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Geographical range

Amazing Species: Water Deer

The **Water Deer**, *Hydropotes inermis*, is listed as 'Vulnerable' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. The Latin name of this highly distinct deer translates as 'unarmed water-drinker' referring to the species' lack of antlers and preference of marshy habitats. It occurs in well-watered lowland terrain in eastern China and Korea.

While the Water Deer is able to survive in modified habitats, a major threat is the contraction and fragmentation of its native range caused by agricultural conversion of the habitat (commonly for rice cultivation). Hunting also takes place for the deer's meat, in retaliation for perceived grazing of crops, and for the semi-digested milk found in the rumen of un-weaned fawns, used in traditional medicine.

The species occurs in Poyang Lake Nature Reserve and Yancheng Nature Reserve in China. However, outside protected areas, salt-marshes and brackish land are under serious threat of conversion, being poorly represented in protected areas. Thus conservation priorities are effective management of protected areas, increasing habitat protection, controlling hunting levels and preventing further agricultural conversion of the remaining semi-natural habitat in coastal lowlands.

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