

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

Patrons:

The Marchioness of Bute, Damon de Laszlo, Lulu Lytle,

Jane McMorland Hunter of Hafton,

Professor David Munro, The Dowager Marchioness of Reading, Lady Grant, Peter Hall,

Professor Yuan Guoying. Gerald Kidd

April 2011 - Newsletter Number 25

Dear Wild Camel Supporter,

Our redoubtable Patron and wild camel supporter par excellence, Jane McMorland Hunter, is undertaking yet another run to raise funds for the wild camel. We have just received a letter from Jane who is attempting a run on a scale she has never undertaken before. Here in her own words:

Brighton Marathon for The Wild Camels

Firstly, a very big thank-you to those of you who have sent cheques supporting my run. The Marathon is on 10th April so there is still plenty of time to sponsor me. (Please send cheques payable to the Wild Camel Protection Foundation to Jane McMorland Hunter, 19 Varna Road, London SW6 7LB or email me at janemcmorlandhunter@yahoo.co.uk). I am training in London, along the river Thames and have now completed my last long run, crossing over almost every bridge between Battersea and the Tower of London to make up the 20 miles!

Having never run more than 6 miles and just hit the wrong side of fifty, I am not aiming for a time in Brighton, just to complete the run, enjoy it, if possible, and raise as much money as I can for the Wild Camels. On the day I shall be wearing a bright yellow t-shirt with the Wild Camels on it so I hope I'll stand out in the crowd. I usually run with a toy camel, but I think 26.2 miles might be a bit tiring for him so he will be cheering from the sidelines.

Thank you for

your support.

Jane McMorland Hunter

PLEASE DO SUPPORT JANE IF YOU CAN AS EVERY DONATION IS IMPORTANT FOR THE WILD CAMELS.

Expedition and Survey by Vehicle and Domestic Camel China

On April 7th 2011, next week I set off on another expedition and field survey, with Chinese scientists, this time into the Taklimakan Desert and the Desert of Lop in north-west China. Prince Albert of Monaco's Trust for Endangered Species is funding the expedition with additional financial support from the Transglobe Educational Trust (Ran Fiennes) and the Chinese Xinjiang Environmental Protection Bureau which manages the Lop Nur Wild Camel National Nature Reserve in Xinjiang the only area where the wild camel is protected in China.

Camels have been sighted in the Taklimakan Desert and one of the objectives of the expedition is to investigate these sightings and confirm whether they are wild camels or not. Then with domestic Bactrian camels we will investigate the situation at Kumsu spring, which members will remember is where we found the badly polluted spring in 2006, where illegal gold miners had used potassium cyanide, which had leached into the fresh water spring and surrounding vegetation. A naïve population of wild life, discovered by us on an earlier expedition in 1999, had it seemed vanished. I will be talking at the RGS on November 10th 2011 about this expedition with details and photographs of what we find.

Mongolia - Hunter Hall Wild Camel Conservation, Breeding and Research Centre

When in 2002 WCPF decided it was important given the serious threats to the wild camels in both China and Mongolia to try and breed wild camels in a breeding centre in Mongolia it was completely unknown territory. It has never been done before and any undertaking was a major step for the Foundation. Having met with the Minister of the Mongolian Ministry of Nature and Environment and with his interest and strong support WCPF entered into an agreement with the Ministry, now called the MNET, as tourism has been added to this Ministry. The wild camels are a Mongolian Red Book listed species and therefore the NCES (National Commission for Endangered Species) a division of the MNET was also involved. The agreement between WCPF and MNET/NCES was signed in 2004 and gave us authority to establish a Wild Camel

Conservation and Breeding Centre in Mongolia. The area selected was a site with a spring within the Buffer Zone of the Great Gobi Special Protected Area 'A' where the wild camels currently exist in the wild. This was so the habitat would be part of the same ecosystem for the wild camels which we hoped would be bred at this new Centre. Fences and wooden buildings for storing winter hay and for use as shelters for the pregnant wild camels were built and local staff employed. Seven years later the Breeding Centre is a success with pregnant wild camels there now as I write, due to give birth to more young wild camels in April/May this year. The numbers have increased, and an International Stud Book detailing the genetic history of the captive wild camels at the Centre has been established. Behavioral studies have been made and genetic samples tested by the Veterinary University in Vienna.

However, it was always part of our plan to encourage national and local stewardship. This rare and amazing animal lives in Mongolia and WCPF has worked hard to encourage the local Mongolians to care for the wild camel, now confirmed as a separate species over 700,000 years old. In 2010 the GGSPA 'A' Director had expressed an interest in the Park Administration taking a greater role in the management of the Breeding Centre. He discussed this with us again at length at the Hustai Workshop – 'Developing a National Action Plan for Wild Camels in Mongolia', in August/September 2011. This Director is well known to WCPF and was one of the Mongolian participants who attended the WCPF/ZSL 2006 training fortnight, for both Chinese and Mongolian wild camel scientists, on Jasper Evans ranch in Kenya. He has managed the Great Gobi Specially Protected Area 'A' for many years. So WCPF having given this very careful consideration and after very lengthy discussions with the GGSPA 'A' Director and the MNET decided to hand the day to day management and supervision of the Hunter Hall Wild Camel Breeding and Conservation Centre over to the GGSPA 'A' Administration. This handover will be managed within a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the GGSPA 'A', a MOU which has been approved by the MNET and WCPF. The MOU will have an agreed Management Plan and Budget and on this basis WCPF will continue to fund the costs of the Hunter Hall Wild Camel Breeding, Conservation and Research Centre.

WCPF is very pleased the Hunter Hall Wild Camel Breeding, Conservation and Research Centre has been a success and it is largely thanks to the HUGE support and encouragement we have had over the seven years from all our members. So THANK YOU for giving us the funds to do this and a very special THANK YOU to Peter Hall who gave us the seed money to establish the project and make it possible. In recognition of Peter's contribution the Centre has been named the Hunter Hall Wild Camel Conservation, Breeding and Research Centre. We are handing over the management of

a very successful project, a Breeding Centre which is very much up and running. The Park has plans for involving the local communities more and also local vets and even using the Centre to help train young vets. So there are some interesting future plans.

WCPF will continue to raise funds for the Breeding Centre budget and also where possible support and fund the work of the GGSPA 'A' in protecting this large desert ecosystem, as it is the only area in Mongolia where the wild camel is protected in its natural habitat and is under very serious threat from mining both legal and illegal. Also as a locally, in-country managed Breeding and Conservation Centre for a IUCN and Red Book listed species WCPF with the GGSPA 'A' Administration have access to more opportunities for applying for funding grants from international Foundations.

Fund raising is difficult in the present economic climate so all ideas for fund raising activities are welcome

Camel day in Warwickshire

Once again Joseph and Rebecca Fossett of Joseph's Amazing Camels www.jacamels.co.uk have kindly offered to host a camel day in June to raise funds for the wild camel. Their generous support for this now Annual Wild Camel Event is much appreciated. There will be camel racing, camel polo, the ever-popular pig racing and numerous side shows. China (crockery not the country) smashing is always a winner. There is not a Football World Cup to reduce attendance as happened last year when England were playing on the same day, so please put this date in your diary and come and support this event if you can on **Sunday June 19th at 2.00 pm**, the Old Farmhouse, White House Farm, Idlicote, Near Shipston-on Stour, Warwick (it is very clearly sign-posted).

Fund-raising in Kenya

Plans are afoot to organise a fund-raising day in Kenya. Amanda Perrett, Jasper Evans daughter and a WCPF Trustee is planning a camel polo match (on dromedaries) and a race through a swamp, which borders the ranch where she lives in West Laikipia. More details shortly. I was staying on the ranch during part of January and February and some of the time was spent cooking-up fund-raising ideas. One or two members have already said they would be interested in participating in one way or another.

NEW WEBSITE

The new website is receiving lots of hits (and compliments). If you have not yet seen it do visit www.wildcamels.com with additional information at <www.johnhare.org.uk>

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Most members have renewed their annual membership but if you haven't, please send £20.00 (or its equivalent in foreign currency). You can pay by going 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 and ask for the WCPF bank and transfer details.** Many of members pay by **setting up a standing order** with their bank account to the WCPF UK account. This keep costs down.

Very best wishes

John Hare

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