

Albinism in Wild Asian Buffalo

Dr. Vivek Gajare

Livestock Development Officer, Animal Husbandry Department of Maharashtra .

Mohini Tayade

Assistant Professor , Department of Chemistry Arts and science College Bhalod ,North Maharashtra University

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There are 12 wild cattle species in world of which nine are found only in Asia and all nine are threatened with extinction which include kouprey a possibly extinct Cambodian wild ox ,The saola a critically endangered bovid from Vietnam and Loas, Anoa dwarf buffalo species endemic to the Indonesian island of Sulawesi,the critically Endangered tamaraw and the gaur and wild water buffalo from India(<https://www.asianwildcattle.org/>)

Manas National Park is a national park, UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site, a Project Tiger reserve, an elephant reserve and a biosphere reserve in Assam, India. Located in the Himalayan foothills, it is continuous with the Royal Manas National Park in Bhutan. The park is known for its rare and endangered endemic wildlife such as the Assam roofed turtle, hispid hare, golden langur and pygmy hog. Manas is famous for its population of the wild water buffalo. In 1992, UNESCO declared it as a world heritage site in danger due to heavy poaching and terrorist activities. On 25 February 2008, the area was increased to 500 km. On 21 June 2011, it was removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger and was commended for its efforts in preservation

The wild asian buffalo is largely restricted to in around Kaziranga ,Manas and Dibru-Saikhowa National Parks ,Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary and in few scattered pockets in Assam and in and around D'Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh. A small population survives in Balphakram National Park in Meghalaya and in Chhattisgarh in Indravati National Park and Udanti Wildlife Sanctuary. This population might extend into adjacent parts of Odisha (Wikipedia)

Wild Asian Buffalo is large bovine native to indian subcontinent and southeast Asia listed Endengered in IUCN Red list since 1986 and Scheduled 1 in Wildlife Protection act 1972 as remaining population total less than 4000 which has been declined by 50 % over last three generations (Wikipedia).There are two sub-species Central Indian Wild Buffalo and Buffalos from North-East(<https://indiabiodiversity.org/species/show/226734>) The North east sub-species are smaller as compare to the central Indian Counterpart with color salty grey to black .The moderately long coarse and moderate hair directed forward from haunches to long narrow head .Ears are comparatively small. Horns are heavy at the base and widely spreading up to 2m along outer edges exceeding in size the horns of any other living bovid. Threats include hybridization, haunting and habitat loss .

Albinism is the result of cells that can't produce melanin, the pigment needed to color skin, scales, eyes and hair. This genetic condition gets passed to offspring when both parents carry the recessive gene. When albinism is present, the animal can appear white or pink.and a nonsense mutation in the tyrosine gene causes albinism in water buffalo(Damé et al. BMC Genetics 2012.)

During our tour to North east we decided to visit Manas National Park and spotted this pinkish wild buffalo in the herd of Wild buffalo ,many confusions were there initially as our gypsy driver was also confused and seen this first time from the external characteristics and behavior with other members of herd the animal is confirmed as albino wild Indian buffalo , We also checked some local herds to clarify .Further research is required to confirm the presence of recessive genes in wild population of wild asian buffalo for conservation and preservation of wild asian buffalo.



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