

Project Update: July 2017

A preliminary survey was carried out initially in the study area with discussing with Umling Park forest range staff and local people whose crops were depredated by hog deer. In each of the four areas, a minimum of 20 agricultural fields that are depredated by hog deer was selected. Habitat use by hog deer was measured by the abundance of pellet groups and tracks counted along line transect, using established line transects methods from March to July 2017 involving park staff and local people. In each type of habitat, a series of well-spaced line transects (100 m separation where possible) was laid across agricultural fields perpendicular to the edge of the field closest to the forest or other natural habitat used by hog deer. Distance methods and circular plots were used for counting pellet groups. Circular plot with radius 1.78 m was established every 50 m interval along line transects and pellet of the hog deer was counted within the circular plot.

A total 200 indirect signs were observed and two direct sightings recorded in the proposed study area. Crop damage along the transect line was also assessed using a qualitative categorical approach. All most 7 acres of agriculture crop was destroyed by the hog deer, especially during the night, in 6 months.

In each study area, three camera traps were set up at key fields to document use by hog deer and other species. Camera traps were checked on a monthly basis, and photographs downloaded. All species were identified. Sex and general age class for hog deer were determined from photos. From the camera trap, only three hog deer was captured from Umling and Tarithang block, and rest was all other species like wild pig, rabbits, barking deer and elephant. Out of four study area distribution of hog deer in Tarithang and Umling block was higher as compared to Chudzergang block but where else in Ngangla block, no sign or evidence presence of hog deer was recorded during the study period.