

= Pudú =

The pudús (Mapudungun pūdū or pūdu , Spanish : pudú , Spanish pronunciation : [puˈðu]) are two species of South American deer from the genus Pudu , and are the world 's smallest deer . The name is a loanword from Mapudungun , the language of the indigenous Mapuche people of southern Chile . The two species of pudús are the northern pudú (Pudu mephistophiles) from Colombia , Ecuador , and Peru , and the southern pudú (Pudu puda ; sometimes incorrectly modified to Pudu pudu) from southern Chile and south @-@ western Argentina . Pudús range in size from 32 to 44 centimeters (13 to 17 in) tall , and up to 85 centimeters (33 in) long . As of 2009 , the southern pudu is classified as near threatened , while the northern pudu is classified as vulnerable in the IUCN Red List .

= = Taxonomy = =

The genus Pudu was first erected by English naturalist John Edward Gray in 1850 . Pudua was a Latinized version of the name proposed by Alfred Henry Garrod in 1877 , but was ruled invalid . Pudús are classified in the New World deer subfamily Capreolinae within the deer family Cervidae . The term " pudú " itself is derived from the Mapuche people of southern Chile . Because they live on the slopes of the Andes Mountain Range , they are also known as the " Chilean mountain goat " .

Two similar species of pudús are recognised :

The southern pudú (*P. puda*) is the better @-@ known species found in the southern Andes of Chile and Argentina . It is slightly larger than its sister species , the northern pudú , being 35 to 45 cm (14 to 18 in) tall at the shoulder and weighs 6 @.@ 4 to 13 @.@ 4 kg (14 to 30 lb) . The antlers of the southern pudú grow to be 5 @.@ 3 to 9 cm (2 @.@ 1 to 3 @.@ 5 in) long and tend to curve back , somewhat like a mountain goat . Its coat is a dark chestnut @-@ brown , and tends to tuft in the front , covering the antlers . It is found at lower elevations than its sister species , from sea level to 2 @,@ 000 m (6 @,@ 600 ft) .

The northern pudú (*P. mephistophiles*) , found in the Andes of Colombia , Peru , and Ecuador , is the smallest species of deer in the world , being 32 to 35 cm (13 to 14 in) tall at the shoulder and weighs 3 @.@ 3 to 6 kg (7 @.@ 3 to 13 @.@ 2 lb) . The antlers of the northern pudú grow to about 6 cm (2 @.@ 4 in) long , also curving backward . Its coat tends to be lighter than that of the southern pudú , but the face is darker compared to the coat . It is found at higher altitudes than its sister species , from 2 @,@ 000 to 4 @,@ 000 m (6 @,@ 600 to 13 @,@ 100 ft) above sea level .

= = Description = =

The pudús are the world 's smallest deer , with the southern pudú being slightly larger than the northern pudú . It has a stocky frame supported by four short and slender legs . It is 32 to 44 cm (13 to 17 in) high at the shoulder and up to 85 cm (33 in) in length . Pudús normally weigh up to 12 kg (26 lb) , but the highest recorded weight of a pudú is 13 @.@ 4 kg (30 lb) . Pudús have small , black eyes , black noses , and rounded ears with lengths of 7 @.@ 5 to 8 cm (3 @.@ 0 to 3 @.@ 1 in) . Sexual dimorphism in the species includes an absence of antlers in females . Males have short , spiked antlers that are not forked , as seen in most species of deer . The antlers , which are shed annually , can extend from 6 @.@ 5 to 7 @.@ 5 cm (2 @.@ 6 to 3 @.@ 0 in) in length and protrude from between the ears . Also on the head are large preorbital glands . Pudús have small hooves , dewclaws , and short tails about 4 @.@ 0 to 4 @.@ 5 cm (1 @.@ 6 to 1 @.@ 8 in) in length when measured without hair . Coat coloration varies with season , sex , and individual genes . The fur is long and stiff , typically pressed close to the body , with a reddish @-@ brown to dark @-@ brown hue . The neck and shoulders of an aged pudú turn a dark gray @-@ brown in the winter .

= = Habitat and distribution = =

The pudú inhabits temperate rainforests in South America , where the dense underbrush and bamboo thickets offer protection from predators . Southern Chile , south @-@ west Argentina , Chiloé Island , and northwest South America are home to the deer . The northern pudú is found in the northern Andes of Colombia , Ecuador , and Peru , from 2 @,@ 000 to 4 @,@ 000 m (6 @,@ 600 to 13 @,@ 100 ft) above sea level . The southern species is found in the slope of the southern Andes from sea level to 2 @,@ 000 m (6 @,@ 600 ft) .

The climate of the pudú 's habitat is composed of two main seasons : a damp , moderate winter and an arid summer . Annual precipitation in these areas of Argentina and Chile ranges from 2 to 4 m (6 @.@ 6 to 13 @.@ 1 ft) .

= = Behavior = =

= = = Social = = =

The pudú is a solitary animal whose behavior in the wild is largely unknown because of its secretive nature . Pudús are crepuscular , most active in the morning , late afternoon , and evening . Their home range generally extends about 16 to 25 ha (40 to 62 acres) , much of which consists of crisscrossing pudú @-@ trodden paths . Each pudú has its own home range , or territory . A single animal 's territory is marked with sizable dung piles found on paths and near eating and resting areas . Large facial glands for scent communication allow correspondence with other pudú deer . Pudús do not interact socially , other than to mate . An easily frightened animal , the deer barks when in fear . Its fur bristles and the pudú shivers when angered .

Predators of the pudús include the horned owl , Andean fox , Magellan fox , cougar , and other small cats . The pudú is a wary animal that moves slowly and stops often , smelling the air for scents of predators . Being a proficient climber , jumper , and sprinter , the deer flees in a zigzag path when being pursued . The lifespan of the pudús ranges from 8 to 10 years in the wild . The longest recorded lifespan is 15 years and 9 months . However , such longevity is rare and most pudús die at a much younger age , from a wide range of causes . Maternal neglect of newborns , as well as a wide range of diseases , can decrease the population . A popular rumor is that if alarmed to a high degree , pudús die from fear @-@ induced cardiac complications .

= = = Diet = = =

The pudús are herbivorous , consuming vines , leaves from low trees , shrubs , succulent sprouts , herbs , ferns , blossoms , buds , tree bark , and fallen fruit . They can survive without drinking water for long periods due to the high water content of the succulent foliage in their diets .

Pudús have various methods of obtaining the foliage they need . Their small stature and cautious nature create obstacles in attaining food . They stop often while searching for food to stand on their hind legs and smell the wind , detecting food scents . Females and fawns peel bark from saplings using their teeth , but mature males may use their spikelike antlers . The deer may use their front legs to press down on saplings until they snap or become low enough to the ground so they can reach the leaves . Forced to stand on their hind legs due to their small size , the deer climb branches and tree stumps to reach higher foliage . They bend bamboo shoots horizontally in order to walk on them and eat from higher branches .

= = = Reproduction = = =

Pudús are solitary and only come together for rut . Mating season is in the Southern Hemisphere autumn , from April to May . Pudú DNA is arranged into 70 chromosomes . To mate , the pudú male rests his chin on the female 's back , then sniffs her rear before mounting her from behind , holding her with his fore legs . The gestation period ranges from 202 to 223 days (around 7 months) with the average being 210 days . A single offspring or sometimes twins are born in austral spring , from

November to January . Newborns weigh 700 to 1 @, @ 000 g (25 to 35 oz) with the average birth weight being 890 g (31 oz) . Newborns less than 600 g (21 oz) or more than 1 @, @ 000 g (35 oz) die . Females and males weigh the same at birth . Fawns have reddish @-@ brown fur and southern pudú fawns have white spots running the length of their backs . Young are weaned after 2 months . Females mature sexually in 6 months , while males mature in 8 ? 12 months . Fawns are fully grown in 3 months , but may stay with their mothers for 8 to 12 months .

= = Status and conservation = =

As of 2009 , both species of pudús are classified as endangered on the IUCN Red List , mainly because of overhunting and habitat loss . Pudu puda is listed in CITES Appendix I , and Pudu mephistophiles is listed in CITES Appendix II . The southern species is more easily maintained in captivity than the northern , though small populations of the northern formerly existed in zoos . As of 2010 , more than 100 southern pudús are kept at ISIS @-@ registered institutions with the vast majority in European and US zoos . Pudús are difficult to transport because they are easily overheated and stressed . Pudús are protected in various national parks ; parks require resources to enforce protection of the deer .

Efforts to preserve the pudú species are being taken in order to prevent extinction . An international captive @-@ breeding program for the southern pudú led by Concepcion University in Chile has been started . Some deer have been bred in captivity and reintroduced into Nahuel Huapi National Park in Argentina . Reintroduction efforts include the use of radio collars for tracking . The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species has banned the international trading of pudús . The Wildlife Conservation Society protects their natural habitat and works to recreate it for pudús in captivity . Despite efforts made by the World Wildlife Fund , the size of the pudú population remains unknown . Threats to the pudús remain despite various conservation efforts .

= = = Threats = = =

Pudús are threatened due to the destruction of their rainforest habitat . The land is cleared for human development , cattle ranching , agriculture , logging , and exotic tree plantations . Habitat fragmentation and road accidents cause pudú deaths . They are taken from the wild as pets , as well as exported illegally . They are overhunted and killed for food by specially trained hunting dogs . The recently introduced red deer compete with pudús for food . Domestic dogs prey upon pudús and transfer parasites through contact . Pudús are very susceptible to diseases such as bladder worms , lungworms , roundworms , and heartworms .