

**DISTRIBUTION AND HABITAT UTILIZATION OF HISPID HARE  
(*Caprolagus hispidus* Pearson, 1839) IN SHUKLAPHANTA  
NATIONAL PARK, KANCHANPUR, NEPAL**



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**RECOMMENDATION**

This is to recommend that the thesis entitled “**Distribution and Habitat Utilization of Hispid hare (*Caprolagushispidus* Pearson, 1839) in Shuklaphanta National Park, Nepal**” has been carried out by Mr. Dharendra Bahadur Chand for the partial fulfillment of Master's Degree of Science in Zoology with special paper Ecology. This is his original work and has been carried out under my supervision. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis work has not been submitted for any other degree in any institutions.

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Thesis entitled “**Distribution and Habitat Utilization of Hispid Hare (*Caprolagushispidus* Pearson, 1839) in Shuklaphanta National Park Kanchanpur, Nepal**” is my own work except otherwise as acknowledged. I have not submitted it or any of its part to any other academic institutions for any degree.

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## ABSTRACT

The Hispid hare (*Caprolagushispidus*), a member of Leporidae family is cited as critically Endangered species by IUCN (1978) in IUCN Red list (2002) and is listed on Appendix I of CITES and protected by NPWC Act- 1973 of Nepal. Historically the species was distributed throughout the southern Himalayan foothill from Uttar Pradesh of India through Nepal and West Bengal to Assam of India, extending southwards as far as Dhaka in Bangladesh; however, the present distribution range is unknown in Nepal because of insufficient evidences of its distribution. This study was carried out to explore the distribution, habitat use and existing threats to the Hispid hare (*Caprolagushispidus*) in Shuklaphanta National Park (SNP), Nepal in winter (November –December ,2015) and summer season (April-Maya,2016).

Line transect survey method was used for observation of the animal and its signs where the pellets density were calculated. The detail vegetation analysis of the plot was done for their habitat use and preference. The Population density of Hispid hare was found to be 0.18/ha in winter and 0.22/ha in summer. The species mainly preferred the Tall grassland habitat. Twelve Grass species were identified in the habitat of Hispid hare with dominancy of *Saccharumspontaneum*, *Imperatacylindrica*, *Narengaporphyrocoma*, and *Saccharummunj*. Illegal grazing of domestic animals inside the protected areas should be strictly banned. Mahakali flooding seems most dangerous for the Shuklaphanta National park in terms of Hispid hare survival. Check dam should be constructed at the point where the Mahakali River entered into SNP. Existing threats were fire, flood, illegal grazing of domestic animals, invasion of grass and tree species.

Action plan should be developed for the better management, field based conservation, and captive breeding program should be implemented immediately to maintain a viable population of Hispid hare in SNP.

**Key word:** Hispid hare, SNP, pellet density, distribution, existing threats.

# CONTENTS

	<b>Pages</b>
DECLARATION	
RECOMMENDATION	
LETTER OF APPROVAL	
CERTIFICATE OF ACCEPT ANCE	
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	
LIST OF TABLES	
LIST OF FIGURES	
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS	
LIST OF APPENDICES	
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	
ABSTRACT	
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1-6</b>
<b>1.1 Background</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1.1 Grassland ecosystem and small mammals	1
1.1.2 Hispid hare ( <i>Caprolagushispidus</i> )	3
1.1.2.1 Morphology	3
1.1.2.2 Distribution	4
1.1.2.3 Habitat	4
1.1.2.4 Behaviour and Reproduction	4
<b>1.2 Objectives of the study</b>	<b>5</b>
1.2.1 General Objective	5
1.2.2 Specific Objective	5
<b>1.3 Significance of the study</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.4 Hypothesis</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2. LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>7-8</b>
2.1 National Context	7
2.2 Global Context	8
<b>3. MATERIALS AND METHODS</b>	<b>9-15</b>
<b>3.1 Study area</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1.1 Location	9
3.1.2 Climate	10
3.1.3 Biological feature	10
3.1.3.1 Flora	10
3.1.3.1.1 Grassland	10
3.1.3.1.2 Aquatic habitat	10
3.1.3.2 Fauna	11
<b>3.2 Materials</b>	<b>11</b>



<b>3.3</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>11</b>
3.3.1	Reconnaissance survey	11
3.2.2	Grassland survey	11
3.3.3	Transect line	11
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Data collection</b>	<b>11</b>
3.4.1	Primary data collection	11
3.2.1.1	Sampling of Hispid hare and their signs	11
3.3.1.2	Pellet estimation	14
3.4.1.3	Pellet Identification	14
3.5.1.4	Animal distribution	14
3.5.1.5	Threats and conservation measures	14
3.5.2	Secondary data collection	15
3.5.3	Data Analysis	15
3.5.3.1	Population density	15
3.5.3.2	Habitat preference	15
3.5.3.3	Vegetation Analysis	15
<b>4.</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>17-24</b>
4.1	Population density	17
4.2	Habitat Compustion	17
4.3	Water	18
4.4	Ground cover	18
4.5	Habitat type and Utilization	21
4.6	Existing threat s	23
4.6.1	Grassland burning	23
4.6.2	Overgrazing	23
4.6.3	Flooding	24
4.6.4	Thatch collection	24
4.6.5	Invasion of plant species	24
<b>5.</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>25-27</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>30-35</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>36-43</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

S.N.		Page no.
Table 1 :	Showing population density of Hispid Hare in different study sites within Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve during 2015-2016.	17
Table 2 :	Number of plots in each habitat type, plots with pellet in winter and summer seasons and habit preference (HP) value	22 36
Table 3 :	Shuklaphanta sites' Grass species Analysis of winter season	36
Table 4 :	Shuklaphanta sites' Grass species Analysis of Summer season	36
Table 5 :	Barcaula sites Grass species Analysis of Winter season	37
Table 6 :	Barcaula sites Grass species Analysis of summer season	37
Table 7 :	Pipariya sites Grass species Analysis of winter season	37
Table 8 :	Pipariya sites Grass species Analysis of summer season	38
Table 9 :	Hirapurphanta sites Grass species Analysis of Winter season	38
Table 10 :	Hirapurphanta sites Grass species Analysis of summer season	38

## LIST OF FIGURE

<b>S.N.</b>		<b>Page no.</b>
Figure 1 :	Map showing the approximate former distribution of Hispid hare	4
Figure 2 :	Map showing study area	9
Figure 3 :	Grass preferred by Hispid hare	17
Figure 4 :	Mean nearest water distance in different study sites	19
Figure 5 :	Water distance preference by Hispid hare	20
Figure 6 :	Mean coverage percentage of plant species in study sites	20
Figure 7 :	Mean coverage percent of plant species in study sites	21
Figure 8 :	Graph showing the Habitat utilization by Hispid hare	22

## LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

<b>Photographs</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Pages</b>
Picture 1 :	Pellet of Hispid hare	14
Picture 2 :	Pellet of Indian hare	14
Picture3 :	Grass land fire in Hispid hare habitat	23
Picture4 :	Grazing pressure	23
Picture5 :	Flooding inside different grassland of SWR	24
Picture6 :	Pellets of Hispid hare	44
Picture7 :	Feeding signs of Hispid hare	44
Picture8 :	Feeding signs and looking for pellets	44
Picture9 :	Nest of Hispid hare	45
Picture10 :	Laying a transect	45
Picture11 :	Searching Pellet of Hispid hare	45
Picture12 :	Field Survey	45
Picture13 :	Interview with staff of SWR	46
Picture14 :	Interview with local people	46

## **ABBREVIATION**

CITES	:	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild
DNPWC	:	Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation
GPS	:	Global Positioning System
ha	:	hector
IUCN	:	The World Conservation Union
JWS	:	Jaldapara Wildlife Sanctuary
NTNC	:	National Trust for Nature Conservation
SNP	:	Shuklaphanta National Park