

UN IYRP 2026

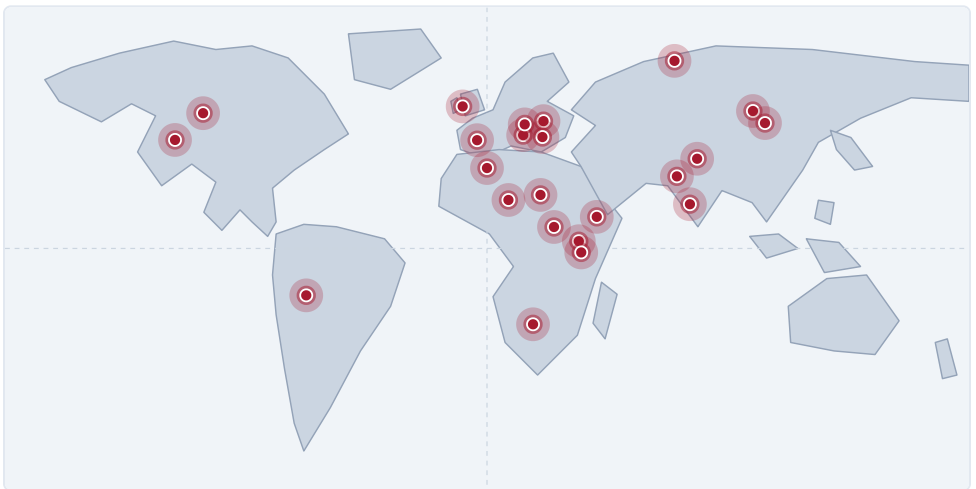
World Nomads Ethnographic Film Festival

Mongolia Festival Program & Schedule

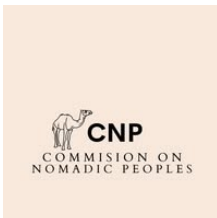
Dates: August 21–23, 2026 **Format:** 3-Day International Program (10:00 AM – 7:00 PM Daily)

Pastoralists are mobile and semi-mobile resource stewards who manage livestock across more than half of the Earth's land surface.

The **World Nomads Ethnographic Film Festival** presents the culture and experiences of pastoralists from mobile herding and rangeland communities across six continents.



Location of pastoralist communities represented in the film festival selections



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WINNIPEG





INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF **RANGELANDS AND PASTORALISTS** 2026

The United Nations General Assembly officially declared 2026 as the **International Year for Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP 2026)**, led by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Rangelands cover 54% of the Earth's land surface and sustain over 500 million pastoralists who produce vital food and dairy, conserve biodiversity, and store vast amounts of soil carbon.

IYRP 2026 seeks to raise global awareness, advocate for pastoralists' land rights and policy inclusion, and celebrate rangelands as resilient, low-carbon ecosystems essential for global sustainable development.

Diverse Herding Traditions

The 23 pastoralist communities featured in this festival steward an incredible array of livestock adapted to extreme landscapes:

- Dromedary and Bactrian camels (Afar, Tuareg, Raika)
- High-altitude yaks and Pashmina goats (Changpa of Ladakh)
- Arctic reindeer (Nenets, Dukha Tsaatan)
- Native Andean camelids (Llama and Vicuña herders)
- Sheep and goats across European alpine transhumance trails (Apennine, Macedonian, Slovenian, Spanish *cañadas reales*, Hungarian Puszta)
- Cattle across African savannas (Maasai, Karamojong) and North American rangelands (Canadian Prairie and Nevada ranchers).

Land Stewardship & Ecological Knowledge

Mobile pastoralism relies on sophisticated customary governance and traditional ecological knowledge.

Systems such as the Afar *mada'a* legal codes, Indigenous Andean *ayllu* collective management, Indian symbiotic agricultural-pastoral exchanges (Dhangar & Kurba), and traditional transhumance corridors enforce equitable resource sharing, prevent overgrazing, and preserve rangeland biodiversity.

Frontlines of Climate Action

Pastoralists face unprecedented contemporary pressures: accelerating climate change, severe droughts, land fragmentation, privatized enclosure of traditional pastures, and socio-economic marginalization.

The films in this festival document how pastoralist youth, women, and elders are actively innovating—combining traditional mobility with modern technology, rain harvesting, and policy advocacy to secure environmental justice and land rights.

FESTIVAL PROGRAM SCHEDULE

The **Mongolia Edition** of the World Nomads Ethnographic Film Festival spans three days (August 21–23, 2026) in Ulaanbaatar, co-hosted during UN COP17 and the World Nomads Culture Festival.

Day 1: Friday, August 21, 2026

Opening Day & Required Film Showcase | 12:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Block 1: Climate Action, Water & Raika Pastoral Stewardship **12:00 PM – 1:30 PM**

Opening 75-minute screening presentation featuring climate change, water harvesting, Maasai youth, and Rajasthan Raika camel herders, followed by a 30-minute joint filmmaker panel discussion.



Climate change and pastoralism

Global

4 mins

Dir: Saverio Krätli & IIED

Global Dryland Pastoralists



Catching Raindrops in Africa

Sweden / Sub-Saharan Africa

5 mins

Dir: Radhika Gupta

Sub-Saharan Rainfed Pastoralists/Farmers



Maasai Voices on Climate Change (and other changes, too)

Kenya

10 mins

Dir: Joana Roque de Pinho & Maasai Youth Filmmakers

Maasai



The Kumbhalgarh Raika Story

India

12 mins

Dir: LPPS & Hanwant Singh Rathore

Raika



Preserving Rajasthan's camel herds

India

5 mins

Dir: LPPS & Camel Charisma

Raika



Shepherds of the Deccan

India

14 mins

Dir: Ankit Pogula / LPPS

Dhangar / Kurba Shepherds



Changing a Landscape to a Lifespace: the Humboldt Ranch

USA

12 mins

Dir: Abbey Kinion

Nevada Rangeland Ranchers



Pastoralism is the future

Global

2 mins

Dir: CELEP & VSF International

Global Mobile Pastoralists

PANEL DISCUSSION (20 mins)

Panel Discussion: Climate Action, Water & Pastoral Stewardship

Block 2: Mongolian Rangelands & Desert Caravans 1:45 PM – 3:50 PM

Focusing on Indigenous environmental justice in Mongolia, Saharan salt trade caravans, and Slovenian youth transhumance, featuring live filmmaker Q&A discussions.



Losing Ground: Documentary Cinema, Pastoral Knowledge, and Environmental Justice in Mongolia

Mongolia

30 mins

Dir: Bradley Rappa

Mongol Herders

Q&A SESSION (15 mins)

Filmmaker Q&A: Losing Ground: Documentary Cinema, Pastoral Knowledge, and Environmental Justice in Mongolia — with *Bradley Rappa*



Commitment (Zaveza)

Slovenia

16 mins

Dir: Tajda Jerkič & Anja Poznič

Slovenian Alpine Goat Herders



Tarlamt: Salt Caravan to Bilma

Niger

42 mins

Dir: Sarah Lunacek

Tuareg (Kel Eway)

Q&A SESSION (15 mins)

Filmmaker Q&A: Tarlamt: Salt Caravan to Bilma — with *Sarah Lunacek*

Block 3: Subarctic Tundras & Boarding School Transitions 4:00 PM – 5:05 PM

An intimate examination of Arctic nomadic childhood and tundra youth preparing for remote boarding school.



Wind has no tale

Russia

60 mins

Dir: Ivan Vlasov & Nikita Stashkevich

Nenets

Block 4: Alpine Transhumance & High Mountain Herding

5:15 PM – 6:55 PM

Our Day 1 closing feature follows young Macedonian brothers battling loneliness and harsh terrain to sustain transhumance traditions.



The Mountain Won't Move (Gora ne premakne se)

North Macedonia / Slovenia

94 mins

Dir: Petra Seliškar

Macedonian Mountain Shepherds

Day 2: Saturday, August 22, 2026

Rotational Program & IYRP Roundtable | 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM

Block 5: Steppe Herders & Asian Pastoral Traditions

10:00 AM – 11:20 AM

Exploring Mongolian river basin herders and Southern Indian sheep pastoralists.



Tes River Mongolians

Mongolia

58 mins

Dir: Joseph L. Subbiondo / Asian Cultural Council

Mongol Herders



Shepherds of the Deccan

India

14 mins

Dir: Ankit Pogula / LPPS

Dhangar / Kurba Shepherds



Living in the Mountains of Ladakh

India

3 mins

Dir: Stanzin Dorjai Gya

Changpa (Ladakh)

Block 6: Pastoral Knowledge & Ecological Stewardship

11:30 AM – 12:50 PM

Documenting traditional ecological knowledge, rangeland biodiversity, and sustainable savanna livestock systems.



Bayandalai: Lord of the Taiga

Mongolia

11 mins

Dir: Aner Etxebarria Moral & Pablo Vidal Santos

Dukha (Tsaatan Reindeer Herders)



An afternoon on the pasture

Hungary

22 mins

Dir: Zsolt Molnár & Sándor Karácsony

Hungarian Puszta Herders



Guardians of the grasslands

Canada

13 mins

Dir: Sarah Wray & Ben Wilson / CRSB

Canadian Prairie Ranchers



Cowherds of the Savannah

Uganda

26 mins

Dir: Mark Michel & Neue Celluloid Fabrik

Karamojong



Pastoralism is the future

Global

2 mins

Dir: CELEP & VSF International

Global Mobile Pastoralists

ROUNDTABLE • 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Commission for Nomadic Peoples Roundtable

Themes from the International Year for Rangelands and Pastoralists

Organized by the **Commission for Nomadic Peoples (CNP)** in collaboration with IYRP 2026. This two-hour interdisciplinary roundtable brings together pastoralist leaders, ethnographic filmmakers, and rangeland scientists to address policy frameworks, land tenure rights, and climate adaptation strategies.

Block 7: African Savannas & Youth Horizons

3:00 PM – 4:35 PM

Following Afar girls in Ethiopia, Maasai youth returning home, Nama community conservancies, and Irish transhumance.



Fatuma and Assya – Two Afar Girls in Ethiopia

Ethiopia

20 mins

Dir: Francesco Sincich

Afar



Enchukunoto (The Return)

Kenya

16 mins

Dir: Laissa Malih

Maasai



Conservation and Traditional Survival

South Africa

22 mins

Dir: Humair Hayat

Nama



Stories from the landscape: cattle drove

Ireland

30 mins

Dir: Christopher O'Donnell

Irish Cattle Drivers

Block 8: Andean Highlands & Rangeland Restoration

4:45 PM – 6:05 PM

Vicuña conservation in Bolivia, Nevada ranch restoration, Italian wolf co-existence, and Spanish transhumance.



The Custodians of the Andean Gold

Bolivia

32 mins

Dir: Bibiana Vilá & CONICET

Andean Llama/Vicuña Herders



Changing a Landscape to a Lifescape: the Humboldt Ranch

USA

12 mins

Dir: Abbey Kinion

Nevada Rangeland Ranchers



Days of the Wolf

Italy

17 mins

Dir: Dario Novellino

Apennine Shepherds



Sharing the Land

Spain

14 mins

Dir: Juan Manuel Rivas & Alfonso Kike

Spanish Transhumance Herders

Day 3: Sunday, August 23, 2026

Rotational Feature Showcase & Festival Closing | 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM

Block 9: Feature Showcase – Nomadic Youth & Tundra Horizons

10:00 AM – 11:50 AM

Re-visiting environmental justice in Mongolia, Nenets reindeer herding, and Slovenian youth transhumance.



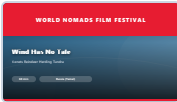
Losing Ground: Documentary Cinema, Pastoral Knowledge, and Environmental Justice in Mongolia

Mongolia

30 mins

Dir: Bradley Rappa

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Wind has no tale

Russia 60 mins Dir: Ivan Vlasov & Nikita Stashkevich **Nenets**



Commitment (Zaveza)

Slovenia 16 mins Dir: Tajda Jerkič & Anja Poznič **Slovenian Alpine Goat Herders**

Block 10: Saharan Caravans & Desert Stewardship 12:00 PM – 1:15 PM

Ancient trade routes across the Sahara and desert camel herd preservation in Rajasthan.



Tarlamt: Salt Caravan to Bilma

Niger 42 mins Dir: Sarah Lunacek **Tuareg (Kel Eway)**



Maasai Voices on Climate Change (and other changes, too)

Kenya 10 mins Dir: Joana Roque de Pinho & Maasai Youth Filmmakers **Maasai**



Preserving Rajasthan's camel herds

India 5 mins Dir: LPPS & Camel Charisma **Raika**



The Kumbhalgarh Raika Story

India 12 mins Dir: LPPS & Hanwant Singh Rathore **Raika**

Block 11: Steppe Rivers & Climate Perspectives 1:30 PM – 2:55 PM

Re-examining Mongolian steppe mobility, rainfed water harvesting, and Taiga elder reflections.



Tes River Mongolians

Mongolia 58 mins Dir: Joseph L. Subbiondo / Asian Cultural Council

Mongol Herders



Climate change and pastoralism

Global 4 mins Dir: Saverio Krättli & IIED **Global Dryland Pastoralists**



Catching Raindrops in Africa

Sweden / Sub-Saharan Africa 5 mins Dir: Radhika Gupta

Sub-Saharan Rainfed Pastoralists/Farmers



Bayandalai: Lord of the Taiga

Mongolia

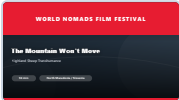
11 mins

Dir: Aner Etxebarria Moral & Pablo Vidal Santos

Dukha (Tsaatan Reindeer Herders)

Block 12: Alpine Transhumance & Closing Ceremony 3:15 PM – 6:00 PM

Festival closing screening featuring Macedonian sheep transhumance, Hungarian pasture management, and Bolivian vicuña stewardship.



The Mountain Won't Move (Gora ne premakne se)

North Macedonia / Slovenia

94 mins

Dir: Petra Seliškar

Macedonian Mountain Shepherds



An afternoon on the pasture

Hungary

22 mins

Dir: Zsolt Molnár & Sándor Karácsony

Hungarian Puszta Herders



The Custodians of the Andean Gold

Bolivia

32 mins

Dir: Bibiana Vilá & CONICET

Andean Llama/Vicuña Herders

FULL FILM DESCRIPTIONS & CATALOG

Climate change and pastoralism

Global

4 mins

Dir: Saverio Krätli & IIED

Group: Global Dryland Pastoralists



Official Synopsis

Part of the MOOC course material for *Pastoralism in Development* created by IIED, MISEREOR, and Saverio Krätli. Explores how mobile pastoralists interact with variable dryland environments and harness climate fluctuations productively.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Saverio Krätli & IIED

Dr. Saverio Krätli is an independent researcher, editor of the journal *Nomadic Peoples*, and leading international expert in dryland pastoral systems and non-equilibrium ecology.

Related Academic Publication

Krätli, S. (2015). *Valuing Variability: New Perspectives on Climate Resilient Drylands Development* Available: <http://pubs.iied.org/10128IIED>.



Krätli, S. et al. (2013). Pastoralism: A critical asset for food security under global climate change. *Animal Frontiers*, 3(1), 42–47. <https://doi.org/10.2527/af.2013-0007>



Catching Raindrops in Africa

Sweden / Sub-Saharan Africa

5 mins

Dir: Radhika Gupta

Group: Sub-Saharan Rainfed Pastoralists/Farmers



Official Synopsis

Produced for the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), this short documentary showcases smallholder farmers and pastoralists as frontline water managers in Africa, advocating for investments in rainfed agriculture and soil moisture conservation.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Radhika Gupta

Radhika Gupta is a documentary director and multimedia communicator specializing in water security, climate adaptation, and sustainable agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Related Academic Publication

(SIWI), S. I. W. I. (2018). *Transforming Investments in African Rainfed Agriculture (TIARA): Green Water Management for Smallholder Farmers and Pastoralists*

Available: <https://siwi.org/publications/transforming-investments-in-african-rainfed-agriculture/>.



Maasai Voices on Climate Change (and other changes, too)

Kenya

10 mins

Dir: Joana Roque de Pinho & Maasai Youth Filmmakers

Group: Maasai

WORLD NOMADS FILM FESTIVAL

Maasai Voices on Climate Change

Maasai Mara Youth Observations

10 min

Kenya

Official Synopsis

A 10-minute participatory documentary made by a freshly trained-in-filmmaking group of young Kenyan Maasai women and men from the Maasai Mara, sharing their firsthand observations on climate change, changing seasons, land privatization, and cultural transformation.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Joana Roque de Pinho & Maasai Youth Filmmakers

Dr. Joana Roque de Pinho is an environmental anthropologist and visual ethnographer at the Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas (ISCSP), University of Lisbon, Portugal.

Related Academic Publication

Roque de Pinho, J. (2013). Shooting climate change in the Maasai Mara: Aesthetics and Expectations in Participatory Filmmaking with Kenya Pastoralists. *Anthropology Now*, 5(2), 74–90 Available: <https://repositorio.iscte-iul.pt/handle/10071/7821>.



Roque de Pinho, J. et al. (2021). People should also look after the people: relational values of wildlife and collectively titled land in Ilkisongo Maasai group ranches in Southern Kenya. *Ecology and Society*, 26(3), 28. <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-12539-260328>



The Kumbhalgarh Raika Story

India

12 mins

Dir: LPPS & Hanwant Singh Rathore

Group: Raika



Official Synopsis

Highlights the struggle of the Raika camel herders of Rajasthan, India, as they advocate for grazing access rights within the Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary, demonstrating their role as stewards of forest biodiversity.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): LPPS & Hanwant Singh Rathore

Hanwant Singh Rathore is director of LPPS, leading community campaigns for Indigenous grazing rights in sanctuary forests.

Related Academic Publication

Köhler-Rollefson, I. (2018). Purdah, purse and patriarchy: the position of women in the Raika shepherd community in Rajasthan (India). *Journal of Arid Environments*, 149, 29–38. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaridenv.2017.09.010>



Köhler-Rollefson, I. (2023). *Hoofprints on the Land: How Traditional Herding and Grazing Can Restore the Soil and Bring Animal Agriculture Back in Balance with the Earth*. Chelsea Green Publishing Available: <https://www.chelseagreen.com/product/hoofprints-on-the-land/>.



Preserving Rajasthan's camel herds

India

5 mins

Dir: LPPS & Camel Charisma

Group: Raika



Official Synopsis

Features community-led initiatives in Rajasthan to create sustainable livelihoods from camel milk and camel wool products, aiming to save endangered camel herds and preserve the traditional Raika way of life.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): LPPS & Camel Charisma

Dr. Ilse Köhler-Rollefson and Hanwant Singh Rathore co-founded Lokhit Pashu-Palak Sansthan (LPPS) to advocate for the land and grazing rights of Raika camel herders in Rajasthan.

Related Academic Publication

Köhler-Rollefson, I. (2018). Purdah, purse and patriarchy: the position of women in the Raika shepherd community in Rajasthan (India). *Journal of Arid Environments*, 149, 29–38. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaridenv.2017.09.010>

Köhler-Rollefson, I. (2014). *Camel Karma: Twenty Years Among India's Camel Nomads*. Tranquebar Press Available: <https://www.ilse-koehler-rollefson.com/books/camel-karma>.



Shepherds of the Deccan

India

14 mins

Dir: Ankit Pogula / LPPS

Group: Dhangar / Kurba Shepherds



Official Synopsis

For hundreds of years, the Dhangar nomads have kept sheep on the Deccan Plateau in Maharashtra State, India. Their biggest problem was wolves, which they also worship, knowing full well that wolves will take a few animals each year, often the weakest. Now they face a new threat: climate change, bringing extreme weather events. The film traces the path of a few migratory families and the loss they felt when several animals died during unprecedented rains. The nomads ask government to take notice of their situation and create policies to protect their sheep and their livelihoods.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Ankit Pogula / LPPS

Ankit Pogula is an Indian documentary filmmaker and co-founder of Earthcare Films, dedicated to highlighting Indigenous rights, environmental justice, and community-led conservation across India.

Related Academic Publication

Kulkarni, A. et al. (2024). Mapping of the Seasonal Migration Routes of Cattle Pastoralists of the Deccan Plateau Region of India Using Ethnographic Mapping. *Pastures & Pastoralism*, 2(6), 45–58. <https://doi.org/10.33002/pp0206>



Changing a Landscape to a Lifescape: the Humboldt Ranch

USA

12 mins

Dir: Abbey Kinion

Group: Nevada Rangeland Ranchers



Official Synopsis

In northeastern Nevada, the Humboldt Ranch is transforming more than 350,000 acres of public and private rangelands through innovative grazing practices. By managing livestock for plant recovery rather than reducing herd size, ranchers have restored streams, revived willow-lined channels, and brought back wildlife from trout to pronghorn antelope. Once eroded gullies are becoming wetlands, turning a landscape into a “lifescape” and offering a compelling vision for sustainable ranching on western rangelands.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Abbey Kinion

Abbey Kinion is an American conservation filmmaker focused on regenerative agriculture, rangeland restoration, and ranching in the Great Basin.

Related Academic Publication

Swanson, S., Wyman, S., & Evans, C.. (2015). Practical Grazing Management to Maintain or Restore Riparian Functions and Values. *Journal of Rangeland Applications* 2 1–28 <https://rangelands.org/journals/journal-of-rangeland-applications/>.



Pastoralism is the future

Global

2 mins

Dir: CELEP & VSF International

Group: Global Mobile Pastoralists



Official Synopsis

Man-made climate change is creating conditions on our planet that are increasingly characterised by variability and unpredictability. Pastoralists use variability to their advantage. Their production systems guide us to a sustainable future. This video was created in support of the International Year of Rangelands & Pastoralists (IYRP) 2026. Subtitles in Arabic, Catalan, Chinese, German, Hindi, Italian, Spanish and Mongolian). Also available in French, Fulfulde, Swahili and Amharic Scenario by Saverio Krätli, Vétérinaires Sans Frontières Belgium, Agrecol and Misereor; funded by Misereor and the Belgian Government; produced by Cartoonbase Belgium.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): CELEP & VSF International

CELEP (Coalition of European Lobbies for Eastern African Pastoralism) and VSF (Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières) produce international advocacy media supporting mobile livestock herders worldwide.

Related Academic Publication

Krätli, S. (2015). *Valuing Variability: New Perspectives on Climate Resilient Drylands Development* Available: <http://pubs.iied.org/10128IIED>.



CELEP, V. I. & . (2022). *Pastoralism: A Sustainable Way of Life in a Changing World*
Available: <https://vsf-international.org/pastoralism-sustainable-way-of-life/>.



Losing Ground: Documentary Cinema, Pastoral Knowledge, and Environmental Justice in Mongolia

Mongolia

30 mins

Dir: Bradley Rappa

Group: Mongol Herders



Official Synopsis

An ethnographic documentary examining how climate change, overgrazing, and destructive mining practices threaten Mongolian nomadic herders. The film explores environmental justice and the struggle to preserve traditional pastoral knowledge amidst rapid industrialization.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Bradley Rappa

Bradley Rappa is an Associate Professor of Media Arts and Documentary Production, specializing in environmental documentary cinema and ecological justice in Central Asia.

Commitment (Zaveza)

Slovenia

16 mins

Dir: Tajda Jerkič & Anja Poznič

Group: Slovenian Alpine Goat Herders



Official Synopsis

A student workshop documentary about a Slovenian urban family who moved to the countryside to dedicate themselves to goat herding, capturing their daily commitment, hard manual labor, and family bond.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Tajda Jerkič & Anja Poznič

Tajda Jerkič and Anja Poznič are Slovenian documentary filmmakers focusing on rural revitalization, alpine ecology, and intergenerational human-nature dynamics.

Tarlamt: Salt Caravan to Bilma

Niger

42 mins

Dir: Sarah Lunacek

Group: Tuareg (Kel Eway)



Official Synopsis

Filed in 2000 with lightweight equipment in harsh desert conditions, this documentary follows a Tuareg (Kel Eway Imjaghan) camel caravan traveling across the Sahara to Bilma, documenting traditional trade routes, desert survival, and social organization.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Sarah Lunacek

Sarah Lunacek is an anthropologist, filmmaker, and researcher at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. She has conducted extensive ethnography in Niger and the Sahara, studying Tuareg caravan routes, mobility, and material culture.

Related Academic Publication

Lunaček, S. (2023). Schooled Tuaregs' Engagement with Mobile Pastoralism in the Agadez Region (Niger): Avoidable Sedentism and Alternative Forms of Cooperation. *Nomadic Peoples*, 27(2), 263–289. <https://doi.org/10.3197/np.2023.270205>



Wind has no tale

Russia

60 mins

Dir: Ivan Vlasov & Nikita Stashkevich

Group: Nenets

WORLD NOMADS FILM FESTIVAL

Wind Has No Tale

Nenets Reindeer Herding Tundra

60 min

Russia (Yamal)

Official Synopsis

Filmed in the Arctic tundra of the Yamal Peninsula, Russia (produced in 2024), this intimate documentary follows Nika, a young Nenets girl living with her nomadic reindeer herding family as she prepares to leave her tundra home for a remote boarding school.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Ivan Vlasov & Nikita Stashkevich

Ivan Vlasov and Nikita Stashkevich are award-winning Russian documentary filmmakers who specialize in Arctic cinema, Indigenous Siberian cultures, and atmospheric observational ethnography.

Related Academic Publication

Liarskaya, E. (2005). Northern Residential Schools in Contemporary Yamal Nenets Culture. *Sibirica: Journal of Siberian Studies*, 4(1), 66–84. <https://doi.org/10.3167/136173605781373307>



The Mountain Won't Move (Gora ne premakne se)

North Macedonia / Slovenia

94 mins

Dir: Petra Seliškar

Group: Macedonian Mountain Shepherds

WORLD NOMADS FILM FESTIVAL

The Mountain Won't Move

Highland Sheep Transhumance

94 min

North Macedonia / Slovenia

Official Synopsis

A feature-length documentary produced in 2025 following young brothers herding sheep in the rugged mountains of North Macedonia, delving into family relationships, loneliness, and the struggle to sustain high-altitude transhumance.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Petra Seliškar

Petra Seliškar is an acclaimed Slovenian documentary film director, producer, and festival director (MakeDox), producing evocative portraits of Balkan human landscapes.

Related Academic Publication

Heritage, U. I. C. (2023). *Transhumance, the seasonal droving of livestock along migratory routes in Europe* Available: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/transhumance-the-seasonal-droving-of-livestock-01964>.



Tes River Mongolians

Mongolia

58 mins

Dir: Joseph L. Subbiondo / Asian Cultural Council

Group: Mongol Herders



Official Synopsis

The Tes River flows from the Bulnai Mountains through three Mongolian provinces – Khuvsgul, Zavkhan and Uvs – feeds into Lake Uvs, registered by UNESCO in 2013 as a Natural World Heritage site. On the banks of the river live mobile herder families who believe the river is God's blessing for them, being the source of their livelihood and of water for humans and animals. The film shows the lifestyle of Mongolian herders, rotational grazing of rangelands and people's attitudes to and respect for their natural environment, by depicting the lives of three families living near the top, middle and end of the Tes River Valley. The full-film with English subtitles can be found here . The 8-min excerpt made for the IYRP 2026 can be viewed here .

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Joseph L. Subbiondo / Asian Cultural Council

Joseph L. Subbiondo is an ethnographic filmmaker supported by the Asian Cultural Council, documenting nomadic music, oral epics, and seasonal camp migrations along the Tes River in northwestern Mongolia.

Related Academic Publication

Fernandez-Gimenez, M. E. (2000). The Role of Ecological Knowledge in Pastoral Land-Use Decisions Among Mongolian Herders. *Human Ecology*, 28(1), 131–161.
<https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1007040428489>



Living in the Mountains of Ladakh

India

3 mins

Dir: Stanzin Dorjai Gya

Group: Changpa (Ladakh)



Official Synopsis

In this film, a nomadic woman shares her daily life in Ladakh's high mountains. She speaks about the hardships of changing rainfall, the struggle to feed her livestock, and the reasons many young people leave for the cities—offering a poignant glimpse into a fragile way of life under pressure.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Stanzin Dorjai Gya

Stanzin Dorjai Gya is an internationally acclaimed Ladakhi filmmaker born into a nomadic Changpa family in Gya village, Ladakh. He co-founded the Himalayan Film House.

Related Academic Publication

Maiti, S., Garai, S., Bhakat, M., & Kadian, K. S.. (2024). Vulnerability to climate change among the Changpa pastoral nomads of Leh-Ladakh. *Range Management and Agroforestry* 45 (1) 180–189 <https://doi.org/10.59515/rma.2024.v45.i1.27>.



Bayandalai: Lord of the Taiga

Mongolia

11 mins

Dir: Aner Etxebarria Moral & Pablo Vidal Santos



Official Synopsis

From inside his yurt in northern Mongolia, the reindeer herder Bayandalai – an elder of the Dukhas tribe – muses about the significance of life and death in the largest forest on Earth, the Taiga. Through his connection with the reindeer and with the Taiga, Bayandalai has access to spiritual truths and higher consciousness that he may not be able to pass on to his family members before the lures of city life — jobs, money, houses, things — entice them away.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Aner Etxebarria Moral & Pablo Vidal Santos

Aner Etxebarria Moral and Pablo Vidal Santos are Spanish ethnographic film directors specializing in high-altitude environments, Indigenous lore, and environmental conservation worldwide.

Related Academic Publication

Inamura, T. (2005). The Transformation of the Community of Tsaatan Reindeer Herders in Mongolia and Their Relationships with the Outside World. *Senri Ethnological Studies*, 69, 123–152. <https://doi.org/10.15021/00002643>



An afternoon on the pasture

Hungary

22 mins

Dir: Zsolt Molnár & Sándor Karácsony

Group: Hungarian Puszta Herders



Official Synopsis

László Sáfián – born into a Hungarian family that has been herding for generations – explains how he, with his dog, manages close-herded grazing on a patchy semi-natural pasture. He speaks about the relationship between pasture and livestock, how he portions the pasture, and how he learnt and transmits this knowledge. This “slow film” documents traditional ecological knowledge of herders in their setting and at their pace, using herder–scientist dialogue about the fine-tuned decisions the herder made on this afternoon.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Zsolt Molnár & Sándor Karácsony

Dr. Zsolt Molnár is a leading Hungarian ethnoecologist and botanist at the Centre for Ecological Research. Sándor Karácsony is a renowned documentary cinematographer specializing in traditional agricultural knowledge.

Related Academic Publication

Molnár, Z. (2012). Classification of pasture habitats by Hungarian herders in a steppe landscape (Hungary). *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine*, 8, 28. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1746-4269-8-28>



Molnár, Z. et al. (2020). Knowledge co-production with traditional herders on cattle grazing behaviour for better management of species-rich grasslands. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, 57(9), 1677–1687. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2664.13664>



Guardians of the grasslands

Canada

13 mins

Dir: Sarah Wray & Ben Wilson / CRSB

Group: Canadian Prairie Ranchers



Official Synopsis

Canada's native grasslands are disappearing at an alarming rate; they are one of the most endangered ecosystems in the world. This film – the result of collaboration between conservationists and local pastoralists (ranchers) – shows how cattle grazing still creates hope on what is left of these iconic landscapes for the plant and animal species that call them home.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Sarah Wray & Ben Wilson / CRSB

Sarah Wray and Ben Wilson are Canadian environmental documentary filmmakers collaborating with the Canadian Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (CRSB) to document grassland ecosystem services.

Related Academic Publication

Alemu, A. W., Kröbel, R., McConkey, B. G., & Iwaasa, A. D.. (2019). Effect of Increasing Species Diversity and Grazing Management on Pasture Productivity, Animal Performance, and Soil Carbon Sequestration of Re-Established Pasture in Canadian Prairie. *Animals* 9 (4) 127 <https://doi.org/10.3390/ani9040127>.



Cowherds of the Savannah

Uganda

26 mins

Dir: Mark Michel & Neue Celluloid Fabrik

Group: Karamojong



Official Synopsis

The Karamojong are herdsman in the North-East of Uganda and guardians of their landscape. This film illustrates how the Karamojong herdsman make productive use of the highly variable landscape, turning even the driest plant fibers into meat and milk, whilst simultaneously dealing with frequent animal disease outbreaks and intertribal conflicts in the region. This film was produced in collaboration with a CELEP partner, DADO (Dodoth Agro-pastoral Development Organization). It is part of a documentary series 'Herders – Guardians of the Earth'.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Mark Michel & Neue Celluloid Fabrik

Mark Michel is a German filmmaker based in Leipzig, producing documentary series (including Herders – Guardians of the Earth) exploring global Indigenous life and dryland ecosystems.

Related Academic Publication

Levine, S. (2010). *An Analysis of Livelihoods and Resilience in Karamoja, Uganda*
Available: <https://fic.tufts.edu/publication-item/an-analysis-of-livelihoods-and-resilience-in-karamoja-uganda/>.



Fatuma and Assya – Two Afar Girls in Ethiopia

Ethiopia

20 mins

Dir: Francesco Sincich

Group: Afar



Official Synopsis

This film tells the story of two girls in Afar, northeast Ethiopia, and how they face challenges in their young lives: Fatuma seeking to avoid the traditional arranged marriage and Asya trying to deal with livestock theft and conflict with the Somali Issa. Fatuma and Asya grow up in two different Afar nomad communities. The film depicts the reality of these adolescents, who explain their daily lives from their own perspective.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Francesco Sincich

Francesco Sincich is an Italian documentary director, photojournalist, and humanitarian videographer focusing on pastoralist adolescent girls, Indigenous rights, and water security across East Africa.

Related Academic Publication

Tsegaye, D. et . al . (2018). Traditional Gender Inequalities Limit Pastoral Women's Opportunities for Adaptation to Climate Change: Evidence from the Afar Pastoralists of Ethiopia. *Pastoralism: Research, Policy and Practice*, 8, 24. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13570-018-0129-1>



Enchukunoto (The Return)

Kenya

16 mins

Dir: Laissa Malih

Group: Maasai



Official Synopsis

In this intimate and groundbreaking film, Laissa Malih, the first female Maasai filmmaker, returns to her ancestral village in Laikipia to explore how climate change is transforming Maasai lands and lives. What begins as a documentary about land and tradition becomes a personal journey of identity, belonging, and intergenerational dialogue. Through her lens, Malih reclaims the narrative of her people, offering a powerful insider's perspective on resilience, culture, and the future of Maasai storytelling.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Laissa Malih

Laissa Malih is a pioneer Maasai Indigenous filmmaker and media activist from Laikipia, Kenya. As the first female Maasai filmmaker, her work reclaims Indigenous narrative sovereignty and explores youth identity.

Related Academic Publication

Maina, A. G., Oriaso, S. O., Outa, G. O., & Opere, A. O.. (2025). Climate Change Policy Implementation Gaps Among Farming Communities in Laikipia County in Kenya. *Kabarak Journal of Research & Innovation* 15 (3) 45–62 <https://doi.org/10.58216/kjri.v15i03.582>.



Conservation and Traditional Survival

South Africa

22 mins

Dir: Humair Hayat

Group: Nama



Official Synopsis

After several years of negotiations with the South African National Parks Board, the local Nama people were allowed to remain living and grazing their livestock in a designated nature conservation area – the Richtersveld World Heritage Site in Northern Cape Province bordering Namibia. The film documents how agreement for a community conservancy was reached and how renegotiations are being considered in view of recent changes in climate and population, including Nama not involved in the original negotiations. Researchers made this film as a way to feed back their findings to the local people.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Humair Hayat

Humair Hayat is a South African ethnographic filmmaker and researcher specializing in Khoisan rights, land restitution, and community co-management in South African National Parks.

Related Academic Publication

Hendricks, H. H. et al. (2007). Why communal pastoralists do what they do in the Richtersveld National Park. *African Journal of Range & Forage Science*, 24(1), 29–36. <https://doi.org/10.2989/10220110709485910>



Stories from the landscape: cattle drove

Ireland

30 mins

Dir: Christopher O'Donnell

Group: Irish Cattle Drovers



Official Synopsis

This film shows the living cultural heritage of transhumance in Europe: moving livestock to different grazing grounds in a seasonal cycle that goes back as long as people have been farming in the region. In Clare County of Ireland, the filmmaker follows the Burren Beo group through their Winterage Festival celebrating this ancient tradition that allows the region's unique plant and animal life to flourish. Here, the highlands are grazed in the winter and the lowlands in summer. This is contrasted with the movement of livestock in the north Italian Alps, that are taken to the mountain pastures for the summer.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Christopher O'Donnell

Christopher O'Donnell is an Irish documentary director and heritage consultant specializing in traditional agricultural practices, winterage grazing, and living cultural landscapes.

Related Academic Publication

Duff, O. (2022). *Reverse Transhumance: From the Boyne to the Burren, the Story of Winterage in Ireland's Burren*. <https://doi.org/10.21427/cr7c-wt62>



The Custodians of the Andean Gold

Bolivia

32 mins

Dir: Bibiana Vilá & CONICET

Group: Andean Llama/Vicuña Herders



Official Synopsis

In the high Andes of Peru and Bolivia, Quechua and Aymara families depend on alpacas and vicuñas for their livelihoods, selling the animals' prized fiber. Yet gold mining, long present in the region, threatens both the environment and the survival of pastoral traditions. The film highlights the urgent need to protect ecosystems, safeguard workers' rights, and support herders so their culture and animals endure.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Bibiana Vilá & CONICET

Dr. Bibiana Vilá is a principal researcher at CONICET (Argentina) and president of VICAM, an internationally renowned biologist studying camelid conservation and traditional Indigenous chaku management.

Related Academic Publication

Vilá, B. (2020). Vicuñas (Vicugna vicugna), Wild Andean Altiplano Camelids: Multiple Valuation for Their Sustainable Use and Biocultural Role in Local Communities. *Case Studies in the Environment*, 4(1), 1232692. <https://doi.org/10.1525/cse.2020.1232692>



Vilá, B. et al. (2022). Weaving a vicuña shawl. *Pastoralism: Research, Policy and Practice*, 12, 40. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13570-022-00260-6>



Days of the Wolf

Italy

17 mins

Dir: Dario Novellino

Group: Apennine Shepherds



Official Synopsis

In Italy's Apennine Mountains, large carnivores are creating problems for herders. The population of wolves and wolf-dog hybrids is growing, and attacks on livestock are increasing. This has devastating economic impact on the herders, who must now confine formerly free-ranging livestock in stables and behind fences. It weakens the management of grazing land and local livestock breeds, leading to loss in biocultural diversity. The herders demand that national and regional governments in Italy take action to address these issues.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Dario Novellino

Dr. Dario Novellino is an Italian visual anthropologist at the Centre for Biocultural Diversity, University of Kent, specializing in biocultural heritage and human-wildlife conflict.

Related Academic Publication

Novellino, D. et al. (2026). 'The macchia is a garden': wildfires, pastoralism, and landscape ideologies in the Aurunci Mountains, Italy. *Fire Ecology*, 22, 14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42408-026-00518-z>



Novellino, D. (2024). 'The Death of a Bear': Conflicting Ontologies and Overlapping Discourses on Grazing Systems and Large Carnivores Coexistence in Central Italy. *ResearchGate* Available: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/386616658>.



Sharing the Land

Spain

14 mins

Dir: Juan Manuel Rivas & Alfonso Kike

Group: Spanish Transhumance Herders



Official Synopsis

This documentary brings the testimonies of three herders – Fernando, Juan and Sofía – who have learnt to live close to wolves. Like many other farmers and herders in Europe, they have found ways to protect their livestock. They explain how they deal with the challenges and opportunities that come with the presence of large carnivores and how they have learnt to accept or even to appreciate them. They show that coexistence is possible, if those living close to large carnivores receive sufficient support and tools to reduce conflict.

Filmmaker Biography

Filmmaker(s): Juan Manuel Rivas & Alfonso Kike

Juan Manuel Rivas and Alfonso Kike are Spanish agricultural documentarians documenting traditional transhumance corridors and ecosystem protection.

Related Academic Publication

Fernández-Gil, A. et . al . (2021). 'They Belong Here': Understanding the Conditions of Human-wolf Coexistence in North-western Spain. *Conservation and Society*, 19(4), 260–270. <https://doi.org/10.4103/cs.cs.18.21>



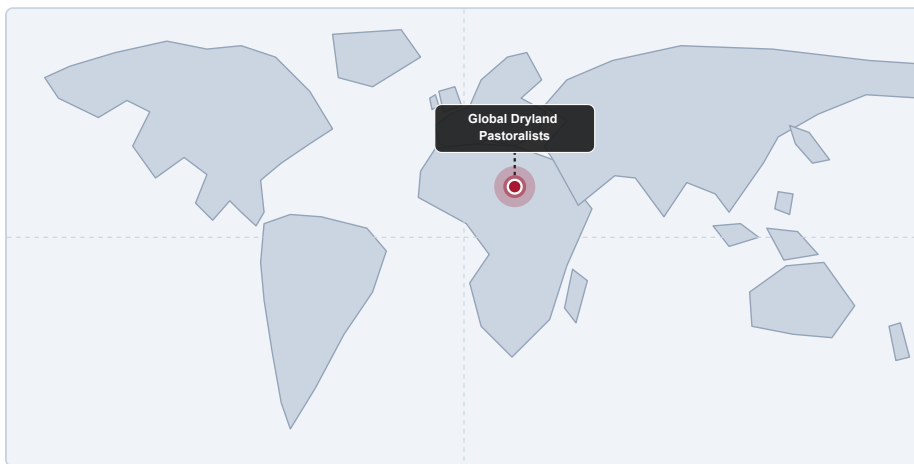
Lozano, J. et . al . (2024). Land of wolves, school of shepherds: the importance of pastoral knowledge on co-existence with large carnivores. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2024.2425515>



FEATURED PASTORALIST COMMUNITY PROFILES

Global Dryland Pastoralists

Location: Arid & Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs), Global (Sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, Middle East)



Overview & Cultural Background

Global dryland pastoralists inhabit the planet's most arid, variable, and non-arable environments, covering nearly 40% of the Earth's land surface. Through high mobility, flexible herd structuring, and opportunistic grazing strategies, dryland herders convert sparse vegetation into nutrient-rich milk, meat, fiber, and hide without requiring permanent irrigation or synthetic fertilizers.

Pastoralism in drylands is a highly efficient economic system tailored to environmental unpredictability. Rather than overgrazing, mobile herds stimulate plant regrowth and seed dispersal, demonstrating that mobile livestock management is key to combating desertification and building climate resilience in global drylands.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** Estimated 200 million mobile and semi-mobile dryland herders globally
- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Dromedary and Bactrian camels, zebu cattle, sheep, goats, and donkeys
- **Contemporary Challenges:** Accelerating desertification, prolonged erratic droughts, policy marginalization favoring crop cultivation, loss of customary land rights, and climate change displacement.



Read more about Pastoralism on Wikipedia →



Sub-Saharan Rainfed Pastoralists & Farmers

Location: Sahelian Belt & Sudanian Savanna, West & East Africa



Overview & Cultural Background

Sub-Saharan rainfed agropastoralists operate integrated crop-livestock production systems across the Sahelian belt and Sudanian savannas of Africa. Combining seasonal rainfed cultivation of millet, sorghum, and maize with mobile livestock grazing, agropastoral communities flexibly shift focus between crops and animals depending on annual rainfall patterns.

This symbiotic system relies on intricate farmer-herder agreements: livestock graze crop residues after harvest, manuring fields for the next planting season, while farmers provide access to water wells. Innovations in peacebuilding, corridors mapping, and rainwater harvesting are vital for sustaining these vital African agropastoral economies.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** Estimated 100 million agropastoralists across West, Central, and East Africa

- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Zebu cattle, Sahelian goats, West African dwarf sheep, and donkeys
- **Contemporary Challenges:** Escalating farmer-herder land use conflicts due to crop expansion into dry-season migration corridors, severe climate rainfall variability, desertification, and regional political instability.

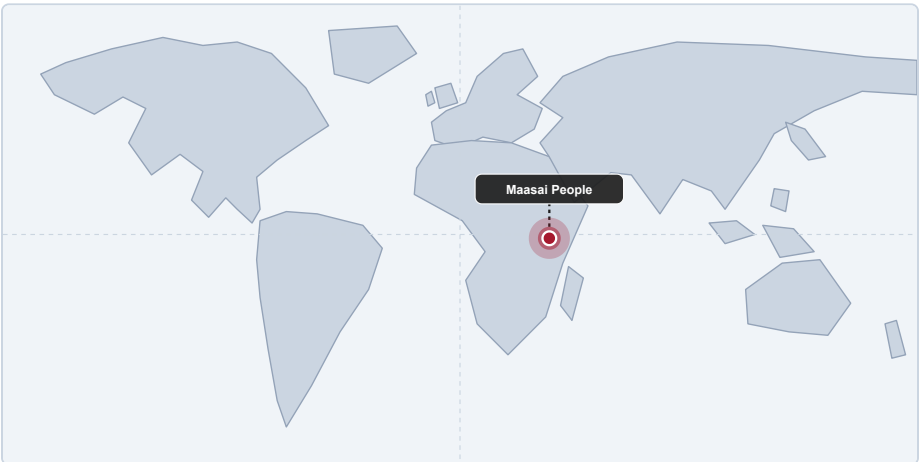


[Read more about Mixed farming on Wikipedia →](#)



Maasai People

Location: Maasai Mara & Great Rift Valley, Southern Kenya / Northern Tanzania



Overview & Cultural Background

The Maasai are an iconic Nilotic ethnic group inhabiting the savanna landscapes of southern Kenya and northern Tanzania along the Great Rift Valley. Renowned for their vibrant red cloaks (*shúkà*), elaborate beadwork, and jumping dances (*adumu*), Maasai identity and cosmology are inextricably linked to cattle.

Maasai pastoralism historically maintained open, unfenced savanna ecosystems that supported the greatest concentration of wild megafauna on Earth. Facing land privatization and severe droughts, Maasai communities are pioneering community wildlife conservancies that combine traditional livestock grazing with ecotourism revenue, proving that pastoralism and wildlife conservation can mutually thrive.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** Approximately 1.5 million people
- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Zebu cattle, red Maasai sheep, and goats
- **Contemporary Challenges:** Evictions and land loss from wildlife conservation reserves and private commercial ranches, severe climate-change-induced droughts in East Africa, land subdivision, and water scarcity.

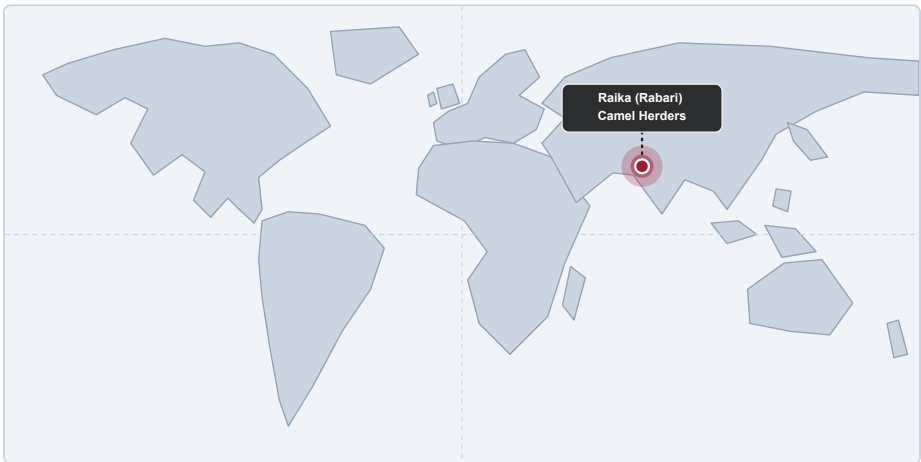


Read more about Maasai people on Wikipedia →



Raika People

Location: Thar Desert & Aravalli Range, Rajasthan, India



Overview & Cultural Background

The Raika (also known as Rabari) are a specialized pastoral caste of Rajasthan in western India. According to Raika belief, they were created by Lord Shiva specifically to care for camels. For centuries, the Raika have served as guardians of the Thar Desert ecosystem, breeding camels, sheep, and goats suited to arid conditions.

Traditionally, Raika culture strictly prohibited slaughtering camels or selling camel milk for commercial gain, treating camels as sacred family members. Facing severe pasture loss, Raika leaders are now developing innovative social enterprises—marketing camel milk for

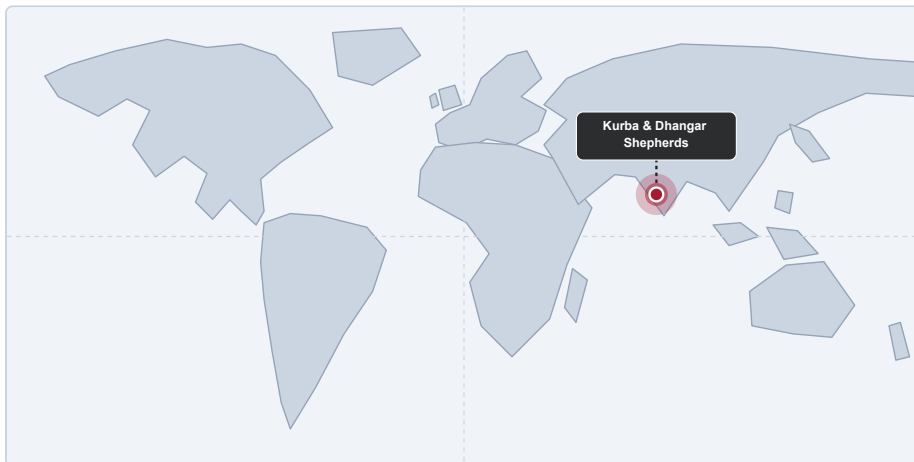
its therapeutic health benefits and producing camel wool textiles to save their herds from extinction.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** Approximately 1 million pastoralists
- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Dromedary camels (Marwari and Jaisalmeri breeds), Indigenous sheep, and goats
- **Contemporary Challenges:** Closure of traditional forest grazing grounds due to wildlife sanctuary restrictions (e.g., Kumbhalgarh National Park), decline in camel demand from motorized transport, lack of camel milk collection infrastructure, and loss of migration corridors.

Dhangar & Kurba Shepherds

Location: Deccan Plateau, Maharashtra / Karnataka / Telangana / Tamil Nadu, India



Overview & Cultural Background

The Dhangar and Kurba are prominent pastoral communities of the semi-arid Deccan Plateau in Peninsular India. Following centuries-old migratory circuits spanning hundreds of kilometers, shepherds move their herds between the dry interior plateaus after monsoon harvests and the coastal Western Ghats or agricultural river valleys during dry summers.

Pastoral migration plays a vital ecological role in Indian agrarian systems: farmers actively invite shepherds to pen their sheep overnight in harvested fields, exchanging grain, fodder, and money for the rich natural manure left by the herds. Dhangar and Kurba culture is deeply rooted in folk devotional traditions dedicated to deities such as Biroba and Khandoba.

Key facts

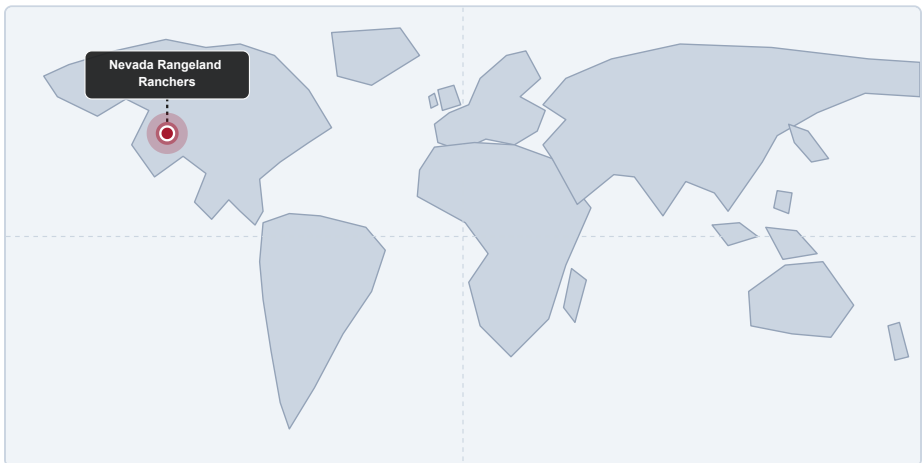
- **Estimated Population:** Over 3.5 million pastoralists across Western and Southern India
- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Deccani sheep, Nellore sheep, and Indigenous goat breeds
- **Contemporary Challenges:** Rapid urban expansion and highway construction bisecting traditional transhumance corridors, fencing of common property rangelands, land conversion for commercial renewable energy projects, and lack of official administrative recognition.

Read more about Dhargar on Wikipedia →



Nevada Rangeland Ranchers

Location: Great Basin & Humboldt River Basin, Nevada, USA



Overview & Cultural Background

Nevada rangeland ranchers operate across the cold desert basins and sagebrush steppes of the Great Basin in western North America. Managing vast landscapes composed predominantly of public land federal grazing leases (BLM and US Forest Service), Nevada ranchers move cattle between seasonal desert allotments and irrigated valley hayfields.

Modern rangeland management in Nevada relies on outcome-based targeted grazing to reduce fuel loads for wildfires, restore riparian streams, and combat invasive weed species. Western ranching culture preserves historic buckaroo horse-riding traditions, roping techniques, and open-space stewardship.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** Approximately 3,200 commercial ranching operations
- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Beef cattle (Hereford, Angus) and horses
- **Contemporary Challenges:** Prolonged Great Basin droughts, catastrophic wildfires destroying sagebrush ecosystems, federal public land grazing permit restrictions, invasive cheatgrass invasion, and wild horse overpopulation.



Read more about Ranching on Wikipedia →



Global Mobile Pastoralists

Location: Global Rangelands, Savannas, Deserts & Steppes



Overview & Cultural Background

Global mobile pastoralists encompass diverse Indigenous and local communities who move livestock seasonally to exploit patchy pasture and water resources across mountain ranges, deserts, tundras, and steppes. Mobile pastoralism represents a refined human adaptation that balances ecological sustainability with food security across non-arable lands.

From the Eurasian steppes to the African Sahel and the High Andes, mobile herders maintain rich intangible cultural heritage, oral literature, customary legal systems, and ecological stewardship. UN declarations designate pastoralism as a sustainable food

production model crucial for global biodiversity conservation.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** Estimated 500 million people relying on mobile livestock production systems worldwide
- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Camels, cattle, sheep, goats, yaks, reindeer, horses, llamas, and alpacas
- **Contemporary Challenges:** State-sponsored forced sedentarization policies, national border restrictions impeding seasonal mobility, loss of grazing corridors to infrastructure, and lack of mobile veterinary, health, and educational services.

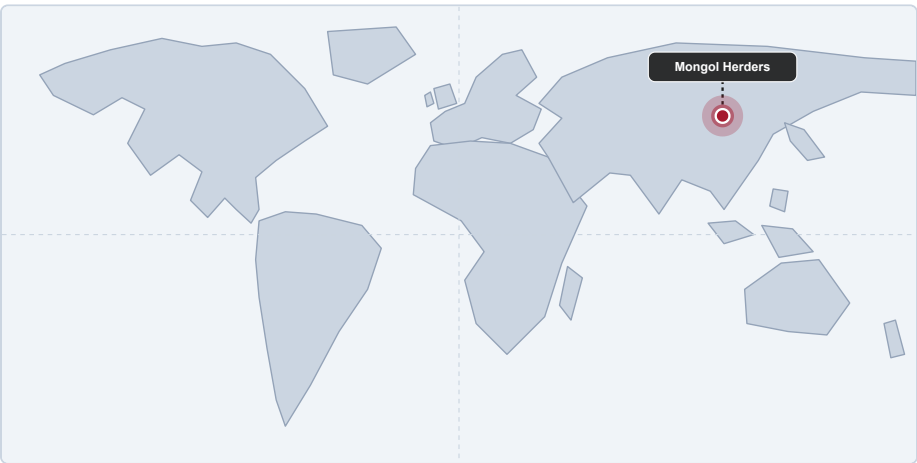


Read more about Nomadic pastoralism on Wikipedia →



Mongol Herders

Location: Mongolian Steppe, Gobi Desert & Altai Mountains, Mongolia



Overview & Cultural Background

Mongolians are one of the largest remaining nomadic pastoral cultures on Earth, maintaining livestock across the grasslands, mountains, and desert steppes of their national territory in Inner Asia. Living in portable felt dwellings (*ger*), herding families move camp several times a year to follow water and fresh pasture.

Mongolian herders maintain the 'Five Snouts' livestock mix to maximize ecological resilience. Horses provide fermented mare's milk (*airag*), Bactrian camels navigate the arid Gobi, yaks thrive in the high Altai, while sheep and goats supply meat, milk, wool, and cashmere. Indigenous environmental stewardship is guided by deep respect for lands and waters.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** Approximately 1.2 million nomadic herders (nearly 30% of the national population)
- **Primary Livestock Herded:** The 'Five Snouts' (*Taban Khushuu*): horses, Bactrian camels, cattle/yaks, sheep, and goats
- **Contemporary Challenges:** Increasing frequency of severe winter freezes (*dzud*), grassland degradation related to climate change and reduced mobility, and mining land concessions.

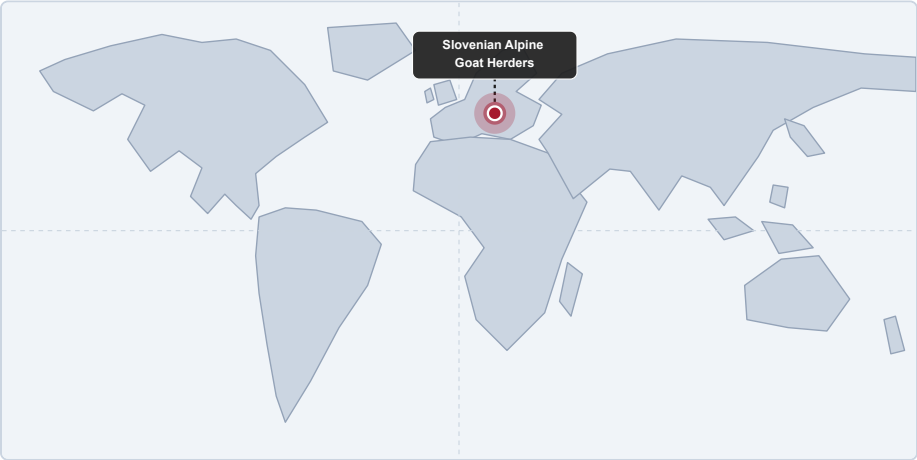


[Read more about Mongols on Wikipedia →](#)



Slovenian Alpine Goat Herders

Location: Julian Alps & Karst Region, Slovenia



Overview & Cultural Background

Slovenian alpine goat herders practice seasonal transhumance across the limestone peaks and glacial valleys of the Julian Alps and Karst region. Moving herds up to high-altitude mountain pastures (*planine*) during summer, herders manage steep slopes inaccessible to cattle, turning alpine herbs into high-quality goat milk and cheese.

The rare Drežnica goat—Slovenia's only autochthonous goat breed—is central to this tradition. Herding families preserve traditional wooden cheese-making equipment, producing distinctive mountain cheeses (*Tolminc*) while maintaining open mountain pastures that protect alpine biodiversity.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** Approximately 1,800 pastoral smallholders and alpine dairy herders
- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Indigenous Drežnica goats, Alpine goats, and Carniolan sheep
- **Contemporary Challenges:** Overgrowth of high-altitude mountain pastures due to historical rural depopulation, strict environmental regulations in Triglav National Park, predator attacks by wolves and bears, and high infrastructure maintenance costs.

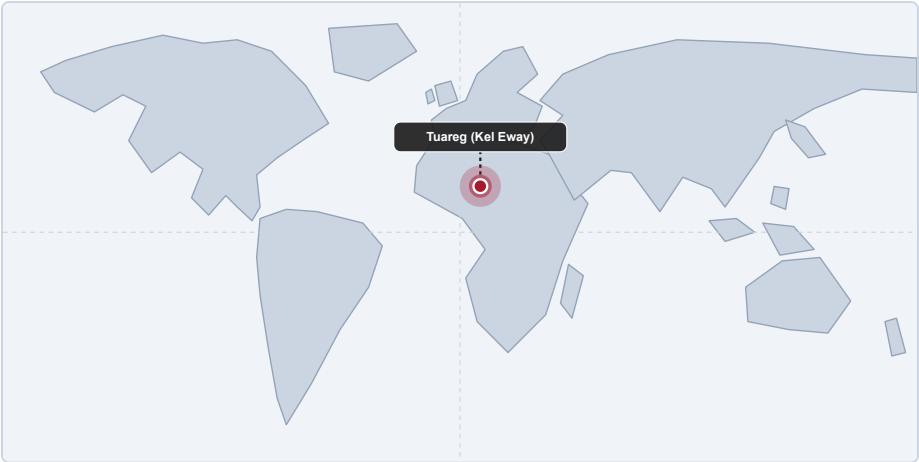


[Read more about Goat herding on Wikipedia →](#)



Tuareg (Kel Eway)

Location: Air Mountains & Sahara Desert (Bilma / Agadez), Niger



Overview & Cultural Background

The Tuareg are a Berber pastoralist ethnic group inhabiting the Saharan interior across Niger, Mali, Algeria, Libya, and Burkina Faso. The Kel Eway are a prominent Tuareg confederation centered in the volcanic Air Mountains of northern Niger. Renowned for their indigo veils (*tagelmust*) and matrilineal social structure, the Tuareg have mastered desert navigation for millennia.

The Kel Eway are famous for organizing the ancient *Taghlamt*—annual trans-Saharan camel caravans that travel over 600 kilometers across the Tenere desert to the Bilma oasis to trade dried dates and salt blocks for millet in the south. The Tuareg maintain complex customary water-sharing rules and rich oral poetry describing desert journeys and camel care.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** Approximately 2 million Tuareg total (~150,000 in the Kel Eway confederation)
- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Dromedary camels, goats, Azawak zebu cattle, and sheep
- **Contemporary Challenges:** Disruption of ancient Saharan salt caravan trade routes (*taghlamt*) by regional insecurity and motorized transport, severe Saharan droughts, uranium mining impacts on pastures, and border restrictions.



Read more about Tuareg people on Wikipedia →



Nenets People

Location: Yamal Peninsula & Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Arctic Russia



Overview & Cultural Background

The Nenets are Indigenous Samoyedic reindeer herders inhabiting the extreme Arctic tundras of the Yamal Peninsula in northwestern Siberia. Migrating up to 1,000 kilometers annually between winter taiga forests and summer Arctic Ocean grazing grounds, the Nenets complete the longest land migration of any pastoralists in the world.

Nenets life revolves around their reindeer herds, which provide food, clothing from reindeer hides (*malitsa*), bone tools, and transportation using wooden sledges (*narty*). Families live in reindeer-hide conical tents (*chum*). Despite industrial mega-projects on Yamal gas fields, the Nenets maintain remarkable cultural vitality and spiritual connection to their tundra homeland.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** Approximately 45,000 total (around 10,000 actively nomadic tundra herders)
- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Tundra reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus*)

- **Contemporary Challenges:** Massive natural gas and oil extraction infrastructure cutting across Arctic migration corridors, climate change thawing permafrost, winter rain-on-snow events freezing moss pastures under impenetrable ice, and mandatory boarding school separation for youth.

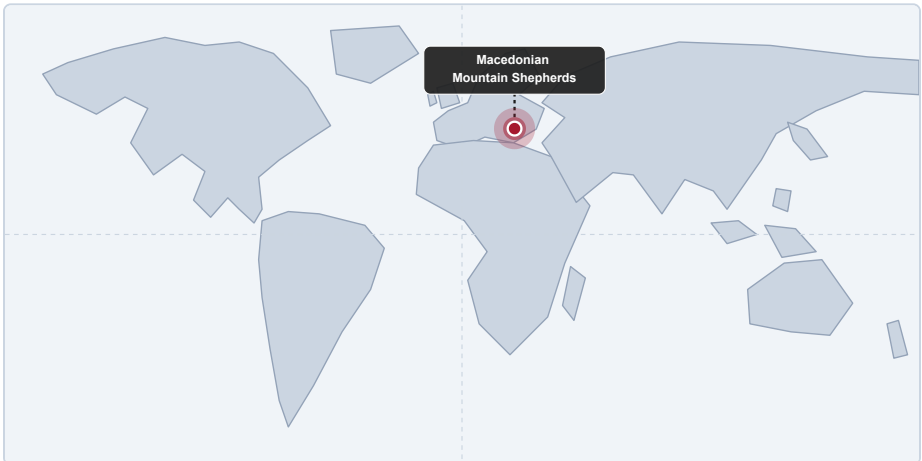


[Read more about Nenets on Wikipedia →](#)



Macedonian Mountain Shepherds

Location: Šar Mountains & Bistra Massif, North Macedonia



Overview & Cultural Background

Macedonian mountain shepherds practice vertical transhumance in the alpine grasslands of the Šar Mountains, Bistra, and Korab massifs in Western North Macedonia. Operating from seasonal stone sheepfolds (*bafči* or *bac*), shepherds spend May through October grazing sheep on mountain ridges reaching up to 2,500 meters altitude.

The shepherds produce world-renowned artisanal sheep cheeses, including hard *Kashkaval* and brined *Galičnik Sirenje*. Large, fearless Šarplaninac shepherd dogs protect the herds against grey wolves and brown bears, representing an ancient non-lethal predator control system.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** Approximately 4,500 active high-altitude mountain shepherds
- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Pramenka sheep, Balkan goats, and Šarplaninac (Yugoslavian Shepherd Dog) livestock guardians
- **Contemporary Challenges:** Depopulation of remote highland mountain villages, lack of young successors willing to undertake grueling seasonal isolation, wolf and bear predation, and economic consolidation in dairy processing.

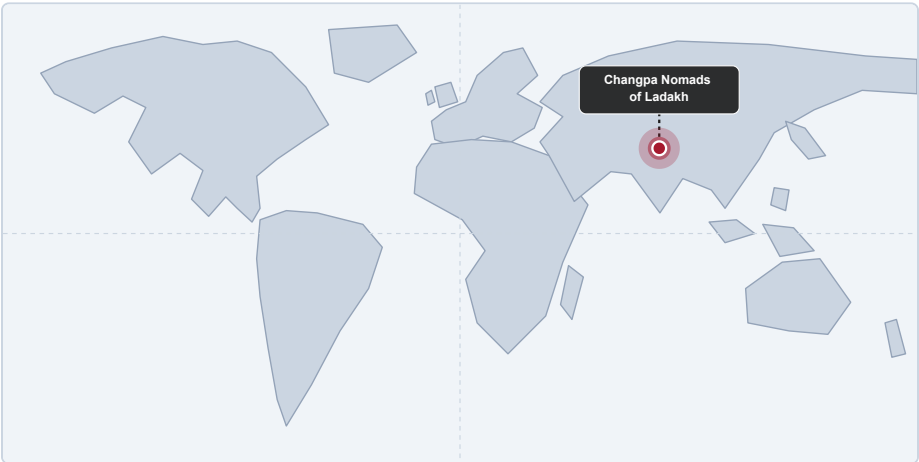


Read more about Transhumance on Wikipedia →



Changpa Nomads of Ladakh

Location: Changthang Plateau, Ladakh, India / Tibet



Overview & Cultural Background

The Changpa are a high-altitude nomadic pastoralist community inhabiting the desolate Changthang plateau of eastern Ladakh, situated at altitudes ranging from 4,000 to 5,500 meters above sea level. Adhering to Tibetan Buddhism, the Changpa move their yak-hair tents (*rebo*) up to ten times a year to follow seasonal pasture availability across frozen high-desert valleys.

The Changpa are famous for rearing the Changthangi goat, which produces *pashmina* (cashmere)—one of the finest, warmest, and most valuable natural animal fibers in the world. Their pastoral economy relies on intimate knowledge of high-altitude ecology, freeze-thaw cycles, and traditional veterinary care.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** Approximately 11,000 high-altitude pastoralists
- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Changthangi pashmina goats (*Capra hircus*), Tibetan sheep, yaks, and mountain horses
- **Contemporary Challenges:** Unprecedented winter snowstorms and altering monsoon rain patterns due to Himalayan climate change, geopolitical border militarization restricting seasonal pastures, youth migration to Leh for education, and economic exploitation by fiber middlemen.

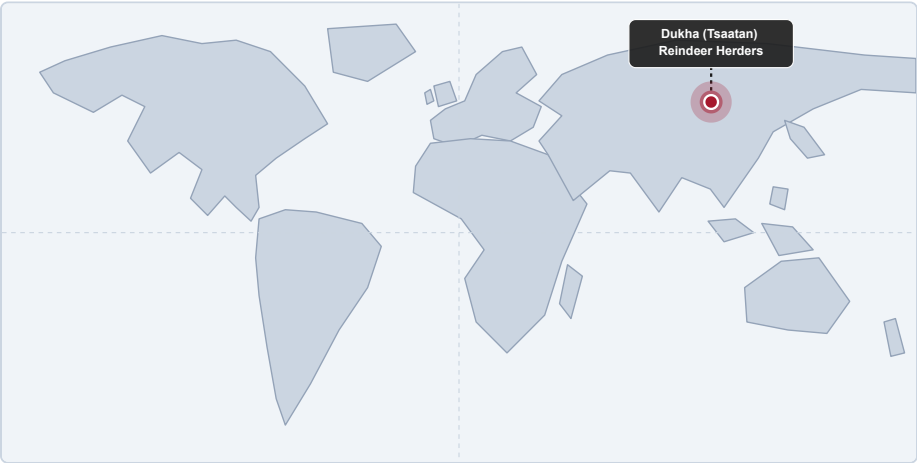


[Read more about Changpa on Wikipedia →](#)



Dukha (Tsaatan) Reindeer Herders

Location: Sayan Mountains & Taiga Forest, Khövsgöl Province, Northern Mongolia



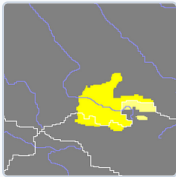
Overview & Cultural Background

The Dukha (known in Mongolia as Tsaatan, meaning 'those with reindeer') are one of the world's smallest and most isolated nomadic ethnic groups. Inhabiting the remote sub-arctic taiga forests of the Sayan Mountains near the Russian border, the Dukha live in canvas or bark conical teepees (*ortz*) and move camp up to ten times per year to protect their reindeer herds from heat and insects.

Unlike arctic tundra reindeer herders who raise reindeer primarily for meat, the Dukha use reindeer as riding animals, pack animals, and sources of rich milk used for cheese, butter, and tea. Dukha culture is rooted in ancient Tuvan shamanism and deep spiritual reverence for the taiga forest and its wildlife.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** Approximately 280 individuals (around 40-50 nomadic families)
- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Domesticated taiga reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus*)
- **Contemporary Challenges:** Strict state environmental laws prohibiting traditional hunting and grazing within national park boundaries, warming sub-arctic temperatures impacting lichen availability, reindeer diseases, and intrusive commercial tourism.

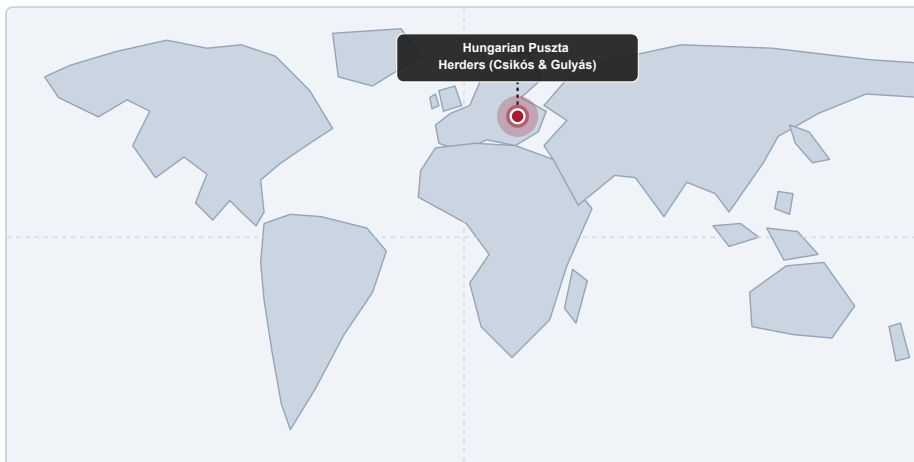


Read more about Dukha people on Wikipedia →



Hungarian Puszta Herders

Location: Great Hungarian Plain (Hortobágy National Park / Puszta), Hungary



Overview & Cultural Background

The herders of the Hungarian Puszta maintain a multi-century pastoral tradition on the vast alkaline steppes of the Great Hungarian Plain, centered in the UNESCO-listed Hortobágy National Park. Divided into specialized guilds—horse herders (*csikós*), cattle herders (*gulyás*), and sheep herders (*juhász*)—they maintain distinctive traditional dress, horse-riding acrobatics, and intricate leathercraft.

Puszta pastoralism is renowned for preserving Indigenous livestock breeds adapted to steppe conditions. The grazing of Hungarian Grey cattle and Racka sheep prevents bush encroachment and maintains the delicate ecosystem of Europe's largest continuous natural grassland.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** Approximately 3,000 active traditional herders (*csikós*, *gulyás*, *juhász*)
- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Hungarian Grey cattle, long-horned Racka sheep, Mangalica pigs, Nonius horses, and Komondor / Puli herding dogs.
- **Contemporary Challenges:** Loss of extensive natural grassland to intensive arable farming, strict European conservation constraints, difficulty recruiting young apprentice herders, and climate-induced drying of saline steppe lakes.

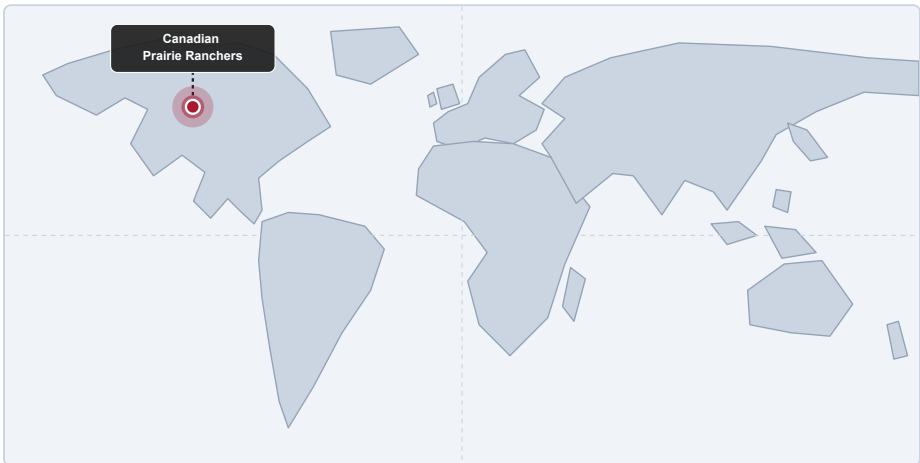


Read more about Puszta on Wikipedia →



Canadian Prairie Ranchers

Location: Great Plains & Foothills, Alberta / Saskatchewan / Manitoba, Canada



Overview & Cultural Background

Canadian Prairie ranchers manage extensive livestock grazing operations across the northern Great Plains, shortgrass prairies, and Rocky Mountain foothills of Western Canada. Operating in an environment characterized by harsh winters and hot, dry summers, ranchers utilize rotational grazing strategies to emulate historical bison grazing patterns.

Native northern grasslands are among the most endangered terrestrial ecosystems on the planet. Through sustainable range management, ranching families maintain critical carbon sinks, preserve wetland habitats for migratory waterfowl, and protect endangered prairie species such as the swift fox, burrowing owl, and Sprague's pipit.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** Approximately 45,000 cattle ranching families and agricultural stewards
- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Beef cattle breeds (Angus, Hereford, Charolais, Simmental) and quarter horses

- **Contemporary Challenges:** Conversion of native temperate grasslands to annual crop monocultures, severe multi-year prairie droughts, extreme weather events, land fragmentation, and economic pressures from volatile grain and feed prices.

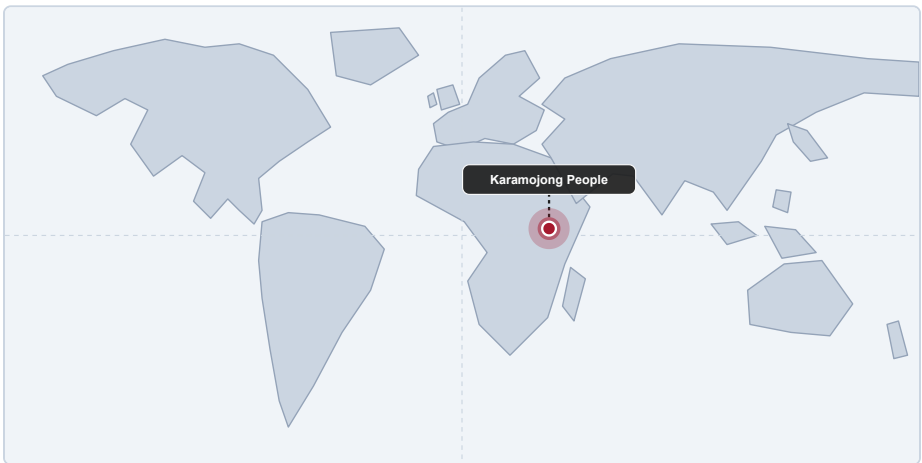


Read more about Ranching on Wikipedia →



Karamojong People

Location: Karamoja Sub-region, Northeastern Uganda



Overview & Cultural Background

The Karamojong are an agro-pastoral Nilotic ethnic group inhabiting the semi-arid plateau of northeastern Uganda. Organized around a clan system and age-set governance (*akiriket*), Karamojong society revolves around cattle, which serve as the primary source of food (milk and blood), social currency, dowry, and cultural identity.

During dry seasons, young herders move cattle from permanent homesteads (*manyattas*) to temporary mobile cattle camps (*kraals*) near distant river basins. Pastoralist development organizations actively support Karamojong communities to strengthen mobile veterinary services, rainwater harvesting, and customary conflict-resolution mechanisms.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** Approximately 1.2 million agro-pastoralists

- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Zebu cattle, goats, fat-tailed sheep, and donkeys
- **Contemporary Challenges:** Severe recurrent multi-year droughts causing water and forage exhaustion, regional cattle rustling and disarmament friction, land acquisition for commercial mining and conservation, and high rates of poverty.

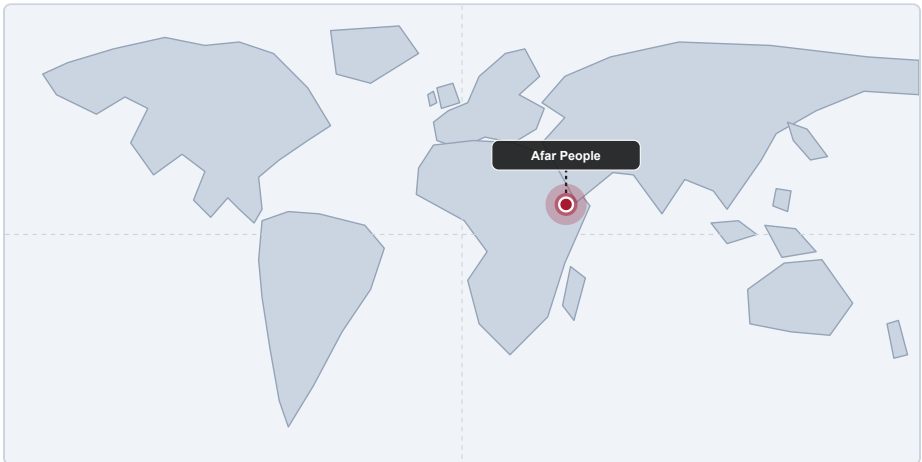


Read more about Karamojong people on Wikipedia →



Afar People

Location: Afar Triangle (Danakil Depression), Ethiopia / Djibouti / Eritrea



Overview & Cultural Background

The Afar are a Cushitic pastoralist group inhabiting the hyper-arid Horn of Africa, spanning northeastern Ethiopia, Djibouti, and southern Eritrea. Residing in the Afar Triangle and Danakil Depression—one of the hottest and lowest inhabited environments on Earth—the Afar have developed extraordinary socio-ecological adaptations to survive in extreme desert conditions.

Customary Afar life centers around mobile pastoralism. Herders migrate seasonally between lowland salt flats during wetter periods and elevated highland pastures during severe dry seasons. Water and pasture management is regulated through complex customary legal

codes (*mada'a*) and clan governance structures that enforce equitable water-sharing at communal wells. The Afar language (*Qafaraf*) and oral traditions preserve detailed ecological knowledge of desert flora, weather forecasting, and livestock breeding.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** 1.8 million people
- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Dromedary camels, goats, fat-tailed sheep, and zebu cattle
- **Contemporary Challenges:** Extreme heat and prolonged droughts induced by climate change, geopolitical conflicts in the Horn of Africa, land enclosure for commercial agriculture along the Awash River, and inter-ethnic disputes over scarce water wells.

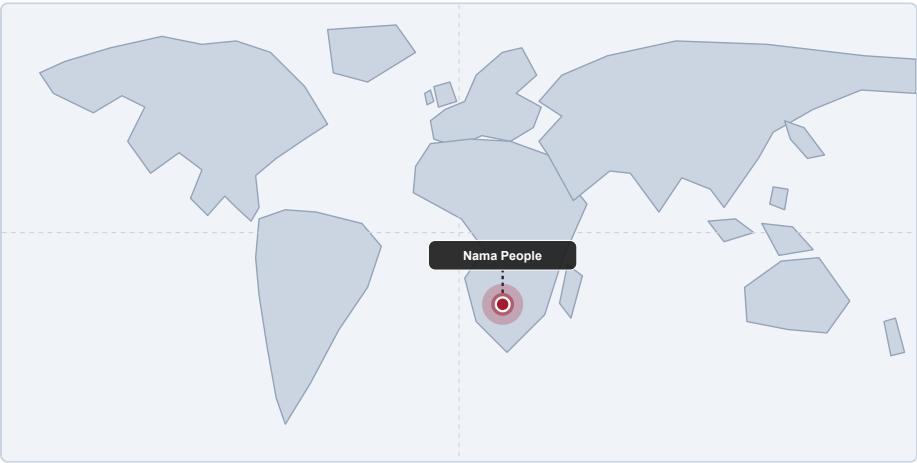


Read more about Afar people on Wikipedia →



Nama People

Location: Richtersveld & Namaqualand, Northern Cape, South Africa / Southern Namibia



Overview & Cultural Background

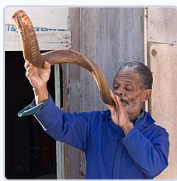
The Nama are a Khoekhoe pastoralist group inhabiting the hyper-arid rangelands of Namaqualand and the Richtersveld desert in South Africa and southern Namibia. Managing livestock in a landscape with less than 50mm of annual rainfall, the Nama reside in portable

dome-shaped mat-huts (*!haru om*) woven from rushes that expand during rain and allow ventilation during scorching heat.

The Nama practice transhumant pastoralism within the UNESCO World Heritage Richtersveld Cultural and Botanical Landscape—the last territory where Khoekhoe transhumance survives. Herders possess profound botanical knowledge of succulents and desert plants, ensuring fragile arid ecosystems are never overgrazed.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** Approximately 300,000 people
- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Namaqua Afrikaner sheep, goats, and donkeys
- **Contemporary Challenges:** Extreme aridification in the Namib desert, historical land dispossession, balancing communal pastoral rights with diamond mining concessions, and restricted access to historic water points.

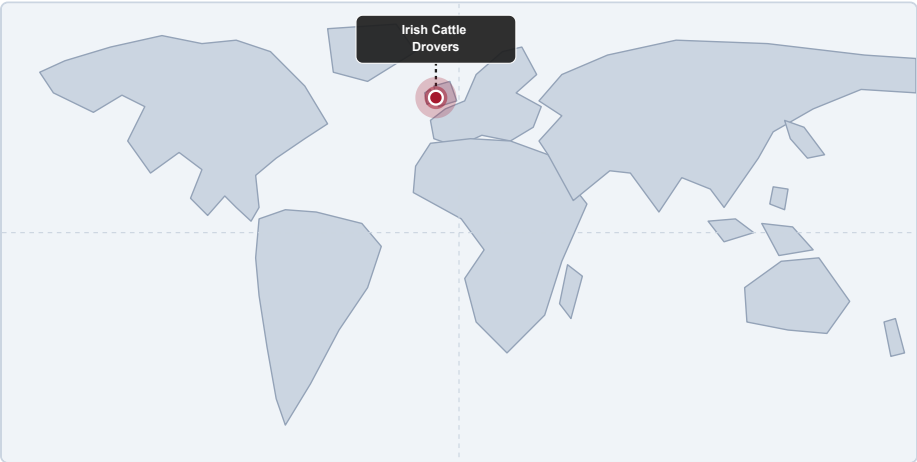


Read more about Nama people on Wikipedia →



Irish Cattle Drovers

Location: Burren & Rural Highlands, County Clare / West of Ireland



Overview & Cultural Background

Irish cattle drovers and pastoral farmers in the Burren region of County Clare practice a unique form of 'reverse transhumance' known as winterage (*geimhrreadh*). Unlike most European mountain herders who move livestock to high pastures in summer, Burren farmers move cattle up onto bare limestone plateaus in late autumn, where the warm karstic rock retains summer heat and provides dry winter grazing.

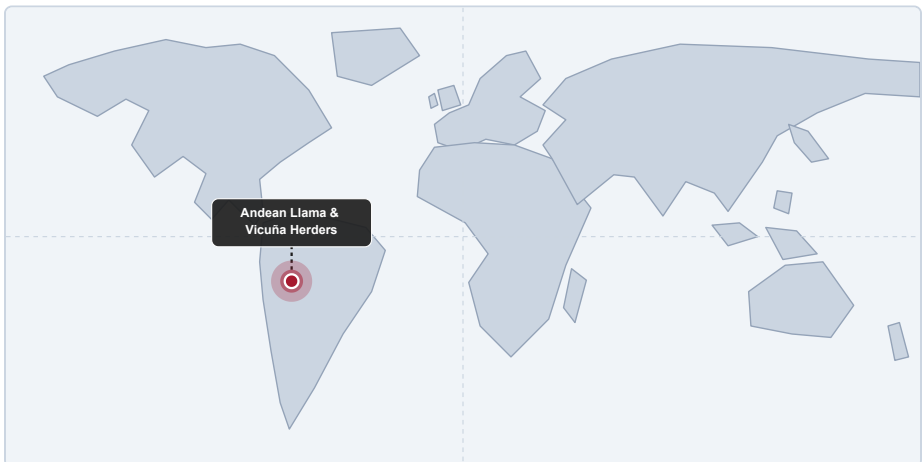
This ancient pastoral system, practiced continuously for over 5,000 years, creates a species-rich floral landscape where Arctic, Alpine, and Mediterranean plants grow side-by-side. Community-led conservation schemes (*Burren Programme*) pay farmers for ecosystem services, showcasing pastoralism as a key tool for biodiversity restoration.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** Approximately 8,000 traditional winterage pastoral farming families
- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Native Irish beef cattle (Kerry cattle, Irish Shorthorn, Hereford-crosses)
- **Contemporary Challenges:** Decline of traditional cattle droving due to mechanized livestock transport, agricultural land abandonment, invasive hazel scrub expansion over species-rich limestone pastures, and shifting agricultural subsidy frameworks.

Andean Llama & Vicuña Herders

Location: High Andes Altiplano, Peru / Bolivia / Argentina / Chile



Overview & Cultural Background

Andean pastoralists are Indigenous Quechua and Aymara communities inhabiting the high-altitude Altiplano and puna ecosystems of the South American Andes, situated between 3,800 and 5,000 meters above sea level. Pastoralism in the Andes represents one of the oldest continuous camelid herding traditions in the world, dating back over 6,000 years.

Herders rely on specialized irrigation techniques to construct and maintain high-altitude peatlands known as *bofedales*, which provide crucial green pasture year-round. Beyond livestock breeding for meat and high-value fiber, Andean pastoralists preserve traditional social reciprocity structures (*ayni* and *minka*) and perform ancient spiritual ceremonies honoring *Pachamama* (Mother Earth) and mountain guardian spirits (*apu*). Ancient trade caravans using llamas continue to connect high-altitude herders with valley farmers.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** Approximately 3 million Indigenous Quechua and Aymara agropastoralists
- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Llamas (*Lama glama*), alpacas (*Vicugna pacos*), domesticated sheep, and wild vicuñas (*Vicugna vicugna*) managed via communal *chaku* captures.
- **Contemporary Challenges:** Glacier retreat and altered rainfall patterns reducing high-altitude wetland (*bofedales*) water supplies, youth rural-to-urban migration, price volatility in global alpaca wool markets, and mineral extraction encroachment on Indigenous grazing lands.

Apennine Shepherds

Location: Central Apennine Mountains & Abruzzo, Italy



Overview & Cultural Background

Apennine shepherds practice vertical transhumance across the rugged karst plateaus and limestone peaks of central Italy, moving sheep between highland summer pastures (*alpeggi*) in Abruzzo, Lazio, and Molise and lowland winter plains in Puglia and Maremma. Recognized by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage, Italian transhumance (*la transumanza*) has shaped the ecology, gastronomy, and cultural landscape of the Apennines for millennia.

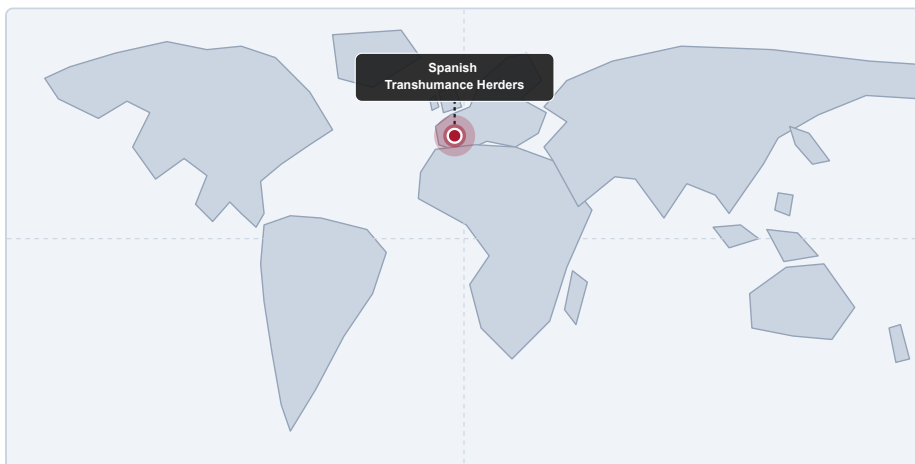
Herding communities maintain ancient cheese-making traditions, producing artisanal Pecorino Abruzzese and Ricotta directly in mountain stone huts (*casoni*). The survival of these pastures is essential for maintaining biodiversity, preventing forest fires, and preserving historic mountain footpaths.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** Approximately 15,000 active transhumant pastoralists across central and southern Italy
- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Merino-derived sheep breeds (Gentile di Puglia, Merinizzata), goats, and white Maremmano-Abruzzese livestock guardian dogs.
- **Contemporary Challenges:** Conflict with re-established and expanding Italian wolf (*Canis lupus italicus*) and Marsican brown bear populations, land abandonment, suburban encroachment along ancient grassy migration routes (*tratturi*), and economic competition from industrial dairy production.

Spanish Transhumance Herders

Location: Cañadas Reales & Sistema Central, Extremadura / Castile / Andalusia, Spain



Overview & Cultural Background

Spanish transhumance (*la trashumancia*) is one of Europe's oldest and most organized pastoral systems, dating back to the medieval Honorable Council of the Mesta (1273). Herders drive hundreds of thousands of sheep and cattle along a 125,000-kilometer network of protected public livestock trails (*cañadas reales*), migrating between southern winter pastures (*dehesas*) in Extremadura and high summer pastures in the Sistema Central mountains.

Transhumance plays an essential ecological role in Spain: livestock transport millions of plant seeds daily, create firebreaks against catastrophic wildfires, and sustain biodiverse oak savanna landscapes (*dehesa*). Annual events, such as driving sheep through central Madrid, celebrate this living cultural heritage.

Key facts

- **Estimated Population:** Approximately 5,000 active transhumant pastoralists
- **Primary Livestock Herded:** Merino sheep, Avileña-Black Iberian cattle, Retinta cattle, and Mastín Español protection dogs
- **Contemporary Challenges:** Urban sprawl and infrastructure obstructing ancient royal droving roads (*cañadas reales*), extreme summer heat and water shortages, complex regional border regulations, and an aging workforce.



Read more about Transhumance on Wikipedia →

