



**La Morgia V. & Bassano B. (2009) Feeding habits, forage selection, and diet overlap in Alpine chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra* L.) and domestic sheep . *Ecological Research*, 24, 1043-1050.**

Fecal microhistological analyses have been used to assess the summer diet of chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra* L., 1758) and domestic sheep and to evaluate diet overlap. The aim of our work was to investigate interspecific interactions and to assess the effects of sheep grazing on the summer feeding habits of chamois. A high dietary overlap (Pianka's index = 0.93–0.99) was found, despite differences in the use of some plant groups. Sheep presence strongly affected chamois feeding habits: a reduction of highly digestible forbs was observed in the chamois diet during August, when both species grazed in the same range. As a consequence of sheep grazing, chamois may have been forced to reduce niche breadth and to change their food habits, increasing percentages of monocotyledons in the diet and feeding mainly on Cyperaceae. The diet overlap between sheep and chamois suggests that resource-mediated interactions as well as direct competition must be taken into account when evaluating chamois and sheep compatibility on Alpine meadows.

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