



Save Hornbills, Save Tropical Forests

Why in News

Scientists from two organisations studied **how fruiting plants and [hornbills](#) influenced each other's distribution** in the **Namdapha Tiger Reserve, Arunachal Pradesh**.

- The study strengthens the argument that **hornbills are gardeners or farmers of the forest**, demonstrating that they farm their own food-rich patches **through their seed dispersal**.

Key Points

▪ About the Study:

- Hornbills have a **sympiotic relationship** with several canopy trees in **tropical forests**. **In the longer term, this likely creates orchards that** continue attracting hornbills.
- The study shows that forest patches that have **rare trees like Canarium**, attract hornbills in large numbers (for food). In turn, hornbills end up **dispersing seeds of a diverse array of plant species** in higher numbers in these patches.

▪ Hornbills:

- **About:** The hornbills (Family Bucerotidae) are a family of birds **found in tropical and subtropical Africa and Asia**.
- **In India:** India is **home to nine species** of hornbills.
 - The **northeastern region has the highest diversity** of hornbill species within India.
 - They are the cultural symbols of some ethnic [communities in the northeast](#), specifically the **Nyishi of Arunachal Pradesh**.
 - The [Hornbill festival](#) celebrated **in Nagaland** is named after the bird - Hornbill which is the most revered and admired bird for the Nagas.
- **Threats:**
 - Hornbills are **hunted for their casques - upper beak - and feathers** for adorning headgear. They are also **poached for their meat and medicinal value** of their body parts.
 - A **conservation programme promoting the use of fibre-glass beaks** for headgear instead of real hornbill casques has helped reduce some threat to it.
 - **Illegal logging i.e. cutting of tall trees** where the hornbill birds nest and feed has led to destruction of its natural habitat.

India's 9 Hornbill Species

Rufous-necked Hornbill

- **Habitat:** It has the Northernmost extent.

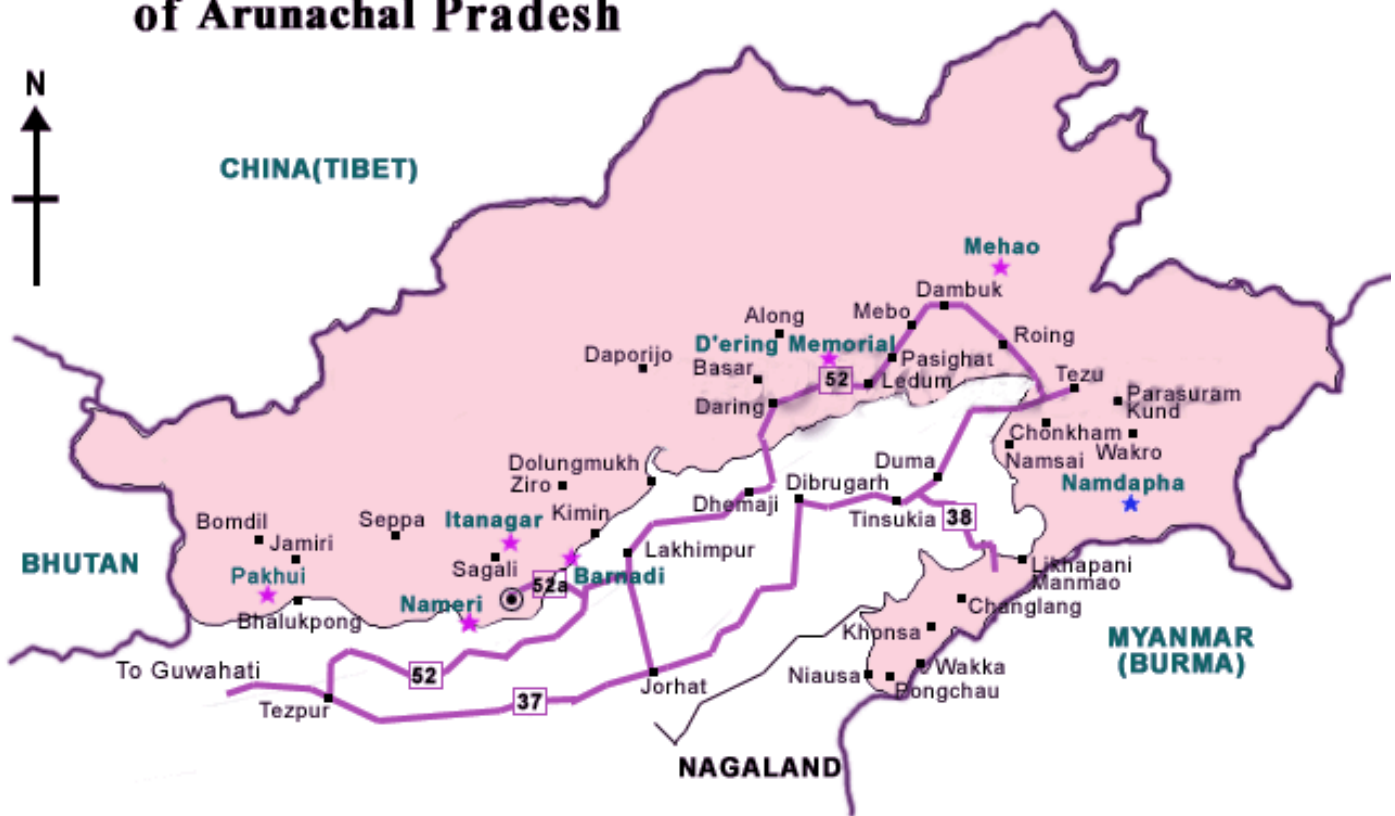
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Habitat: Western Ghats and Himalayas. Largest of all hornbills in India, state bird of Arunachal Pradesh and Kerala. ▪ IUCN Red List: Vulnerable ▪ CITES: Appendix I ▪ Wildlife Protection Act (WPA), 1972: Schedule I 	<p>Whole of North-East India to Mahananda Wildlife Sanctuary in West Bengal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IUCN Red List: Vulnerable ▪ CITES: Appendix I 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Habitat: North-East India. ▪ IUCN Red List: Vulnerable ▪ CITES: Appendix II
<p>Narcondam Hornbill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Habitat: Endemic to the Indian island of Narcondam in Andamans. ▪ IUCN Red List: Vulnerable ▪ CITES: Appendix II ▪ WPA, 1972: Schedule I 	<p>Malabar Pied Hornbill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Habitat: Evergreen and moist deciduous forests in India and Sri Lanka. ▪ IUCN Red List: Near Threatened ▪ CITES: Appendix II. 	<p>Oriental Pied Hornbill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Habitat: Subtropical or tropical moist lowland forests. ▪ IUCN Red List: Least Concern ▪ CITES: Appendix II
<p>Austen's Brown Hornbill</p>	<p>Malabar Grey Hornbill</p>	<p>Indian Grey Hornbill</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Habitat: Forests of North East India, majorly in Namdapha National Park, Arunachal Pradesh. ▪ IUCN Red List: Near Threatened ▪ CITES: N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Habitat: Western Ghats. ▪ IUCN Red List: Least Concern ▪ CITES: N/A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Habitat: Foothills of Southern Himalayas. ▪ IUCN Red List: Least Concern ▪ CITES: N/A
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Namdapha National Park

- **About:** It was declared a National Park in 1983. In the same year, it was also declared as a [Tiger Reserve](#).
- **Geography:**
 - It lies at the international border **between [India and Myanmar](#)** in the **state of Arunachal Pradesh**.
 - Namdapha is surrounded by the **Patkai hills to the south and south-east** and by the **Himalaya in the north**.
 - Namdapha is in fact the **name of a river** originating in the Park and **it meets Noa-Dehing river**. The Noa-Dehing river, is a **tributary of the Brahmaputra** and flows in a North-South direction in the middle of the National Park.
- **Climate:** Enjoys the **sub-tropical climate**. The **mountainous part has a mountain type of climate** while the **low lying plains and valleys experience tropical climate**.
- **Vegetation:** The **vegetation** is characteristic of [tropical evergreen forests](#) (Tropical Rain Forests).
- **Fauna:**
 - It is the **only park in the World** to have the **four species of big cat** namely the [Tiger](#), [Leopard](#), [Snow Leopard](#) and [Clouded Leopard](#).
 - A number of primate species such as **Assamese macaque, pig-tailed macaque, stump-tailed macaque**.
 - [Hoolock Gibbons](#), the **only 'ape' species found in India** is found in this National Park.
 - Of the many other important animals are the **elephants, black bear, Indian Bison**, and a variety of arboreal animals.
 - Among the **bird** species, most notable are the **White winged Wood Ducks, a rare and endangered species**. It is also **home to 5 out of 9 species of Hornbill** including the **great Indian hornbill**.

National Parks & Sanctuaries of Arunachal Pradesh



Source: DTE

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