



Sandscript

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The wet season is a time for renewal, especially for plants and insects like this jewel bug (top) and bombardier beetle (bottom).

Desert Renaissance

At least once each year I try to get to the desert during the wet season. Although often very hot and sticky, there is no time quite like it. This year I caught the first rains in northern Senegal in June whilst visiting the Guemboul and Ferlo-Nord game reserves to see the gazelle and oryx reintroduction projects (see page 3). In Niger a month later I was privileged to see the desert in bloom, with gazelles and sandgrouse thirstily sipping their first water of the year. The wet season is a time of renaissance for nature and a time of liberation for desert people. At last they can take their herds into fresh green pastures and avoid for a few short weeks the drudgery of hauling water from the deep wells they are tied to during the long dry season. One such well used by the nomads near the village of Tesker was destroyed last year by flooding, depriving many people and

their livestock of clean drinking water. With support from Saint Louis Zoo, SCF has helped rebuild the well. It was great to see it in action again (see photo on page 4). Work like this helps build positive relationships while addressing some of the most fundamental human needs – access to clean water, food, health care, education, shelter... SCF believes conservation should be of tangible benefit to people. For conservation to succeed, it must meet human aspirations, be they spiritual, aesthetic or more down-to-earth, such as the need for food or income. With desert wildlife populations so threatened it is often difficult to see how this possible. However, search we must and to help us find those linkages and sometimes tenuous benefits, SCF is working with community leaders and locally recruited game guards in its project in Niger. The article below by SCF's Tho-



This Peul lady and her family will travel hundreds of miles each year in search of pasture and water for their livestock.

mas Rabeil explains how it works. Although vast and sparsely inhabited, the Sahara is no different from anywhere else when it comes to the role that people – both local and less so – must play to make conservation work. This issue of *Sandscript* is very much a celebration of this fact.

John Newby
CEO, SCF

Building Community Support

The failure to integrate local people into conservation initiatives has been one of the main reasons for their demise. Aware of this, the Sahelo-Saharan antelopes programme in Niger has, since its inception, adopted a systemic and

integrated approach to enhance wildlife conservation in the Termit/Tin Toumma area. In this context, community game guards have been recruited from the local population and trained. Recruitment was carried out in close

collaboration with traditional tribal and community leaders in order to involve them in the process and to obtain their support.

Continued on page 2



SCF project adviser Thomas Rabeil consults with Toubou community leader El Hadji Boukar Mani

Building Community Support (cont. from page 1)

The guards currently employed come from two neighbouring areas inhabited by two different but related factions of Toubou: the Teda and the Daza. Initial focus on these areas was determined by ecological monitoring work that showed their high importance in terms of wildlife abundance and threats from poaching.

Each team, which is composed of three game guards and a field-based coordinator, has been trained to communicate with and sensitize the local population about the project and its aims. They also collect information on poaching and on any wildlife encountered, using GPS and Cybertracker units to record data. A special Cybertracker sequence based on icons has been designed for the guards. Communications is facilitated by the use of satellite phones. Project staff visit each team at least once a month to collect data and information, as well as to set the work programme for the coming month based on the season, distribution and activities of the people,

presence of wells and camps, etc. Since the game guards are camel-mounted, their autonomy and range of activities varies greatly with the time of the year and the presence of wells. As few of the guards are literate, it is the job of the coordinators to ensure regular contact between the team in the field and the project staff and technical services responsible for controlling poaching and making arrests. Game guards are not empowered to do this nor are they armed. The intention is not for them to become a surrogate police force but to grow the cooperation, trust and confidence between the project and the local population.

Started just six months ago, the community game guards experience is still very much experimental and will be assessed after a year's operation to refine and reorientate it as necessary. So far, the experience has been very positive for all concerned and has been instrumental in establishing strong linkages with the local communities and their leaders. The game guards

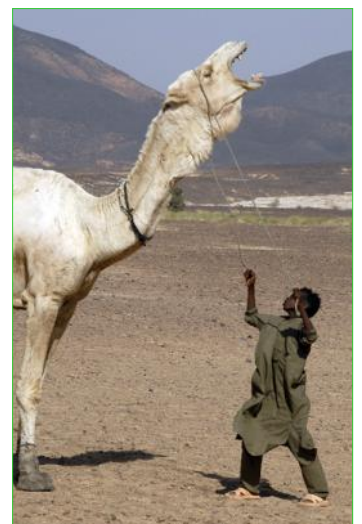
have reported a number of poaching incidents that have been followed up on with visits from project and forest service staff. The network has also proved valuable in acting as an early warning mechanism for the outbreak of illnesses, such as the recent measles epidemic that hit the area. If all works well, the project will increase the number of teams and will employ a skilled head facilitator to manage the network created.

With the reserve being established some 100,000 km² (38,600 square miles), i.e. larger than Ireland, Portugal or Indiana, communications and the creation of a functional network of stakeholders is critically important for its viability and management. The community game guards are very much the crucial interface and link between the area's inhabitants and all those external parties whose support is necessary for the reserve to work.

Thomas Rabeil
SCF Technical Adviser
Termit/Tin Toumma



Game guards like those from Termit (top) and Kossatori (below) are helping build strong links with Termit's Toubou community.





A magnificent group of scimitar-horned oryx drinking, Katané, Ferlo-Nord game reserve, Senegal

Senegal

In June, SCF CEO, John Newby, visited Senegal to consolidate support for the reintroduction of Sahelo-Saharan antelopes. The mission was carried out in association with partners from Barcelona Zoo and Almería's aridlands breeding facility. Spain is providing extremely useful support for dorcas gazelle reintroduction and were there to inspect recently introduced breeding stock at the Guembeul game reserve near St Louis. We were also interested in seeing the Katané release site, a 440 ha enclosure in the Ferlo-Nord game reserve. Fencing the area has had a dramatic effect on habitat, creating a verdant oasis of biodiversity in an otherwise heavily degraded pastoral ecosystem. Katané was originally set up in 2002 to receive a group of scimitar-horned oryx brought into Senegal by the Israeli Parks Authority and France's Zoo de Vincennes. There are now over 40 healthy oryx in Katané, with a further 40-odd animals at the Guembeul reception site. Along with the oryx is a small group of dama

gazelles, raised from stock initially provided by Almería in 1984. Almería is now spearheading an initiative to bring dorcas gazelles to Katané, sometime in late 2008 or early 2009.

SCF is keen to support Senegal's wildlife restoration programme and has offered help for Katané, as well as assistance to the National Parks directorate for strategic planning and wildlife surveys in the framework of the new Pan-Saharan Wildlife Survey (see page 5). For Katané, the plan is to extend the current area from 8.8 km² to over 12 km², thus increasing its carrying capacity as well as bringing more degraded land under restoration. The work at Katané is being made possible by generous support from the Exotic Wildlife Association (EWA), and notably its Conservation Committee under the experienced leadership of Mr. Larry Johnson (right, with his wife, Tony). Larry is a long time supporter of SCF and has provided financial support for our work in Tunisia and elsewhere. In the coming

months, EWA will be shipping several kilometres of high-tensile game fencing to Senegal along with all the necessary posts and tools needed to erect at least 4 km of fencing. For its part, the National Parks directorate will provide handling, transport and tax-free importation of all donated materials.

With the extension built, SCF will assess possibilities of helping Senegal create new enclosures in Ferlo-Nord. The 287,000 ha reserve established in 1972 requires urgent action to salvage the rare remaining wild populations of red-fronted gazelle and ostrich. During the visit, the joint SCF/Spanish team was handsomely looked after by local parks conservators, Babacar Youm and Cheikh Ahmed Tidiane Djigo. Both are extremely committed to seeing their parks improved. In Dakar, the mission held several meetings with National Park staff, including the Director, M. Mame Balla Gueye, and his senior colleagues, MM. Ndiaye and Niaga, and Mme. Thiam.





This and another well at Tesker in Niger were restored by SCF with funding from St Louis Zoo, CMS and the Irish NGO GOAL

Foundation for Success

In 2006, Addax Petroleum Corporation (APC) very generously donated \$200,000 to SCF for its programme to save the last viable populations of addax living in Niger and neighbouring Chad. Along with donations from St Louis Zoo, the Smithsonian's National Zoo, African Parks Conservation, the Iara Lee & George Gund Foundation, Conservation International, Philadelphia Zoo and Gilman Conservation International, the Corporation's funding allowed SCF to leverage a further €144,000 from the Convention on Migratory Species and the French Global Environment Facility. This support has had an enormous impact on the ground, establishing a solid foundation

for the creation of a vast new nature reserve for the addax and dozens of other needy species.

In 2007, to extend and consolidate its charitable giving, APC established the Addax Petroleum Foundation as an independent non-profit entity. The Foundation's mandate is to contribute to sustainable development projects addressing the root causes of poverty in Africa and the Middle East. The programmes and projects to be supported by the Foundation are focussed on four core themes: education, health, community development and environment. It is through this latter component that Addax Petroleum Corporation has pledged additional

funding to SCF for its work in Niger. Between 2008-2010, the Foundation will provide a further \$250,000. If this were not enough, the Foundation will also provide SCF with \$90,000 for institutional support, becoming thus our first major corporate sponsor.

Since day one, relationships with Addax Petroleum have been exceptionally warm and support from APC staff exemplary. We would especially like to thank Marie-Gabrielle Cajoly, the Foundation's Executive Director and her very able assistants Adi Chayto and Christelle Kashi. No organization could wish for better support nor better fans!



Absolutely addax! The lovely Adi Chayto, (l) Marie-Gabrielle Cajoly (c) and Christelle Kashi (r).



Training

Livestock predation is often a major problem for herders and usually ends up with target and non-target species destroyed and persecuted, often without justification. As part of its training pro-

grammes, the Cheetah Conservation Fund has recently held a very useful workshop on the management of livestock predation. SCF's Abdoulaye Harouna (right) was a participant and is now far

better equipped to deal with some of the specific issues faced by the herders of Termit from jackals, whilst sparing species like the fennec and pale foxes from unnecessary harm and persecution.





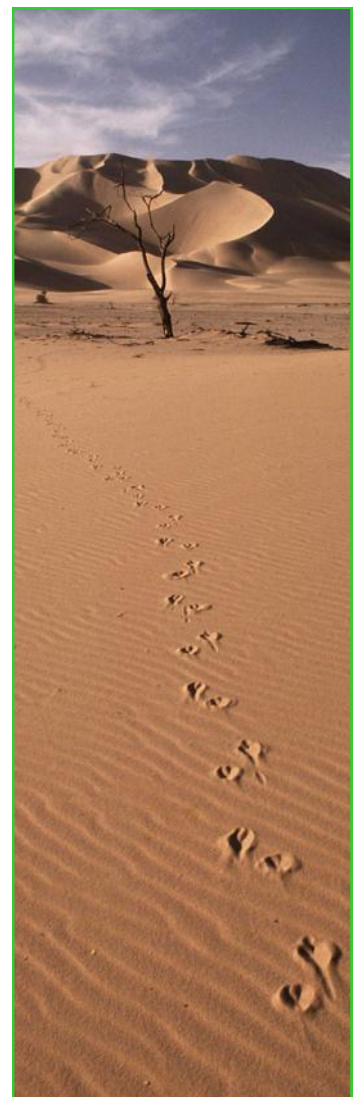
Flagship species: addax (Olivier Born), Nubian bustard (Thomas Rabeil), scimitar-horned oryx (Olivier Born), desert monitor (John Newby)

Pan-Saharan Wildlife Survey

With support from HM the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, through the Morocco-based Emirates Center for Wildlife Propagation (ECWP), SCF is developing a ground-breaking initiative to identify and address the top conservation priorities across the entire Sahara. The Pan-Saharan Wildlife Survey (PSWS) is a science-based initiative to assess, prioritize and fast-track conservation action with an underpinning philosophy of directly linking field-based research, data collection and analysis with concrete on-the-ground action. Lack of up to date information and data is limiting the ability of Saharan nations to conserve desert fauna, access international support for conservation,

prioritize action and deployment of available resources, and ensure sustainable use of wildlife. As reflected in the IUCN Red Data List (see below) there is also great urgency and a need to scale up action across the entire Sahelo-Saharan region. PSWS will also provide a wealth of up to date information on species abundance and distribution, conservation threats and habitat condition. This will contribute directly to national initiatives under the Conventions on Biological Diversity, Combating Desertification and Climate Change. PSWS will establish a scientific basis for decision-making on consumptive and non-consumptive uses of wildlife, help identify sites suitable for

reintroduction projects, support the implementation of regional action plans, such as that of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) for Sahelo-Saharan Ungulates, permit the development of standardized data collection methods and protocols, provide an opportunity for hands-on training and skills development of local conservation staff, and support international efforts to list and raise support for the conservation of endangered species (IUCN Red Data List, Global Mammal Assessment, etc.). The project will be rolled out in stages with initial surveys already agreed with partner agencies in Niger and Senegal.



Scimitar-horned Oryx	Extinct in the Wild	Dama Gazelle	Critically Endangered
Addax	Critically Endangered	Dorcas Gazelle	Vulnerable
Cheetah	Vulnerable	Striped Hyena	Lower Risk
Fennec	Data Deficient	Pale Fox	Data Deficient
Rüppell's Fox	Data Deficient	Ostrich	Least Concern
Lappet-faced Vulture	Vulnerable	Nubian Bustard	Near Threatened
Sudan Bustard	Least Concern	Spurred Tortoise	Vulnerable

Sandscript is the newsletter of SCF, the **Sahara Conservation Fund**. It is edited by SCF CEO John Newby. We gratefully thank Thomas Rabeil for his input to this issue. To subscribe to or sponsor **Sandscript** please contact SCF by email at scf@bluewin.ch

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SCF's mission is to conserve the wildlife of the Sahara and bordering Sahelian grasslands.

Our vision is of a Sahara that is well conserved and managed, in which ecological processes function naturally, with plants and animals existing in healthy numbers across their historical range; a Sahara that benefits all its inhabitants and where support for its conservation comes from stakeholders across all sectors of society.

To implement our mission, we forge partnerships between people, governments, the world zoo and scientific communities, international conventions, non-governmental organizations and donor agencies. A powerful network with a common goal – the conservation of deserts and their unique natural and cultural heritage.

If you would like to know more about our work and how to contribute to our projects, please contact us at scf@bluewin.ch We would love to hear from you!

SCF gives special thanks to the people and organizations that have donated funds for core support from January 2007 to August 2008

- Addax Petroleum Corporation (Switzerland)
- Addax Petroleum Foundation (Switzerland)
- Al Ain Zoo (UAE)
- Cincinnati Zoo (USA)
- Convention on Migratory Species (Germany)
- Dachser Logistik (Germany)
- David J. Bamberger (USA)
- Denver Zoo AAZK Chapter (USA)
- Disney's Animal Kingdom (USA)
- Exotic Endeavors (USA)
- Emirates Center for Wildlife Propagation (UAE)
- Exotic Wildlife Association (USA)
- French Global Environment Facility (France)
- Hannover Zoo (Germany)
- Jerry Brown (USA)
- Joe Coe Design (USA)
- Los Angeles Zoo (USA)
- Marwell Zoo (UK)
- Mary Hislop (USA)
- Osnabrück Zoo (Germany)
- Rotterdam Zoo (Netherlands)
- Sacramento Zoo (USA)
- Saint Louis Zoo (USA)
- Safari Enterprises
- Sedgwick County Zoo (USA)
- Smithsonian's National Zoo (USA)
- The Living Desert (USA)
- Wildlife Trading Company (USA)
- Zoological Society of London (UK)
- Zoological Society of San Diego (USA)