

Shawls of **SHAME**



THE SHAHTOOSH CONNECTION



WWF

World Wide Fund for Nature-India



TRAFFIC
—INDIA—

The World Wide Fund for Nature India (WWF-India) has been working to promote harmony between humankind and nature for almost three decades. Today, it is recognized as a premier conservation NGO in the country dealing with conservation and development issues.

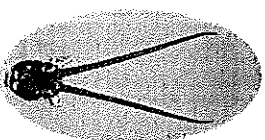
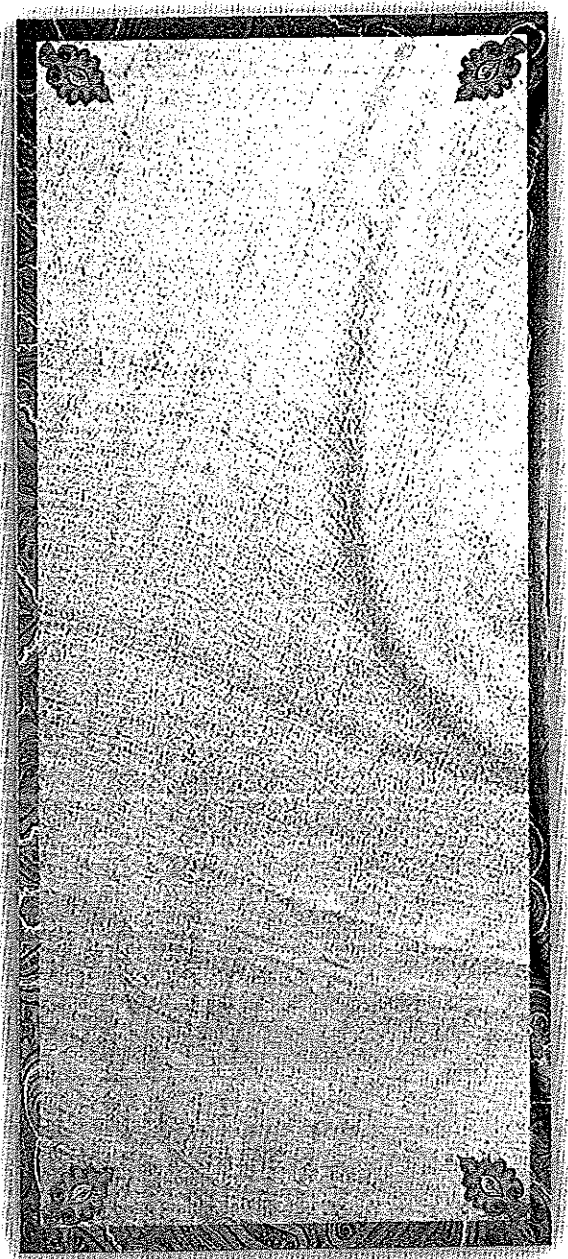
At a time when the Web of Life has come under increasing threats, WWF-India's attempts have been to find and implement solutions so that human beings can live in harmony with nature, and leave a world rich in natural resources and natural wonders for future generations.

Formerly known as the World Wildlife Fund, WWF-India was established as a Charitable Trust in 1969. With its network of State/Divisional and Field Offices spread across the country to implement its programmes, WWF-India is the largest and one of the most experienced conservation organisations in the country. WWF-India's secretariat functions from New Delhi. The organisation is part of the WWF family with 27 independent National Organisations. The coordination body, the WWF International, is located at Gland in Switzerland.

TRAFFIC-India is a Programme Division of WWF-India and part of the worldwide TRAFFIC Network, which is supported by WWF and IUCN to monitor trade and utilization of wild plants and animals, in co-operation with the CITES Secretariat.

Shahtooshi! The very name suggests the royalty, the grace, and the prestige, associated with the wool from the underfleece of Chiru - the Tibetan Antelope found in the high reaches of the Tibetan plateau across the Himalayas. It is derived from the two Persian words - "shah" meaning "Emperor" and "toosh" meaning "Nature " (that which is fit for emperors and procured from nature). Also known as 'Asal tush' (asal=real), it is used to manufacture the famous 'ring shawl' known for its high quality warmth and lightness.

Shahtoosh is the name given to reputedly the finest wool of animal origin. Skilled crafts-women in Kashmir have for generations, hand spun the wool that their menfolk then weave into shawls and scarves. Of the many handicrafts from Kashmir, Shahtoosh has pride of place.



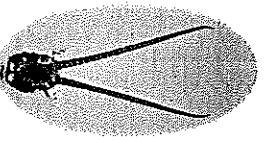
TRAFFIC

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Stanley Marcus, a fashion executive from Dallas, US is credited with introducing the western audiences to the charms of Shahtoosh in 1983. However it was Moorcroft who in early 19th century first described the shawls of Kashmiric.

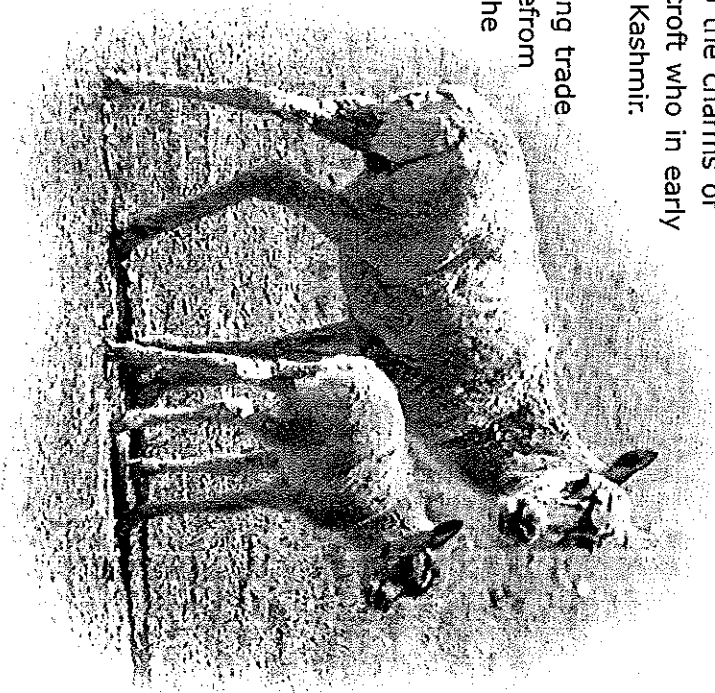
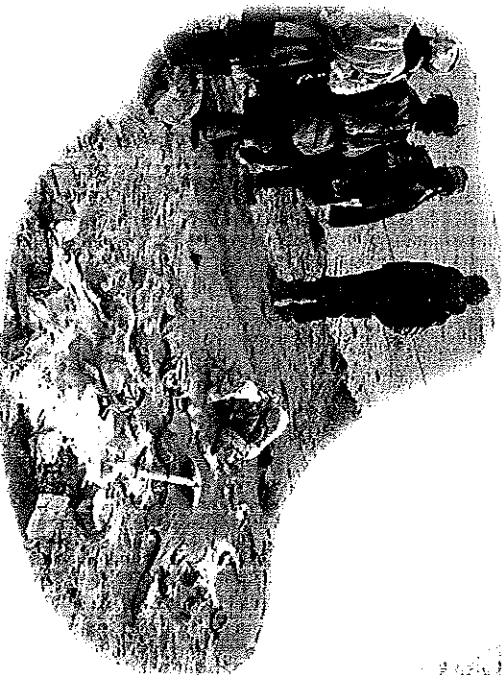
Shahtoosh is a classic case where a thriving trade in shawls and other garments made therefrom has resulted in its source animal facing the threat of extinction causing a worldwide concern for its survival.

The intricate art of spinning and weaving a Shahtoosh shawl is carried out only in the state of Jammu & Kashmir, known for its shawls and carpets apart from the picturesque terrain. However, it has



J&K

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been found that most of the spinners and weavers are little aware of the actual source of the wool they use and the fact that the Chiru is killed for the wool.

It is an established fact that Chiru, the Tibetan Antelope (*Pantholops hodgsoni*) is the source of Shahtoosh and the animal is

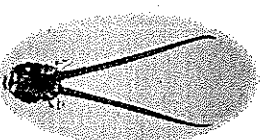
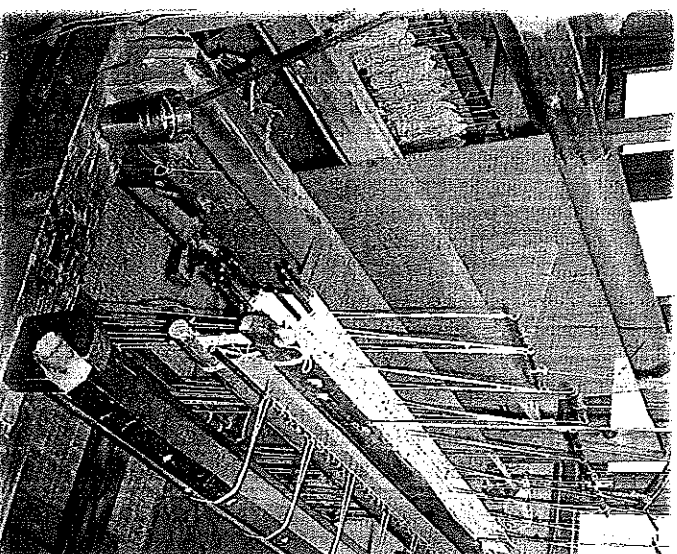


listed in Schedule II of J&K Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1978, permitting trade with a license.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora (CITES) listed the Tibetan antelope, *Pantholops hodgsoni*, in Appendix I in July 1975. Thus international commercial trade in Shahtoosh has been banned for almost 25 years. Only Switzerland had

killed for procuring the wool. It has been listed in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act since 1972. In 1991, trade in Schedule I animals or products was banned. Yet in 1993, TRAFFIC India investigators found Shahtoosh shawls freely available in Delhi shops and emporiums, including the government owned Central Cottage Industries Emporium. Even now they surface in Delhi and other markets, each winter.

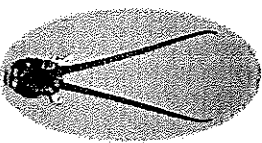
Repeatedly, the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India has written to the J&K Chief Minister to ban trade in Shahtoosh by including Chiru in Schedule I of J&K Wildlife (Protection) Act. However, the J&K Government feels that there is no evidence to support that the animals are killed for Shahtoosh. Chiru is



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JAMMU

The state of Jammu and Kashmir is the only place in the world where the trade in Shahtoosh is still legal

Call to stop illegal trade in Shahtoosh
 The Special Committee on Shahtoosh, set up by the Government of India, has today called for a ban on the trade in Shahtoosh, the wool of the Chiru, a goat (sic) found in the high altitudes of Kashmir and is sheared from the animal, others claim that the Tibetan Antelope or Chiru wool that is used to make shawls and scarves is shed wool collected off bushes! None of the opinions however, have any base. As far as the collection of shed wool is concerned, no evidence of such collection could be provided to the Govt. of India official team by the traders in Ladakh.

Farooq against banning Shahtoosh
 The Jammu and Kashmir Government has today rejected the demand for a ban on the trade in Shahtoosh, the wool of the Chiru, a goat (sic) found in the high altitudes of Kashmir and is sheared from the animal, others claim that the Tibetan Antelope or Chiru wool that is used to make shawls and scarves is shed wool collected off bushes! None of the opinions however, have any base. As far as the collection of shed wool is concerned, no evidence of such collection could be provided to the Govt. of India official team by the traders in Ladakh.

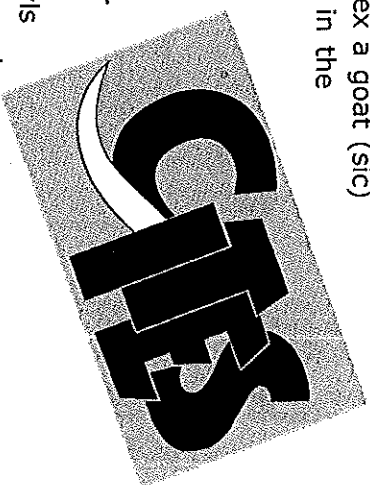
Concern over J&K Govt stand on shahtoosh trade
 NEW DELHI, June 22. — The Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi, today expressed concern over the J&K Govt stand on shahtoosh trade. The ministry said that the J&K Govt had not provided any evidence of the collection of shed wool to the Govt. of India official team by the traders in Ladakh.

STATISTICAL NEWS SERVICE
 NEW DELHI, June 22. — The Ministry of Environment and Forests, New Delhi, today expressed concern over the J&K Govt stand on shahtoosh trade. The ministry said that the J&K Govt had not provided any evidence of the collection of shed wool to the Govt. of India official team by the traders in Ladakh.

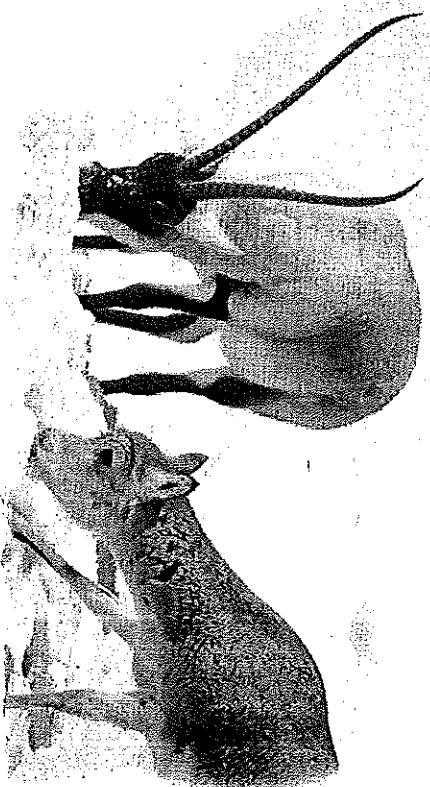
registered a reservation to this inclusion allowing trade. Recently after factual evidence emerged, Switzerland withdrew its reservation thereby leaving only the state of Jammu and Kashmir as the sole region, where the trade is still legal.

Differing Viewpoints

The traders, it is interesting to note, maintain a varied opinion. While some say that Shahtoosh



is procured from Ibex a goat (sic) called 'Chiru' found in the high altitudes of Kashmir and is sheared from the animal, others claim that the Tibetan Antelope or Chiru wool that is used to make shawls and scarves is shed wool collected off bushes! None of the opinions however, have any base. As far as the collection of shed wool is concerned, no evidence of such collection could be provided to the Govt. of India official team by the traders in Ladakh.



Conclusions from a visit of an official (GOI) team to Ladakh in 1995

- A migratory population (200 - 220) of the Tibetan Antelope comes within Indian limits around July in small batches and remain there till September before returning to their wintering grounds in Tibet (China).
- Population of the Tibetan Antelope is declining rapidly in the region.
- No evidence found of collection of shed wool in the area surveyed.
- No evidence found of killing of Tibetan Antelope within Indian territory.
- No evidence found of existence of a breeding farm of the Tibetan Antelope in Ladakh (as claimed by the traders).

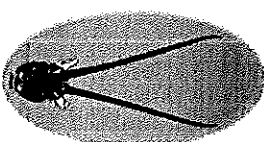
Several individuals have been imprisoned. I hope that the Indian government will take vigorous action against this wool trade".

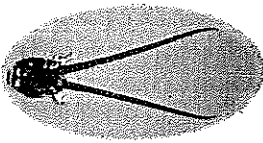
George Schaller and Tibet

Experts like George Schaller who have spent decades studying wildlife in Tibet, confirm the fact that Chirus are shot or trapped on the Tibetan Plateau - in the Tibet Autonomous region, Qinghai, and the southern Xinjiang- by the thousands, principally for their wool but also for meat and horns, the last used for medicinal purposes. "Herdsmen, truck drivers, kill the Chiru, and the hide is then sold in a town such as Gerze, and sacks of it are then smuggled into India, usually via Nepal".

In a personal communication to Director, TRAFFIC-India in March 1994 George Schaller wrote "I have worked on wildlife conservation issues annually in Tibet since 1988 and observed killed Chiru in hunters' camps and hides and sacks of wool in dealers' shops. The Tibet Autonomous region government has confiscated hundreds of Chiru hides in an attempt to control the illegal wool trade.

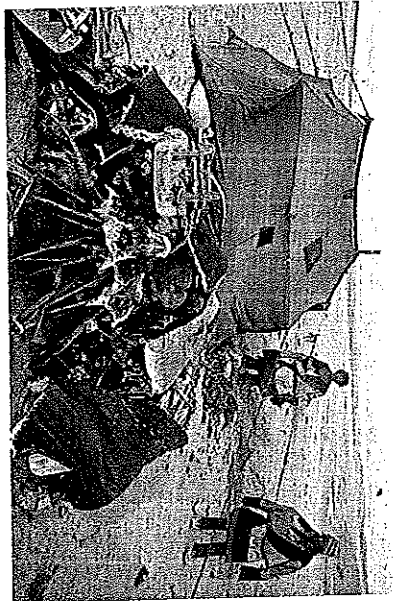
TRAFFIC
Poaching
has seriously
interrupted
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TRAFFIC

**"I have
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Schaller**



Concerned by the threat of extinction to the Tibetan Antelope, the Chinese Government in 1988, listed Chiru as a most protected animal. An official analysis based on confiscated pelts and wool, and discarded carcasses has estimated that about 20,000 antelopes (from

an estimated total population of 50,000-70,000) are poached per year. In addition, frequent disturbance from poaching activity has seriously interrupted the antelope's original migratory (routes) and reproduction (*Conservation Status of the Tibetan Antelope*, Chinese State Forestry Administration, December 1998).

Seizures and Prosecutions

In the recent past, there have been many seizures within India and elsewhere involving Shahtoosh shawls and wool. Huge quantities of wool were seized ranging from 100 to 400 kgs through raids between 1993 and 1994. As many as 172 shawls were seized in just one raid by wildlife authorities in 1995. Till date, more than 350 Shahtoosh

shawls have been seized in India. Significant judicial actions in India have also contributed to the efforts for saving the Chiru. In a court case, intervened by WWF-India, the honorable High Court of Delhi rejected the defendants request for the release of 400 kgs of Shahtoosh wool which were seized earlier.

Many such raids and anti-poaching efforts are also being carried out in

The status of three species declined during the period: blue sheep and argali declined slightly (possibly due to a weather event), and Tibetan antelope declined dramatically (probably due primarily to poaching), from over 2,000 estimated in 1991 to only 2 seen during 1997. (Harris, et al, "Status of wild mammals in Qinghai Province's Yentugou - Wild Yak Valley", 1997 update).

Tibet. Chinese police confiscated 190 furs and 2000 rounds of ammunition and rifles in Hoh Xil Nature Reserve, Forest police apprehended 66 poachers and seized more than 1600 Chiru skins, 548 heads, 18 vehicles, 14 firearms and 12000 rounds of ammunition in April-May, 1999. Seizures of Shahtoosh shawls have also been reported from Hong Kong and as many as 189 shawls were seized by the enforcement authorities. It is also in Hongkong that the first ever conviction for illegal trade in Shahtoosh (see box p.8) has taken place.

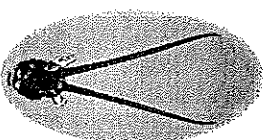
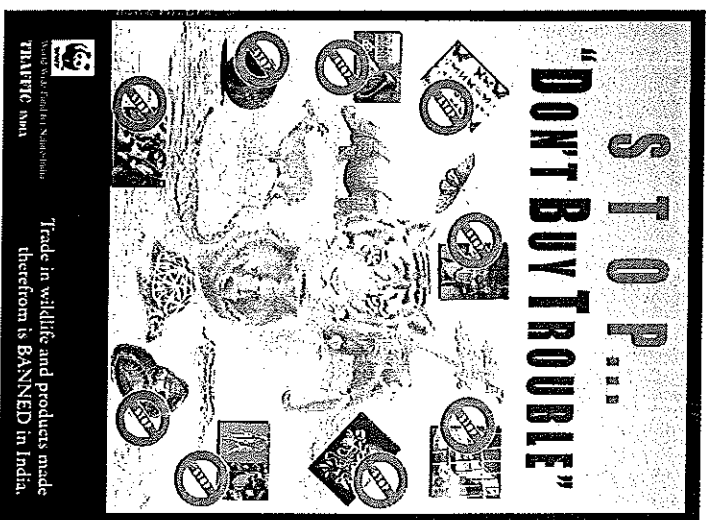
TRAFFIC-India's Role

TRAFFIC-India under its awareness generation campaign called "Don't Buy Trouble", is focusing on the plight of the Chiru and the trade in Shahtoosh through studies, TV Spots and a Video capsule on the Shahtoosh trade.

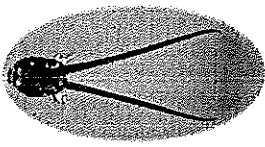
Research carried out by TRAFFIC-India and other agencies/organisations concerned with the control of large-scale illegal killing of Chiru (*Pantholops hodgsoni*) has concluded:

The Shahtoosh shawls manufactured in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) state of India use wool procured from Chiru and not any other animal or some bird as is commonly maintained by the Shahtoosh traders. Despite Schedule II listing in J&K Wildlife (Protection) Act, the manufacture and trade in Shahtoosh, even within J&K is *ipso facto* illegal because:

- Transit of Shahtoosh wool from Tibet (China) into India would require CITES permits even for a non-commercial use. No such permits have been issued, by the CITES Management Authority of the Peoples



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TRAFFIC

**Significant
judicial
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India have
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to the efforts
for saving
the Chiru**

"I am satisfied so I am sure the prosecution has proved beyond reasonable doubt all the elements of the offence. The defendant has failed on a balance of probabilities to show she believed for good and sufficient reason that the 130 shawls did not contain the hair of the Tibetan Antelope, the Pantholops hodgsoni, a highly endangered species. The defendant is convicted of the amended summons". Dated the 25th day of February 1999 (D.J. Duffon, Magistrate, South Kowloon Magistracy, Hong Kong).

Republic of China, for trade with India.

- Manufacture and trade in Shahtoosh shawls in J&K, require valid (annual) license, from the competent authority under the J&K Wildlife Protection Act, 1978. No such licenses have been issued in J&K for several years now.

The Shahtoosh shawl industry despite its antiquity, is today endangering Chiru in the

wild because of high demand.

The Pashmina shawl made out of the domesticated Pashmina goat in Jammu & Kashmir is comparable in fineness, quality and warmth to the Shahtoosh shawl. In fact, often Pashmina wool and Shahtoosh wool are mixed

While in early nineteenth century (Moorcroft and Trebeck, 1825) the annual consumption of asal tush, did not exceed 1200 lbs. (540 kg equivalent to some 3,600 animals at the rate of 150gms per animal) the current annual consumption (industry source) of about 3000 Kgs. (equivalent to some 20,000 animals of a total of 50,000-70,000 animals) is clearly unsustainable.

to produce Shahtoosh – Pashmina shawls.

Interestingly, it is extremely difficult to differentiate a high quality Pashmina from a Shahtoosh shawl. So while one would be doing an illegal act in purchasing Shahtoosh, one might even be duped into purchasing Pashmina in the name of Shatoosh at an exorbitant price! Best quality Pashmina shawls do not cost more than Rs. 15,000 (USD 375).

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: p. 3 bottom

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: Cover Model with Shahtoosh Shawl

Manoj Misra

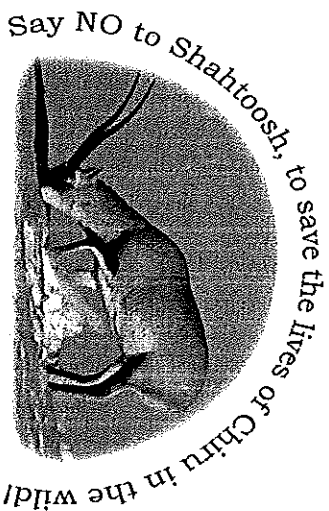
: p. 3 top, Head of Chiru, (courtesy

USFWS forensic lab, Ashland, Oregon, US)

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Buy Pashmina not Shahtoosh

If you are interested in buying high quality fine shawls you should buy only pure Pashmina shawls, thereby ensuring that the looms in J&K don't come to a halt and spinners and weavers of shawls in Kashmir continue to flourish.



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