

# Sudan Status of Desert Antelopes

by

Mohamed Elsarag Fadlalla

Sudan – Delegate

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## Introduction

The desert eco-system covers almost 35% of the area of the Sudan ( FIG-1) > It is less human activities, unproductive land when compared with other ecological zones where rainfall is relatively high and the land is intensively cultivated and grazed .

In the past the desert eco-system was only slightly disturbed as nomadic tribes graze their livestock and poached wildlife on a limited scale. Subsistence poaching was only done by primitive means using snares and chasing larger antelopes such as addax (*Addax nasomaculatus*) and Oryx (*Oryx dammah*) with camels subsistence poaching continued until early 1970's when guns and safari hunting activities from the middle east countries entered the area.

They start with the most desirable hunting species such as addax Oryx and dama gazelle (*Gazella dama*) and using well equipped 4-wheel drive vehicles. This resulted in disappearance of Oryx and critical reduction in the number of addax and dama gazelle. Beside that in 1980's drought severely reduced the number and distribution of the desert wildlife. The desert lost its seasonal vegetation cover, which led to the movement of wild animals southwards. These movements brought the animals close to the hungry settlements where they were subjected to heavy poaching. Also drought led to the mass mortality of wildlife in the area.

In order to alleviate 1980's drought problems, the authority banned hunting of the desert animals for five years starting with the year 1988. So as, to allow animal populations to recover after the ban period, although no survey is carried out to measure the abundance of the animal, before and after the ban, but it was believed that the ban insure an obvious animal recovery.

The expansion of mechanized agriculture in the northern Sudan and insecurity of the south, the hunting - safari is concentrated on the desert species.

It is imperative, therefore to survey the desert species and their habitat and then sound management measures should be taken to conserve and utilize in sustainable means the desert wildlife. These surveys and management measures are carried as we explain later.

## **1- Status of the Desert Antelopes**

The desert antelopes can roughly be categorized into threatened and unthreatened species. The threatened species including addax, Oryx, dama gazelle, barbary sheep and the nubian ibex which were listed in schedule I according to the Sudan wildlife act 1986. The unthreatened species include dorcas gazelles and slender - horned gazelle, which were listed in schedule III.

The addax (*Addax nasomaculatus*) population must be very small according to the information of the wildlife administration of northern Dar Fur State. It was seen 1992 near the border with Chad it always ran westwards to cross the border when disturbed. It is likely that addax makes seasonal movements across the border but it is not clear at present whether they move to Sudan during the rainy or dry season. Protection of addax can be done within:

- 1- The context of Sudan-Chad agreement for the protection of wildlife in the two countries.
- 2- Extension of the already declared Sudanese Wadi Hawar National park into Chadian part as a trans-boundary protected areas,

Adequate conservation measures tackling the destructive factors of the park and lead to habitat rehabilitation together with community in and around the park to be involved in the management policy. At this stage of park improvement conditions the endangered or even distinct species can be introduced

Happold (1966) stated the addax used to be quite common in Dar Fur region but now was greatly reduced due to tribe using firearms. Lord Mc Pherson who visited Dar Fur (1968) located a small herd of 12 adults and three calves in Wadi Hawar area. Nimir (1983) cited lamprey ( 1975) who located addax at Jebel Tegra in Dar Fur during an aerial survey. No addax was reported

recently although tribesmen however insist that the animal still exists in their domain (figs 2).

In 1998 a survey mission for preparation of an initial report on the possibility of establishment of natural verify the presence of addax.

They reported that the addax may migrate to Sindy and Tordami mounts from Chadian territories

Information concerning scimitar-horned Oryx is lacking. Reliable report were those of Mackenzie (1954) and Schomber (1963) who stated that the animal was very common in Dar Fur because of its larger size, Oryx was easily hunted by herdsmen before firearms became available in the region. A needotal reports revealed that Oryx would collapse after only a short distance when chased by camels

The proposed Wadi Hawar reserve mission report (1998) stated that the scimitar – horned Oryx was not observed for decades and the present survey didn't verify the presence of addax and dama gazelles.

No report is available about the status of dama gazelle in the desert. Anecdotal information., suggested this animal is still extinct and widely disappeared in Kordofan and Dar Fur .

The proposed Wadi Hawar reserve mission (1998) reported that dama gazelles were not observed during the survey.

Hashim (1995) report that the population of dorcas gazelle appear to increase towards the northern and western portions of the red sea Hills, where they emerge with the desert.

Al though dorcas gazelle was considered unthreatened but it should be checked

Safari-hunters from Petro–Dollar-Nations enter the country in considerable number. Al though they issued hunting licenses but they always not committed to the license conditions. As there is no authority supervision due to the lacking of equipped facility to offer good frequent checking of the hunter, more animals were killed.

For the proposed Wadi Hawar reserve, the survey report (1998) stead that, about 107 dorcas gazelles were seen along the distance less than 100kms in the middle Wadi Hawar. While in the lower Wadi Hawar, only small number of dorcas gazelle live and move around in search of grass, in the Gizzu areas.

A report of the potentiality Hassania proposed reserve (2002) stated that 462 dorcas gazelles were observed in the sample area with an estimate of a density of two animals in each 10km<sup>2</sup>. The total number of animals calculated was 1190 in the total area of study (7220km<sup>2</sup>).

(Fig 3)

### 3- Distribution :-

Action area of wild ungulates inhabiting the desert is overlapping to greater extent. Some of these animals occupy the same habitat.

Addax is among the largest animals that are adapted to arid part of the Sahara in sandy country as well as stony desert, always far away from any waterhole (Dorst and Dandelot, 1970). It was distributed west of the Nile in northern Kordofan and northern Dar Fur states . An isolated population occurred east of the Nile in the early 1950's (Mckerize , 1954, Simon and Geroudet, 1970 , schimber , 1963 ). The eastern addax was considered a distinct race (Mcknieze 1954). The present distribution of addax is unknown and information is lacking concerning the eastern addax, since it was first reported

Oryx occupied open flat country with sparse vegetation and migrated over a considerable distance (Schomber, 1963). If any Oryx exist today its distribution is unknown.

Dama gazelle occurred mainly in north Kordofan and north Dar Fur (Hashim 1995). Their distribution was sympatric with western addax and Oryx. Hillman and Fryxell (1988) however extended this distribution further east to the Big Band of the Nile.

Dorcas gazelle occupies two allopatric habitats i.e. west and east of the Nile.

### **4- Efforts and Conservation Measures**

4-1 Before 1992 the desert eco-system has never been represented as a conservation area in Sudan.

In 1992 Shandi, Al matama and Atbra Wildlife station were established in River Nile State with duties including anti-poaching, initial survey and local people awareness program. Followed that in 1997 Dongola in the northern state and Al Jinana in the West Dar Fur state were established

4-2 Declaration of Wadi Hawar Nautical park

Darling (1961) recommended that the government of the Sudan should consider the possibility of establishing a desert type

national park or reserve for the desert species as addax and Oryx as they suffered more restriction of their home range in Africa. Happald (1966) raised the same recommendation.

Kroplin presented a paper on geological research in northern east Africa held in Berlin (1993) which titled:

Environment changes in south east Sahara with a proposal of geobiosphere reserve at Wadi Hawar in Sudan. The proposed reserve will cover geological archeological and environment need (Fig 4).

In 1998 a joint activation of ACACIA project of Cologne university – Germany, UNESCO – Cairo office and MAB Sudanese National committee produce a preliminary report to declare Wadi Hawar as protected area and part of the world heritage in the dry land.

The survey showed the significance of establishing the reserve area in Wadi Hawar with a total area of (3.465.000) acres within coordinates (19:00X 15:15N. and 25:40 X 27:E)

The considered objectives of declaring Wadi Hawar as National Park are:

- 1- Rehabilitation of the existing and distinct species home range land.
- 2- To maintain a continuous conservation measures in the park
- 3- To restore the already distinct desert species e.g. Oryx, addax Dama.
- 4- To protect the cultural and heritage importance the area.
- 5- To involve the local community on the conservation programs and management plan of the park.
- 6- To set rural development in the region

In 18.7.2001 a presidential decree number 252/2001 declaring Wadi Hawar as a national park.

#### **4.3 Declaration of Hassania Mountain as a national park.**

Hassania Mountain area is of one of the most popular areas in the northern Sudan in term of wildlife resources. It is also thought to be of a historical importance, which contains famous archeological sites.

Hassania is proposed to be a national park. The total area of the proposed national park is approximately within the co-ordinates (17: 15X18: 15N and 32:45 X 33:45E).

The area is being of dorcas gazelle high density together with other species.

The main human activities in the area is grazing of camel. These activities are of less destruction to the nature. The safari-hunting in and around the area being the most destructive to the habitat and mainly poaching of the wild animals

The area also being close to the capital with an easy access subjected to high poaching

This poaching activities needs a conservation measures to decrease it to a limited scale.

A survey mission conducted in 2002 showed, the area high potentiality of wildlife with little harm from the residence whom they only graze their camels.

A presidential decree not for the year 2003 dated 6/1/2003 declaring Hassania mountains as a desert national park (fig 5)

The main objectives of Hassania declaration are:

- 1- To insure sound conservation and sustainable utilization.
- 2- To rehabilitate the home range land of different desert and mountains species.
- 3- Compensation of the off take by safari hunting in the area surrounding the park.
- 4- The recitation of distort or rare species of the area.
- 5- Establishment of rural development programs in the area such program should concentrate on provision of limited resources improvement of rangeland.
- 6- Establishment of awareness.
- 7- Enforcement of the conservation measures and poaching combat.
- 8- To formulate data base programs net work.
- 9- The park management system must address information issues such as combating of desertification climate change and biodiversity.

4-4 A three years hunting bans starting from may 2002. The main aim for hunting ban is to give the population ample time to recover.

4-5 Khartoum Declaration Wildlife protection.

A presidential decree no. 17/2002 issued on 16/1/2003 rnou As Khartoum declaration of Wildlife protection.

The government of Sudan Wildlife resources cans salvation

The decollation an appreciated the role of the national, international and regional organization together with the national, regional and international non-governmental organizations.

It also emphasis the role of awareness of the community to share in conservation of Wildlife resources

The Sudan undertakes priorities of conservation measures co-operation with regional and international institutes to protect the Wildlife resources.

The government insures its commitment towards the international community and the coming generation.

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