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HEMUL (*HIPPOCAMELUS BISULCUS*) – PROBLEMS OF PROTECTION OF THE ENDANGERED DEER FROM PATAGONIA

Summary

Patagonian hemul (*Hippocamelus bisulcus*) is a member of the deer family (*Cervidae*) classified as an endangered species. The size of its population, estimated at 350–500 heads in Argentina and at 1000 in Chile, is distributed in over 100 family groups. Taking into account the gradually decreasing number of specimens, it is necessary to establish a captive breeding center. Besides reproduction and reintroduction to the natural environment, the center will help also to conduct scientific investigations on this poorly known species. Tamed animals reared on the bottle will allow to collect semen using artificial vagina, and would provide an opportunity to establish a live semen bank protected in liquid nitrogen (LN₂), as a reserve of genes.

Key words: farm breeding, gene bank, hemul (*Hippocamelus bisulcus*), reintroduction, species protection