

# News Release

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## **Successful Conservation Efforts Result in Reclassification of Rare Pakistani Mountain Goat Under the Endangered Species Act**

*The Straight-Horned Markhor has Rebounded from the Brink of Extinction  
Thanks to a Community Conservation and Hunting Program*

Thanks to a thirty-year community conservation program in the remote mountains of Pakistan, a key population of the straight-horned markhor, a type of wild mountain goat, has made a remarkable recovery to the point where the subspecies' status is being reduced from endangered to threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today in a final rule.

The straight-horned markhor occurs in small, scattered populations mainly in the mountains of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, Pakistan. In 1984, a critical population in the Torghar Hills stood at just 200 individuals, a result of heavy artillery use and killing during periods of political unrest. Today, that same population numbers in excess of 3,500.

The turnaround resulted directly from the Torghar Conservation Project, a community-controlled conservation program that uses limited trophy hunting as a means to raise critically needed funds for markhor conservation, while improving habitat for both markhor and domestic livestock and improving the economic conditions for the local tribal community. Revenue from this program has funded local game wardens, construction and maintenance of wells, irrigation channels, schools and other community infrastructure, and medical and veterinary supplies to the local community.

The program's success has served as an incentive for tribal groups in several other regions to explore similar markhor conservation projects.

In recognition of the benefit that this conservation approach has had and can continue to have for the straight-horned markhor, the Service is also publishing a rule under section 4(d) of the ESA that will allow the import of certain sport-hunted straight-horned markhor trophies into the United States without a threatened species permit issued under the ESA.

The trophies must be taken from established conservation programs that meet strict criteria. In particular, the populations of straight-horned markhor must be sufficiently large enough to sustain sport hunting, the populations must be stable or increasing, and regulatory authorities must have access to reliable population data. The conservation program must further demonstrate a benefit of hunting to both the local communities and the species, and the funds derived from sport hunting must be applied toward the community and the species.

The final reclassification from endangered to threatened and the 4(d) rule for the straight-horned markhor will publish in the *Federal Register* on October 7, 2014. The final publication of this rule will be available online at <http://www.fws.gov/policy/frsystem/default.cfm> by clicking on the 2014 Final Rules under Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants.

For a video on the markhor and the efforts of the Torghar Conservation Project, please visit: <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/about/vp-151-2014.html>.

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