

as elsewhere, most former habitat has been lost to settlements and agriculture following the rapid expansion of the human population (Oliver, 1980, 1981, 1989; Oliver and Deb Roy, 1993). Some management practices, such as planting of trees in the grasslands and indiscriminate use of fire to create openings and to promote fresh growth of grass, have caused extensive damage to the habitats the authorities intend to protect (Narayan and Deka 2002). A combination of these factors has almost certainly resulted in the loss of all of the small populations of these animals in the reserve forests of north-western Assam. These losses strongly reinforced the overwhelming importance of the largest and, by the early to mid-1980's, only known surviving population in the Manas (Oliver, 1981, 1989; Oliver and Deb Roy 1993). Hunting for wild meat by tribes was not considered a major problem in the past but is now threatening the remnant populations (Narayan and Deka 2002). The survival of Pygmy Hogs is closely linked to the existence of the tall, wet grasslands of the region which, besides being a highly threatened habitat itself, is also crucial for survival of