



Capra hircus

Common name: Domestic Goat

Latin name: *Capra hircus*

Local name: ماعز/غنماية



ECOLOGY

Type:

Domesticated

Role in Ecosystem:

Goats browse invasive plants from pastures, keeping native plants thriving and contributing to the health of the pasture's ecosystem.

HABITAT

In Sudan, goats are found across all ecological environments from the arid region in the North to the fertile Savannah in the South. Goats are adapted to the harsh climate and the limited food resources and therefore require low food and water.



Food

Herbivore

Goats are browsers, feeding on bushes and trees.



Movement and Communication

Communication:

Goats communicate with each other by bleating. Mothers will often call to their young (kids) to ensure they stay close-by. Mother and kid goats recognise each other's calls soon after the mothers give birth.

Movement:

Goats are very agile and are capable of climbing trees, hill and mountains and balancing on very steep terrain.



Social Habits

Social

Goats are sociable animals and therefore become depressed if they are separated or isolated from their companions, however they are not flock-orientated like sheep.

The presence of horns plays a major factor in hierarchy in the herd.

Goats are very intelligent and curious animals. They constantly want to explore and investigate anything unfamiliar which they come across.



Reproduction

Viviparous

Goats breed year-round, but kids are born mostly in the rainy season. Gestation period is around 146 days, and litter size is 1-2 kids. They are weaned at around 6 to 8 weeks, and reach sexual maturity at 3 to 12 months.



Attributes



Appearance:

Goats are medium-sized ruminants. Sudanese breeds are generally horned and have long ears. Coat color ranges from black, brown.

Size:

70-75 cm

Weight:

Male 50-70 kg; female 40-60 kg

Lifespan:

12-15 years

INTRODUCTION

The domestic goat is a small ruminant found in a wide variety of habitats. It's a very intelligent and nimble animal, capable of a lot of acrobatic feats, such as climbing very steep mountainous areas or climbing trees to browse. Goats were one of the first animals to be domesticated, estimated to have been domesticated by humans around 11,000 years ago.

Sudan is endowed with a variety of indigenous goat breeds which are used for meat and milk production and which are well adapted to the local environment. The four main Sudanese breeds are Nubian, Desert, Taggar and Nilotic goats.

LIVELIHOODS AND CULTURE

Human interaction

Goats are one of the most important livestock species in rural Sudan and the most widely distributed animal in the country. This is because they are easy to handle and can look after themselves very well. Women are the major handlers of goats in the Sudan.

Goats in Sudan contribute to food security by producing milk and meat. Their manure and skins also provide a source of income for farmers.

Cultural value

Many Sudanese households raise goats in their homes, and their close proximity, independence and inquisitive nature makes them appear frequently in the background of everyday life. They can be handled by small children and are generally taken out to graze within residential areas.

Since amassing large numbers of these animals is relatively easy, goats, along with sheep, are used to pay blood money in certain tribes, like the Medob. The milk from goats with a certain color, as well as sacrifices, are sometimes used in superstitious practices.

Cultural expression

التسوي كريت في القرض تلقاه في جلدها

(Lit.: What the goat does to the *garad*, it will find in its skin)

An expression meaning "what goes around comes around". The *garad* mentioned here is the fruit of the *Acacia senegalenses* tree, and is used in leather tanning

فلان الغنماية تاكل عشاها

(Lit. The goat eats his/her dinner)

A metaphor for a timid person that anyone can push around.

THREATS

The local goat population is threatened by loss of natural pastures due to drought, human conflict, and epidemics.

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