

## Nilgiri Tahr (*Nilgiritragus hylocrius*)



Nilgiri Tahr (*Nilgiritragus hylocrius*) or Nilgiri Ibex locally known as Varai adoo, Varayadu (Tamil and Kanarese) Mulla atu (Malayalam) is a stocky goat endemic to the Nilgiri Hills and the southern portion of the Western Ghats in the states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Nilgiri Tahr is the state animal of Tamil Nadu.

Tahr feed on various types of grasses, herbs, shrubs, and leaves. Nilgiri Tahr is a social animal. They found in small groups or some time large groups. The average life expectancy in the wild is estimated to be only three or 3.5 years although the potential life span is at least 9 years. The Nilgiri Tahr inhabits the open mountain grassland habitats at elevations from 1200 to 2600 m (generally above 2000 m) on cliffs, grass covered hills, and open terrain of the South Western Ghats.

Tahr once ranged through most of the Western Ghats and considered the entire southern half of Peninsula extending up to most of Karnataka as Tahr range in historic time. The current global population of Nilgiri Tahr is estimated to be between 2,000 and 2,500 individuals and shows a decreasing trend.

Principal threats are uncontrolled hunting and conversion of habitat to plantations and other human related pressure. In the wild, Nilgiri Tahr are preyed upon by leopard (*Panthera pardus*) and dhole (*Cuon alpinus*), and the tiger (*Panthera tigris*). The population of Nilgiri Tahr is small and isolated, making them vulnerable to local extinction. Nilgiri Tahr is classified as Endangered (EN) by the IUCN.



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