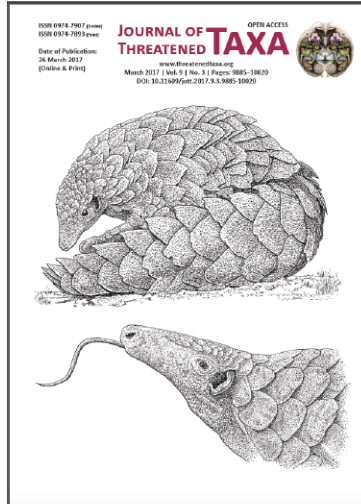


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### NOTE

**A FIRST REPORT OF THE PRESENCE OF THE INDIAN WILD PIG *SUS SCROFA CRISTATUS* FROM KAJINAG RANGE, KASHMIR, INDIA**

Riyaz Ahmad, Intesar Suhail & Yash Veer Bhatnagar

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The Indian Wild Pig *Sus scrofa* is a widely distributed mammal found in western Europe, Russia, northern Africa, the Mediterranean Basin, Middle East, India, Indo-China, Japan, Taiwan and the Greater Sunda Islands of Southeast Asia (Oliver & Leus 2008). 'Indian races' are distributed from Iran to India and in the neighbouring countries of Myanmar and Thailand (Oliver & Leus 2008). There are three subspecies of Wild Pig in India, which occur throughout the country except the arid areas of Rajasthan and Gujarat and the high Himalaya (Menon 2014). The northern most limits of Wild Pig extends up to the Himalayan foothills (Menon 2014), which includes the Jammu region of Jammu & Kashmir. The Wild Pig is not believed to have been naturally present in the Kashmir Valley but is said to have been introduced during the time of Maharaja Gulab Singh (1846–1857), the erstwhile ruler of Jammu & Kashmir (Lawrence 1895). The Wild Pig became common along the eastern foothills of Kashmir mountains with Dachigam National Park holding the core population (Lawrence 1895); however, there have been no reports of its occurrence in northern Kashmir.

After the Dogra Raj (Maharaja Rule), the Wild Pig was recognized as an invasive species in Kashmir and thus no steps were taken to conserve it. The species was considered locally extinct even from the Dachigam National Park (Mansoor 1989) and, according to State Wildlife Department, was not sighted from the park and its adjoining areas since 1984. The recent sighting of the Wild Pig in Dachigam after a gap of about 30 years

## A FIRST REPORT OF THE PRESENCE OF THE INDIAN WILD PIG *SUS SCROFA CRISTATUS* FROM KAJINAG RANGE, KASHMIR, INDIA

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however proves that it still survives in Dachigam (Ahmad et al. 2013).

Limber and Lachipora Wildlife Sanctuaries are situated in the Kajinag mountain range (34°10'0"N & 74°2'0"E) which falls in Baramulla District in the northwest of the Kashmir Valley (Fig. 1). Located in the northwestern Himalayan biogeographic zone (2A) (Rodgers & Panwar 1988), the area occupies the north bank of the river Jhelum in Uri, close to the Line of Control (LoC) on the northwestern side and the Shamshabari mountain range (Langate Forest Division of Kupwara District) to its north. The altitudinal range of Kajinag is between 1,800–4,700 m and the area is interspersed with rocky cliffs more or less uniformly along the altitude. The area consists of valleys, narrower belts along streams and alpine meadows.

The vegetation of Kajinag is dominated by coniferous

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Snow  
Leopard  
Trust



nature  
conservation  
foundation





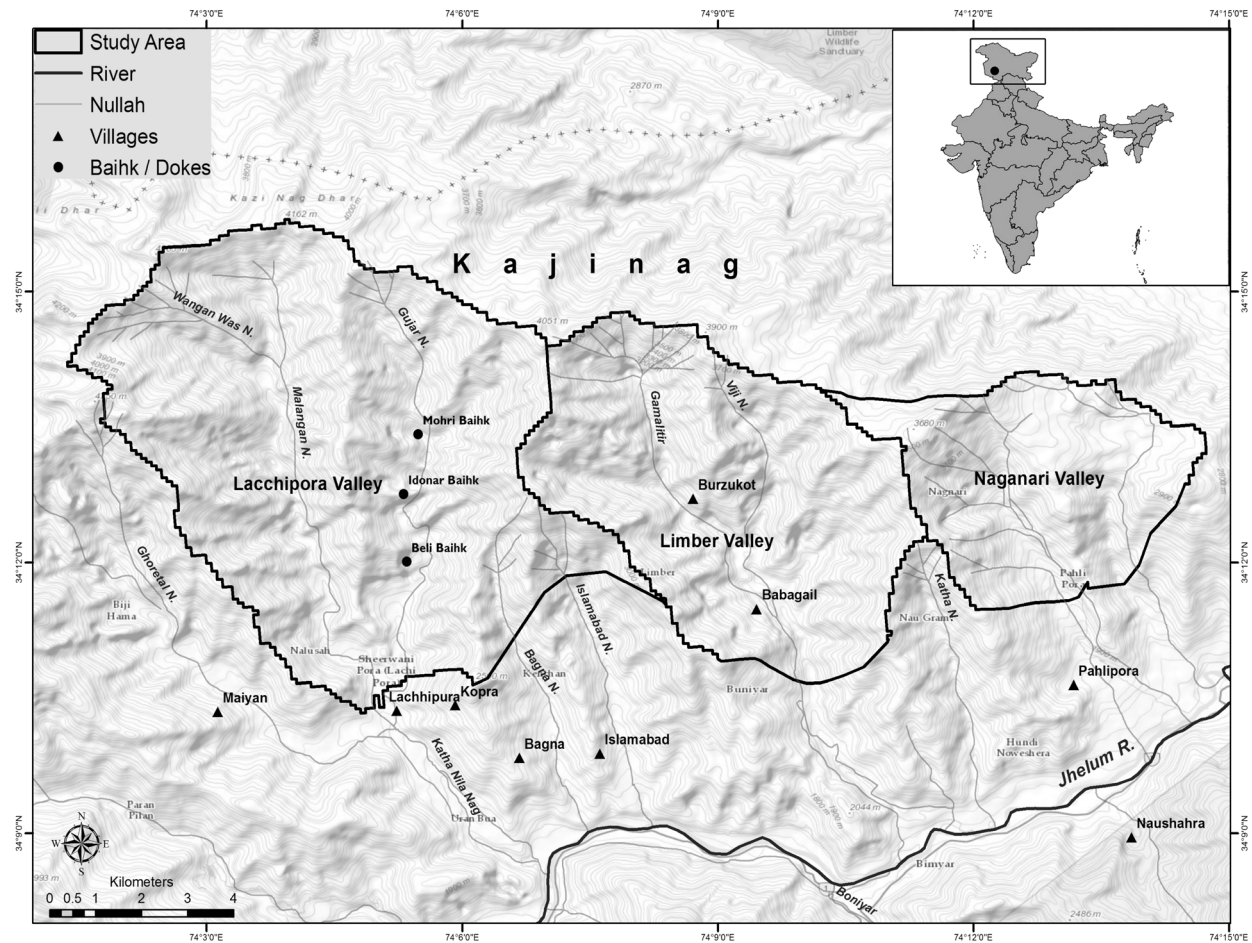


Figure 1. Study area with Lacchipora Valley (Lacchipora WS) and Limber Valley (Limber WS) in Kajinag Range

forests (Pine *Pinus wallichiana*, Deodar *Cedrus deodara* and Fir *Abies pindrow*) in the lower and middle elevations. At higher elevations, the subalpine forest is dominated by Birch *Betula utilis* and mixed forests whereas the alpine vegetation is dominated by Juniper *Juniperus squamata* and alpine meadows. The lower areas of riverine forests are dominated by Horse Chestnut *Aesculus indica* forests and *Viburnum* shrubs. There are temperate grasslands with rolling terrain at lower elevations.

Being home to the Markhor *Capra falconeri* and a host of other species, the Kajinag range is considered as one of the most important wildlife areas in Jammu & Kashmir. Some published information on wildlife of Kajinag, based on various field surveys conducted in 1980s is available (Kaul 1989; Bhatnagar et al. 2009); however, there is neither any published record of the Wild Pig from Kajinag range, nor any knowledge with the locals of its occurrence in the area.

With this background, we report the presence of the Indian Wild Pig in the Limber and Lachipora wildlife



Image 1. Photograph of dead Wild Pig in Limber Wildlife Sanctuary.

sanctuaries of the Kajinag Range in northern Kashmir. On 20 April 2010 while we were surveying the Limber Wildlife Sanctuary (WS) for Markhor we came across a dead Wild Pig (Image 1) at Mamyka Kadam location

(34°13'13.23"N & 74°9'37.48"E) of Methwani Nallah area. The animal had probably fallen from a nearby cliff and died. Again, on 9 October 2014, an individual Wild Pig was sighted at the Kakawpud location (34°10'51.16"N & 74°5'10.19"E) of Lachipora WS.

Historically, Limber and Lachipora WSs have been "game" reserves during the Maharaja's reign prior to 1947. Although there is no specific record pertaining to the introduction of the Wild Pig in this region during the Maharaja's time, it is possible that the individual/carcass recorded, represent the remnant surviving population from the animals introduced in some "game" preserves in that era. Alternatively, this may suggest an expansion of the northern population from across the LoC, where in the Jhelum Valley, the populations are known to be increasing and expanding for more than a decade (Naem Awan pers. comm. 2016). Human intervention plays an important role in the expansion of the home range of the Wild Pig (Oliver & Leus 2008), which has been found to be a favoured prey of the Common Leopard (Wegge et al. 2009). The Wild Pig is also potentially an invasive species in Kajinag. We therefore recommend a close, regular monitoring of the apparently establishing population to understand the possible conservation implications.

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