

Himalayan Serow

Himalayan Serow - a Himalayan mammal, somewhere between a goat and an antelope, has been confirmed as the newest creature to be spotted in various locations in India such as in Assam (Manas Tiger Reserve) and in Himalayan cold desert region Spiti Valley, Himachal Pradesh.

Himalayan Serow - Key Facts	
Official State Animal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mizoram, India
Geographical Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Found at altitudes between 2,000 metres and 4,000 metres. In eastern, central, and western Himalayas
Conservation Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IUCN Red List - Vulnerable Wildlife Protection Act 1972 - Schedule I CITES - Appendix I

Himalayan Serow

What are Himalayan Serows?

- Himalayan Serows are medium-sized mammals with a large head, thick neck, short limbs, long, mule-like ears, and a coat of dark hair.
- They resemble a cross between a goat, a donkey, a cow, and a pig.
- Himalayan serows are herbivores.
- The onlookers described it as an extremely shy animal, and informed that its sighting is possible only when it migrates to lower elevations.
- They are typically found at altitudes between 6,500 to 13,000 feet i.e. 2000m to 4000m.
- Eastern, Central, and Western Himalayas inhabit the Himalayan Serow, but not the Trans Himalayan region.
 - The Trans-Himalayas Mountain Region is located to the north of the Great Himalayas. It is also called Tibet Himalayan Region. It consists of Kailash, Ladakh, Zaskar and Karakoram mountain ranges.

About the Specie

- The Himalayan serow, scientific name *Capricornis sumatraensis* thar, is restricted to the Himalayan region.
- It is a subspecies of the mainland serow (*Capricornis sumatraensis*).
- There are several other species of Serows and all of them are found in Asia.

Status of Himalayan Serow Conservation

- According to the IUCN, the animals 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. The Himalayan Serow is categorised as 'vulnerable' in the IUCN Red List, earlier it was assessed as 'near threatened'.

1. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species is the world's most comprehensive inventory of the global conservation status of biological species (Animal, fungus and plant species).
2. It was founded in 1964
3. The data is based upon precise criteria to evaluate the rate of extinction of thousands of species and subspecies. These criteria are relevant to all species and all regions of the world.

- The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora & Fauna (CITES) has placed them on the most sensitive listing which prohibits any commercial trade of these animals.
- The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, provides absolute protection to the Himalayan Serow under the Schedule I.

What is Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972?

1. This schedule covered endangered species, which need rigorous protection and therefore, the harshest penalties for violation of the law are under this Schedule.

Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 provides for the safeguard and protection of the wildlife (flora and fauna) in the country in order to ensure environmental and ecological security.

Latest Sightings of Himalayan Serow

- The animal was recently spotted near Hurling village in Spiti, Himachal Pradesh. This is the first recorded human sighting of the serow in Himachal Pradesh.
 - Spiti lies in the cold mountain desert region of the western Himalaya, and its valley floor has an average elevation of 4,270 metres above sea level, generally Serows not found at this altitude, and never before has a serow been seen in the Himalayan cold desert.
 - Spiti Valley is known for its thriving population of endangered Snow Leopards.
- The Manas Bansbari-Mathanguri forest close to the border with Bhutan witnessed the sighting of the Himalayan serow.
- The serow has been spotted for the first time in the tiger reserve or anywhere else in Assam. Go through the information on Tiger Conservation in India on the given link.
- Himalayan serow has been spotted in the Great Himalayan National park, Kullu and upper region of Chamba District.
- Rupi Bhaba Wildlife Sanctuary has also witnessed the Himalayan Serow. The Sanctuary is locally well known for its extensive alpine pastures. Its numerous treks, trails and passes connect Rupi Bhaba Wildlife Sanctuary with the Pin Valley National Park and Great Himalayan National Park in its neighbourhood. Check out the List of National Parks in India on the linked page.