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MAGAZINE NOTES

Blackbuck Conservation & Sal Heartwood Borer

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ENVIRONMENT

GS3

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Blackbuck Conservation & Sal Heartwood Borer

 **Down to Earth** Chapter 16 · 1 min read ·

Blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*)

- Keystone grassland species; population reflects health of grassland ecosystems
- **Conservation status:** Schedule I (Wildlife Protection Act, 1972); **Vulnerable** (IUCN Red List)
- **Ganjam district (Odisha):** Sole blackbuck habitat in the state; population surged to **9,287** (increase of 2,412 since 2020)
- Success driven by community reverence and reduced poaching — not aggressive fencing

Sal Tree (*Shorea robusta*) & Heartwood Borer

- Sal: **second most important timber species** in India after teak
- Dominates tropical moist deciduous forests (~**10 million hectares** total cover)
- MP and Chhattisgarh account for **>25%** of sal cover
- **Sal Heartwood Borer (*Hoplocerambyx spinicornis*):** Family *Cerambycidae*; causing severe epidemic in MP and Chhattisgarh
- Highly attracted to tree sap and resin
- **Control: “Trap Tree Method”** — healthy trees (60-90 cm girth) cut and beaten to release sap, intoxicating borers for manual killing

UPSC Angle

- **GS3:** Biodiversity, species conservation, pest management

★ **FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGE PEDIA****BLACKBUCK:**

Scientific name: *Antelope cervicapra*

WPA status: Schedule I; IUCN: Vulnerable

Ganjam (Odisha) population: 9,287 (up 2,412 since 2020)

SAL TREE & HEARTWOOD BORER:

Sal rank: 2nd most important timber species (after teak)

Sal cover: ~10 million hectares; MP + Chhattisgarh: >25%

Borer: *Hoplocerambyx spinicornis* (Cerambycidae)

Control: Trap Tree Method (60-90 cm girth trees)



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