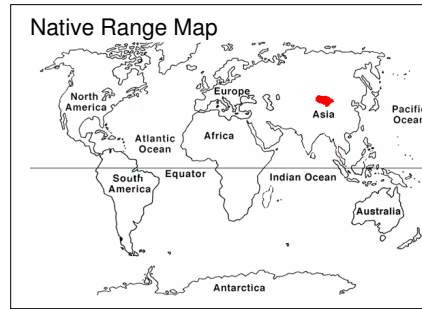


Domestic Yak



Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mammalia
Order: Artiodactyla
Family: Bovidae
Genus: *Bos*
Species: *Bos grunniens*



Status: Endangered

Natural Habitat: High plateaus and mountains of Central Asia.

Features

- First domesticated in the first millennium BC, the yak is a docile but powerful animal. They are very well adapted to live on desolate steppes at high elevations. Yaks are blackish brown with long hairs which almost reach to the ground. The tail also has long hairs. Hooves are broad. The males are up to 14 feet in length and over 5 feet tall at the shoulder, and weigh up to 2200 lbs. Females are about 1/3 as large. Domestic yaks are much smaller, with weaker horns, and are more varied in color. They are used for beasts of burden and for meat and milk.

Behaviors

- The Yak has exceptional stamina and agility, and can climb well. Females and young congregate in large herds, while adult males spend most of the year either alone or in groups of up to twelve. During the mating season, which begins in September, the bulls join the herd and fight other bulls for the females.

Reproduction

- Yaks are also called "grunting ox" because of the grunting sounds bulls make during the breeding season: September to October. Births occur in June after a gestation of 9 months. A single calf is born. Maturity is reached at 6-8 years. Females breed every other year.

Diet

- Grass, herbs and lichen.

Longevity

- Up to 25 years in captivity, less in the wild.

Sources:

- Larousse Encyclopedia of the Animal World. New York: Larousse & Co., 1969. Nowak, Ronald M. Walker's Mammals of the World. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991, Fifth Edition, Vol. II