



MIDEASTERN RED DEER OR MARAL
MONGOLIA, Bayan Onjuul
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BRONZE
AWARD

Its coloration *Cervus elaphus maral*

Ciervo oriental, *Maral* (Sp), *Ostlich Rothirsch*, *Maral* (G), *Cerf de l'orient*, *Cerf maral* (F). Called *maral* in Iran. Sometimes called **Caucasian maral**, **Caspian red deer** or **Caspian noble deer**. Some authorities believe the Farsi (Iran) name *maral* should be restricted to this subspecies, or to red deer in general; however, the name was long ago appropriated by Russians, Mongolians and others and applied to wapiti.

DESCRIPTION (*male*) Shoulder height up to 4-1/2 feet (1.4 m). Weight up to 600 pounds (270 kg).

A large deer with a stouter build and narrower skull than other red deer. Summer coat is reddish-brown with dark underparts. Winter coat is a dark slate gray with black underparts and much black on shoulders and thighs. Rump patch is small and poorly outlined, with the upper part darker than the lower. Antlers are large and massive, generally less complex than those of western races, and seldom with more than eight points to a side and often only six. A two-tined terminal fork, rather than a cup or crown, is relatively common, which perhaps is evidence of a transition toward the next race to the east, which is the Bactrian or Bukharan deer. In some heads the fourth tine is very large, with the fifth tine directly behind as in a wapiti. The largest antlers have come from the Caucasus,

where they tend to have wide spreads and many tines. Antlers from Turkey and Iran usually are smaller; however, the longest of record, measuring 48-3/4 inches (123.8 cm) and carrying 14 points, were obtained in Anatolia (Asian Turkey) (Rowland Ward, 1927).

DISTRIBUTION Anatolia (Asian Turkey); the Caucasus region of Russia, Georgia and Azerbaijan; northern Iran; and southwestern Turkmenistan.

very different from that of the Siberian and Gobi



ibexes. In winter coat, most adult males are a cinnamon-brown color of varying intensity, becoming browner and duller on the flanks, shoulders and thighs. There usually is a dark, well-developed dorsal stripe, and also a light-colored saddle patch that can vary in size, shape and location. A very dark flank band separates the brown flanks from the whitish belly. There is a distinct brown band on the front surface of the forelegs, a lighter one on the hind legs. The head is lighter than the flanks—actually somewhat grayish—and the beard is brown. However, there is a good deal of individual variation in color and markings. Some animals are darker or lighter, and some are a uniform light gray color. The dorsal stripe may be wide, narrow, or absent entirely. The saddle patch may be light or dark, large or small, on the neck or shoulder instead of the small of the back, absent entirely, or there may be more than one patch. Females seldom if ever have a saddle patch.

Regional variation also occurs. Ibex from the Alai Mountains in Tajikistan (*alaiana* race) have been described as light grayish-brown in summer, with a dark dorsal stripe but no saddle patch; and bright foxy red in winter, with a distinct light saddle patch. Those from the Terskey-Ala-Too range in Kyrgyzstan (*almasyi* race) have been said to be reddish-brown-fawn in summer, with distinct light saddle and neck patches and tending to gray on the head; turning to some shade of grayish-brown in winter, with a broad dark dorsal stripe and small, dark saddle and neck patches. Horns very long and relatively slender with comparatively small cross ridges. Ibexes of the Naryn district in Kyrgyzstan (*merzbacheri* race) are stated to differ from *almasyi* by lighter coloration, a more distinctly defined dorsal saddle and much shorter, more divergent and more heavily knotted horns. However, none of these descriptions is consistent with the region or even within the herd.

DISTRIBUTION The Pamir, Alai, Transalai and Tian Shan mountains in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and China.

TAXONOMIC NOTES Includes the following races: *alaiana*, *almasyi*, *merzbacheri*, and *transalaiana*, with *alaiana* Noack, 1902 having priority.