

# Persian onager ... an endangered equid for all seasons!

**TAG PRIORITY SPECIES**



## MEASUREMENTS

**Length:** 6.5-8 feet

**Height:** 4 feet  
at shoulder

**Weight:** 500 lbs



Semi-desert



Middle East

**IUCN  
ENDANGERED  
CITES II  
< 800  
in the wild**

## Care and Husbandry

**RED SSP:** 9.21 (30) in 3 AZA institutions (2019)

**Species coordinator:** Kate Volz, Smithsonian National Zoo  
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**Social nature:** Can be exhibited year-round as a harem group, with 1-15 females and one male. Bachelor groups of males have worked in some cases.

**Mixed species:** Housed successfully with bison, Indian rhino, camels, large deer, and some birds in very large paddocks. Will hybridize with other equids. Caution is needed during introductions since onagers can be aggressive.

**Housing:** Tolerant of both hot and cold climates. Basic shelters from the elements (without supplemental heat) are generally sufficient.

**Medical notes:** Hoof trims are usually unnecessary with some access to hard substrate. May require a regular schedule of parasite prophylaxis.

**Special requirements:** Iron storage can be an issue, so diets should not contain an iron supplement. They will enjoy as much browse as can be made available.

**Keeper resources:** Large feces simplify cleaning. This species is very responsive to positive reinforcement training. Stallions can be aggressive.

Please contact the TAG for full husbandry guidelines.

<http://www.azaungulates.org/>

## Why exhibit Persian onagers?

- Impress upon visitors that extinction is forever: the onager is the closest surviving relative of the now-extinct (as of 1927) Syrian wild ass. Without continued action, the onager could be next: only 600 individuals remain in the wild.
- Join forces with an international group of zoos and organizations to support ongoing research and conservation efforts, including innovative reproductive technologies.
- Provide guests with an active all-season display in virtually any climate with this hardy species.
- Link this species to other Middle Eastern and Asian species in your collection affected by hunting and competition/conflict with livestock.

## Stewardship Opportunities

Conservation and ecology of the onager in Iran

<http://www.vetmeduni.ac.at/en/research-institute-of-wildlife-ecology/forschung/projects/onager/>

The Gobi Kulan Project (WAZA)

<http://www.waza.org/en/site/conservation/waza-conservation-projects/gobi-b-khulan-project>

