

## Himalayan Serow

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### Why in News

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A Himalayan serow has been **sighted for the first time in the Himalayan cold desert region** (Spiti, Himachal Pradesh).

### Key Points

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- **Description:**



Himalayan serow resembles **a cross between a goat, a donkey, a cow, and a pig.**

- **Physical Features:**

It's a medium-sized mammal with a large head, thick neck, short limbs, long, mule-like ears, and a coat of dark hair.

- **Species Type:**

- 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.
- Taxonomically, it is a subspecies of the mainland serow (***Capricornis sumatraensis***).

- **Diet:**

Himalayan serows are **herbivores.**

- **Geographical Location:**

They are typically found **at altitudes between 2,000 metres and 4,000 metres**. They are known to be found in **eastern, central, and western Himalayas**, but not in the **Trans Himalayan region**.

The Trans-Himalayas Mountain Region or Tibet Himalayan Region is located to the **north of the Great Himalayas** which consists of **Karakoram, Ladakh, Zaskar and Kailash mountain ranges**.

- **Latest Sighting:**

- The animal was spotted near **Hurling village in Spiti, 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, making the sighting special** as Serows are generally **not found at this altitude**.

- 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.

- The animal has also been spotted in the **Rupi Bhaba Wildlife Sanctuary**, and in the higher reaches of Chamba.

The Sanctuary is locally well known for its **extensive alpine pastures** as well as the numerous treks, trails and passes that connect it with the neighboring **Great Himalayan National Park** and **Pin Valley National Park**.

### **Salient Features of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**

- The Act provides for the protection of a listed species of **animals, birds, and plants**, and also for the **establishment of a network of ecologically-important protected areas in the country**.
- The Act provides for the formation of **wildlife advisory boards, wildlife wardens, specifies their powers and duties**, etc.
- The Act prohibited the **hunting of endangered species**.
- The Act provides for licenses for the **sale, transfer, and possession of some wildlife species**.
- Its provisions paved the way for the formation of the **Central Zoo Authority**. This is the central body responsible for the **oversight of zoos** in India.

It was established in 1992.

- The Act created **six schedules which gave varying degrees of protection to classes of flora and fauna**.
  - **Schedule I and Schedule II (Part II)** get **absolute protection**, and offences under these schedules attract the maximum penalties.
  - The schedules also include species that **may be hunted**.

- The **National Board for Wildlife** was constituted as a statutory organization under the provisions of this Act.
  - It is chaired by the **Prime Minister**.
  - This is an **advisory board** that offers advice to the central government on issues of wildlife conservation in India.
  - It is also the apex body to **review and approve** all matters related to wildlife, projects of national parks, sanctuaries, etc.
  - The chief function of the Board is to promote the **conservation and development of wildlife and forests**.

**Source: IE**