

# Pygmy Hogs

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## About Pygmy Hogs

- The greyish brown pygmy hog (*Porcula salvania*), with its sparse hair and a streamlined body that is about the size of a cat's, is the smallest wild pig in the world.
- Smallest, rarest and most highly specialized member of the pig family.
- Named after the sal grasslands where they were first found, they once thrived in the lush plains of the sub Himalayas from Nepal to Uttar Pradesh. But today, there are thought to be less than 300 in the wild, in Assam, India.
- It is listed as 'Critically Endangered' under the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
- It is an 'indicator species' as its presence reflects the health of its primary habitat, the tall, wet grasslands of the region.
- They are found in tall grass habitats, usually near water.
- It is protected under 'Schedule I' of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

## Threats

- Reasons for disappearance were largely extensive destruction and degradation of grassland habitat due to rapid expansion of human settlements and farming activities.
- The habitat in critical condition due to:
  - Unsustainable livestock grazing
  - Indiscriminate dry season burning of grass
  - Unsustainable thatch grass and minor forest produce collection
  - Flash floods caused by natural or artificial dams

- Illegal trapping or snaring for bush meat

### **Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme (PHCP)**

- Started in 1995.
- In collaborative project of Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, IUCN/SSC Wild Pig Specialist Group, Forest Department, Government of Assam and the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC).
- Implemented in Assam by the Rare & Endangered Species Conservation Unit (RESCU) of EcoSystems-India.

### **Wildlife Protection Act 1972**

- The Wildlife (Protection) Act is a hallmark in the history of wildlife protection in India.
- Forest and Wildlife come in Concurrent subject by the 42nd amendment.
- The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted for the protection of plants and animal species.
- Act established schedules of protected plant and animal species; hunting or harvesting these species was largely outlawed.
- The Act provides for the protection of wild animals, birds, and plants; and for matters connected therewith or ancillary or incidental thereto. It extends to the whole of India.
- It has six schedules that give varying degrees of protection.
- Schedule I and part II of Schedule II provide absolute protection – offenses under these are prescribed the highest penalties.
- Species listed in Schedule III and Schedule IV are also protected, but the penalties are much lower.
- Schedule V includes the animals which may be hunted.
- The specified endemic plants in Schedule VI are

prohibited from cultivation and planting.

- The hunting to the Enforcement authorities has the power to compound offenses under this Schedule (i.e. they impose fines on the offenders).
- The act was amended in 1982, 1986, 1991 and 1993 and 2006.