Indian Hog Deer

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Species*

Why in News?

A rare albino hog deer was recently spotted roaming freely inside Assam's famous Kaziranga National Park.

- **Scientific Name** – Axis porcinus
- It is a *small, solidly built deer*, named for its hog-like running style.
- **Habitat** – Dense grasslands, floodplains (Indo-Gangetic plains), riverine valleys.
- **Distribution** – It is found across South Asia and Southeast Asia, including northern India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and western Thailand.
- **Name** – Its name comes from its characteristic mode of locomotion, *hog-like running style* — running with its head lowered to duck under obstacles rather than leaping.

Key Features

- **Size** – Males stand about 70 cm at the shoulder and weigh ~50 kg, while females are smaller at ~61 cm and 30 kg.
- **Appearance** – The coat shifts seasonally - thick dark-brown winter coat, reddish-brown in summer; often a dark dorsal stripe with light spots along the back.
- Males grow three-tined antlers (brow tine + forked top), shed yearly.



- **Behaviour** – Hog deer are crepuscular—active in the morning and late afternoon—and may extend nocturnal activity in hotter or threatened zones.
- **Reproduction** – They are seasonally breeding; gestation lasts ~220–230 days, generally yielding one fawn, which weighs ~2.0–2.7 kg at birth.
- **Predators** – Include tigers, leopards, dholes and sometimes the Burmese python.
- **Conservation Status**
  - **IUCN** – Endanger
  - **WPA, 1972** – Schedule I
- **Threats** – Habitat loss, presence of invasive species, poaching & hunting.

Quick Fact

Albino Hog Deer

• **Mutation** – Due to a rare genetic mutation known as *albinism*, the animal entirely lacks melanin pigment.
• **Appearance** –It has a striking, snow-white coat, pale hooves, pinkish skin features, and translucent, light-colored eyes.
• **Rarity** – Albino hog deer are almost never seen in the wild; folklore mentions "white deer," but clear documentation is rare.



Other rare white wildlife in India
• Albino saltwater crocodiles – Odisha's Bhitarkanika National Park
• Albino Indian bison or Gaur – Western Ghats.

References

1. First Post | Rare white albino hog deer spotted in Kaziranga
2. Thai National Park | Indian hog deer

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