

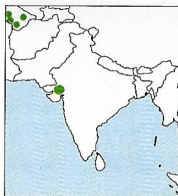
Mammals of South Asia

Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal,
Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka



HORSES AND RELATIVES Equidae

Asiatic Wild Ass *Equus hemionus* **NT**

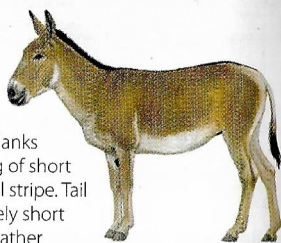


0–3000 m

HB 200–250 cm, **T** 30–49 cm, **W** 200–260 kg.

Flat semi-desert, saline desert and other xeric habitats.

Above reddish-brown in summer, becoming paler brown, sandy or greyish in winter; flanks and belly white. Mane black; erect, consisting of short bristly hair, and continuing as thin dark dorsal stripe. Tail has tuft of long black hairs at tip. Legs relatively short and thin compared to other equids; hooves rather horse-like.



Tibetan Wild Ass *Equus kiang* **LC**

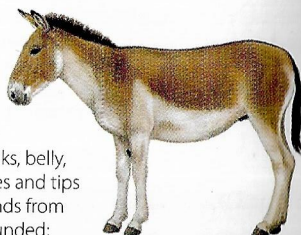


2700–5300 m

HB 182–214 cm, **T** 32–45 cm, **W** 250–400 kg.

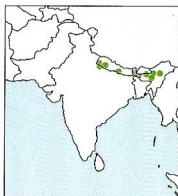
Alpine meadows, alpine steppe and desert steppe.

Above rather dark chestnut-brown, extending onto upper flanks and thighs; lower flanks, belly, rump patch and legs white. Mane and edges and tips of ears black; dark brown dorsal stripe extends from mane to blackish tail. Hooves broad and rounded; each hoof circled by thin black ring.



RHINOCEROSSES Rhinocerotidae

Greater One-horned Rhinoceros *Rhinoceros unicornis* **VU**

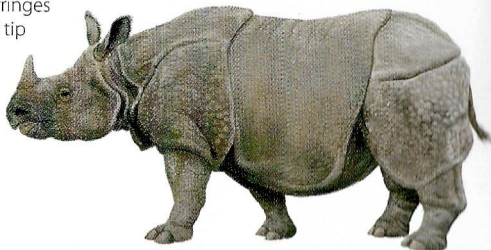


0–415 m

HB 335–346 cm, **T** 66 cm, **W** c. 2000 kg (male; female lighter).

Riverine grassland, often with giant grasses; during monsoon flooding, may take refuge in upland *Shorea robusta* forest.

Unmistakable. All grey; thick skin, with distinct folds that drape over side of each leg; prominent mosaic-like pattern on rump. Horn present in both sexes. Hair limited to fringes of ears, eyelashes and tip of tail.



Introduction

This is the second in a new collection of illustrated checklists which aim to furnish up-to-date information about the mammals occurring in a series of regions selected for their interest to naturalists. The books in this collection are not designed to be field guides as such, but are intended to help visitors see at a glance which species are present and give pointers that will help towards their identification, based on a manageable format that is easy to use in the field. Readers will find brief descriptive texts, indications of the main habitats occupied, and distribution maps that include the latest published data. Each species has at least one illustration, complemented in many cases by others showing differences between sexes, races or colour morphs.

The region normally defined as "South Asia" might more accurately be described as "south-central Asia", as it excludes south-west Asia and the Middle East, South-east Asia and China. It is made up essentially of the area lying south of the Himalayan massif, and for the purposes of this book is considered to comprise the countries of Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, including the nearby Andaman, Nicobar and Laccadive Islands. Most of the region lies on the Indian Plate, which, after the disintegration of Gondwanaland, surged northwards to collide with the Eurasian Plate probably some time about 55–25 million years ago, thereby creating the towering Himalaya and, to the north, the vast Tibetan Plateau.

The total land area of South Asia amounts to some 5,220,161 km², constituting roughly 11–12% of the total Asian land mass. It contains the highest points on the planet, and includes such imposing ranges as the Karakoram and the Hindu Kush. The Himalaya are drained by three of the world's great rivers, the Indus, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, while climate is mostly dominated by the monsoons. From the tropical waters of the Indian Ocean to the permanent snows of the high mountains, from the arid north-west of Balochistan, the Rann of Kutch and the Thar Desert to the hot, humid Sundarbans, from the fertile floodplain watered by the five rivers of the Punjab to the dry, rugged mountains of Afghanistan and Ladakh, from the terai, the hill forests and the tea estates of the Himalayan foothills through the Deccan to the lush rainforests of Sri Lanka, from dry deciduous to evergreen, from rhododendron and bamboo to sal forests and teak plantations, the variety of habitats is immense.

Faunistically, the region is mainly Oriental but with a strong Palaearctic element, the latter not surprisingly being most evident in the mountainous north, which borders the Eastern Palaearctic. At the same time, numerous families, and even some genera and species, are shared with the Afrotropical Region; nowhere else comes closer to Africa in terms of the numbers of large mammal species that can still be seen. The most emblematic mammals include big cats, wild cattle, antelopes, deer, macaques, gibbons, elephants, rhinos, goats, sheep, fruit-bats, flying-squirrels, wild asses, dugongs, porcupines, pangolins, mongooses, civets and bears. Particularly well-represented families include vesper bats (76 species), mice, rats and gerbils (72), shrews (40), squirrels (34), hollow-horned ruminants (31), horseshoe bats (22), monkeys (21), hamsters and voles (19), weasels (18), cats (16), dolphins (16), leaf-nosed bats (16), fruit-bats (14) and deer (10).

The present book covers 540 species, including one introduced and widespread (Brown Rat), and two long-domesticated forms (Dromedary and Bactrian Camels) with limited feral populations within the region. Three species that have become extinct within the region during the last century or so (Javan and Sumatran Rhinoceroses and Cheetah) are not included.

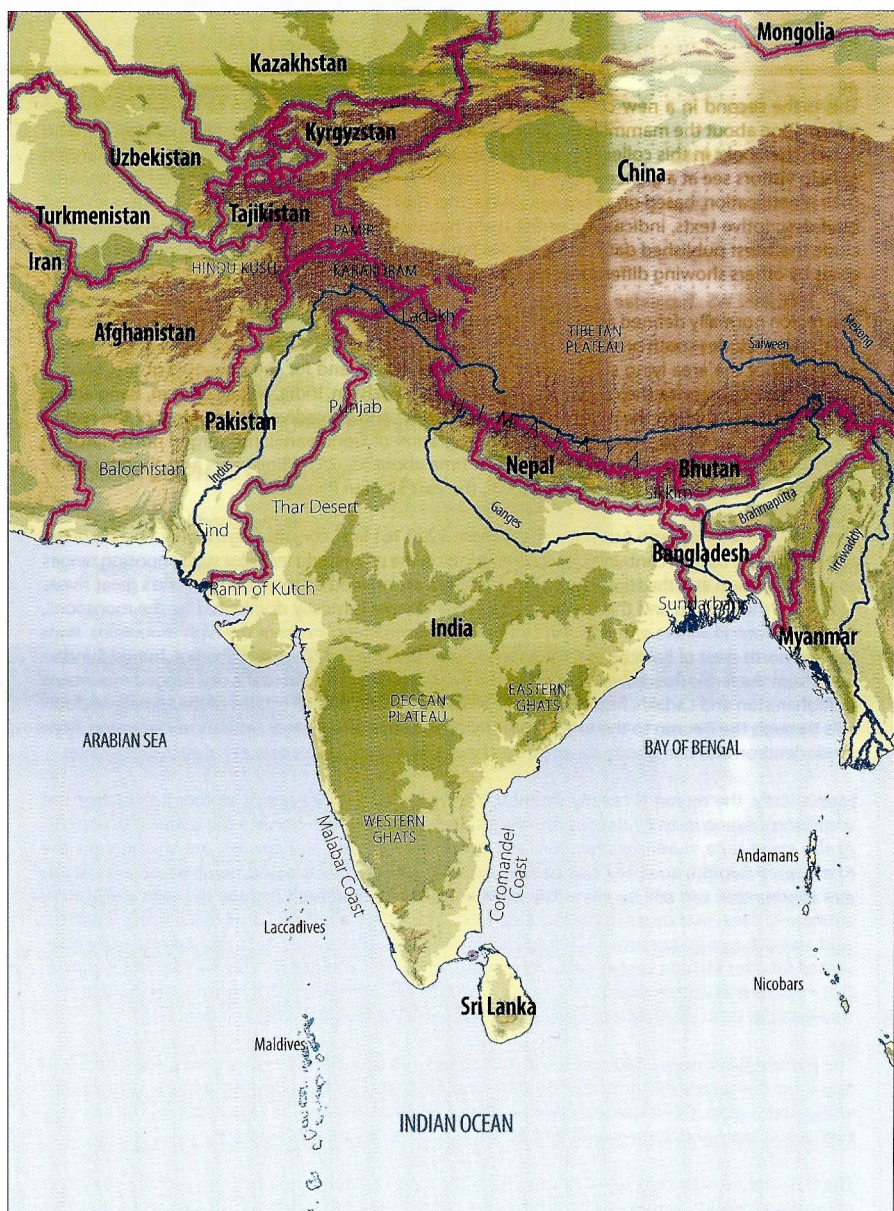
The basic information has been collated from the nine volumes of the *Handbook of the Mammals of the World* (HMW), with minor modifications, corrections and updates. The same series provides one of the main elements of the checklist, namely the illustrations of all the species; these have been boosted by several new illustrations seen here for the first time. Relevant bibliography is listed at the end of the book.

Using the Illustrated Checklist

Taxonomic treatment

The taxonomy and nomenclature used in this book follow the HMW series without changes.

Species accounts



ording to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Also indicated in this first line of text, where applicable, are the cases of "Introduced" and "Domesticated".

The main text presents a brief summary of the habitats used by the species, including the range of altitudes at which it can be found, when such information is available. There are also very brief descriptive notes to help with identification. It must be stressed, however, that not all animals will be identifiable to the species level based on this book, notably bats and small rodents, which often depend on details of the skull, such as dentition, or in some cases even chromosomes.

The descriptive notes also include the most relevant biometric data. Three options have variably

to offer an idea of size. For most species, the measurements presented are head-body (HB) and tail length (T), and weight (W); for marine mammals, total length (TL) and weight (W); and, finally, for bats, forearm (FA) and weight (W). Lengths are given in mm or cm and weights in g or kg, depending on the unit considered most appropriate for each group.

Each account is accompanied by a distribution map, extracted from HMW and updated where necessary. Distributions of terrestrial species are marked in green and those of marine species in blue. Areas where the current presence of a species is in some doubt are indicated with a question mark. The introduced and domesticated species do not have maps.

IUCN status

It must be noted that the HMW taxonomy followed in this checklist differs in numerous instances from that adopted by IUCN—as indeed is naturally the case with most checklists. In a few instances in this book, where taxonomic differences from IUCN usage have been judged (subjectively) to have significant potential implications on the status applied (under IUCN taxonomy) to a named taxon, the species in question has herein been listed as “Not Assessed” (NA), to reflect the fact that in these cases the true status of the named taxon under its HMW taxonomy has not been formally assessed. In such cases, the species in question has been listed as “NA”, after which in brackets the status applied by IUCN to the unsplit form is recorded “(LC, when lumped with...)”.

Thus, for example, the taxon *Hipposideros pomona* is listed on the IUCN Red List as “Least Concern” (LC). However, comparison of the HMW map with the current (7th April 2020) IUCN map reveals that the former shows a species occurring in only a couple of tiny pockets in south India, whereas in the latter it additionally occupies an immense region stretching from Nepal east to south-east China and south through all of South-east Asia to Peninsular Malaysia. The IUCN status of LC for “*Hipposideros pomona*” applies to the species of that name as taxonomically defined by IUCN, and not to the form taxonomically considered to constitute “*Hipposideros pomona*” in this checklist. The significant difference in distribution is because the IUCN rating is based on the taxonomic inclusion of a widespread form here considered to represent a separate species, *Hipposideros genivittis*.

Major sites for observing mammals

Throughout the region there are many protected areas that offer the visitor plenty of opportunities to observe a rich variety of mammals. Any attempted list is likely to be incomplete, but some of the more notable sites are listed below, along with the biogeographical province each belongs to and some of the more characteristic mammals that occur in each.