



DOMESTIC GOAT

ARTIODACTYLA

Family: Bovidae

Genus: *Capra*

Species: *hircus*



Range: Worldwide; in parts of Africa, Asia, Europe, N America etc.

Habitat: rocky terrain, lowland plains, alpine regions, etc.

Niche: terrestrial, diurnal, herbivorous

Wild diet: pastured grasses, bark, leaves, twigs, shrubs

Zoo diet: alfalfa, oats and omelene

Life Span: (Wild) N/A

(Captivity) 22 years

Sexual dimorphism: Male has larger horns and beard, Male considered malodorous (gland at base of tail)

Location in SF Zoo: Family Farm

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

There are numerous breeds of the domestic goat with different forms, colors and horn shapes. Some are completely hornless as well. Some horns curve upward and back, some scimitar shaped, others spiraling. Their coat is usually reddish brown in summer, grayish brown in winter, and irregular black markings. Angoras are white, Nubians are black and African Pygmies are silver to charcoal gray. Toes 3 and 4 form hooves and they are sure-footed in mountainous areas.

Goats have a four chambered stomach and are ruminators. Normal body temperature is 103.8, giving endurance in extremely arid climates.

Goats' lower incisors project more or less forward, and the cheek teeth are low crowned or high crowned with crescentic ridges of enamel on the crowns. They are browsers, feeding on shoots and leaves of shrubs, etc.

Weight: 26 – 280 lbs

HRL: 1.5 – 4.5 ft

TL: short, usually carried up

STATUS & CONSERVATION

Some introduced populations (e.g. New Zealand and Hawaii) have reverted to a feral state. They are widespread feral ungulates in the United States.

COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

Goats make a bleating-type call in both sexes.

They are gregarious heard animals (groups of 5 to 50) usually led by an older female. Males are usually on the periphery but not always.

COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

Normally, mating occurs in autumn. One or two precocial young are born.

Estrous: seasonally polyestrous

Gestation: 135 – 180 days

of Mammas: 1 – 2 pair

of Young: 1 - 2

Sexual Maturity: 12 mos

Weaning Age: 6 weeks

Weight at birth:

MISCELLANEOUS

Used by humans for milk, wool and meat. Domestication dates back to 7500 BC from *C. aegagrus* (Crete). Currently five common breed: Nubian, Alpine and Toggenberg, which are prized for milk; Angora, prized for wool and Pygmies, the least prized commercially. Goats are considered to be highly destructive grazers, often competing with and endangering wildlife.

The Family Farm in the Exploration Zoe has five goat breeds, including Nubian, LaMancha, San Clemente, Boer and Nigerian dwarf goats.

Sources:

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Walker's Mammals of the World Vol II © 1999 R. Nowak, Johns Hopkins Press

Biological Values for Mammals © 1986 Larry Brainard, San Francisco Zoological Society

Encyclopedia of Mammals © 1984 David Macdonald, New York