



Indian Water Buffalo (*Bubalus arnee*)

Size: Head and body length, 2.4 - 3 m; shoulder height, 1.5 - 1.9 m; tail, 0.6 - 1 m **Weight:** Approx. 700 - 1,200 kg **Habitat:** Prefers low-lying alluvial grasslands, riparian forests and woodlands

Surviving number: Estimated at fewer than 2,500 mature individuals



Photographed by Sandesh Kadur

WILDLIFE AS CANON SEES IT

A dangerous mix. As habitat loss brings the Indian water buffalo closer to its cousin the domestic water buffalo, their union results in hybridized offspring that threaten the gene pool. Highly social, these prodigious grazers usually live in loosely structured maternal groups made up of females, their dependent young and a bull. Adult males not attached to such a group sometimes form groups of their own. But the urge

to mingle is hazardous when wild and domestic meet—due to not only hybridization, but also diseases that can spread to wild populations. The two worlds have gotten too close for comfort.

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