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Unraveling the footprints left in the DNA of sheep

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Understanding the genetic backstory of how organisms evolved and adapted is essential. Bighorn (*Ovis canadensis*) and thinhorn (Dall, *Ovis dalli dalli*; Stone, *Ovis dalli stonei*) sheep present an interesting study case given their complex evolutionary history and physical differences. Although bighorn and Stone sheep are different species, they both present darker pelage colour, while Dall is white. Past encounters, i.e., hybridization, between the ancestors of these organisms could generate such differences. Once thought rare in animals, hybridization events are becoming more evident with the usage of the complete DNA, i.e., genome. One can compare and find similarities between these genomes, and I found smaller pieces that were present both in Stone and bighorn but not in Dall sheep. These pieces were associated with the position of pelage colour genes, which could have contributed to the origin or maintenance of the darker colour, while Dall originated and developed their white pelage.