

## Rare Breed Sheep



By Suzy Sharpe



## Introduction

A book of rare breed sheep as identified by the Rare Breeds Survival Trust in 2014. The breeds change from year to year as some breeds become more popular and others decline. So this is just a snap shot of the diverse breeds that fall into the watchlist from endangered to vulnerable to at risk and minority breed. A full and current listing can be found on the Rare Breeds Survival Trust website [www.rbst.org.uk](http://www.rbst.org.uk).

Of all animals I love the diversity of sheep I find my own sheep a constant source of interest and intrigue. whilst occasionally hampered by their breeding I find them to show a great deal of intelligence...often outwitting their owner and her attempts at GOOD fencing and restricted grazing!

## Balwen



Balwen meaning 'White Blaze' in Welsh . Is a small mountain breed of sheep between 40 and 60 kg. Thought to be very hardy sheep and more docile than the Welsh Mountain. They are considered to be a relatively low input and long lived breed.

## Boreray



Boreray found mainly on Boreray island is a small sheep of between 30 kg and 45kg. Thought to be very good for conservation grazing, doing well on sparse grazing and a very hardy breed.

## Border leicester



The Border Leicester is considered very versatile for crossing and is a large sheep of between 80 and 145 kg with a very distinctive Roman nose. They are renowned for their docility and ability to produce quality early maturing lambs.

## Castlemilk Moorit



The Castlemilk Moorit is a small sheep of between 40 and 55kg, an agile primitive breed with white mouflon markings around the eyes, lower jaw, legs, belly and rump. Considered a specialist wool breed as the fleece has little or no kemp. They are long lived and lambs mature slowly.

## Cotswold



The Cotswold breed originally for the wool trade they are a large sheep of between 85 and 130 kg. They are a hardy breed considered to be easily trained.

## Devon & Cornwall Longwool



Devon & Cornwall Longwool sheep are a large sturdy breed of between 75 and 110 kg. Generally a docile breed and considered easy to train, they are a specialist wool breed due to their long wool staple of between 20 and 25cm.

## Dorset Horn



The Dorset Horn known for their ability to breed out of season, they have been superceded to a large extent by the polled Dorsets originally breed in Australia. They are a stocky medium size sheep or between 75 and 120 kg with spiral horns. They are very docile and easily trained with all year round lambing ability.

## Greyfaced Dartmoor



The Greyfaced Dartmoor descends from ancient hill sheep. They are a medium sized sheep of between 60 kg and 100 kg. They are a hardy breed, docile breed and can be used for specialist wool production.

## Hill Radnor



Hill Radnor are a medium sized sheep of between 50 and 80 kg very useful for upland grazing as they are a hardy breed.

## Leicester Longwool



Leicester Longwool are a Large breed of sheep of between 80 and 100 kg, they are a specialist wool breed with a staple length of between 20 and 25cm. they are docile and easy to keep in but very large to handle.

## Lincoln Longwool



Lincoln Longwool, is a large breed of 80 to 160 kg they are a tall sheep with long lustrous fleece with a staple of between 15 and 35 cm. They are docile and easily trained but very large to handle.

## Manx Loaghtan



Manx Loaghtan are a small breed of between 40 and 55kg they are very hardy and show high levels of disease resistance. they are useful for conservation grazin as they thrive on rough ground, they are also a specialist wool breed as the fleece is exceptionally hard wearing.

## Norfolk Horn



Norfolk Horn a medium sized sheep of between 70 and 95 kg, they are particularly good for conservation grazing and meat production as the lambs grow relatively quickly.

## North Ronaldsay



North Ronaldsay are small sheep at between 25 and 35kg, they are very hardy and capable of surviving wet and windy conditions. They have a particular sensitivity to copper and can die of copper toxicity if on the wrong grazing this is due to their unusual metabolism which enables them to live on seaweed.

## Oxford Down



Oxford down are a large sheep of between 90 and 140 kg they are generally hardy and can survive in most conditions. they are a docile breed and easily trained.

## Portland



Portland Sheep are a small sheep of between 35 and 45 kg they are a hardy and thrifty breed, docile and easily trained.

## Soay



Soay sheep are a small breed of between 25 and 40 kg said to look a little like a gazelle. They are exceptionally hardy and survive in the most adverse conditions.

## Teeswater



Teeswater sheep are a large breed of between 90 and 120 kg, they are a specialist wool breed with a staple of between 20 and 30cm.

## Wensleydale



Wensleydale sheep are a large breed of between 90 and 135 kg they are a striking sheep with a deep blue head and ears. They are a specialist wool breed with a staple of between 20 and 25 cm.

## Whitefaced Dartmoor



white faced Dartmoor are a medium breed of between 50 and 80 kg, they are exceptionally hardy and survive on exposed uplands.

## Whitefaced Woodland



Whitefaced woodland are a medium breed of 60 - 130kg they are one of the largest hill breeds, both ewes and rams are horned.





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This book stems from a fascination and love of sheep and daily inspiration by the variety sheep and other creatures kept on my smallholding in west Cornwall.

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