira and Mehrgarh.
- It is routinely depicted in miniature paintings of the Mughal era.
- It is considered to be the vehicle of Vayu (the wind god), Soma (the divine drink) and Chandra (the moon god).
- In Tamil Nadu, the blackbuck is considered to be the vehicle of the Hindu goddess Korravai.
- In Rajasthan, the goddess Karni Mata is believed to protect the blackbuck.

In the Yajnavalkya Smṛiti, Sage Yagyavalkya has quoted that – “in what country there is black antelope, in that Dharma must be known”.