

Pygmy Hogs Return Home to Manas After 30 Years



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Hantigiri Narzary 7 June 2026 Updated 22 Jun 11249 views

In a landmark conservation milestone, fifteen captive-bred pygmy hogs were released today into the Kuribeel grasslands of Manas National Park — the very site where the species' conservation journey began three decades ago.

The release, carried out under the Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme (PHCP), marks a true homecoming. In 1996, six pygmy hogs were captured from this same Kuribeel grassland to establish a captive breeding population against extinction. Today, their descendants have been brought back to a landscape where no confirmed signs of the species had been recorded for the past nine years.

The fifteen animals — nine females and six males — were released in the presence of senior forest officials including Dr. Vinay Gupta IFS, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) and Chief Wildlife Warden of Assam.

This is the sixth release of pygmy hogs into Manas National Park since 2020, taking the total number released by the programme to 78. The PHCP has so far bred and reintroduced 194 hogs across Assam, and for the first time since the programme began, the captive-bred population may now be outnumbered by wild-born animals — a remarkable conservation benchmark.

The pygmy hog (*Porcula salvania*), the world's smallest and rarest wild pig, was feared extinct in the 1970s before being rediscovered. It remains listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List, threatened primarily by grassland loss due to invasive plant species and human disturbance.

Over the next five years, the PHCP plans to release around 80 more pygmy hogs at Manas, with the goal of rebuilding a thriving wild population of approximately 300 animals by 2040.

Dr. Vinay Gupta called the reintroduction "a remarkable conservation achievement," adding that it would further strengthen Manas as a globally important biodiversity conservation area. Field Director Dr. C. Ramesh underscored the ecological significance of Manas' sub-Himalayan grasslands, describing them as indispensable not just for wildlife but also as natural water reservoirs vital to farming communities surrounding the park.

The PHCP is a collaborative initiative involving the Assam Forest Department, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, the IUCN SSC Wild Pig Specialist Group, Aaranyak and Ecosystems-India.



Hantigiri Narzary
Reporting from Kokrajhar

BY HANTIGIRI NARZARY

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