KASHMIR MARKHOR

Scientific Name: *Capra falconeri* Wagner, 1839

Local Name/s: Markhor

Alternate Name/s: Flare-horned Markhor

Family/ Sub-family: Bovidae/ Caprinae

Status as per IUCN/ Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972: Endangered/ Schedule-I



Photo Jainy Maria

Global Distribution: Native to Central Asia (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan) and South Asia (Afghanistan, Pakistan, India)

Distribution in J&K: Kazinag National Park and Limber, Lachipora & Hirpora Wildlife Sanctuaries.

Population Status in India: Approximately 300 to 400.

Description: Markhor is a large mountain goat (largest in the world) with long fur, flowing beard and corkscrew horns. A male stands at up to 105 cm and may weigh between 80 to 108 kg, while females are much lighter: 30 to 50 kg. Both the sexes have horns. Horn length of males can reach up to 165 cm and that of

a female is around 35 cm. Males are reddish brown in summer and greyish to creamy in winter. Both the sexes have dark brown muzzles, brown upper legs and brown flank stripe with white on belly and rump. Legs have a dark patch below the knees.

Ecology: Markhor are gregarious and live in herds. Females, yearlings and juvenile males are known to form medium to large herds. Adult males in the non-breeding season are either solitary or in small groups and join the females during the rut in late autumn. Markhor can easily manoeuvre through the most difficult terrains.

Habitat: Markhor live in open, barren, precipitous rocky cliffs surrounded by dense pine and fir forests and may also frequent alpine areas, characterised by birch and juniper.

Threats: Poaching, habitat fragmentation and anthropogenic activity.

KASHMIR RED DEER or HANGUL

Scientific Name: *Cervus hanglu* Linnaeus, 1758

Local Name/s: *Hangul* (male), *Minimer* (female)

Alternate Name/s: Kashmir Stag, Hangul Deer

Family: Cervidae

Status as per IUCN/ Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972: Critically Endangered/ Schedule-I



Photo: Intesar Suhail

Global Distribution: Endemic to Jammu & Kashmir, India

Distribution in J&K: Restricted to Dachigam National Park and a few adjacent areas of Wangath-Naranag Conservation Reserve, Tral Wildlife Sanctuary and Overa-Aru Wildlife Sanctuary.

Population Status in India: Less than 250

Description: Hangul is a large brownish deer having a whitish rump patch with a broad dark border and a short black tail. The winter coat is darker with lighter side flanks and limbs. Under body, lips, chin and inner ears are white. Young ones show spotting on the body. A male stands at between 125 to 145 cm and may weigh from 150 to 240 kg, while females have a height from 110 to 120 cm and a weight of up to 170 kg. Antlers are usually five-tined in fully mature adult males but may rarely be six-tined. Antlers are shed in spring and grow back well before the next rutting season in autumn.

Ecology: Hangul are known to live in congregations. Herds comprising of 5 to 35 individuals, mostly females and young and occasionally a few males are often seen together at lower elevations in winter. Mature males come into the rut in autumn and disperse after mating. Females give birth to one fawn in May-June.

Habitat: Hangul inhabit temperate broad-leaved and coniferous forests, sub-alpine meadows and grasslands. It uses mixed oak forests along riverine habitats in winter and mixed oak forests and conifer forests in summer

Threats: Poaching, habitat fragmentation and anthropogenic activity.

KASHMIR MUSK DEER

Scientific Name: *Moschus cupreus* Grubb, 1982

Local Name/s: Roos (male), Roos-ket (female)

Alternate Name/s: Musk Deer

Family: Moschidae

Status as per IUCN/ Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972: Endangered/ Schedule-I



Photo: Intesar Suhail

Global Distribution: Himalayas of Northern India, Pakistan and northern Afghanistan.

Distribution in J&K: Distributed all across the Himalayan ranges bordering Kashmir, Chenab and Pir Panjal valleys and found in almost all the wildlife Protected Areas (PAs) of Kashmir.

Population Status in India: Not known.

Description: Kashmir Musk Deer is a medium sized brownish grey ruminant distinguished from other Musk Deer species in having pale grey colouration instead of creamy, on the throat, underside and legs and prominent spots on the upper body. The face is grey and ears dark brown with white edges and base. Height at the shoulder is 40-50 cm and average animal weighs around 12 to 17 kg.

Ecology: Very little is known about the behaviour of the species, but it is generally believed to be solitary and crepuscular (active at dawn & dusk).

Habitat: Inhabits oak and conifer forests and also prefers sub-alpine scrub. Occurs between 1,500 to 4,000 m.

Threats: Poaching, habitat fragmentation and anthropogenic activity.

HIMALAYAN TAHR

Scientific Name: *Hemitragus jemlahicus* Smith, 1826

Local Name/s: *Kras/Jegla* (Kashmiri), *Jharal* (Hindi), *Karth* (Himachali)

Alternate Name/s: Tahr

Family/ Sub-family: Bovidae/ Caprinae

Status as per IUCN/ Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972: Near Threatened/ Schedule-I



Photo: istockphoto.com

Global Distribution: Himalayas of China, India and Nepal.

Distribution in J&K: Found in the southern forest slopes of Himalayas in Kishtwar National Park, Doda district and Bani-Sarthal areas of Kathua district.

Population Status in India: Not available

Description: Himalayan Tahr is a medium sized mountain goat. Males are deep copper-brown in colour while female and younger males are light brown. Male has a tangled mane over its neck and chest which appears straw-coloured in

summer. The rump, the abdomen and the back of the lower legs are rusty. Horns are short, keeled and wrinkled, curving backwards. Horns in female are marginally shorter with lesser downward curve.

Ecology: Adult males segregate into all-male herds in spring and re-join females in the autumn. The Himalayan Tahr is primarily a grazer, feeding mainly on grasses, sedges, herbs and ferns. They are active in the morning and late afternoon and rest during mid-day. Mating occurs in late March and the young ones, usually single kids are born in summer.

Habitat: Himalayan Tahr inhabits temperate and subalpine forested precipitous terrain with grass cover and slopes with oak and other broad-leaved cover between 2,000 to 4,400 m.

Threats: Poaching, habitat fragmentation and anthropogenic activity.

SNOW LEOPARD

Scientific Name: *Panthera uncia* Schreber, 1775

Local Name/s: *Barfani Cheetah* (Urdu), *Sheen Suh* (Kashmiri), *Shan* (Ladakhi)

Alternate Name/s: Ounce

Family/ Sub-family: Felidae/ Pantherinae

Status as per IUCN/ Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972: Vulnerable/ Schedule-I



Photo: Tsering Smanla

Global Distribution: The range of Snow Leopard is spread across twelve countries and extends from the Himalaya in the south, across the Tibetan plateau and the mountains of Central Asia to the mountains of southern Siberia in the north.

Distribution in J&K: Believed to be present in the mountains of Gurez, Sindh and Padder valleys and occurs at least in two of the J&K PAs namely the Kishtwar National Park and the Thajwas Wildlife Sanctuary.

Population Status in India: Between 400 to 700.

Description: Snow Leopard is marginally smaller than the Common Leopard and has a furrier coat which is Smokey grey in colour with dark rosette spots. Ears are short and round, limbs long and muscular and the paws very large in proportion to the body. Hind limbs are longer than the forelimbs and the tail is bushy and long, about 75 to 90 percent of the body length. An average sized adult male Snow Leopard weighs around 44 to 55 kg, while the female is slightly smaller, about 35 to 40 kg. Body length varies from 86 to 125 cm and the tail length from 80 to 105 cm.

Ecology: Known to be shy and enigmatic, Snow Leopard is generally a solitary animal, but not completely asocial. Snow Leopard home ranges are very large and may reach up to 1200 sq km. Mating occurs between January and mid-March and the cubs are born between April and July. Snow Leopards are opportunistic predators and their diet varies from smaller animals like Marmots and Pika to large ungulates like the Blue Sheep and the Ibex.

Habitat: Alpine and sub-alpine steppes and scrub above the treeline. It prefers steep rocky areas with proximity to cliffs and occurs between 1,800 m to 5,800 m.

Threats: Retaliation killing, irresponsible tourism and anthropogenic activity.

WHITE-RUMPED VULTURE

Scientific Name: *Gyps bengalensis* Gmelin, 1788

Local Name/s: *Chamar Gidh* (Urdu)

Alternate Name/s: Indian White-backed Vulture.

Family: Accipitridae

Status as per IUCN/ Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972: Critically Endangered/ Schedule-I



Photo: Asad R Rahmani

Global Distribution: The species is widely distributed in Asia and occurs in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and southern Vietnam.

Distribution in J&K: South of Pir Panjal, across the whole Jammu region

Population Status in India: Around 6000

Description: Smallest of Gyps vultures (85 cm), it is mainly dark blackish brown with naked, thick, dark brown neck, with a white ruff at the base of the neck,

dark silvery upper mandible and conspicuous white rump which is visible in flight or when the bird spreads its wings. In flight, a broad whitish band along underside of wings is characteristic. Immatures are more brownish than black and lack the white rump and underwing bands. Head and neck are covered with dirty white fluffy down.

Ecology: The White-rumped Vulture is a resident bird in India with a large home range. It lives in flocks and breeds on tall trees in loose scattered colonies. However young birds may nest solitarily. It feeds on large carcasses and locates them visually by soaring covering vast areas of hundreds of kilometres a day. It also locates food by following other vultures and scavengers.

Habitat: White-rumped Vulture inhabits open countryside, avoiding thick forests and wooded hilly areas.

Threats: Use of veterinary drug diclofenac in domestic livestock. If an animal dies in 2-5 days of ingestion of diclofenac and the vultures feed on its carcass, they suffer renal failure causing visceral gout and leading to death.

WESTERN TRAGOPAN

Scientific Name: *Tragopan melanocephalus* Gray, 1829

Local Name/s: *Daanageer/Rang-rawul* (Kashmiri)

Alternate Name/s: Horned Pheasant

Family: Phasianidae

Status as per IUCN/ Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972: Vulnerable/ Schedule-I

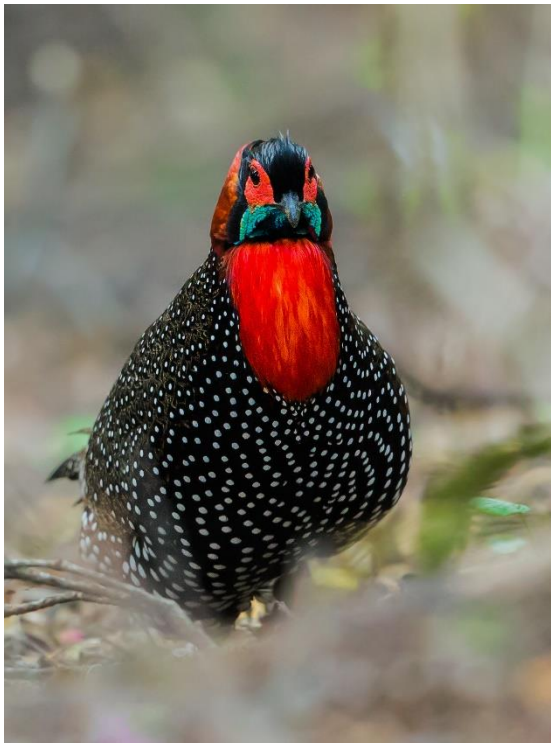


Photo Jainy Maria

Global Distribution: The species occupies a narrow distribution zone in the temperate forests of the Northwest Himalaya. It has been reported from Swat catchment of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan through Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and up to west Uttarakhand in India

Distribution in J&K: It occurs along the Pir Panjal Range and has been recorded from Kazinag National Park and Limber and Lachipora Wildlife Sanctuaries in Kashmir valley and also from the Baranari-Kalamund areas of the Tatakutti Wildlife Sanctuary in Jammu region.

Population Status in India: Approximately 2000.

Description: The Western Tragopan (68-73 cm) is a brilliantly coloured beautiful bird. The male is dark with white ocelli, crimson hindneck patch, orange fore

neck, reddish facial skin, blue throat patch, a small dark occipital crest and white upper tail-coverts with black tips. Underparts are black ocellated with white irregularly smeared with red, flanks and abdomen mottled with brown and black. Female is smaller, greyer and finely marked and without red and blue facial markings of the male.

Ecology: It lives in pairs or family groups, is generally timid and forages in thick vegetation. It feeds on ground on fresh leaves, fallen fruits and seeds, shoots berries and insects. The nest is made either on the ground in thick vegetation or on boughs or in cavities of large trees, not very high. The clutch size is three to six and incubation 26 days. Only the hen incubates, but the cock stays close to the nest for protection. Both sexes help in raising the chicks. Breeding season is May-June. Like all pheasants the Western Tragopan is territorial and makes a nasal wailing *Khuwaah* call repeated 7 to 15 times during the breeding season

Habitat: Uses little disturbed temperate coniferous and deciduous forest from 2,400 m to 3.600 m in the breeding season and in winter makes very local altitudinal migration to grassy or shrubby gullies with less snow cover between 1,750 m and 3,000 m.

Threats: Habitat degradation and fragmentation, poaching and anthropogenic disturbances.