

## Small mammal thought to be extinct rediscovered in Nepal's national park

March 16 2018

---



Image of Hispid hare captured on camera-trap in Chitwan National Park, Nepal.  
Credit: Bed Khadka

The hispid hare (*Caprolagus hispidus*) is in the list of critically endangered small mammals. It was thought to be extinct from Chitwan National Park as it had not been spotted again after its first spotting in 1984.

Now, there is good news for nature lovers and conservationists. A baby hispid hare was caught on camera by a conservationist in Chitwan National Park, 150 kilometres southwest of Nepalese capital Kathmandu.

"The fact that the hispid hare was a baby indicates that there are also parents and both male and female," says Bed Khadka, who is a [conservation](#) officer at Chitwan National Park.

Khadka has published an article in the journal *Conservation Science* (CS) detailing his rediscovery of the small rabbit-like species.

"It's a small mammal species smaller than the regular rabbit and larger than a rat," Khadka says. "We had taken it to be extinct from the national [park](#) as it had not been spotted after 1984."

The species inhabits the lowlands of Ganges floodplain. Rare sightings have been reported in India and Nepal, but mostly it is not seen. The recent sighting has shown that it has a resurrection possibility and can be conserved.

The present government and international efforts on animal conservation are focussed on [large mammals](#) like the tiger and rhino with the idea that conservation of large mammals will in turn conserve the ecosystem as a whole and so conserve the small animals too.

"Now I see a need of some programmes to protect some of these [small animals](#) too," says Khadka.

Khadka has been studying a bird called the Bengal Florican for several years and the hispid hare was spotted while studying the Bengal Florican.

The population of the hispid [hare](#) is rapidly declining due to

anthropogenic pressure and grassland fire. In protected areas in Nepal, grassland burning is used as a management tool by park authorities to create new grass shoots for grazing [animals](#).

"Until now, we cannot predict downstream effects of current grassland management, although continuous grassland burning in protected areas might become a possible threat to rare hispid hares," says Khadka.

"Therefore, further study about their presence-absence, population status needs to be done throughout the [grassland](#) of the low land of Nepal including the newly rediscovered park," he adds.

**More information:** Bed Bahadur Khadka et al. Rediscovery of the hispid hare (*Caprolagus hispidus*) in Chitwan National Park, Nepal after three decades, *Conservation Science* (2017). [DOI: 10.3126/cs.v5i1.18560](https://doi.org/10.3126/cs.v5i1.18560)

Provided by INASP

Citation: Small mammal thought to be extinct rediscovered in Nepal's national park (2018, March 16) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-03-small-mammal-thought-extinct-rediscovered.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--