

# **THE WILD CAMEL PROTECTION FOUNDATION**

## **Head Office, School Farm, Benenden, Kent, TN17 4EU England**

Tel: 44 (0) 1580 241132

Email: [harecamel@aol.com](mailto:harecamel@aol.com)

[www.wildcamels.com](http://www.wildcamels.com)

**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, Romy Shovelton.

**November 2016 - Newsletter Number 37**

**Dear Wild Camel Supporter,**

### **CAMEL RACE DAY – SUNDAY, 4th of SEPTEMBER 2016**

This event, held behind the magnificent backdrop of Chilham Castle in Kent, was a great success. Among the 3,000 people who attended the event, was the Mongolian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, His Excellency, Tulga Narkhuu and his wife together with a large contingent of Mongolians in national dress who came from as far afield as Manchester and Liverpool. Most of the Mongolian Embassy officials in London also attended.

There were 30 trade stands covering a wide range of crafts both British and Mongolian and such rarities as camel milk ice-cream, which sold particularly well. The splendid facilities at Chilham Castle ensured that there was adequate parking for the 800 cars. The only drawback to a highly successful day, which raised sufficient funds to pay for the winter hay at the wild camels breeding centre, was the late arrival of Joseph and Rebecca's racing camels. They arrived an hour and a half late, disrupting the day's programme. Consequently the first race scheduled to start at 3.00pm did not start until 4.30pm. This is not the first time that the Fossett's camels have been unable to arrive on time and consequently disappoint the crowd.

We are extremely grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Wheeler who allowed us to hold the event in the splendid grounds of Chilham Castle. We would also like to thank a number of people, the four patrons who attended the races, especially, Romy Shovelton who gave us so much help and also rode in the Ladies' Race, Jane McMorland Hunter for skillfully handling the day's finances, Lulu Lytle for once again organizing a very successful tombola and Gerard Kidd for his generous donation. A USA WCPF member, Nancy Fite and her husband and family came all the way from the Arizona and were particularly helpful with crowd control. They also donated many items for us to sell on the WCPF stall. Paul and Pam Dunn, for the second time running raised a considerable amount of money selling all the camel milk ice-cream. The Ashford Valley and Tickham Hunt helped in so many ways in particularly Victoria Kindersley, who gave us huge help with the parking, as did Philip Partridge and Christian Galdo. The ex-master of the hunt Robert Pascall had the distinction of being the overall winner in the races – even beating the Mongolian jockeys.

### **MONGOLIA**

Shortly after the races I travelled to Mongolia and then on to China. The British Ambassador to Mongolia, Catherine Arnold, kindly hosted a barbecue for my visit and I was able to meet various NGO representatives whose activities related to wildlife conservation – in particular the representative in Mongolia from the Zoological Society of London. Adiya Yadasuren, the Chairman of the WCPF NGO in Mongolia was also invited, as was WCPF patron, Lulu Lytle and her sister Emma Buchanan. Lulu and Emma then accompanied me on the 1500 kms journey to Bayan Torooi and the breeding centre at Zakhyn Us. It is so good for our patrons to see our work at first hand, especially Lulu who is an ardent camel lover and has been a long term supporter of WCPF. We are particularly grateful to her for finding the time to take an interest in our work, as she owns Soane, an extremely successful, but time-consuming, furniture and fabric design business in London. She later writes, "Emma, like me, has returned home feeling inspired by the work you, Adiya, Tsog Erdene, Dovchin and the rangers are doing at Zakhyn Us. To see the wild camels with my own eyes was every bit as thrilling as I had anticipated." Soane has made a very generous donation towards our work at the breeding centre and Emma gave us the funds to buy a motorbike for our assistant herdsman. For both these donations WCPF is extremely grateful.

The breeding centre is in excellent shape and I must again congratulate the director of Gobi "A", Dovchin on the excellent work he is doing on our behalf. Unfortunately one of the three male calves born this year at the Centre had died earlier in the year. I was told he was a sickly calf from birth and when the summer temperatures reached nearly 50 degrees Celsius he collapsed.

I spent a night and a day observing wildlife in Gobi "A" and although we did not see any wild camels we did see a number of Khulan (wild ass) and the black-tailed gazelle – both endangered species.

We are still receiving data showing the whereabouts of two of the satellite collared camels from the second release of 6 captive bred male wild camels from the Breeding Centre at Zakhyn Us. They appear to be moving about the area and

returning to the spring where they were released. It is interesting to note they do not stay together, but wander individually on their own. What we cannot tell is whether wild females accompany them. And we are hoping the camera trap study planned for 2017 might answer this question and assist in a more complete understanding of the movements of the released camels. Two of the collars have ceased to function (as they are expected to do after 18 months) but we have no reason to suspect that any of the released camels has died and they all appear to be thriving.

## CHINA

I travelled on to China from Mongolia where I was due to meet Anna Jemmett who is currently working as the Information Officer for the WCPF and managing the WCPF Facebook and Twitter accounts. My purpose was to introduce her to Yuan Lei, who is in charge of the Lop Nur Wild Camel National Nature Reserve, which WCPF helped the Chinese to establish, and other members of his staff at their offices in Urumqi. Unfortunately Anna's flight was delayed in Amsterdam and as she could not make the necessary connection, she was forced to abandon her visit. However, I was able to catch up on the latest developments in the reserve in China. There is a security situation in Xinjiang, the province where the reserve is situated and as a part response the military has taken control of part of the reserve. This is not wholly unwelcome news as the military has no interest in poaching wild camels and their presence keeps illegal miners or potential poachers out of the area. The Reserve office has taken some remarkable pictures on camera traps. One shows six young camel calves prancing joyfully around a fresh water spring near the mountains at the southern extremity of the reserve. Fresh water is a rarity in this salt desert but the encouraging feature is to see six wild camels under two years old looking very alive and well. The other photo shows a wild camel confronting a wolf. Wolves are big predators of the wild camel and are on the increase in both China and Mongolia. This remarkable confrontation shows the wolf running away with its tail between its legs. These photos can be seen on our website: [www.wildcamels.com](http://www.wildcamels.com) or on Facebook: <https://facebook.com/WildCamels>

## WCPF PLANS FOR 2017 AND BEYOND

While I was in UB I had several meetings with Adiya to work out the WCPF projects for 2017. Before there can be any more releases, WCPF must undertake an assessment of possible food sources, competition for these resources and water points in the Gobi "A" Reserve. Anna Jemmett and Adiya, who are both zoologists, will be implementing these two field projects between 2017- 2020 and will be using camera traps to monitor species at the existing water points in the Protected Area. WCPF is applying for funding for these essential field projects and hopes to be able to buy the camera traps, so that monitoring can be overseen by the Gobi "A" rangers. WCPF plans to work with Adiya on the training the rangers in the Gobi "A" Strictly Protected Area. The cost each year for this project work will be USD\$30,000, excluding Anna's remuneration which is being funded most generously by two of the WCPF Patrons.

## CAMEL DOCUMENTARY ON FRENCH TV and GEOGRAPHICAL ARTICLE

An excellent French documentary film about our work in Mongolia and on the camel in general was aired on the French TV channel Arte in February. Patrice Desenne and Francois Brey directed the film and Francois is also Director of the Camelomanes Association of France, a loyal supporter of WCPF for over 15 years and a great camel enthusiast. It is excellent and accurately displays and explains the work we are doing at the breeding centre and the history of the Camelid. We are greatly indebted to Francois for his lucid explanation of our work. Two additional parts of the series have been completed and Francois has just told me the film will be shown all over the world on French Television. This is a wonderful advertisement for WCPF and the work we do.

The distributors have sent us a link, which has **an English commentary**, and I would encourage you to watch the film:

<http://www.gad-distribution.com/video-full-829?p=rpibuflqlgyuqbdielvdieyatdpcdxtjgmeeqmqxdfwghfct&lang=eng>

There is also a link to the film on our website.

In August the Royal Geographical Society's magazine Geographical published on line this short article which I wrote for them. It provides a concise account of our work and the current situation of the wild camel in both China and Mongolia.

### The wild camel – a great survivor

*Listed as 'Critically Endangered' by the IUCN, the double-humped camel has nonetheless proved a remarkable breed. John Hare of the Wild Camel Protection Foundation makes a case for the future of the species. Very few people are aware that the critically endangered wild double-humped camel (*Camelus ferus*) is, according to ZSL, the eighth most endangered large mammal in the world. As few as 450 roam the Mongolian Gobi, in a 55,000 square kilometre reserve called the [Great Gobi Strictly Protected Area 'A'](#). Another 600 are found across the Chinese border, in the desert surrounding the dried-up lake of Lop Nur where, in 2003, the [Wild Camel Protection Foundation](#) (WCPF), a UK registered charity, established an even larger reserve. In 2008, genetic testing carried out by the Veterinary University in Vienna on samples sent by WCPF from both China and Mongolia proved the wild camel is an entirely new and separate species that evolved over 700,000 years ago – and not, as was previously thought, a domesticated Bactrian camel turned feral. In China, wild camels have developed the incredible ability to drink water with a higher salt*

content than seawater and they survived 43 atmospheric nuclear tests when their habitat was the former [Lop Nur nuclear test area](#). Today, their enemy is man, who enters their protected areas, often illegally, to explore for gold, copper or iron ore and shoots the wild camel for food. A growing wolf population in both countries also takes its toll.

In 1997, alarmed by these growing threats, I co-founded the WCPF, which obtained World Bank funding and established the Lop Nur Wild Camel National Nature Reserve in China – at 155,000 square kilometres one of the largest in the world. In 2004, the WCPF also established a Wild Camel Breeding Centre, in southwestern Mongolia, on the fringe of the Gobi 'A' site. Peter Hall, an Australian philanthropist, along with the [Mongolian Ministry for Nature](#) both provided essential support. We started with 12 wild camels and today there are 28. November to February, is when the male camels start their three-month-long 'rut' and the females come into season. As temperatures drop into the minus 30s, the male camels' adrenalin levels rise. If a group of young bull camels challenge the alpha male in the confines of a wild camel breeding centre, the situation can be explosive. Fences and wooden buildings can be smashed and herdsmen put in fear of their lives. The only solution is to remove the three-to-six-year-old males from the fray. Consequently, in October 2013 we released two young males into the desert, and six more in October 2015. They were fitted with satellite collars by the [Academy of Sciences in China](#) and both the releases have been extremely successful.

Our goals are to safeguard the wild camel's unique genetic makeup for future generations and to introduce fresh blood into the wild population by releasing camels we breed into their natural habitat. But it's not only the camel's genetic make-up that is unique. Its ability to survive both nuclear testing and salt water make it a species that must not be lost to the world on account of man's greed.

### **SUPPORT FROM ZOOS AROUND THE WORLD**

I gave a highly successful and well-attended talk at Knowsley Wildlife Park, Lancashire <[www.knowsleysafariexperience.co.uk](http://www.knowsleysafariexperience.co.uk)> who made a substantial donation to our funds as a result of a charity run for supporting the wild camels. Two of the Knowsley staff rode in the Ladies Race at the camel races on the Camel Day. Our links with Knowsley Wildlife Park are very positive and we are extremely grateful for their continuing support.

As I reported in the last newsletter, we are delighted that WCPF has recently received, in addition to UK support, a great deal of support and funding from American zoos – in addition to Alaska, Detroit, Cincinnati and the American Association of Zookeepers - Potawatomi Zoo Chapter, we now have **Milwaukie Zoo**. This is hugely encouraging and is much appreciated. It is clear that our work and message is spreading through the Zoo Network in the USA and the UK and is increasingly recognised by the scientific community.

### **EDUCATIONAL BOOKS AND OTHER THOUGHTS FOR CHRISTMAS**

The **three educational booklets** that we published for schoolchildren in China and Mongolia are also published in **English** and are informative on all aspects of the wild camel and the wider camelid family. They are fully illustrated with superb photographs. If any member would like to receive a set I can send them in the UK for the special price of £10 plus £2.80 postage. I also have a new **stock of hats, and scarves made from wild camel wool** harvested at the Breeding Centre. They cost £35.00 plus £2.80 postage. There are also superb **Mongolian slippers** (large, medium, small) at £30.00 plus £2.80 postage. All these goods can be viewed on our website <[www.wildcamels.com](http://www.wildcamels.com)> under **SHOP**.

### **GENEROUS DONATION**

Our thanks to Colin Griffith, an eminent sculptor, who lives in Kent, for making a beautiful pot decorated with wild camels, which raised £200 at auction for WCPF funds. We are immensely grateful to Colin. You can see his pots on the WCPF website.

### **WEBSITE, TWITTER and FACEBOOK**

Anna Jemmett continues to do a brilliant job with our communications on Facebook and Twitter and will be helping us with project writing and fundraising for future Breeding Centre field projects. Our website is maintained and updated by Deborah Swain and her costs are funded by a generous Beijing supporter who has been a member of WCPF since the beginning. Please do 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. Photos and a commentary on the release are on the site as is the link to the French TV documentary. Please see:

[www.wildcamels.com](http://www.wildcamels.com)

[www.facebook.com/WildCamels](https://www.facebook.com/WildCamels)

[www.twitter.com/WildCamels](https://www.twitter.com/WildCamels)

### **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 and only volunteer staff we rely on members to send us the subscription themselves. You can pay by going direct to the website [www.wildcamels.com](http://www.wildcamels.com) using PayPal, or by setting up a direct debit with your bank. 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 ACCOUNT 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 cost effective and a huge help for the work of WCPF, as with this regular income we pay the monthly costs at the Breeding Centre.

#### **SPONSORING A YOUNG WILD CAMEL**

**With three young wild camels calves shortly to be born at the Breeding Centre we are looking for their sponsorship.** If you are already sponsoring a young wild camel at the Breeding Centre, your sponsorship covers vaccines, veterinary advice, hay and medicines. Please remember to send your annual payment, which was due **1st March 2016.**

**THIS IS OUR LAST NEWSLETTER FOR 2016. SO IF YOU ARE THINKING OF MAKING A DONATION TO A CHARITY FOR CHRISTMAS OR GIVING SOMEONE THE PRESENT OF A WCPF MEMBERSHIP THEN PLEASE REMEMBER WCPF.**

Renewed thanks for your great support for our on-going work – the protection of the critically endangered wild camel in its fragile desert habitat from extinction. It is with your help and your generous support that we are able to achieve so much.

Very best wishes

**John Hare**  
**Wild Camel Protection Foundation Head Office,**  
**School Farm, Benenden, Kent TN17 4EU**  
[www.wildcamels.com](http://www.wildcamels.com)  
[www.johnhare.org.uk](http://www.johnhare.org.uk)

#### **POSTSCRIPT FROM KATE RAE - THE OTHER CO-MANAGING WCPF TRUSTEE**

I am delighted to announce that John Hare FRGS has been awarded the Nairamdal (Friendship) Medal by the President of Mongolia for his outstanding contribution to the protection of the wild camel. The Citation reflects his long association with Mongolia, his untiring work to protect the wild camel and its fragile desert habitat in Mongolia, the promotion of Mongolia in the UK and the fact that the UK Camel Day is also celebrated as day of all things Mongolian. It is the highest medal Mongolia can give to a foreigner.