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Cover: Life and death in one night - wolf hunting the hare. Mixed media—gouache, acrylics, pen & colour pencils. © Dupati Poojitha.

1972 (amended), in Appendix I of CITES, and classified as 'Vulnerable' by the IUCN Red List (Phan et al. 2020). Reliable data on its distribution and population status, however, are scarce, making it challenging to develop effective conservation action plans. Recent shifts in habitat use and sightings at lower elevations are noteworthy and warrant further investigation.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Nameri National Park (NNP) is located in the foothills of the eastern Himalayas and is contiguous with Pakke Tiger Reserve to the north and north-east. It is bounded by the Jia Bhorali River to the west and the Bor Dikorai River to the east. The NNP spans across 200 km² with altitudes ranging 36–321 m. It comprises tropical evergreen, semi-evergreen, and moist deciduous forests, with patches of bamboo and cane. Grasslands constitute less than 10% of the area, whereas semi-evergreen and moist deciduous forests dominate (Das & Deori 2011). The region is rich in faunal diversity, harbouring over 40 mammalian species, more than 400 species of bird, and over 40 species of herpetofauna. It is also designated as

an Important Bird Area (IBA) under A1 and A2 categories.

As part of the Phase IV Protocol of the National Tiger Conservation Authority for 2023-24, 196 camera traps were deployed in 98 trap stations within Nameri National Park with a sampling effort ($n = 30$) from 2 February to 2 March, 2024. Each trail camera (Cuddeback X-Change Color Model 1279) was positioned in a fabricated camera trap holder at a height of approximately 30–45 cm above the ground. The cameras were placed to face each other in 2 km² grids (Figure 1).

RESULTS

The Himalayan Serow was recorded in Tiger grid no. 37 with one adult individual's photo-capture instance on 19 February 2024 at 0715 h (Table 1). It is likely that the individual was grazing or searching for water in the vicinity. The area comprised of moist deciduous, semi-evergreen patches mostly comprising of *Magnolia hodgsonii*, *Dillenia indica*, *Premna bengalensis*, *Bridelia retusa*, *Litsea monopetala*, *Dysoxylum binectariferum*, *Amoora wallichii*, *Magnolia oblonga*, *Stereospermum chelonoides*, *Mallotus nudiflorus*, *Castanopsis*

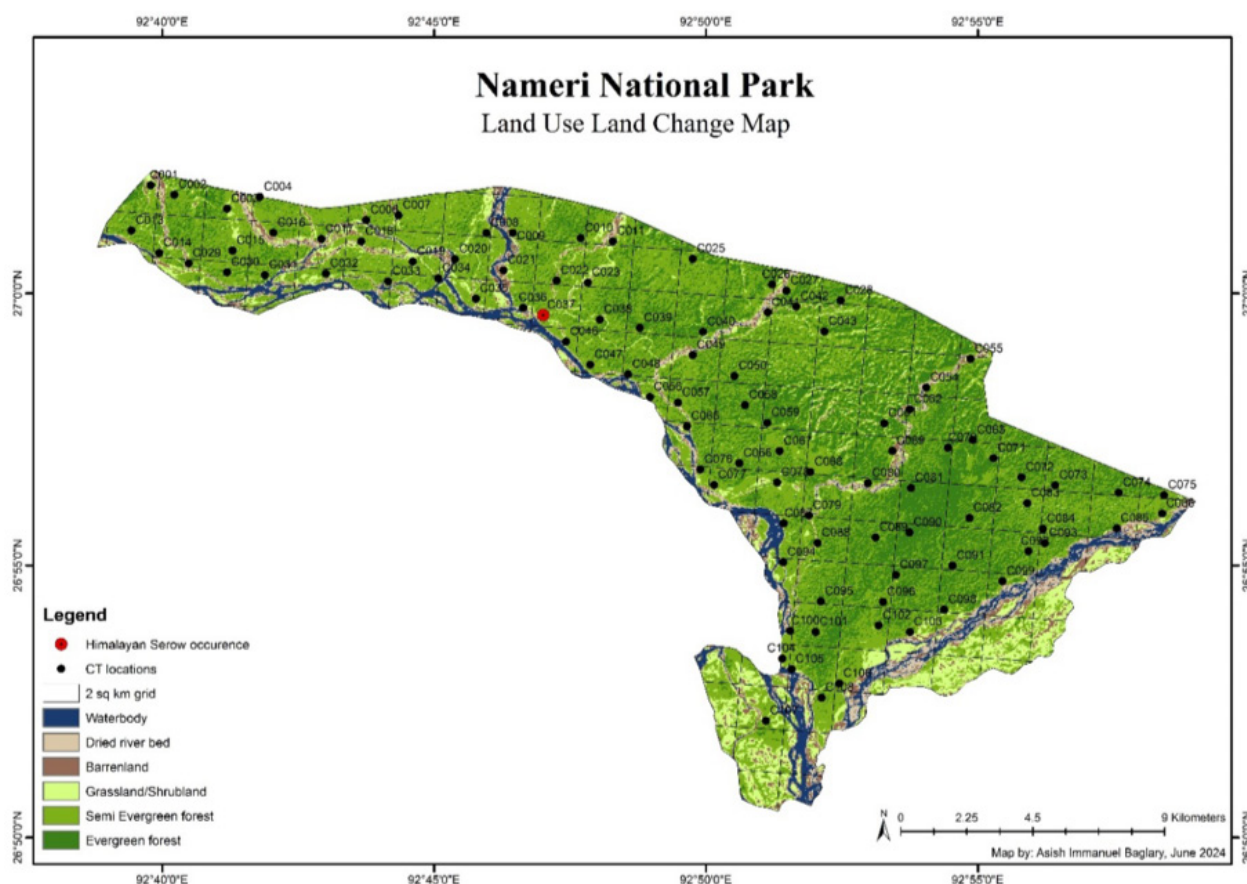


Figure 1. LULC map of NNP showing CT locations and Himalayan Serow.

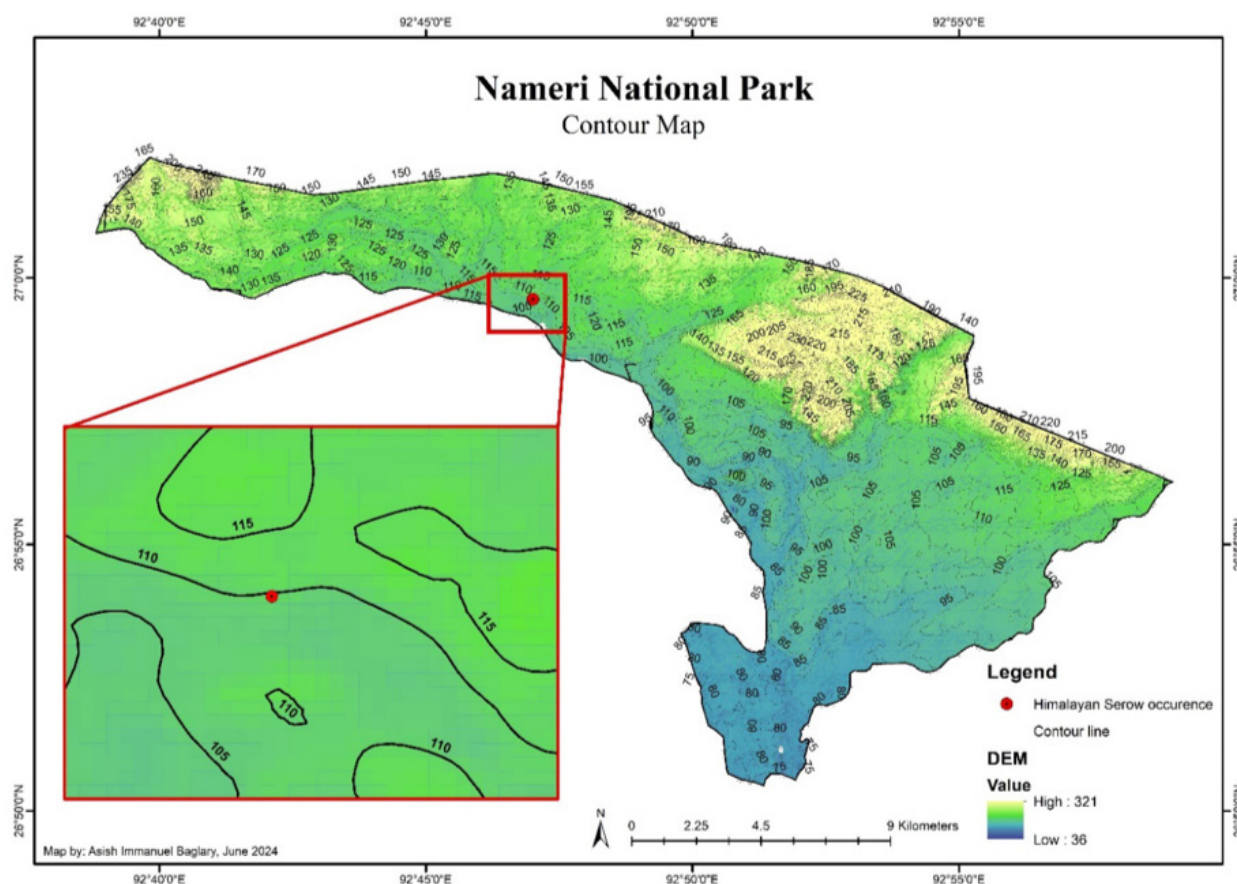


Figure 2. Contour map of NNP showing elevation and Himalayan Serow occurrence.

indica, *Pterospermum acerifolium*, *Morus laevigata*, *Cinnamomum glanduliferum*, *Tetrameles nudiflora*, and *Duabanga grandiflora* (Image 1). The location is proximity to a branch of river Jia Bhorali with an alluvial grassland patch comprising of *Saccharum spontaneum*, *Tamarix dioica*, and *Alpinia nigra*. Vegetation analysis revealed a diverse composition supporting the presence of multiple ungulate species. Predatory species such as the Indian Leopard and the Royal Bengal tiger were also photo-captured at the same trap location, along with other ungulate species such as Barking Deer *Muntiacus muntjac* and Sambar *Rusa unicolor*, demonstrating sympatric habitat usage (Image 2). This is the first recorded sighting of the Himalayan Serow in Nameri National Park at 110 m (Figure 2).

DISCUSSION

The presence of the Himalayan Serow at such a low elevation, with recent records from Manas (Deka et al. 2021), Valmiki (Safi & Maurya 2024), and now Nameri, is unusual and may be attributed to several factors:

1. Habitat adaptability: the Serow may exhibit

Table 1. Details of Himalayan Serow photo captured in Nameri National Park.

	Particulars	Description
1.	Tiger grid number	37
2.	Camera ID	C037B
3.	Location	26.993333°N, 92.783408°E
4.	Elevation	110 m
5.	Habitat type	Woodland
6.	Distance to river	250 m
7.	Distance to nearest human settlement	490 m
8.	Date & time of capture	19 February 2024 at 0715 h
9.	Predatory species captured in the same camera trap	<i>Panthera pardus fusca</i> , <i>Panthera tigris tigris</i>
10.	Sympatric species captured in the same camera trap	<i>Muntiacus muntjac</i> , <i>Rusa unicolor</i>

greater habitat flexibility than previously understood, allowing it to exploit lower elevation environments.

2. Seasonal migration: the sighting could be part of a seasonal migration pattern, possibly in response to



Image 1. Photographic record of Himalayan Serow in Nameri National Park. © Research Cell, Nameri Tiger Reserve.

climatic variations or resource availability.

3. Disturbance-induced displacement: increased human activities and habitat disturbances at higher elevations might have driven the Serow to seek refuge in lower, less disturbed areas.

Similar shifts in habitat use have been documented in other ungulate species, indicating a potential adaptive response to environmental changes. These findings suggest that the Serow's ecological niche may be broader than traditionally perceived. Given the limited literature available, it is crucial to study its behaviour, ecology, population, and distribution status in relation to global climate change threats before the risk of regional extinction arises.

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Image 2. Other sympatric ungulate and predatory species recorded from the same location. © Research Cell, Nameri Tiger Reserve.

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