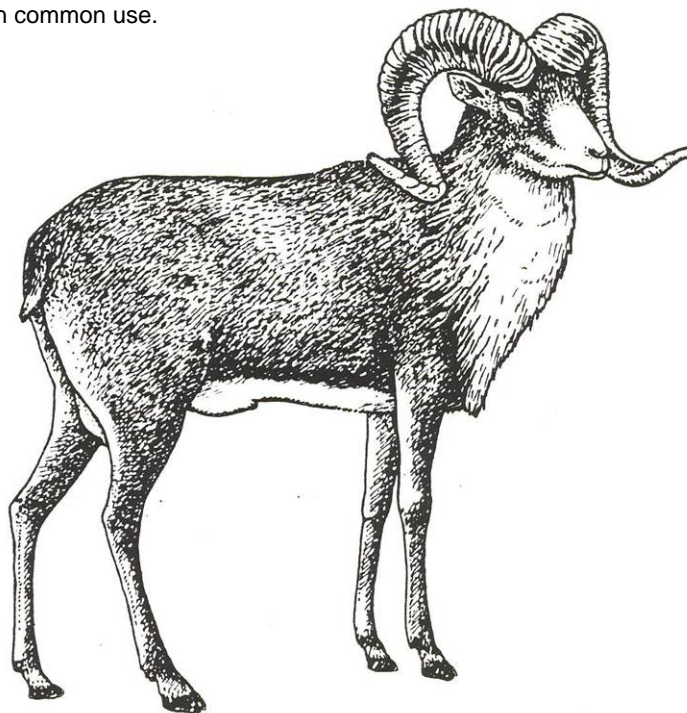


Ovis amon

(Linnaeus, 1758)



- Common names:** engl.: Argali
esp.: Argal
fr.: Argali
de.: Argali
ital.: Argali
- Scientific synonyms:** None in common use.



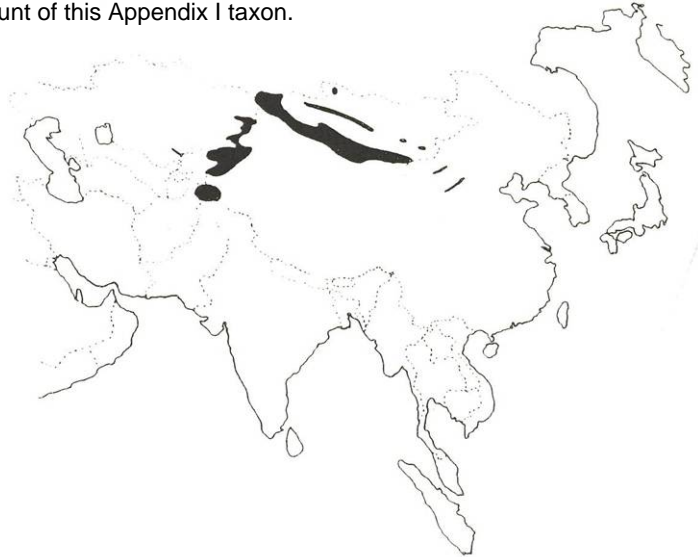
Characteristics:

Adult:

- General appearance:** Large, long-legged brown sheep, with white underparts and insides of legs. Large white neck ruff and rump patch in most populations. No bib or saddle patch. Horns variable but large, deeply ribbed, usually rounded edges, always curl forward around face.
- Coat:** Fairly uniform brown coat in summer, but some populations quite pale. White rump patch has diffuse indistinct border in summer and varies in extent between populations. In males, white hairs begin to grow through the coat in mid-summer, lengthening by rutting time (around November) to form a long white neck ruff, a prominent white rump, and whiter face and belly. In some populations, white hairs form pale patches or suffuse the whole pelage. The neck ruff extends onto the shoulders in some populations. Females lack extreme seasonal colour changes.
- Horns:** Massive, deeply-ribbed, in adult males between 115 cm and 190 cm in length and 35 cm and 55 cm basal circumference. Variable, but always curl forward next to face (homonym spiral: ie. right-hand horn develops anti-clockwise spiral). Horns may form about three-quarters of one complete turn (e.g. *hodgsonii*) or up to 1.5 turns (e.g. *karelinii*, *polii*). In some forms (e.g. *hodgsonii*) the horns often form a flat spiral close to the head, in others (e.g. *karelinii*, *polii*) the horns form an open coil coil with the horn tips extending laterally some distance from the face. Tip-to-tip distance varies between 58 cm in the former case and 117 cm in the latter. Females have long, thick, angular, horns normally not over 45 cm in length, but occasionally up to 60 cm
- Other features:** Head-body length 180-200 cm, shoulder height up to 125 cm in males. Body weight: range 95-180 kg, average perhaps 135 kg.
Ears: small, rounded.
Tail: short or very short, round, 6-10 cm including hair, terminates in small dark tuft.
- Sexual dimorphism:** Males larger than females, with much longer and more massive horns.

Distribution:

Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan. Note: map includes *O.a. hodgsonii* widespread in the Tibet region (China); see separate account of this Appendix I taxon.

**Population:****Wild population:**

Cursorial and dispersive sheep of mountains and arid upland plateaus in Central Asia. The Tibetan Argalis range above 4,600 m in summer. All subspecies are regarded as threatened in the 1994 IUCN Red List. Endangered: *darwini*, *jubata*, *karelini* and *nigrimontana*; Indeterminate: *ammon*, *hodgsonii* and *polii*. Excess hunting, competition with domestic stock and habitat disturbance are the principal threats.

Captive population:

The International Zoo Yearbook reported five *O. ammon* in captivity in 1992; 14 young were bred in four collections in 1991.

Trade:

Data reported by Parties to CITES suggest an approximate annual mean (1987-1991) net export of about 50 *Ovis ammon* trophies and horns, plus small numbers of live animals and other products. This excludes items reported as *Ovis ammon hodgsoni* (q.v.).

Intraspecific variation:

Marked taxonomic controversy has been largely resolved by the systematic analysis of Geist (1991), whose taxonomy is followed here. Identification of isolated horns may not be possible; identification of entire animals by Geist's key requires adult males in winter pelage.

O.a. ammon Altai Argali: China, Mongolia, Russia. The largest subspecies. Adult males have strongly-wrinkled, massive horns, rather round in cross-section without a distinct combat edge. Adult male horn dimensions: 140-160 cm long, 44-55 cm in basal circumference. Female horns only about 20 cm in length.

O.a. darwini Mongolian or Gobi Argali: China, Mongolia. Tail (without hair) at least 7.5 cm long.

O.a. hodgsonii Tibetan Argali. Adult rams have the largest white ruff of all Argalis, sharply set off from dark shoulders, a large white rump patch entirely surrounding the tail, and the subspecies has the shortest tail of all Argalis.

O.a. jubata Shansi Argali: China. Short grey restricted neck ruff, enlarged dorsal neck mane, and more massive horns.

O.a. karelini Tien Shan Argali: China, Kazakhstan. Darkish grey face, including rostrum, with a conspicuous white muzzle. Legs all white. Horns as in *polii* but shorter, thicker, with increased rounding of the combat edge and the development of a second combat ridge.

O.a. nigrimontana Kara Tau Argali: Kazakhstan. The smallest of the Argalis. Somewhat similar subspecies to *hodgsonii* in pelage, but with longer tail (12-16 cm with hair), distinct white rump patch that does not surround the tail, and dark, not light, rostrum.

O.a. polii Marco Polo Sheep, Marco Polo's Argali: Afghanistan, China, Pakistan, Tajikistan. Longer tail, shorter ruff. Face light all over. Diffuse border between light rump patch and dark coat. Horns long, reaching up to 190.5 cm, and tips extended far laterally: horns of old rams have a more well-developed combat edge, curl outwards more widely from the body, and usually have broken tips.

Ovis ammon



Similar species:

Ovis orientalis Mouflon (sheet A-119.009.041.006i): Smaller; shoulder height around 85 cm. Females often hornless; male horns shorter and more slender, only up to 89 cm, variable in form but often curve back from head and inward towards neck. Light-coloured saddle patch in winter coat.

Ovis vignei Urial (sheet A-119.009.041.008): Smaller; lacks extensive white area in the caudal region; male horns more slender. White bib. Ruff in winter coat is black and restricted to front of neck.

Pseudois nayaur Bharal or Blue Sheep: Smaller; no ruff. Slaty-blue coat colour, horns cylindrical and very broad at the base, curving almost horizontally outwards. Horns lack corrugations and are dark olive in colour, rather than yellowish as in true sheep.

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