

CHAMOIS

Rupicapra rupicapra



Females and young males are gregarious, while adult males are solitary and aggressive in the rutting season. Breeding males drive younger males away from the maternal herds, occasionally killing them. Chamois announce danger with a whistling sound and foot stamping. When alarmed, these animals flee to the most inaccessible places, often making prodigious leaps. They can jump almost 6 feet in height and at least 18 feet in length, and they can run at speeds of 30 miles per hour on uneven ground. Eurasian lynx and wolves are the main predators of the chamois.



SPECIES QUICK FACTS

SIZE

Chamois are approximately 2.5 feet tall at the shoulder and 4 feet in length.

WEIGHT

The chamois can weigh from 55 to 110 pounds.

FOOD HABITS

During the summer chamois will eat herbs and flowers, but in the winter it eats lichens, mosses, and young pine shoots.

HABITAT

The chamois lives in alpine and subalpine meadows above timberline. It winters in forested areas and steep slopes where snow does not accumulate.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The range of the chamois includes the Pyrenees, the mountains of south and central Europe, Turkey, and the Caucasus in Asia.

FUN FACT

The skin of the chamois is made into chamois (pronounces "shammy") leather, used for cleaning glass and polishing automobiles.