Fact Sheet
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Animals of Sudan

Horse

Common name: **Horse**
Latin name: **Equus ferus caballus**
Local name: الحصان/ الخيل

ECOLOGY

Type:

Domesticated

Role in Ecosystem:

As grazing animals, horses influence the diversity and structure of the ecosystems in which they live. In some places, horses have been important in the seed dispersal of certain trees.

HABITAT

This species is adapted to live in a wide range of habitats in Sudan.

Food — Herbivores

The natural diet of horses is pasture grass and tender plants, or hay. They may be given grains under certain conditions.

Movement and Communication

Communication:

In horses, the nostrils, muzzle, whiskers, and cheeks all have whiskers that are used to perceive the environment through touch. Vision is the primary means of perceiving the environment in horses. Ears are long, slender, and upright, which aid in auditory perception. Although their sense of smell is important, it is not the chief means of perception and provides a smaller role than vision or the sensitive receptors on the nostrils, muzzle, whiskers, or cheeks.

Movement:

Horses can use various gaits (patterns of leg movement) during locomotion across the ground either naturally or due to specialized training by humans.

Social Habits — Social

Horses are social animals. In the wild, they live in bands that consist of several mares, their offspring up to 2–3 yr of age, and at least 1 and as many as 6 adult males. The core of the group is the mares, which stay together even if the stallion leaves or dies.

Reproduction — Viviparous

Horses are seasonal breeders. They reach puberty between 12 and 18 months of age. Gestation period is around 340 days.

Attributes

Baladi breed:

Weight Male: 450 kg Female: 400 kg

Height Male: 140 cm Female: 140 cm

Dongolawi breed:

Height 152-157 cm

Lifespan:

25-30 years

INTRODUCTION

The total number of horses in Sudan is 747,112 head. Two major types of native horses are usually recognized. The Baladi is the western Sudan type found specifically in the Northern Darfur States and the Kordofan states. It has a light brown color, some are white in the color, medium size used for riding, carrying baggage, and looking after the grazing cattle stocks and is owned mainly by the Baggara tribes. It is rather small with a withers height of about 12-13 hands (120 cm).

The Baladi has been the subject of years of attempted improvement, firstly for military purposes and more recently for racing: English and French thoroughbreds were first imported and then bloodstock from Kenya. The resulting Sudan Country bred is not widespread and limited to a small coterie of wealthy traders and civil servants. Crossing with some exotic breeds of horses especially the pure Arabic breeds and the English breeds from England & Kenya is practiced in Khartoum, Nyala, and EL Fashir, and excellent breeds are now recognized as racehorses.

Dongolawi takes its name from the town of the same name in Northern Province. It is believed to have been introduced from Egypt in the late 18th century. Dongolawi type is found in North and Central Sudan and Northern Darfur state. It has a large smart body and black withers & tail.
It is bigger than the Baladi, has a pronounced nose, and is reputed to be a fast runner.

LIVELIHOODS AND CULTURE

Human interaction

Except for very few horses used for sport, all Sudanese equines can be considered to be true work animals. Horses are ridden in the rural areas and especially in the 'baqqara' or cattle belt running across the country from about 11° N to 14°N. Horses in Sudan are present in both urban and rural communities and they transport water and goods, especially in rural areas, and are also used to carry firewood. Moreover, they are extremely valued for work, especially in isolated areas where access is still difficult for motorized vehicles and where short journeys with small loads would be much more expensive using other forms of transport. With increasing poverty in Sudan, especially in the Darfur region, the demand for working horses has increased. They are used for pulling plows in agriculture. They travel long distances, carrying people on their backs or pulling carts to and from the market or farms, typically carrying heavy loads more than three times their body weight.In urban areas are mainly used for local transport attached to 4-wheel wagons or less commonly to 2-wheel carts.

Cultural value

The Kushites valued the ancient Kushite horses, which were known for their large size and speed, as the Dongola region was known for its Kushite horse breed.

Sudan's horse culture dates back centuries, with horses being highly prized and associated with wealth and power. Particularly, ethnic groups in the Darfur region, such as the Missairiyah and Rizeigat tribes, have preserved their historical connection with horses, considering them a part of their identity and heritage.

Horses are a symbol of power in Sudanese culture. Traditional festivals and ceremonies seem to constitute one of the main uses of the horse in Sudan. The Darfur Horse Festival is a traditional Sudanese event. During the festival, people perform songs and dances that date back hundreds of years.

Cultural expression

Horses are frequently mentioned in songs of enthusiasm, .songs of joy, and elegies

الخيل تجقلب و الشكر لي حماد

A phrase said when a person does all the work and the .credit and thanks go to anoher person

THREATS

Domesticated horses are abundant in many areas in Sudan and around the world.

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