

Exclusive- Rare ‘Hog Deer’ found in Mirzapur for the first time

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<https://vindhyaabachao.org/activities/wildlife-related/812-hog-deer-in-mirzapur>

A hog deer was rescued in an injured condition near a village

A hog deer was rescued by the Forest Department on tuesday when the villagers raised an alarm of sighting an injured deer-like species. Reportedly, the deer was being chased by feral dogs in Kolana village near Adalahat when the villagers rescued it and informed the police and forest department. The animal was later taken into custody by the Chunar Forest Ranger-Shri SP Ojha for medical treatment. The animal which was initially mistaken to be Chital, was later identified as ‘Hog Deer’ with the help of wildlife experts.

Hog deers are mainly found in terai grasslands and floodplains of north Indian rivers. Once widespread across northern India, floodplains of River Ganga are its natural habitat. Its rediscovery in Mirzapur is seen as a big achievement towards conservation of wildlife in Uttar Pradesh.

It is possible that lesser human activities during the lockdown has increased visibility of such rare wild animals. This also shows that several rare species of wildlife are still thriving in Mirzapur, which needs to be studied.



*Injured Hog Deer: Villagers approached the local Police and Forest Department
(Photo: Santosh Giri/Vindhya Bachao)*



Hog Deer under the custody of Chunar Forest Range Officer after administration of First-Aid.
(Photo: Office, Divisional Forest Officer, Mirzapur)

What did Experts say?

“Sighting of a female yearling Hog deer or Pada is a good sign for the species which seems to be reclaiming the historical-geographical ranges. A rapid assessment of floodplain coupled with management of floodplain grassland may help in reviving the Hog deer population in Mirzapur forest Division. The UP Forest department should be proudly taking further initiatives of habitat management and monitoring.”, said **Mr Faiyaz Khudsar, Senior Wildlife Biologist**

Senior conservationist and former member NBWL - Prerna Bindra emphasised on identification and protection of habitats of rare species. ‘Rediscovery of the endangered hog deer-whose populations are declining drastically-is welcome news and indicates there may be isolated populations of this rare species still thriving in flood-plains of River Ganga, and only accentuates the importance of this area. Both Uttar Pradesh and the Bihar government must identify and protect this habitat, important not only for the hog deer but other rare species”, she added.

Divisional Forest Officer, Mirzapur Forest Division- Mr Rakesh Chaudhary praised the efforts and dedication of field staff. He stated “All the employees of Mirzapur Forest Division are excited with the sighting of hog deer for the first time in the district. The floodplains of Ganga and the grasslands are the natural habitats of

this rare deer species. A survey for identifying its habitat is in progress. The animal is currently being treated under the custody of S.P. Ojha, Forest Range Officer-Chunar. Once recovered, it will be released into its natural habitat.”

Mirzapur is home to several rare species

In 2018, a camera trap [survey](#) conducted by the Forest Department and Vindhyan Ecology and Natural History Foundation recorded 11 new wildlife species in the Mirzapur Forest Division, including several species recorded for the first time in Uttar Pradesh. Three forest ranges- Marihan, Sukrit and Chunar have been proposed as a sloth bear conservation reserve by the Mirzapur forest division.

The forests of Mirzapur are also famous for tigers, leopards and wolves. The presence of herbivores like chital, sambar, barasingha, blackbuck, chinkara, wild boar etc. in these forests, makes it a favourable habitat for such carnivores. However, the forests in this region are under severe threat from activities such as mining and encroachment. Incidents of poaching/hunting are also reported from this region. The shortage of frontline forest staff is a great challenge in efficiently monitoring and management of the forests of Mirzapur.

General Information on Hog Deer

Common Name: Hog Deer, *Padha* (hindi)

Scientific Name: *Axis porcinus*

Habitat: Savanna, Shrubland, Grassland, Wetlands

Native: Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; India; Nepal; Pakistan

- As per December 2014 assessment, Hog Deer is listed as “Endangered” on The [IUCN](#) Red List of Threatened Species.
- Hog Deer is protected under Schedule III of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- It is listed in the Appendix of CITES. International trade of wildlife and their parts is prohibited.
- The habitat of hog deer ranges from Pakistan to northern and north-eastern India, southern China, and a large part of mainland South-East Asia.
- Due to hunting and habitat loss, distribution of Hog deers are now limited mainly within protected areas where they exist as small isolated populations.
- In India, Hog deer are limited to grasslands adjoining the foothills of the Himalayas, near wetlands and floodplains of Rivers Ganga and Brahmaputra, extending from Punjab to Arunachal Pradesh.
- Hunting and destruction of its habitats are main threats to its existence.