

## Record of *Tetracerus quadricornis* (de Blainville, 1816) in Pilibhit Forest division of Terai Arc Landscape, Uttar Pradesh, India

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The occurrence of Four-horned Antelope *Tetracerus quadricornis* from Terai Arc Landscape of India was dubious in the recent past (Krishna et al. 2009), and was considered locally extirpated from the north of the Gangetic plains (Sharma 2006). The only sighting of a Four-horned Antelope, also called Chausingha, with a fawn was reported from Kaladhungi area of Uttarakhand by Corbett (1953).

In the Pilibhit Forest Division of Uttar Pradesh the photograph of a *T. quadricornis* (Image 1) was captured by camera trap during the exercises carried out for population estimation of the Tiger *Panthera*

*tigris* between 22 May and 30 June 2010. The location where the photo-capture of *T. quadricornis* was possible is at the coordinates 28°39'00.5"N & 79°56'17.0"E. It is in the Marwari Beat of the Mala Forest Range (Fig. 1). Camera trapping was carried out in an area of 150km<sup>2</sup> over 30 trap stations on 40 occasions (Anwar et al. 2010).

This is the first photographic record of *T. quadricornis* from the Pilibhit District of Uttar Pradesh State. It is believed that *T. quadricornis* has traditionally occurred in Pilibhit Forest Division but sightings have escaped proper identification. From a distance clear identification of Chausingha from Muntjac *Muntiacus muntjak* and Hog Deer *Axis porcinus* may be confusing (Nowak 1991). In the Pilibhit Forest Division, the ecological associates of *T. quadricornis* include the Nilgai *Boselaphus tragocamelus*, Hog Deer and Muntjac, among other cervids.

*T. quadricornis* is differentiated from Nilgai on the basis of its smaller size and height (1:9 and 1:2, respectively) and the presence of four horns (Leslie & Sharma 2009). It differs in its body posture from Muntjac and Hog Deer (Meraj Anwar pers. obs.). Chausingha has a delicate-build, thin short yellow-creamy fawn pelage, whitish ventral and inner leg markings without clear demarcation, and has a most conspicuous elongated and well developed preorbital



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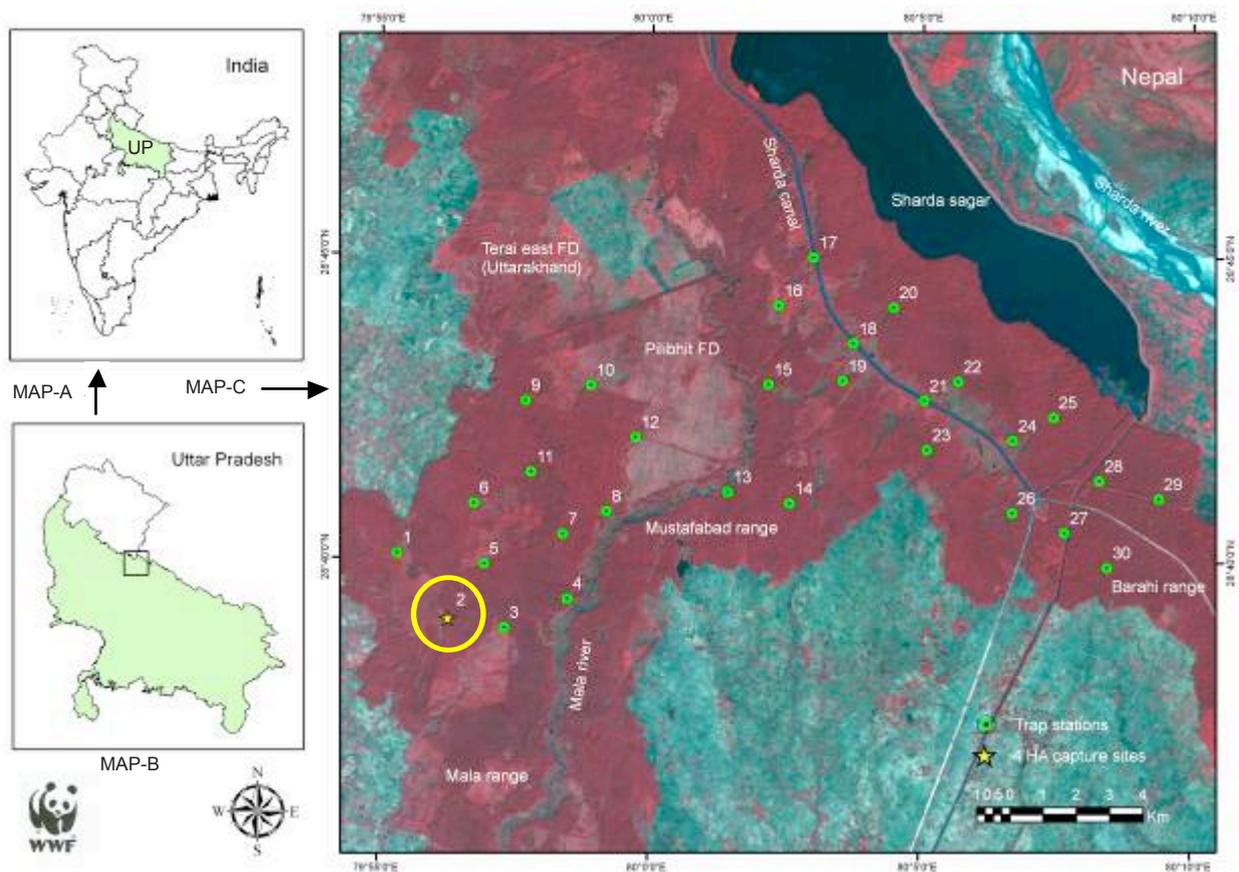
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**Image 1.** Four-horned Antelope captured in camera trap in Pilibhit Forest Division



**Figure 1.** State of Uttar Pradesh (U.P. in Map-A) showing the location of Pilibhit Forest Division (square in Map-B). Map-C shows locations where camera traps were mounted (green dots) and the site where Four-horned Antelope was photographed (site no.2, marked with yellow circle) in Marwari beat of Mala range of Pilibhit Forest Division.

gland (Leslie & Sharma 2009).

*T. quadricornis* is one of the most diminutive, non-congener members of the order Artiodactyla, family Bovidae, subfamily Bovinae and tribe Boselaphinae. It is a sexually dimorphic boselaphid and generally males are recognized by the presence of two anterior and two posterior smooth and sharp horns pointing slightly backwards. It prefers a dry deciduous forested habitat and hilly terrain and is secretive and has been little studied (Leslie & Sharma 2009).

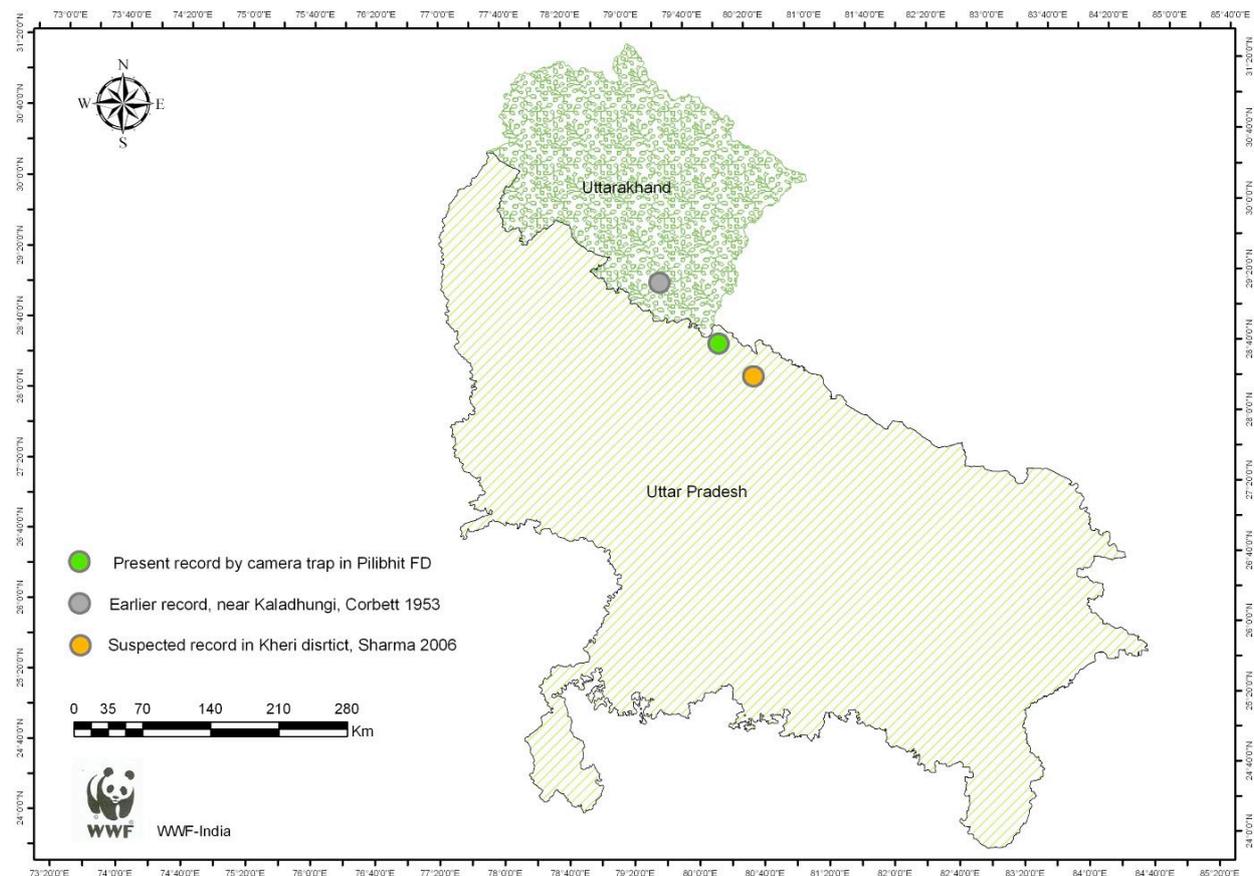
*T. quadricornis* is endemic to the Indian peninsula and Indus divisions of the Indian sub-region in the Asian Indo-Malayan Region (Corbet & Hill 1992) and occurs only in India and Nepal (Chesmore 1970; Krishnan 1972; Prater 1980; Rice 1991; Rahmani 2001; Singh & Swain 2003; Sharma et al. 2005). Historically, *T. quadricornis* was distributed from the Punjab and Terai region of Nepal to the Nilgiri Hills in the south and the Bengal region in the east to Sind province of Pakistan in the west (Jerdon 1874; Murray 1884; Blanford 1888).

The species is considered to be abundant in central India and a small population from the forests of Kheri District in Uttar Pradesh State of India. Inference regarding the presence of *T. quadricornis* in Kheri District (Fig. 2) was based on a questionnaire survey but the status was unknown, and therefore, further confirmation was recommended by Sharma (2006).

The inclusion of Pilibhit Forest Division in the distribution range of Chousingha is a record. The terrain of Pilibhit FD is characterized by very gentle slopes with a mosaic of grasslands, moist deciduous and dry deciduous forests. The present photographic record of *T. quadricornis* is from a forest dominated with *Sal Shorea robusta* trees.

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**Figure 2. Records of Four-horned Antelope in Terai Arc Landscape of Uttar Pradesh: present record (green dot) in Pilibhit District, and suspected record in Kheri District (orange dot). Earlier record near Kaladhungi in Uttarakhand is shown as a grey dot. The record from Pilibhit makes the range of distribution continuous from Kheri to Kaladhungi.**

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