



SHORT COMMUNICATION

Unique Land, Flora and Fauna of Sikkim - Part I

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(I)

Canis lupus familiaris Linnaeus: **Habitat:** Alpine and boreal forest, away from human habitation; **Distribution:** ROMANIA, NORTH AMERICA, BRITAIN, IRELAND, INDIA: SIKKIM

Specimen Located: G.P.S: 27° 59' 22 N 88° 35' 30" E Altitude: 4652m **New record :** Way to Gurudongmar route, North Sikkim.

Material. 1♂, Khangla, Near Gurudongmar route, North Sikkim, 4930 m, 5.06.2011.

Canis lupus familiaris Linnaeus, 1758

Homotypic synonym: ***Canis familiaris*** Linnaeus, 1758



Romanian Raven Shepherd Dog

It is known as one of the species domesticated by the human for the management of livestock. Some of the studies considered it as the first animal to be domesticated by human (Pascal and Gasper, 2015; <http://www.ach.ro/2011/standarde/corb-en.pdf>). Originally, this breed is originated in the Meridional Carpathian and Subcarpathian areal (old Muntenia region of Wallachia, within the Dâmbovița, Argeș and Prahova counties, and around Brașov). In general, it is black and its body is massive,

rectangular having strong skeleton and wide chest. Its head is strong with conical well developed snout. The neck of this species is thick and strong.

This species is widely accepted as Raven because of its black colour. It is highly accepted, appreciated and successful in defending the livestock and herds.

The genetic study has not been undertaken of this species although there are several studies on the genome of shepherd dog (Bigi et al., 2015). So, it is helpful if the study shall be undertaken in line to the genome study.

Further, the different sub-species of this *Canis lupus* are extinct till date (<https://www.gbif.org/species/141120536>) so the study of this Sikkim breed and its genetic marker warrant researches.

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<https://www.gbif.org/species/141120536>

(II)

Ovis ammon hodgsoni

Name: *Ovis ammon hodgsonii* Blyth, 1841

Local Name: Banpala

Native: Sikkim (East, West and North)

Description of *Ovis ammon hodgsoni*

Medium sized animals, compact body covering coarse wool, coat colour is predominantly black and white. Head is medium in length, ears are small and tubular, thin tail and short, horned. Small and round udder, tightly attached to the belly with conical teats. .

As the change in the policies of grazing in Sikkim, it affects the shepherds and its livestock a lot which led to the decrease in the population of banpala sheep. To preserve the landrace of this species, the genetic analysis and conservation model is needed to develop and perform in several studies (Chaudhari et al., 2017).

Generally, the indigenous community of Sikkim, especially Gurung, has had their livelihood rearing the different genetically suitable sheep races in Sikkim

Himalaya. This community has good knowledge of its practice of rearing and this knowledge was transferred from many generations all together. Out of the livestock, the community used to generate economy making cheese, wool, and carpet and so on. In earlier days, these products were marketed through the silk route of Sikkim towards the then Tibet, China and other parts of the world. Thus, the then woolen products were the economic factors for the vibrant and sustainable economy of earlier Sikkim.

Substantial geo-political changes occur in both national and international spheres, it leads to the change in the animal based economic model of Sikkim. In the old policies of Sikkim during the 19th and 20th centuries, it was reflected in the regulation of Gharpala and Banpala sheeps of Sikkim (Wilson and Deean, 2005; Pradhan, 2020). Moreover, in accordance to the 17th Livestock Census (2003), the total sheep population in NEH region is about 0.22 million having 2.7% in Sikkim (<http://www.kiran.nic.in/sheep.html>).

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(III)

Gyps himalayensis Hume sighting at the lower elevation in Winter in the Sikkim Himalaya

The migratory bird, *Gyps himalayensis* Hume, 1869, migrates from the Tibetan plateau to the lower elevation during December and January in Sikkim Himalaya (Li and Kasorndorkbua, 2008; Jayadevan et al., 2014). Locally, this species is known as Chageyu in Tibetan Language and Goth in Lepcha language.

Occasionally, the bird flies to the elevation of 3000 ft, which is a rare view otherwise the *Gyps himalayensis* Hume lives around the elevation of 4000m and above.

In this Himalayan region, the species was photographed by Krasuse, 1939 that was documented in German Archives. Recently, the rare view of bird sighting reported at the elevation of 4000 ft, at Lingko, Dzongu (North Sikkim), in 2008 and 2021, respectively. This village is located at the forest fringed of Khanchenzonga National Park, Sikkim.

The status of this species is critically endangered (IUCN, 2020). Although the enumeration of this species is not performed even though the decreasing population of *Gyps himalayensis* Hume is a concern. Possibly, the lower population of *Gyps himalayensis* Hume may be responsible for rare sighting of it.

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(IV)

Khangchenzonga in Lepcha language

Khanchenzonga is the peak bounded in the west by the Tamur River and in the north by the Lhonak river and has summit of 8586 m. This lies in between Nepal and Sikkim, India. In Sikkim, this peak is also known as Kongchenchu or Kinchumzongmu Chu in Lepcha language.

Kongchen Chu means the peak and is considered as the deity of the Sikkim. In Lepcha language, kong means chief, chen means regional diety and chu means peak. It implies that the peak is the Chief regional deity of Lepcha community.

Likewise, Kindchimzongmu Chu is the name of Kongchen Chu. In Lepcha language, the Kinchum means luck, zong means similar to, mu means relating to that place and chu means peak. In other words, it means Kindchimzongmu Chu is the symbol of luck of the region.