



## BOAR

---

**BOAR** (*Sus scrofa*, Pers. *gorāz*). The wild boar is found in a broad cross section of habitats and has a range that extends over much of Europe and Asia including Java, Sumatra, Japan, and Taiwan. Its distribution also includes parts of North Africa. In the drier parts of its range it is found near permanent sources of water. In Iran it is most commonly found associated with marshes wherever they occur, in the scrublands of southeast Iran, and especially among the oak forests of the Alborz and Zagros mountains (Figure 1). Although sometimes inhabiting moist sites at higher elevations in summer, it is most frequently associated with lower elevations. While over most of its range the wild boar is found where there is dense cover, in southern Iran, such as Dašt-e Aržan International Reserve, it is commonly seen moving about comparatively open country, foraging among the wild pistachio.

Like the domestic pig, the wild boar is an intelligent animal. Though its sense of smell and hearing is acute, its eyesight is poor. The Iranian wild boar is quite large, sometimes exceeding 250 kg in weight. It also has prominent tusks, which it uses for rooting and as weapons. Tusks of males are larger than those of females, which in some instances may exceed 25 cm in length. The upper canines are designed to aid in sharpening the tusks and serve additionally as weapons. The wild boar is omnivorous, living on crops, roots, tubers, acorns, fungi, insects, larvae, earthworms, reptiles, birds and their eggs, small mammals, and carrion. It feeds in early morning, late evening, and at night. It is especially destructive of crops.

The breeding season takes place in early winter when the males join the



female groups and compete for their attention. After mating the males leave the group. Gestation is between 100 and 140 days. The young are born primarily in April. Litter sizes average about 6 individuals, although on occasion as many as a dozen offspring may be born. Their eyes are open at birth. Although they can begin to forage for themselves within two weeks after birth, they remain with the group for the first two years, by which time their canines grow sufficiently long to show outside the mouth. Males are generally not able to compete successfully for mating privileges until they reach full size at around 5 years.

Like the domestic pig, wild boars enjoy wallowing in mud. Unlike the domestic pig, the tail is straight. It is held vertically when the animal is alarmed. Also unlike the domestic pig they have a dense coat of hair. It is extremely coarse and well adapted for penetrating dense undergrowth. The hairs are somewhat unusual in that many have split ends.

As a result of the wild boar's high rate of reproduction, it provides abundant prey for Iran's large carnivores, particularly the leopard. In the past the wild boar was also the favored prey of the Persian lion and the Caspian tiger. The wild boar further benefits other wildlife by creating small clearings in the forest which other species utilize. In winter, while digging for roots, wild boars remove the litter and snow cover, exposing food for species such as pheasants and deer. In the Alborz mountains pheasants can sometimes be seen feeding alongside wild boars. While it is true that wild boars consume a lot of acorns, in moderate numbers a wild boar population actually contributes to the protection of the forest. This is achieved by their turning over the forest floor in the course of rooting. This mixes plant material into the soil and exposes harmful insect larvae, which are subsequently killed by exposure to cold, if not eaten by other animals. Although hunted over much of Eurasia, in Iran the Muslim religion forbids the eating of pork, and hence the wild boar is rarely killed.

For representations of boars in art see [gorāz](#).



---

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

M. Burton, *The New Larousse Encyclopaedia of Animal Life*, New York, 1981.

F. A. Harrington, ed., *A Guide to the Mammals of Iran*, Tehran, 1977.

P. Joslin, M. Sharifi, and A. Taimouri, *Results of the Wild Boar Survey of Potential Prey for Lions in the Dasht Arjan International Reserve*, Tehran, 1974.

*Search terms:*

گراز goraz gouraz goraaz