



Mouflon

Ovis musimon

Description: Mouflon are medium-sized sheep with adult males averaging about 120 pounds. They have a coarse, heavy coat that hides a woolly under fur in the winter. They are usually red-brown with a dark back-stripe, light colored saddle patch and under parts. Males can have large horns, females seldom have horns.

Geographic Range/Habitat: Mediterranean Islands, Europe, and S.W. Asia. The mouflon is thought to be one of two original ancestors of all modern day sheep. The species originated on the islands of Corsica, Sardinia, and Cyprus, but has recently been introduced in much of Europe. Like most sheep, the mouflon lives in mountainous terrain, usually above the tree line or in mountain meadows. In Corsica it lives on steep-sided rocky peaks where it is protected from predators.

Behavior: Females are social and remain in groups, while the males are solitary for part of the year. They are non-territorial and very gregarious, forming large herds of 300-400 members. Rams charge with their feet on the ground and, as they reach their opponent, they lift about 1-2 feet off the ground before making contact.



Diet: Grasses, hay and alfalfa

Status: Their wild populations have diminished even in protected refuges. This decrease is due mostly to hunting and competition with domestic stock animals.