

WILD CAMEL PROTECTION FOUNDATION
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Hon. Life Patron: Dr. Jane Goodall D.B.E.

Patrons: The Marchioness of Bute, The Countess of Chichester, Lady Grant, Professor Yuan Guoying, Peter Hall, Jane McMorland Hunter of Hafton, Gerald Kidd, Damon de Laszlo, Lulu Lytle, Colin McIntosh, Professor David Munro, The Dowager Marchioness of Reading.

October 2014 - Newsletter Number 34

Dear Wild Camel Supporter,

WCPF ESSAY COMPETITION

Instead of holding a camel race day this year, we are holding an Essay Competition. There will be two categories: - Adult and Junior

The Essay Question:

“Why should the critically endangered wild camel be protected?”

The competition will be widely advertised on-line, on the WCPF web site, Twitter and Facebook pages

www.wildcamels.com
www.facebook.com/WildCamels
www.twitter.com/WildCamels

The Competition is open to all (WCPF members included)

The essay which must be in English will have a maximum length of 2,000 words for the Adult category and 1000 words in English for the Junior (Fifteen and under) category.

The entry fee for the Adult Competition (16 years and above) is £35 (US\$50, €45).

The prize will be £500 (US\$750, €700).

The Entry fee for the Junior Competition - (8 to 15 years) is £20 (US\$35, €30).

The prize will be £200 (US\$300, €275)

The winners in each category will be asked to name one of the crop of camel calves due to be born soon at the Mongolian Hunter Hall Wild Camel Breeding Centre.

The deadline for entry is the 1st July 2015.

The winner will be announced on the 1st of October 2015.

The judge's decision is final.

The aim of the Essay Competition is to raise awareness on the PLIGHT OF THE WILD CAMEL worldwide using facebook and twitter and to raise enough money to pay for the winter hay at the Mongolian Hunter Hall Wild Camel Breeding Centre. All the money from the competition entries will be put towards that purpose.

All Entrance fees must be in the form of a Sterling, US dollar or Euro cheque and should be sent with the Essay to the:

Head Office, Wild Camel Protection Foundation,
School Farm, Benenden, Kent TN17 4EU United Kingdom.

Payment can also be made by using the donate button on the website <www.wildcamels.com>

Essays submitted without an entrance fee will not be accepted.

Juniors up to 15 years must state their age when entering.

Will Members please promote the Essay Competition.

The Cotswold Wildlife Park in Burford, Oxfordshire. UK <www.cotswoldwildlifepark.co.uk> has generously donated the prize money. The Park has been a long-term supporter of our work to save the critically endangered wild camel from extinction and we are deeply grateful for their sponsorship.

CAMEL RACE DAY – Sunday, September 4th 2016

As for the Camel Race Day, we plan to hold it again **on Sunday the 4th September 2016** at the same site, Hole Park, Rolvenden Kent.

So thinking caps on please and sharpen your pencils.

We are now receiving over 2,500 “hits” per month on our website from new visitors. All visitors (new and old) average 4500 per month, which we think is very encouraging, especially as the numbers are steadily increasing. These figures prompted the thought of the essay competition.

PRIMARY SCHOOL WORKSHOP – Louise Thomas

Louise Thomas, who built Gobi the War Camel, organized a workshop at a primary school in Islington to raise awareness for the wild camel. Louise writes as follows:

The workshop on Friday 13th went well, however I ended up not involving the Gobi puppet as he was too large to fit inside the classroom designated to me for the day! However, I handed out the Wild Camel booklets to all primary year groups, and we had really interesting talks on the wild camel and the students' knowledge of camels in general. With each group, I made templates to create 2d and 3d geometrical camel shapes, as well as trying origami camel patterns with the older years. The school was Copenhagen Primary School in Islington, and potentially they will be commissioning a large outdoor camel sculpture for their playground. I've left all the educational packs with the school as well.

Thank you, Louise and WELL DONE.

MONGOLIA

The two wild male camels we released in October 2013 returned to the breeding centre at the end of 2014. They had spent one breeding season (November-February 2013-2014) in the wild but clearly thought that one season was enough, even though Naran (one of the wild camels released) had managed to attract 4 females. Jolon's (the second wild camel) collar had stopped working and we were only aware of the movements of Naran. I was receiving spasmodic satellite images when to my alarm, the latest image showed that Naran was heading straight back towards the breeding centre, 250 miles away. It is said when he arrived he came together with his four females. Jolon also turned up, slightly the worse for wear after a scrap in the wild.

We are still waiting for full confirmation of this story, but if it is true that Naran has presented four females to the breeding centre, it is a very welcome introduction of new blood. It also prompts some fascinating thoughts on the migrating instinct in camels. When Naran set his mind on returning to the breeding centre he did not meander back but travelled huge distances very fast and virtually in a straight line. As I have said, the full facts will not be revealed until I make my annual trip to the breeding centre this August.

Anna Jemmett, who spent three months at the Breeding Centre, three years ago is coming out to join me at the end of my stay there and will remain for a few weeks after I have left. One of her tasks will be to update the stud book for the Breeding Centre. Our thanks to Anna, now the WCPF Communications Manager, who has been a fantastic help in mastering our Facebook and Twitter activities and is full of bright ideas both for fund-raising and attracting new members and has proved to be a great asset for WCPF.

There has been talk of another release this year, but recent changes in the Mongolian government has meant that the official who gave us permission for a second release last year has been replaced. Whether his replacement will be willing to sanction a second release we do not yet know. Again, this will all be clearer when I visit in August.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) established the Great Gobi Strictly Protected Areas "A" and "B" 40 years ago. A celebration is taking place at the Protected Area this July. Because of my imminent visit in August I will not be attending the celebration but it is a sobering thought that WCPF has been running the breeding centre for eleven years and has been in existence for 18 years. I made my first expedition into the Mongolian Gobi 22 years ago.

Dovchin, the manager of Gobi "A" and, the manager of the wild camel breeding centre has sent us an excellent annual report for last year. In spite of the lack of proper internet facilities at Bayan Toroi he is communicating very well and has masterminded a successful fence repair operation, established a look-out tower and completed a host of other minor improvements.

We are still waiting to hear the figures of the wild camel count which was undertaken by Gobi "A" staff and ZSL in December 2014.

His Excellency Tulga Narkhuu, the Mongolian Ambassador to the United Kingdom kindly invited me to give a talk at the embassy about the wild camel situation in Mongolia. I had a further invitation from the Ambassador to the Mongolian New Year celebrations. I also attended and gave a talk to delegates at the Mongolian/British Chamber of Commerce meeting in December 2014 in London.

CHINA

Xinjiang's internal problems are unfortunately not improving and Urumqi is still unable to make contact with the world-wide web. Yuan Lei has recovered from his broken leg and I hope to visit Urumqi on my August trip to catch up on what is happening to the wild camels in the Lop Nur Wild Camel National Nature Reserve which was established due to the efforts of WCPF

AMERICAN ZOOS

We are very pleased to say that WCPF has recently received a tremendous amount of support and funding from American zoos - Alaska, Detroit, Cincinnati and the American Association of Zookeepers - Potawatomi Zoo Chapter. This is hugely encouraging and much appreciated and it is clear that our work and message is spreading through the Zoo Network in the USA. I hope that we can attract similar interest and encouragement from other zoos around the world which have an interest in camels. If any member has a contact with a particular zoo anywhere in the world, maybe they would kindly spread the word about the activities of WCPF..

WEBSITE, TWITTER and FACEBOOK

Please continue to visit our website which is constantly being updated and contains a great deal of relevant information and pictures from both China and Mongolia. The details of the essay competition will be on the site very shortly. Please see

www.wildcamels.com

www.facebook.com/WildCamels

www.twitter.com/WildCamels

LECTURES

I continue to give lecture to schools and other institutions, societies or clubs. If anyone knows of any suitable lecture audiences who might be interested in a talk in this country or overseas, could they please let me know. The wider the wild camel message gets out, the better.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Your annual subscription is used entirely for funding the Mongolian Breeding Centre Budget. So please remember to renew your annual membership and if you haven't, please send £20.00 (or its equivalent in foreign currency). With over 550 members we cannot send out reminders but rely

on individuals to send us the subscription themselves. You can pay by going direct to the website www.wildcamels.com using Paypal. If you are paying in US dollars or Euros you can also transfer funds direct into the WCPF's Euro or US dollar accounts. **Please email us for the WCPF bank and transfer details.**

Thank you to the many members who already pay by **standing order** direct to the WCPF account. We will send you our bank details on request. This is a huge help and means we have regular funding for the Breeding Centre salaries and costs are kept down.

SHOPPING

Do visit the WCPF shop page on our website as we have wild camel knitted hats and scarves again.

SPONSORING A YOUNG WILD CAMEL

If you are sponsoring a young wild camel at the breeding centre, a sponsorship which covers vaccines, veterinary advice, hay and medicines, please remember to send your annual payment, which was due **1st March 2015**. **There are two new healthy young female camels looking for sponsors and their will soon be more!**

Very best wishes and renewed thanks for your great support for our on-going work – the protection and conservation of the critically endangered wild camel from extinction. It is with your help and generous support that we are able to achieve so much.

John Hare
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