

Eastern swamp deer (Barasingha)

January 21, 2022

In news- Recently, the officials have found that the population of the vulnerable eastern swamp deer, extinct elsewhere in South Asia, has dipped in the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve.

Key updates –

- Officials attributed the decrease to two high floods in 2019 and 2020.
- They have also observed that the animal is distributed to areas beyond the Kaziranga National Park and now found in Orang National Park and Laokhowa-Bura Chapori wildlife sanctuaries (Assam).
- During the last survey, it was found that the female eastern swamp deer outnumbered the males by more than three times.

Swamp deer & its subspecies-

- The **Barasingha** (*Rucervus duvaucelii*), also called swamp deer, is a deer species distributed in the Indian subcontinent.
- Populations in northern and central India are fragmented, and two isolated populations occur in southwestern Nepal.
- It has been **extinct in Pakistan and Bangladesh, and its presence is uncertain in Bhutan.**
- The swamp deer differs from all other Indian deer species in that the **antlers carry more than three tines.**
- Because of this distinctive character it is designated ***bārah-singgā*, meaning “twelve-horned”** in Hindi.

- **In Assamese, *Barasingha* is called *dolhorina*; *dol* meaning swamp.**
- **There are three subspecies of *Barasingha* found in India**
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- Wetland *Barasingha*, the largest among all the swamp deers of India
- Hard-ground/Southern *Barasingha*
- Eastern *Barasingha*
- All the three species of swamp deer vary in dental and cranial features, and a few other features as well.
- Eastern *Barasingha*, the smallest of *Barasinghas*, has smaller tail and antlers compared to other subspecies.
- Large off-white hair on the inner side of the ears makes this *Barasingha* different from other two subspecies.
- The **eastern swamp deer is endemic to Kaziranga.**
- Swamp deer is considered Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List.
- It is considered as Appendix I in CITES.
- It is placed under **Schedule I of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.**