

Barasingha Deer

Prelims: Current events of national and international relations | Species

Why in news?

A decade after reintroduction, the Satpura tiger reserve's Barasingha population tops around 303 and three population units established across the landscape.

- **Scientific name** - *Rucervus duvaucelii*
- It commonly known as the swamp deer, is a large and majestic deer species native to the Indian subcontinent.
- **Family** - 'Artiodactyls' or 'even-toed ungulates'
- **Name** - "Barasingha" translates to "twelve-tined" or "twelve-horned" in Hindi, which highlights the magnificent, multi-branched antlers found on mature males.
- **Distribution** - It is distributed across the Indian subcontinent; an isolated population is found in Nepal.
- **Habitat** - Grasslands, meadows, open woodland areas, wetlands and swampy regions.
- Present mainly in Kanha Tiger Reserve (largest natural population) of Madhya Pradesh.
- **Subspecies of Barasingha in India**
 - Wetland Barasingha (*Rucervus duvaucelii duvaucelii*)
 - Hard-ground Barasingha (*Rucervus duvaucelii branderi*) - in Kanha Tiger Reserve. Hard-ground swamp deer is the state animal of Madhya Pradesh.
 - Eastern Barasingha (*Rucervus duvaucelii ranjitsinhii*)
- **Presence in other regions** includes
 - Dudhwa Tiger Reserve & Pilibhit National Park (Uttar Pradesh) - Where the Barasingha proudly serves as the State Animal of Uttar Pradesh.
 - Kaziranga and Manas National Parks (Assam)
 - Bardia National Park & Shukla Phanta (Nepal).
- **Size** - They stand about 110 to 120 cm (44 to 46 inches) at the shoulder and can weigh up to 170-180 kg.
- **Appearance** - Their woolly coat is a bright rufous or yellowish-brown in the summer, shifting to a thicker, paler brown during the winter.
- **Hooves** - They possess unique, wide and splayed hooves that spread out as they walk.
- This serves as an evolutionary adaptation providing crucial stability on soft, muddy, and marshy ground.
- **Behaviour** - They are strictly herbivorous, feeding mostly on swamp grasses and aquatic plants.



- **Conservation Status**

- IUCN Red List - Vulnerable
- Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 - Schedule I.
- CITES - Appendix I

- **Threats** - Habitat loss & fragmentation, hunting, poaching, human encroachment, grazing pressure, etc.

Reference

[TOI | Decade after reintroduction, Satpura reserve's Barasingha population tops 300](#)