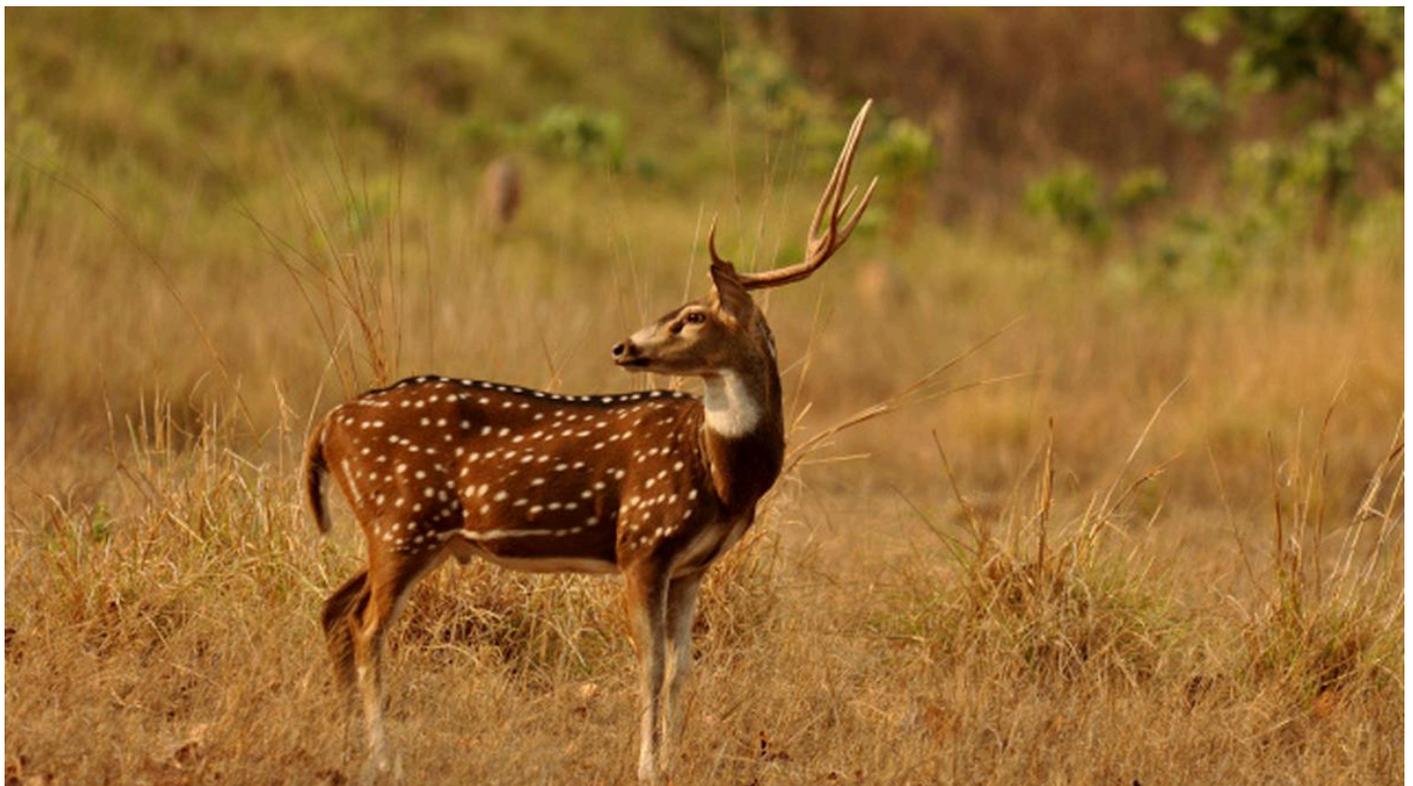


Imported threat

They're beautiful but within themselves they carry the seeds of destruction.

Updated - October 18, 2016 12:49 pm IST

RAUF ALI



Looking back: Return to the mainland or remove from the islands?

Spotted deer were introduced to the Andaman Islands either in the early 1900s or the 1930s. The exact date doesn't matter, and nor does the actual number. What matters is that, in the absence of predators, they have multiplied and spread, swimming from one island to another. In each island their population has shot up, and they browse relentlessly on the seedlings of the forest trees that regenerate there. They avoid browsing on only two of the hundreds of species of trees found there. Forests of *Pongamia* (pongam) monocultures are taking over the coastlines, and *Terminalia* leafless forest of the inner islands is taking over

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