



Blackbuck Population Increased in Odisha

Why in News

Recently, a **census** carried out by the Odisha State Forest Department revealed that **Odisha's blackbuck population has doubled** in the last six years.



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The Vision

Key Points

▪ About Blackbuck:

- The **Blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*)**, or the **Indian Antelope**, is a species of antelope **native to India and Nepal**.
 - It is widespread in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, and other areas throughout peninsular India.
- It is **considered as the epitome of grassland**.
- It is **considered to be the fastest animal in the world next to Cheetah**.
- The blackbuck is a **diurnal antelope (active mainly during the day)**.
- It has been **declared as the State Animal** of Punjab, Haryana, and Andhra Pradesh.
- **Cultural Importance:** It is a **symbol of purity for Hinduism** as its skin and horns are regarded as a sacred object. For **Buddhism**, it is a symbol of **good luck**.

▪ Protection Status:

- [Wildlife Protection Act 1972](#): Schedule I
- [IUCN Status](#): Least Concern
- [CITES](#): Appendix III

▪ Threats:

- Habitat Fragmentation, Deforestation, Natural Calamities, Illegal Hunting.

▪ Related Protected Areas:

- Velavadar Blackbuck Sanctuary - Gujarat
- Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary - Tamil Nadu
- In 2017, the **Uttar Pradesh** State Government approved the plan of setting up the **Blackbuck Conservation Reserve** in the trans-Yamuna belt near Prayagraj. It would be the first conservation reserve dedicated to the blackbuck.

▪ **Blackbuck in Odisha:**

- The blackbuck is **known in Odisha as Krushnasara Mruga.**
- Blackbucks are confined to **Balukhand-Konark coastal plain / wildlife sanctuary** in Puri District; **Balipadar-Bhetnoi and adjacent areas** in Ganjam District.
- As per the latest census, the antelopes numbered 7,358, compared to 2,194 in 2011.
- Improvement of habitats, protection given by the local people and forest staff were some of the **reasons for the increase of the population.**

▪ **Other Antelopes Found in India:**

- **Barasingha/Swamp Deer**, Chital/Spotted Deer, Sambar Deer, Sangai/Brow-Antlered Deer, **Himalayan Serow**, Barking Deer/Indian Muntjac, **Nilgiri Tahr**/Nilgiri Ibex, Tibetan Antelope, Himalayan Tahr, Nilgai/Blue Bull, Chinkara/Indian Gazelle.

Source: DTE

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