

BARBARY SHEEP



Ammotragus lervia

STATUS

- Vulnerable. The main threats are habitat loss for agriculture and hunting.

ORIGIN

- Northern Africa: scattered interior regions of the Sahara Desert.

HABITAT

- Rough, rocky, barren, waterless desert and mountains.
- Barbary sheep eat grass, herbaceous plants and stunted bushes.
- They can get sufficient water from vegetation, dew on leaves during cold desert nights and “respiration water”: they do not need to drink.

SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

- Barbary sheep live in small family groups - adult male and female and offspring of various ages. Bachelor males which have left the family group live on their own.
- Barbary sheep have an exceptional ability to hide without cover from vegetation by remaining motionless when threatened.
- Barbary sheep are excellent, sure-footed jumpers and climbers. Their heavy horns help them with balance.

DESCRIPTION

- The fur is a reddish, tawny colour. A downy winter undercoat is shed in spring.
- Barbary sheep are the only wild sheep from Africa.
- Barbary sheep have a mane of long, soft hairs on the throat, chest and upper parts of the forelegs, especially males.
- Both sexes have heavy horns.