



Nilgiri Tahr

[Source: TH](#)

A **joint census** across **Kerala and Tamil Nadu** recorded **2,668 Nilgiri Tahrs**, with **1,365 in Kerala** and **1,303 in Tamil Nadu**.

Nilgiri Tahr (*Nilgiritragus hylocrius*)

- **About:** Also known as **Varayaadu** or **Nilgiri ibex**, it is a **caprine ungulate** endemic to the **Western Ghats**, specifically in Tamil Nadu (where it is the state animal) and Kerala.
 - It inhabits **montane grasslands** and **shola forests** at **1,200–2,600 m** elevation, thriving on **grassy slopes** and **rocky cliffs** of the **Western Ghats**.
 - The **Eravikulam National Park (ENP)** in Kerala hosts the **largest population** with **smaller populations** in the **Palani Hills, Srivilliputtur, Meghamalai, and Agasthiyar Ranges**.
- **Behaviour & Life Cycle:** A **diurnal species**, with **average lifespan of around 3-3.5 years**, although the species can live up to **9 years in ideal conditions**.
- **Threats:** **Habitat loss** (deforestation, hydroelectric projects, monoculture), **livestock competition, poaching, and local extinction** (e.g., Karnataka highlands).
- **Ecological Significance:** **Key prey** for **tiger and leopard**, coexists with **endemic species** like the **Nilgiri langur** and **lion-tailed macaque**; an indicator of **montane grassland health**.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - **IUCN Status:** Endangered
 - **WPA, 1972:** Schedule-I

Nilgiri tahr *Nilgiritragus hylocrius*

Mountain ungulates from southern India

Goat or Sheep?

Looks similar to a goat but genetically much closer to sheep



GEOGRAPHIC RANGE

In the Nilgiris (north of the Palghat Gap) and in the southern Western Ghats — (Tamil Nadu and Kerala)

HABITAT

Open, high altitude (or montane) grasslands above 1,200 m up to 2,600 m



POPULATION

3,122
(WWF report, 2015)

WEIGHT
50-100 kg

LIFESPAN
up to 9 years (in the wild)
up to 17.3 years (in captivity)

Precipice Goat

- Locally known as *varaiaadu* which translates to "precipice goat"
- Rush to steep hillsides to escape predators such as tigers, leopards or wild dogs

HERD SIZE
6 to over 100

APPEARANCE

- Short, coarse fur
- Adult males are generally larger than females, with thick horns, bristly mane and a darker coat
- Large males have a silvery saddle, referred to as saddlebacks

THREATS

- Habitat loss due to agriculture and plantations
- Habitat fragmentation
- Competition from livestock grazing
- Poaching for meat

PROTECTION STATUS

Endangered on the IUCN Red List

MATING AND CHILDREN

- Polygynous mating system: Males mate with several females
- Males fight to gain access to females
- Births peak in winter
- Females give birth to one offspring

EAT
Primarily grazers; feed on grass, herbs



Read More: [Nilgiri Tahr](#)

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