

Przewalski's Horse

DOMAIN
Eukarya

KINGDOM
Animalia

PHYLUM
Chordata

CLASS
Mammalia

ORDER
Perissodactyla

FAMILY
Equidae

GENUS
Equus

SPECIES
E. ferus

WHERE DO THEY HANG OUT?

Grasslands of Mongolia, China, and Kazakhstan. Their original heartlands stretched across the Gobi Desert and the Dzungarian Basin.



BUILT DIFFERENT: THEIR SPECIAL TRAIT

They are shorter and stockier than many domesticated horses, with strong limbs and hoof structures adapted to rugged terrain. They sport an abrupt, erect mane (no flowing forelock), a dun-colored coat, dark legs, and a dark muzzle, giving them a wild, "ancient" appearance. Then there's the genetic twist: this species carries 66 chromosomes compared to 64 in the domestic horse. This is a clear indication that they split from the domestic horse lineage a long time ago.

WHAT'S ON THE MENU?

Przewalski's horses eat mostly grasses, herbs, and shrubs. In spring and summer, they graze actively on the open steppe; in winter, they'll dig through snow to reach buried grasses and even browse on shrubs when needed.



Photo by Graeme Travers, via pexels

Extinct
EX

Threatened
EW **CR** **EN** **VU**

Least Concern
NT **LC**

HERD COMMUNICATION

Communication is constant: visual signals (ears, tail, posture), scent-marking, and vocalizations. The stallion drives and defends the group; the mares often lead foraging and movement. The structure helps the herd survive in harsh steppe environments where vigilance pays.

TIGHT-KNIT TROOPS

Przewalski's Horses live in structured social groups. Usually, they form a harem of one dominant stallion, several mares, and their foals. Young males may form bachelor groups until they're strong enough to challenge for their own harem; young females eventually leave and join another group.



THREATS TO THEIR SURVIVAL



Habitat Loss



decrease in
genetic diversity



Diseases

Though the species has made an incredible comeback, several threats remain:

- **Habitat Loss:** Livestock grazing, fencing, water access, mining, and human encroachment all reduce usable wild habitat.
- **Low genetic diversity:** With descent from only about 12 founders, the gene pool is narrow, raising risks from disease, reduced fertility, and inability to adapt.
- **Harsh weather events:** In years with extreme winter conditions (dzud), even healthy herds can suffer large losses.
- **Human-wildlife conflict:** When domesticated horses mix with wild ones, hybridisation may dilute wild genetics; livestock may carry disease; and resources can become contested.

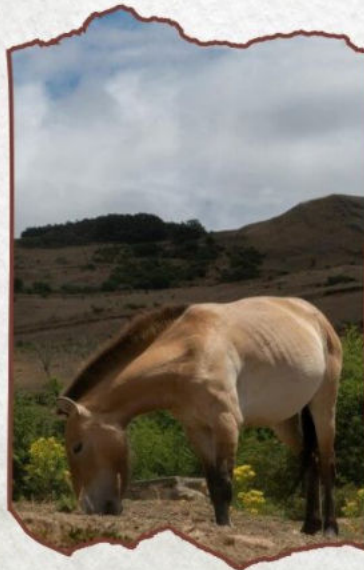


Photo by Jesus Esteban San Jose via Pexels



Did you
know?

5 FUN FACTS ABOUT THE PRZEWALSKI'S HORSE

- In Mongolia, they're called "takhi," meaning "spirit" or "worthy of worship."
- One-Hour Runners - Foals can stand and walk within an hour of birth, which is essential for surviving in wide-open grasslands.
- By grazing and trampling, they help shape their grassland habitat, making room for new plant growth and biodiversity.
- In 2020, scientists successfully cloned a Przewalski's horse named "Kurt" from 40-year-old preserved cells, restoring lost genetic diversity.
- They've got 66 chromosomes, two more than domestic horses, proving they're a separate species.

