

Mountain Goat (*Oreamnos americanus*)



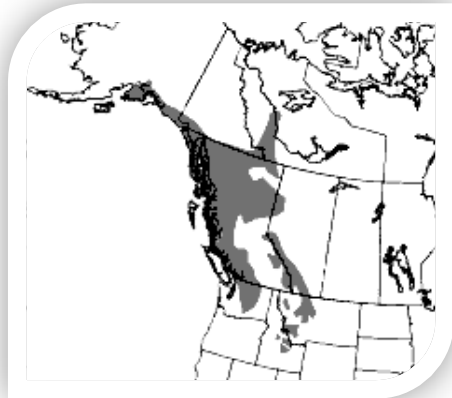
Taxonomy:

Family Cervidae. Also called Rocky Mountain goat. There are 4 recognized subspecies.

Description:

The mountain goat is the only montane ungulate in the region so it is very easy to identify. They have all-white pelage and short, black recurved horns.

Total length: 1.2-1.6 m; Tail length: 84-203 mm; Weight 46-136 kg (males) 45-84 kg (females)



Distribution:

The native range of the mountain goat is the northern Rocky Mountains, the Cascade Mountains, the Coast Range from central Idaho and Washington northward to Alaska and the mountains of the Yukon and Northwest Territories. They have been widely introduced elsewhere in the west as a trophy game animal, including along the Wasatch Front where they occur at high elevations, generally at or above treeline.

Ecology and Diet:

Studies have shown that mountain goats spend about $\frac{3}{4}$ of their time on cliff faces, where they are generally safe from predators. The rest of their time is spent in alpine meadows or fields adjacent to the cliffs. Most mountain goat populations undergo annual migrations from higher elevations in the summer to lower elevations in the winter, yet they still remain above the timberline for the most part. The goats forage on the small pockets of vegetation that grow on the cliff faces or in the alpine meadows.

Life History:

Most breeding occurs in November and early December and the young are born in late May or early June, usually just one kid per female but twins are not uncommon. The young are very precocial and are able to navigate their dangerous surroundings soon after being born. Infant mortality rates are high but the females that do survive reach sexual maturity at age three, whereas males don't tend to participate in the rut until their fifth year.

Reference: Hoffmann 1999.