

Himalayan Serow

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In news

A Himalayan serow has been sighted for the first time in the Himalayan cold desert region.

Key highlights

This is the first recorded human sighting of the serow in Himachal Pradesh. The animal has been spotted a few times earlier in the state, but that has always been through camera traps.

About Himalayan serow

- The Himalayan serow (*Capricornis thar*) is a medium-sized goat like antelope, native to the montane forests of the Himalayas.
- It is considered a flagship species due to its specialized habitat requirements of dense and undisturbed forests
- Taxonomically, Himalayan serow is a subspecies of the mainland serow
- There are several species of serows, and all of them are found in Asia.
- The Himalayan serow, or *Capricornis sumatraensis thar*, is restricted to the Himalayan region.
- Himalayan serows are herbivores
- **Habitat:** They inhabit steep hills with rocky slopes, especially limestone regions up to 3,000 m above sea level, and also in hill and mountain forest areas with gentler terrain. Serows prefer damp and thickly wooded gorges and typically occur at altitudes between 1,500-4,000 m
- **Distribution:** They are known to be found in eastern, central, and western Himalayas, but not in the Trans

Himalayan region.

- Description: An appearance of a goat with long, donkey like ears, and a habit of standing with forelegs astraddle, make the Serow an ungainly goat antelope. Its coarse coat(long hair length than the Goral) varies from black to red.
- It's a medium-sized mammal with a large head, thick neck, short limbs, long, mule-like ears, and a coat of dark hair.

Threat

According to IUCN, Himalayan serows have experienced significant declines in population size, range size and habitat in the last decade, and this is expected to continue due to intensive human impact.

Conservation status

- Himalayan serow is categorized as 'vulnerable' in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
- It is listed under Schedule I of The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, which provides absolute protection.