

# Nilgai

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**In news-** The State government of Bihar has chalked out a plan to sterilize the nilgais instead of culling them to control their population in view of repeated demand by farmers to save their crops. .

## **About Nilgai-**

- The nilgai is the **largest Asian antelope and is ubiquitous across the northern Indian subcontinent.**
- The **scientific name of the nilgai is *Boselaphus tragocamelus*.** The nilgai is the **sole member of the genus *Boselaphus* and placed in the family Bovidae.**
- It is also called the Blue Bull, ghurparas in Bihar.
- The vernacular name “nilgai” comes from the fusion of the Hindi words *nil* (“blue”) and *gai* (“cow”). The word was first recorded in use in 1882.
- **Sexual dimorphism is prominent;** the males are larger than females and differ in colouration.
- They live in dry areas with a variety of land types. They range from grassy, steppe woodlands, to hillsides.
- It occurs in India, Nepal, and Pakistan. Significant numbers occur in the Terai lowlands in the foothills of the Himalayas.
- It is indigenous to the Indian subcontinent, and Hindus accord it the same sacred status as cattle (both belong to the subfamily Bovinae).
- Accordingly, the nilgai is the only one of the four Indian antelopes that is still abundant.
- **It comes under Schedule III of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.**
- **IUCN status:** Least Concern.