

Bharal

Why in News?

Recently, the researchers analyzed the population of 1,000 snow leopards due to large numbers of bharal in the Sanjiangyuan region of China.

- **Bharal** - It is called as the **Blue Sheep** and native to the high Himalayas.
- **Taxonomy:**
 - **Scientific name** - Pseudois Nayaur.
 - **Genus** - Pseudois, where it is the only member.
- **Distribution** - Montane regions in the Himalayas and China (in Gansu, Ningxia, Sichuan, Tibet and Inner Mongolia).
 - India, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan.

Bharal accounted over 80% of snow leopards food intake. Its density ranks among the world's highest in Sanjiangyuan area of China's Qinghai province, part of the Tibetan Plateau.

- **Habitat** - Open grassy slopes in high mountains and near cliffs.
- **Morphology** - Short, dense coat is slate grey in colour and bluish sheen, underparts and backs of legs are white, chest and fronts of legs are black.
- Ears are small, nose is dark, horns are found in both sexes and are ridged on the upper surface.



- **Sexual dimorphism:**
 - **Males** - Horns are grown upwards, turn sideways and curve backwards.

- **Females** - Horns are much shorter and straighter.
- **Behavior** - They are ***active throughout the day***, alternating between feeding and resting on the grassy mountain slopes.
- They adjust up to the precipitous cliffs, where they once again freeze, melting into the rock face.
- **Threats:**
 - Poaching for meat.
 - Competition with livestock.
- **Conservation Status:**
 - **IUCN Status** - Least Concern (LC).
 - **Wildlife Protection Act 1972** - Schedule 1.

References

1. [Down to Earth| High numbers of snow leopards due to large numbers of Bharal](#)
2. [Ultimate Ungulate| Bharal](#)

