



Wild Yak (*Bos grunniens*)

Researchers analysed yak dung to understand the vegetation and climate of the past and the connections they have to extinct the woolly rhino and mammoth.

- The researchers found that the yak preferred a variety of food. A good diversity of pollen, spores and phytoliths (silica bodies found in plants) were observed.
 - This also indicated that the yak was able to modify its diet according to the climatic change of the past.
 - On the other hand, giant mammoth and woolly rhino which used to live with the yak about 18,000-20,000 years ago were not able to adapt to these changes and thus went extinct.
- The yak dung analysis also helped to map out the different plants and trees in that area, thus, generating modern botanical analogue of higher Himalayas.
- These animals mostly depend on the regional flora and studies can throw light on the past vegetation of an area,
- Across the globe, many researchers are working on fossilized dung of extinct animals. A comparison of the present results with the extinct ones can help understand more about ancestor climatic factors and other adaptation strategies of mega herbivores.

Wild Yak

- The Yak (*Bos grunniens*) is endemic to the Tibetan Plateau and the adjacent high-altitude regions.
- Yaks belong to the Bovini tribe, which also includes bison, buffaloes, and cattle.
- It can tolerate temperatures as low as -40 degrees Celsius
- IUCN Red list status: Vulnerable
- Listed under Appendix I of CITES
- Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972: Schedule II
- The most serious threat to the Wild Yak's survival is casual and market hunting. The Yak is hunted for its meat, horns, and other materials.