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Guest Editorial

Some Interesting facts about National Animal of Pakistan

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"Markhor" (*Capra falconeri*) name is derived from two Persian and Pashto words, "Mar" means 'snake' and "khor" means 'eater'. It is a large wild goat, habitant of mountains and high altitude rainy forest of Western and Central Asia. It is national animal of Pakistan and also termed as the 'screw-horned goat' or 'Shakhawat'. The male Markhor are usually loners while females live in herds of 9. They are diurnal and excellent climbers and jump on rocky, mountains. After chewing the cud, they form a foamy substance in their drool which is used by the native people for extracting poison of the snake.

Male Markhor lives in forest during the hot weathers, while female Markhor climb the highest peaks. However, they descend down to the area of relatively lower altitudes in cold season to avoid the extreme weather conditions. They forage for around 8-12 hours a day and then rest during the mid-day to chew their cud. Markhor are normally kept with other 83 wild goats. They are captivated in zoo and wildlife parks for conservation purpose. Markhor have an average life span of 10 to 13 years.

They are susceptible of being eaten, when threatened, they give an alarm that is similar to that of a domestic goat bleating. It is listed as an endangered species on 'The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List since 2015. During the last fifteen years (2006-2020), hundreds of markhor have been killed in Chitral gol national park (CGNP), Pakistan [1]. Direct predation and disturbance of natural environment to these animals have compromised conservation of markhor in Pakistan.

REFERENCE

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