

ISSUE 22 - FALL 2017

# Sandscript

*An eye on the conservation of the wildlife of the Sahara and the Sahel*



The biannual publication of the Sahara Conservation Fund,  
only organization dedicated uniquely to the biodiversity of  
the Sahara and the Sahel





What's Inside

# SANDSCRIPT

ISSUE 22 - FALL 2017

A lot's been going on over the past few months since the previous issue Sandscript.

There has been the CMS COP 12 in Manila (Convention on Migratory Species), the CCC COP 23 in Bonn (Climate Change Convention), a great deal of talking, distressing observations about climate change and the destruction of nature, and another widely-shared consensus on the urgency of the situation. New announcements about biodiversity loss worldwide have highlighted a large array of species, ranging from the tiniest insects to the biggest mammals on earth. The story of the emblematic polar bear recently reached a new tragic stage in world opinion with the publication of a photo showing one of these animals starving to death and trying to find food among garbage bins. The ice pack that usually provides its marine feeding habitat at this time of the year being totally absent.

Paradoxically, we receive so much bad news that we fail to feel upset and motivated to take action.

This said, there is no lack of activity at SCF! We keep on pursuing our conservation mission in the Sahara and Sahel with as much dedication - if not more so - than ever. At a time when scientists are just beginning to understand how much global ecosystems can be intertwined, a grain of sand matters as much as a leaf from the rainforest.

John Newby, SCF's CEO, and Bill Houston, Vice-President, were on the road in September to meet with our partners in many places of the United States. We learnt that this year was declared « Year of the Giraffe » by our partner The Living Desert, and had the pleasure of attending its launch at the promotional event they had organized. We pay tribute to this rapidly declining species on the front cover. Photos are great but there's nothing like Actionà and we are very pleased to announce our partnership with the Giraffe Conservation Foundation to help conserve West Africa's last remaining giraffes .

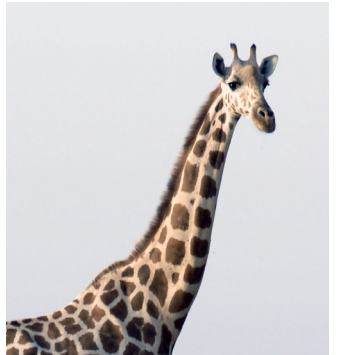
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*Sandscript 22 will take you to Niger to let you know more about the giraffe project, but also to Algeria for a brief update on cheetah, to Chad for the latest news on the oryx project - where we had to deal with bushfires, and to complete the circle, back to Niger with news of our latest healthcare mission. Have a good trip and enjoy the read!*

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# Editorial: In Desperate Need of a Sahara Summit

BY **Roseline C. Beudels-Jamar**  
CONSERVATION BIOLOGIST  
SCF BOARD MEMBER

AWARENESS IN CONSERVATION IS INCREASING GLOBALLY. AS FOR ACTION ON THE GROUND, IN THE SAHARA AND IN THE SAHEL, SCF AND PARTNERS REMAIN THE MOST ACTIVE AND EFFECTIVE SPECIES CONSERVATION FORCES. A FEW WEEKS AFTER THE MEETING OF THE CONFERENCES OF THE PARTIES OF TWO OF THE MAJOR MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS, THE CLIMATE CONVENTION AND THE CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES, SCF WOULD LIKE TO COMMENT ON THE DECISIONS THAT WERE TAKEN AND REAFFIRM ITS ENGAGEMENT TO HIGHLIGHT AND HALT THE DECLINE OF THE BIODIVERSITY IN THE SAHARA.

**Biodiversity loss and climate change** are now the biggest threats the planet and humanity have to face after centuries of careless exploitation of natural resources. Major Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) responsible for mitigating such threats have unequal impacts in the matter. The Climate Convention COP 21 held in Paris two years ago is still widely recognized by many observers, experts and journalists, for having created a huge environmental momentum around climate change issues. But people seem to have far less recollections of what happened recently at COP 22, in Bonn, or at CMS COP 12 in Manila.

One can certainly say that twenty years ago, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) became truly instrumental in attracting the world's attention to the fate of the Sahelo-Saharan megafauna (SSM). The CMS convention, an international treaty on the conservation of migratory species under the auspices of the United Nations, organized the first international meeting that united the few specialists of the little studied endangered (or just extinct) species adapted to live in some of the most remote and extreme regions of the world, in the Sahara and in the Sahel. On the basis of the CMS Sahelo-Saharan Mammals Action Plan, great efforts have been made since then by Range States, NGOs (the Sahara Conservation Fund (SCF) in particular, and others), Parties, and with the help of several supportive funding organizations.

CMS holds a Conference of the parties (COP) every three years. It is the decision-making body of the Convention. COPs' main objectives are to review the Convention's implementation, adopt budgets, resolutions and recommendations, amend the Appendices and decide on priorities for future activities. This year, COP 12 convened in Manila, Philippines, and its motto was "Their future is our future. Sustainable Development for Wildlife and People."

Since its establishment in 2004, SCF has been particularly involved in the field precisely along the line of COP 12 theme. Conservation of Saharan wildlife and habitats is essential for maintaining a whole set of uniquely adapted species of

plants and animals. But the current crisis in the region is a crisis for humans as well as for nature because native desert fauna and flora contribute significantly to human welfare, to environmental and social resilience, and to combating desertification. Keystone species like the Saharan Oryx, Addax, Dama Gazelle, Saharan Cheetah and Ostrich are essential for the maintenance of global biodiversity, ecological processes and productivity in these desert ecosystems that provide benefits for people and wildlife alike.



The COP 12 approved the inclusion of 34 new species in the Convention's appendices. Positive outcomes must be mentioned regarding the Sahelo-Saharan species. For the first time, the giraffe will receive protection under an international treaty, the lion has also been listed in CMS appendix II, and too the Lappet-Faced Vulture (*Torgos tracheliotos*) on Appendix I.

But globally, on the ground, the situation is critical. Despite all the efforts and good results, large parts of the Sahelo-Saharan region are now subject to serious security issues and development challenges. Several species of the region are now facing extinction. 20 years after the first CMS Range States meeting (1998, Djerba), decisions should be taken collectively by all stakeholders on priorities for the coming years.

What is the vision for the large wildlife of the Sahara and how can it be attained? Some options may seem clear: safe-guarding the few wild populations; not losing the genetic diversity remaining in the wild – which is known to

**EXTINCTION NEED NOT BE FOREVER.** The story of SCF and the different phases of the scimitar-horned oryx reintroduction project in particular show how a conservation initiative is able to gather together various stakeholders and provide benefits both for the species and for them. The concept of a common natural heritage - their future is our future! - incites people and partners coming from all over the world to take action to protect wildlife.



**CMS.** The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) is an environmental treaty under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme that entered into force in 1983. CMS provides a global platform for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory animals and their habitats.

**CMS APPENDICES.** Appendix I lists migratory species that are endangered. Appendix II lists migratory species which have an unfavourable conservation status, requiring international agreements for their conservation and management. Most of the species SCF works on are listed on Appendix I.

**MEETING IN DJERBA.** In 1998, a meeting convened under the auspices of CMS in Djerba (Tunisia) to define and adopt a concerted action plan for the conservation of six endangered Sahelo-Saharan antelopes (addax scimitar-horned oryx, dama, dorcas, slender-horned and Cuvier's gazelles). SCF founders were present and

be wider than currently represented in the captive populations; supporting all ongoing and planned releases; building up 'world herds' to provide adequate stock for reintroductions; changing attitudes in favour of valuing wildlife and biodiversity as part of the national, regional and global heritage.

The identification of a global vision could be achieved by means of a high level 'Sahara summit' which would provide also the opportunity to highlight, once again, the urgency faced by these highly endangered species, while promoting the essential work that has been and is being carried out in some areas.





## Saving West Africa's last giraffes Giraffes on the Move!

SCF IS WORKING ON A NEW GIRAFFE CONSERVATION PROJECT WITH PARTNER GIRAFFE CONSERVATION FOUNDATION. THE ONLY REMAINING POPULATION OF WEST AFRICAN GIRAFFES LIVING IN NIGER IS THREATENED WITH HABITAT LOSS AND DEGRADATION. THE PROJECT'S OBJECTIVE IS TO ACHIEVE THE TRANSLOCATION OF THE ANIMALS FROM THEIR CURRENT SITE - THE AREA OF KOURÉ - TO ANOTHER ONE - THE GADABEJI GAME RESERVE.

BY **Thomas Rabeil**  
CONSERVATION BIOLOGIST  
SCF CONSERVATION & SCIENCE  
COMITTEE



**The West African Giraffe** (*Giraffa camelopardalis peralta*) has recently entered the select circle of the key focal species SCF is working on through its conservation programme. Welcome to you, gracious long-necked species.

In July 2017, SCF joined forces with the Giraffe Conservation Foundation to protect the last remaining few hundred giraffes living in the wild in Niger. Thanks to its presence in the region, SCF had of course always "kept an eye" on the species, and is happy to finally have the opportunity of moving forward with GCF to help with the species' recovery.

As a reminder, IUCN added the West African Giraffe to its sadly famous Red List of Threatened Species in 2008. The only wild population remaining can be found some 60 kilometers to the west of Niamey, the capital of Niger.

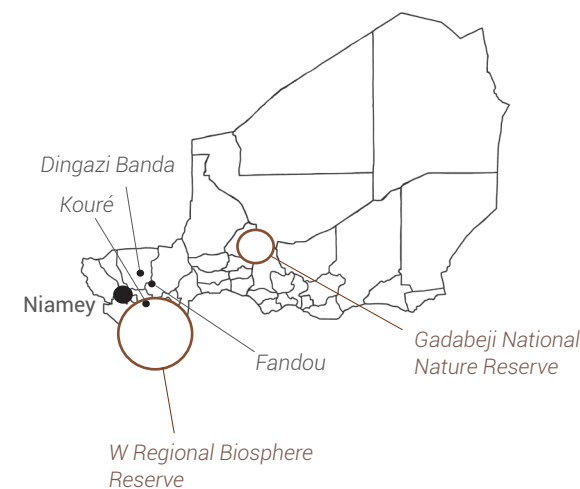
The animals live freely in the area of Kouré which is included in the W Regional Biosphere Reserve. Demographic pressure and the spread of agriculture are threatening their habitat and forcing them into increasing conflict with people. For lack of natural food, giraffes are forced occasionally to raid gardens and fields, robbing the farmers of their cow peas and juicy mangos. Competition between giraffes and livestock is also observed sometimes.

The government of Niger has been active in the protection of the giraffes for about a decade through its National Giraffe Conservation Strategy; a strategy that was updated in 2015 during a regional workshop. Among its results, the workshop called for a feasibility study to look into the translocation of some of the giraffes to other places in the country. Amongst the options, the Gadabéji Game Reserve, in central Niger, was deemed to be a suitable site based on the historical range of the giraffe and the good management of this protected area which has been designated in 2017 as a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO.

Following up on the study, GCF and SCF put together a team to carry out fieldwork to census the giraffe population from July to November. As a parallel activity, the team also worked with local people and their leaders to raise awareness of the giraffe's plight and then need to move some individuals to new sites to improve their chances of survival.

The fieldwork was carried out in two phases. The first phase consisted of collecting data using cameras and drones from three areas frequented by the giraffes – Kouré, Fandou, and Dingazi Banda. The photos were then analyzed by staff at Niger's Wildlife & Protected Areas

**THEY WORK WITH US.** The Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF) and The Association for the Valorisation of Ecotourism in Niger (AVEN) are our main partners on the project. GCF is the only NGO in the world that concentrates solely on the conservation and management of giraffe in the wild throughout Africa. AVEN is an association of ecotourism guides who facilitate giraffe tourism in the area and help protect this endangered species through their activities. Of course, the Government of Niger is also involved in this important work to ensure the future of this giraffe population and brings the necessary political to do it properly.



service back in Niamey. To everyone's satisfaction, the results of the census were extremely encouraging.

The overall population of West African giraffes in Niger for the year 2017 is estimated to be about 607 individuals. In 2016 a similar survey recorded 587. By 2017 the population had increased some 11,7 % and was composed of 325 females and 291 males.

The awareness raising work also had positive outcomes, allowing the team to visit 9 villages in the current core area of giraffe distribution but also in the region of Maradi – Dakoro and Gadabéji. Main objectives were to meet with the local administration and representatives in the current "giraffe zone" in order to tell them more about the project, the purpose and activities related to the translocation, and when they were to begin. The team used the occasion to remind the assembled about their obligations as part of the regional workshop they had attended, where they had committed to facilitate and assist with the translocation.

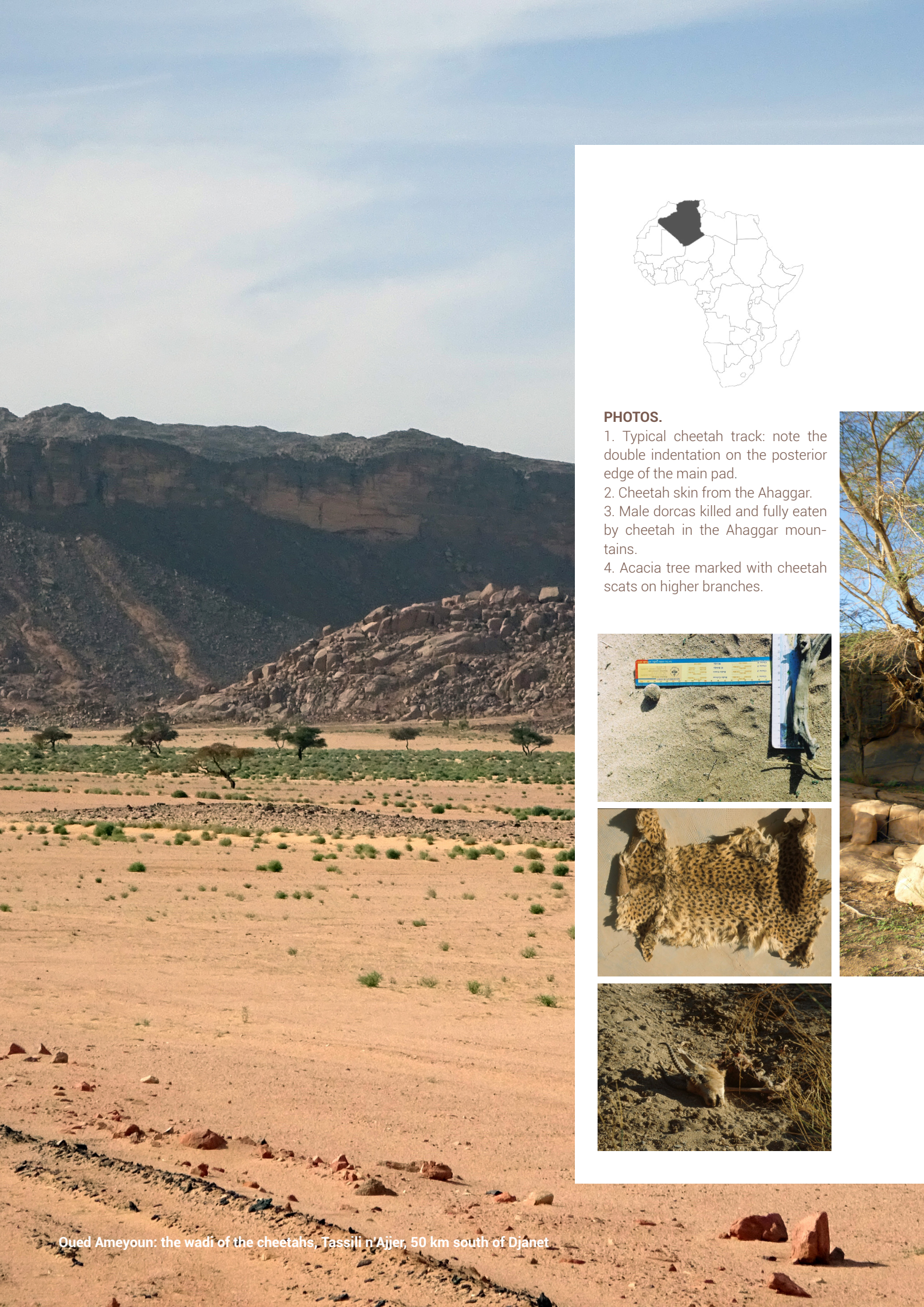
It looks like 2018 will definitely be the year of the giraffe!



**THE WEST AFRICAN GIRAFFE.** A subspecies of the giraffe distinguished by its light-colored spots, the West African giraffe, Niger giraffe or Nigerien giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis peralta*) can be found in Niger. In the 19th century it ranged from Senegal to Lake Chad. The reasons for its decline include human population growth (with more intensive farming and hunting) and a series of droughts in the late 19th and 20th centuries. The photos here were taken at Kouré (southwest Niger) some 80 km southeast of Niamey.

**THE NATIONAL GIRAFFE CONSERVATION STRATEGY OF NIGER.** Currently, Niger is the only country in Africa that has finalized and implemented a National Giraffe Conservation Strategy. The government brings together various stakeholders and NGOs to develop projects in collaboration and protect the last remaining West African giraffe populations living in Niger territory.





#### PHOTOS.

1. Typical cheetah track: note the double indentation on the posterior edge of the main pad.
2. Cheetah skin from the Ahaggar.
3. Male dorcas killed and fully eaten by cheetah in the Ahaggar mountains.
4. Acacia tree marked with cheetah scats on higher branches.



BY **Farid Belbachir**  
RESEARCHER IN BIOLOGY  
UNIVERSITE DE BEJAIA, ALGERIA  
AND **Koen de Smet**  
AGRICULTURAL ENGINEER  
SCF BOARD MEMBER

**NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR CHEETAH CONSERVATION.** Following a national workshop held in 2015 (12-13 October 2015) in the National Park of Tlemcen, the Algerian *Direction Générale des Forêts* (DGF) developed a national action plan for the conservation of cheetah and African wild dog.

## Algerian Cheetah's Habitat

# The Cheetah in the Algeria's Central Sahara

CHEETAH'S RANGE ACROSS AFRICA HAS DRASTICALLY DECLINED OVER THE LAST FIFTY YEARS. THANKS TO THE STUDY OF ITS HABITAT AND INDIRECT OBSERVATIONS, WE KNOW THAT VERY SMALL ISOLATED POPULATIONS STILL OCCUR IN THE SAHARA. HERE IS AN OVERVIEW OF THE PLACES WHERE THE CHEETAH'S TRACKS CAN BE FOUND AND WHAT IS NEEDED FOR ITS CONSERVATION IN ALGERIA.

**Extending over an area of almost 800,000 km<sup>2</sup>** in the Algeria's Central Sahara, and often located at altitudes above 1,000 m, the relief of the Ahaggar and Tassili N'Ajjer Cultural Parks are made up of high and middle-altitude mountains, river valleys, plateaus, gorges and ergs. In the northern parts of this region, the rain falls late in autumn or early in spring; whereas the southern part is watered by summer rains.

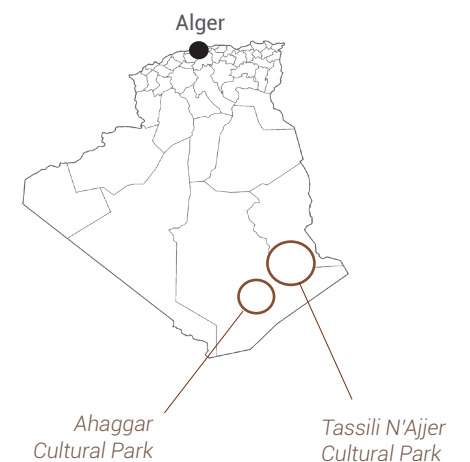
However, the rain does not fall every year. Temporary and permanent water points (gueltas) are present here and there in the region, particularly where river valleys pass through rock crevasses. Perennial plants, made up of trees (mainly *Acacia tortilis* var. *raddiana*, *A. ehrenbergiana* and *Tamarix aphylla*) and grasses (e.g. *Panicum turgidum* and *Stipagrostis pungens*), are abundant along broad river valleys in the lower parts of the mountains. The resulting vegetation provides food and shelter for prey and hiding posts for predators, and is particularly attractive to the Saharan cheetah.

The cheetah is distributed in Ahaggar and Tassili N'Ajjer Mountains, Immidir Tassili, Ahnet Mountains, and possibly in the Algerian part of the Adagh Massif. Prey includes Dorcas gazelle and livestock, and probably Barbary sheep, Cape hare, rock hyrax, and feral donkeys. A recent study documented a large home range for this carnivore in Ahaggar with a minimum of about 1,600 km<sup>2</sup> measured over 2-3 months; whereas densities were estimated at 0.023 individuals per 100 km<sup>2</sup>.

**TO KNOW MORE:** An article by Farid Belbachir is also available online: «Monitoring Rarity: The Critically Endangered Saharan Cheetah as a Flagship Species for a Threatened Ecosystem.» Use the following link to access it: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0115136>.

The Saharan cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus hecki* is categorized as critically endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, and the main threats jeopardizing the survival of this landscape-roaming carnivore in Ahaggar and Tassili N'Ajjer Cultural Parks are poaching of its natural ungulate prey (e.g., Dorcas gazelle, Barbary sheep) and habitat degradation through illegal tree cutting and burning for charcoal, and in a lesser extent, retaliatory killing by pastoralists following depredation on livestock (camel calves and goats).

The long-term sustainable conservation of the cheetah in Algeria requires the implementation of the recent National Action Plan for Cheetah Conservation including, among others, raising the awareness of Algerian authorities in charge of wildlife management on the status and conservation needs of the cheetah; assessing and mitigating human-carnivore conflict; and developing a plan for the restoration of current and extirpated (e.g., Addax and dama gazelle) prey species in cheetah habitat.

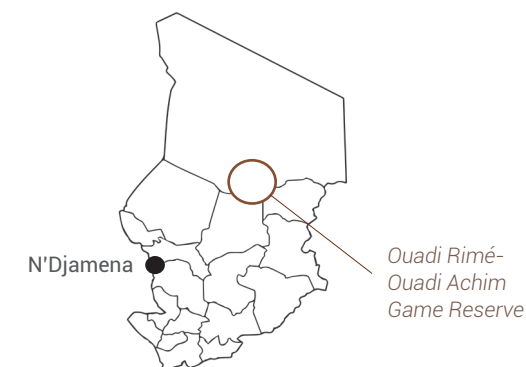


Oued Ameyoun: the wadi of the cheetahs, Tassili n'Ajjer, 50 km south of Djânet





**BUSHFIRES.** Hot temperatures and wind help bushfires spread very fast. The flames are impressive and can be difficult to control. The surface burnt by the fires becomes visible. Unlike the wetter savannas, Sahelian grasslands are mostly composed of annual plants and do not regreen after the passage of fire. Furthermore, precious green perennials and shade-providing shrubs are also scorched and killed. Without these plants, species like the oryx have no greenery from which to extract vital water or shade under which in hot season. Establishing firebreaks is one of the best ways to limit the spread of the fires when they occur. SCF had enclosed the entire oryx site in early stage of the project within a firebreak - cleared by tractor - protecting the vital infrastructure and pre-release pens.



## Oryx Reintroduction Project Scorched Earth

NEW BUSHFIRES RECENTLY OCCURED IN THE OUADI RIME-OUADI ACHIM GAME RESERVE, CHAD. TRAFFICKERS DRIVING ACROSS THE RESERVE ILLEGALLY WITH THEIR VEHICLES HOT EXHAUST PIPES CAUSED THE FIRES. SCF CALLED UPON THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT TO TAKE MEASURES AND INCREASE THE CONTROL OF THE PASSAGE OF THE VEHICLES.

BY **Marc Dethier**  
CONSERVATION BIOLOGIST  
SCF PROJECT MANAGER

**Chad's Ouadi Rimé-Ouadi Achim Game Reserve** has always known bushfires.

Ever since the scimitar-horned oryx reintroduction project began operations in the reserve in 2015, the staff on the ground have had to deal with a particularly dangerous and worrying threat: wildfires. As many as a dozen occur each year, destroying thousands of square kilometers of grassland and depriving our volunteer firefighters of many nights of sleep.

The causes of the fires are diverse and include lack of care in setting and extinguishing household fires, carelessly discarded cigarettes, traffickers driving across the reserve illegally without paying attention to the hot exhaust pipes of their vehicles... Lately, this latter cause has turned particularly serious.

This year, the project staff has noticed a distinct increase in the number of vehicles crossing the reserve. Many of these are likely engaged in illegal activities, black marketing, transporting people headed for Europe, or carrying perilous loads of people keen to join the gold rush taking place in northern Chad, Niger and Libya. Traversing the reserve avoids the controls along the normal highways and traffic has become so frequent that the deep tracks the vehicles make have become known as "trafficker's highways".

Since the beginning of this year's dry season, at least four vehicles have caused wildfires with three of these being caught in the flames and consumed. And although vast areas of precious grazing have been lost, no material damage to the project or the oryx has occurred. Given the circumstances, SCF has called upon the local authorities and the Ministry of the Environment to take measures to control the passage of vehicles. Since many of the vehicles are travelling illegally, and most of the them carry at least some armed passengers, an appropriate response is required, something that SCF is neither equipped or mandated to do.

We are happy to report that our call for action has not gone unheeded. Police and armed forces now patrol the reserve and it has been some while since we last saw a suspicious vehicle.

In conservation, a threat is nothing more than a threat. When well understood and taken seriously by all stakeholders, it can be addressed properly. Raising awareness and throwing light on their causes can lead to solutions, something SCF is definitely willing to keep on doing.

**CHAD ORYX REINTRODUCTION PROJECT.** The Scimitar-horned Oryx Reintroduction Programme in Chad is a joint initiative of the Government of Chad and the Environment Agency–Abu Dhabi. Under the overall leadership and management of the Environment Agency–Abu Dhabi, on-the-ground implementation of the project is carried out by the Sahara Conservation Fund. The goal is to build up a viable, free-ranging and self-sustaining population of at least 500 animals. And in the longer term, have the oryx removed from the Extinct-in-the-Wild category and reassigned to a lower level of threat.

**CHAD'S OUADI RIME-OUADI ACHIM GAME RESERVE.** A vast protected area set up in the 1960s specifically for the conservation of oryx and other desert species, this 78,000 km<sup>2</sup> zone is one of the largest in the world..

**THEY WORK WITH US.** Further technical support for wildlife monitoring, oryx genetics and animal husbandry is being provided by the Zoological Society of London , the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute , the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland , Marwell Wildlife, and Fossil Rim Wildlife Center .



**SEASONS.** As a reminder, the dry season is from November to mid-June, and the rainy season from mid-June to October.



**BRUSH YOUR TEETH.** The patients were repeatedly reminded not to neglect oral hygiene and brush teeth right after eating with movements from the inside to the outside. The debris not removed by tooth brushing later transform into tartar (calcified food debris) which leads to the alteration of the bone supporting teeth and finally, to floating teeth that soon fall spontaneously.



The patients waiting their turn outside to be examined.

## Health care missions

# Stronger together

SCF HAS BEEN INVOLVED WITH PARTNERS IN SEVERAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND HEALTH CARE MISSIONS IN THE TERMIT AND TIN-TOUMMA NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE, NIGER. FOR THE FIRST TIME, SCF WENT TO THE AIR AND TENERE NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE TO PROVIDE CARE TO THE POPULATIONS LIVING IN THIS AREA AS WELL. THE MISSION WAS CONDUCTED IN LATE OCTOBER BY SCF, L'AFRIQUE A COEUR, AND ESAFRO.

BY **Jean-Marie Weber**  
PRESIDENT OF L'AFRIQUE A COEUR  
SCF-EUROPE BOARD MEMBER

**THEY WORK WITH US.** L'Afrique à Coeur is a French non-profit whose main objective is to provide humanitarian assistance and improve the lives of the deprived populations of the African continent through various projects in the fields of education, health care, access to water, market gardening and reforestation, sustainable development, cultural exchange and any other relevant action. ESAFRO was established in 2006 as a non-profit, too. Its purpose is to promote access to education and health and thus to improve the living conditions of impoverished populations in developing countries.

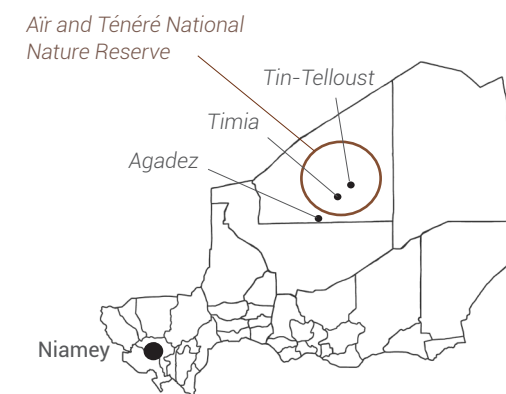
**When I first met John Newby** at the beginning of the 1980's, I never thought we would both make this wonderful journey that was to bound us together for such a long time.

Our common love for Africa quickly allowed us to get closer though. When I created the NGO "L'Afrique à Coeur" in 2013, John, whose expertise on the Sahelo-Saharan fauna and its decline was widely acknowledged, had already joined forces with other international specialists of the matter by founding the Sahara Conservation Fund (2004).

In a complex region facing political and geopolitical uncertainties, extreme climate phenomena like droughts, and many other events weakening both the inhabitants and the ecosystems, SCF has developed a truly innovative approach. An approach that finally led us to partner, and become friends and colleagues at the same time.

Indeed, SCF was - and still is - unable to conceive any biodiversity initiative in the Sahara or in the Sahel that would not suppose building up mutual understanding and confidence-based long-lasting relationships with the local populations, Toubous, Tuaregs, Peuls, Arabs, all kinds of nomads or pastoralist communities...

In Niger, L'Afrique à Coeur and SCF have been repeatedly partnering for healthcare missions. SCF provides logistical and security assistance in order to facilitate prevention, sensitization, and education campaigns in the nomadic camps. The objective is also to involve people in the conservation of species and the protection of the habitats.



**AIR AND TENERE NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE.** The Air and Ténéré Natural Reserve is one of the largest protected areas in Africa, covering 77,360 km². It comprises two main zones : the mountain massifs of Aïr rising up to 2000 m in altitude and the vast plain of the Ténéré desert.

**WORKING WITH LOCALS.** A lot of local specificities such as the big difference between the living conditions of men and women must be taken into consideration. Working with a nurse from this area has been an irreplaceable asset during the mission. The presence of some foresters very often present in the area was also of a great help.

It is proved that a lot of pathologies can actually be linked to their environment's condition; the various communities must then oppose to poachers, to all forms of illegal or abusive hunting, and to the destruction of nature in general. In doing so they are simply protecting their own living conditions.

The latest collaboration with SCF made us very proud and happy at L'Afrique à Coeur. From 23 October to 2 November 2017, the Aïr & Ténéré National Nature Reserve in northern Niger, a UNESCO world heritage site, welcomed us for the first time. The French NGO L'Education et Santé sans Frontière (ESAFRO) who has also been a devoted partner for a long time, participated in this healthcare mission too.

The staff on the ground split into two groups. The first one stayed at the Timia and Tin-Telloust Integrated Health Centres to provide dental care, whereas the second one traveled across the camps settled around the Takoloukouzet mountain to better assess the needs of the isolated populations and offer first aid services.

320 patients were examined and/or treated; 130 by the dental care team, and 190 by the mobile team! More than 700 km were travelled

L'Afrique à Coeur is convinced that these missions and the way they are conducted collaboratively, taking into full consideration the subtle Sahara-Sahel specificities, provide appropriate and quality support to the populations.

As I am writing these lines, I know little time is left before the New Year. Soon, we will be discussing our 2018 New Year's resolutions in all kind of contexts. As for me, I know at least one thing that remains unchanged year after year: the wish to continue to work with SCF and ESAFRO, and raise again enough funds to help species, nature, humans, and ourselves.





## Stand with SCF for the Sahara and the Sahel!

Until very recently, the silent crisis of extinction in the Sahara and the Sahel has been largely overlooked and underfunded by the international conservation community and aid agencies around the world. In 2004, a small group of committed individuals and institutions launched the Sahara Conservation Fund (SCF) in response to an urgent call to action: "If not us, then who will speak for Saharan wildlife?"

SCF is now leading a rapidly growing Sahelo-Saharan wildlife conservation movement to protect and restore a unique and exquisitely adapted assemblage of species, including addax, scimitar-horned

oryx, Saharan cheetah, North African ostrich and dama gazelles.

As a fully registered NGO in the U.S and France, SCF relies on donations, grants and other funding from individuals, corporations and organizations to help drive its mission and to give voice to the Sahara and the plight of its wildlife.

We invite you to add your voice to the growing chorus calling for the protection and restoration of Sahelo-Saharan wildlife through your support of SCF.

TO DONATE TO SCF JUST SCAN THE QR CODE  
OR VISIT [WWW.SAHARACONSERVATION.ORG/DONATE](http://WWW.SAHARACONSERVATION.ORG/DONATE)



[www.saharaconservation.org](http://www.saharaconservation.org) | [scf@saharaconservation.org](mailto:scf@saharaconservation.org)

*If you would like to know more about our work and how to contribute to our projects, please do not hesitate to contact us. We would love to hear from you!*

SCF is grateful to Roseline Beudels, Farid Belbachir, Koen de Smet, Thomas Rabeil, Marc Dethier, Jean-Marie Weber, and John Newby for their photos and contributions to this issue. Sandscript is edited by Yasmina Khaznawi, Communications Officer for SCF. You can reach her for any comments and feedback (contact informations above). We also like to thank the growing chorus of supporters that gives us the precious support that makes our projects and their achievements so tangible.



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Sahara Conservation Fund



Portrait of a West African Giraffe



# SAND SCRIPT

**The biannual publication of the Sahara Conservation Fund**

Launched in 2007, Sandscript has been bringing you news of the Sahara Conservation Fund and its projects for over a decade.

Since its inception, Sandscript articles have been written by the SCF team, their collaborators, and all those who, through their fieldwork, make the conservation of biodiversity a reality. Its primary purpose is to inform the public of our conservation activities in the Sahara and Sahel, to share relevant news items, but also to sensitize the reader to the beauty and richness of this region of the world. Over the years, Sandscript has gone beyond a simple informative role to provide original perspectives on poorly-known areas of Africa and their amazingly diverse, unique and threatened wildlife. It is thanks to its narrative style and its beautiful photos that the publication invites the reader, twice a year, to delve into this universe. Taking readers behind the scenes, Sandscript creates a new perspective on the fauna and flora of the Sahara and the Sahel and the efforts undertaken to ensure its survival.

We are sincerely grateful to all those who have helped make Sandscript one of the first and finest sources of information on the unique but neglected wildlife of the Sahara and the Sahel.

To accompany and complement Sandscript with brief news items, a quarterly e-newsletter is also now available. Subscribe on line at [www.saharaconservation.org](http://www.saharaconservation.org).



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

