



NAVAJO-CHURRO SHEEP

ARTIODACTYLA

Family: Bovidae

Genus: *Ovis*

Species: *aries*



Range: Originally from Spain and brought to the SW of NA and adopted by Navajo

Habitat: High desert to grasslands

Niche: Terrestrial diurnal herbivore

Biomes:

Wild diet: grasses

Zoo diet:

Life Span: (Wild)
(Captivity)

Sexual dimorphism: Male is larger than female

Location in SF Children's Zoo Barnyard

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

This breed can be found in a variety of colors from white, various tans, gray, brown, black and red. The outer coarse hairs are 6 – 12 inches in length where the inner coat is 3 – 5 inches. Both sexes have horns though the male can sometimes have 2 pair. They are long-legged and narrowed-bodied.

Weight: M ~ 120 – 175 lb
F ~ 85 – 120 lb

Length:

STATUS & CONSERVATION

This formerly endangered breed has been up graded to rare. They had been reduced to a population of 450 in the 70s. Today about 2000 are registered by breeders from New Mexico to Canada.

COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

Lambing season is in March and April. Ewes are very protective of young

Estrous Period:

Gestation:

of Mammas: 2

of Young: 1 - 3

Sexual Maturity: F 1 ½ years

Weaning Age:

Weight at birth:

MISCELLANEOUS

Was brought by the Spanish in the 1600s and became first domesticated sheep in the New World.

They were trailed to California to supply the 1850 gold rush

1863 many were killed by the army as retribution against the Navajo (Dine)

1900s saw more government restrictions imposed. Not until the 1970s was an effort made to restore the breed

Churro is Spanish for coarse

Sources:

www.ansi.okstate.edu

www.mapletreefarms.com

www.navajo-churrosheep.com

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