

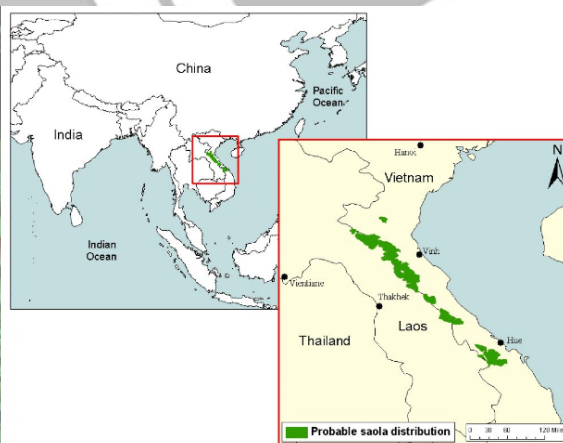


Saola

Source: DTE

Scientists have mapped the **genome** of the **Saola (*Pseudoryx nghetinhensis*)** to aid conservation and found that the species split into two populations 5,000 to 20,000 years ago, coinciding with habitat changes during and after the **Last Glacial Maximum (about 20,000 years ago)**. Agricultural expansion in Vietnam further isolated the populations. **Saola:**

- **Saola:** Often called the "Asian unicorn," it is the **rarest large land mammal** and belongs to the **bovid genus**. It has a **dark, antelope-like body, soft fur, white facial markings**, and long parallel horns present in both sexes.
 - Its name, "**Saola**," in Lao means "**spinning wheel posts**," referencing the shape of its horns.
- **Habitat and Survival Threats:** The saola is found in the misty highland forests of the **Annamite mountain range between Vietnam and Laos**.
 - It is classified as Critically Endangered (**IUCN Status**) and is primarily threatened by **habitat loss, poaching, and indiscriminate snaring**.
- **Behavior:** Saola are **diurnal** (active during daylight hours) and are **herbivores** (folivores).
 - They are mostly solitary, although small groups of 2-3 individuals have been observed. **Males are territorial** and mark their territory by rubbing secretions from their maxillary glands on rocks and vegetation.
- **Reproduction:** Females give birth to a single calf after a **gestation period of 7-8 months**. The saola's lifespan is estimated to be 8-11 years in the wild.



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