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An Overview on the State of *Equus hemionus* in Whole China

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An overview on the state of *Equus hemionus* in whole China

Weikang Yang

The wild ass in China is divided into two species: Gobi khulan (*Equus hemionus*) and Kiang (*Equus kiang*).
*Equus kiang* occurs in Xingjian, Gansu, Sichuan, Qinghai and Tibetan provinces with a total area of 150,000 km² (fig. 2). The population size was estimated of more than 200,000 (GAO & GU 1989, SUNG WANG 1998).

*Equus hemionus* occurs in Gansu, Inner Mongolia, and northern parts of Xingjian provinces (fig. 1). At present, no report was found to declare the exactly population size of *Equus hemionus* in China. GUOZHONG CHU (1985) wrote that there are at least 358 khulans in the Kalamaili mountain natural reserve in Xinjiang (fig. 3). XINGYI GAO (1989) reported that there are no more than 2000 khulans in China. YAN GE (2003) found 2,632 – 4,200 khulans in the Kalamaili natural reserve.

Fig. 3: Location of the Kalamaili reserve (—) in China.

The Xingjian Kalamaili Mountain natural reserve is the most important refuge for *Equus hemionus*. Here, we estimated that the population size of khulan in China is more than 3,000.

From Middle July to August 2000 large herds of khulans emigrated from Republic of Mongolia into Wulate Zand and Wulate Houqi of Bayannaor League in Inner Mongolia, China. The distribution range and population size of the khulans were investigated in September (fig. 4, 5).

The population of khulan in Kalamaili reserve was estimated around 358 in 1985 and after the migration of some big herds from Mongolia into China in late summer 2000 of 3,400 in 2003. The population of khulan in whole China was estimated around 2,000 animals in 1989.

The southern border of the distribution region of the khulan ranged from 142°17' N, 108°30' E to 42°08', 106°36' E (fig. 5). The national boundary between China and Mongolia is the northern border of the range of khulan. The distribution area of the khulan is 5,380 km², and the estimated total number of khulan is 11,400 according to the belt transect method (CHUNWANG LI 2002).
Fig. 4: Estimated numbers of *Equus hemionus* in the Kalamaili reserve in 1985 and 2003 and in whole China 1989.

Figure 5: Distribution area and northern distribution border of *Equus hemionus* (map from LI CHUNWANG et al. 2002).

Main threats for the wild ass in China are considered to be poaching, domestic animal competition, and habitat destruction.
References


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