

Scientific name: *Capra hircus*

Common name: Goat, wild goat, feral goat

Organism type: Mammal

Description:

Male goats weigh between 45 kg and 55 kg and females weigh between 25 kg and 35 kg. Colouration is highly variable from mostly black, to various shades of brown, and from single-coloured to multi-coloured. Both males and females can have horns and all males and some females are bearded as adults.

Occurs in:

Goats were introduced to many islands as a food source and for weed control on developing land. However, many escaped or were deliberately released and thrived in the natural forests, planted forests, grasslands and shrub lands of islands. Feral goats are farmed goats which have escaped.

Habitat description:

Goats usually move in family groups that roam over territories up to 20 km wide. Sometimes family ranges can be as small as 100m². Males usually wander more widely than females. Grasslands, scrub lands, rocky outcrops and semi-open or open forests are all used extensively by goats. In bad weather, they may seek shelter under rocky ledges.

General impacts:

Goats alter plant communities and forest structures and threaten vulnerable plant species by over grazing; the flow-down effect of these outcomes includes increased soil erosion and the reduction of native fauna that share a similar environmental habitat. In some island ecosystems it has been the case that goats are the most destructive herbivore present.

Management Information:

Goats have been eradicated from approximately 120 islands. Goat eradication projects for islands larger than 500 ha requires detailed planning and the use of specialised technology, equipment and personnel.

The introduction of modern eradication technology has greatly improved the effectiveness of goat management programmes, making goat eradication more likely. Some management methods include the employment of aerial hunting by helicopters, specially trained goat-hunting dogs, GPS and GIS techniques as well as sterilised goats marked with radiotelemetry collars, called “Judas goats”. Judas goats are used to find the last few survivors, stragglers, when it is uncertain whether they have been eradicated. Hunting dogs are also useful in situations where goat density is low and vegetation density is high. Aerial hunting is appropriate in situations where there is less ground cover and a higher density of goats. Eradication is always the better option when compared to short-term control. If short-term control is chosen, goats should be kept at low densities.

Range:

Native range: Goats were domesticated 10,000 years ago in the highlands of western Iran. Feral goats are derived from domestic/farmed goats, originally native to Asia.

Pacific range: Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati and Northern Mariana Islands,



Goat (*Capra hircus*)

This information was taken from the Global Invasives Species Database website. For more information relating to this species and other invasive species please visit: <http://www.issg.org/database/welcome/>



<http://www.issg.org/cii/PII/>

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