

THE 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, Emma Buchanan, Professor Yuan Guoying, Peter Hall AO, Kate Humble, Jane McMorland Hunter of Hafton, Dr. Yuan Lei, Gerald Kidd, Damon de Laszlo, Lulu Lytle, Professor David Munro MBE, Amanda Perrett, Romy Shovelton.

September 2020 - Newsletter Number 43

Dear Wild Camel Supporter

HERDSMAN Tsog Erdene

Tosg Erdene has been our invaluable and senior herdsman since 2003. This spring he unfortunately lost his right eye in an accident involving his horse. Mongolians are the toughest of the tough and with stoical aplomb Tsog Erdene informed us he would have to have a replacement glass eye. This operation has now been successfully completed and Tsog Erdene is back on duty. WCPF covered part of his medical costs. He is an excellent employee especially with his extensive knowledge of wild camels. I am sure you all join me in wishing him well. We have recruited a third herdsman called, Sosi, and this means that during the months when the wild camels leave the breeding centre enclosure and summer graze in the Buffer Zone of the GGSPA "A", they are properly supervised, and in particular under Sosi's supervision are separated from domestic Bactrian camels

LULU LYTLE

Lulu has been a generous supporter of WCPF almost since its inception when she initiated a Christmas fund-raiser for wild camels in her shop Soane, in the Pimlico Road. As a Patron she continued to help us in many ways, including fund-raising, and we are delighted she has now agreed to become a WCPF trustee.

NEW WILD CAMEL DEVELOPMENTS

Despite the obvious difficulties of the last few months, much positive wild camel action has taken place, especially in Mongolia. Anna Jemmett, WCPF's PhD student and Dr. Adiya Yadamsuren have, in a joint exercise with the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), co-funded by WCPF, established a large network of camera traps in the Great Gobi Specially Protected Area "A" (GGSPA "A"). Camera traps have also been installed along the Chinese/Mongolia border, which forms the southern boundary of the reserve. These border camera traps have been funded by the Convention for Migratory Species (CMS) with co-funding from WCPF. We hope to have the initial analysis very soon.

And not only is the analysis a huge task. This extract from Dr. Adiya's excellent report on the project to Prague Zoo - who generously provided additional funding - highlights the difficulties involved.

Field work updates - Spring 2020

We had organizing to divide to the three field teams in Great Gobi A SPA including in East, Middle and West because the camera trapping study area was covered huge area approximately 45.000 square kilometres. Each team has 3-4 team members including driver, researcher, and ranger and assistant, also

each team has an extra ranger from the Park who drives a motorcycle. Motorcycles are very important to find the exact GPS position of the installed and installing cameras especially in rocky dried desert area, break-stone area, drainage of between hills and mountain area. I am very appreciative for the rangers who are attending this field trip with motorcycles. It was very hard to drive from place to place in the desert by motorcycle. Also, border soldiers helped us to find the right place of the cameras locations which camera GPS location is closest with the international border area.

This spring we installed 113 new L-shine cameras in new different place according to our field method protocols which we discussed early. Also, we has exchange the 20 Cerenova cameras instead new L-shine cameras. Also, we changed the batteries from the old installed cameras which was the batteries died. Also, we replaced 8 broken cameras with new cameras.

September/October camera trap field project second year.

Anna will not be able to travel to Mongolia to be part of this field trip however Dr Yadamsuren will lead two teams and ZSL Mongolia will lead two teams. Dr Yadamsuren will also visit the camera traps along the order as part of his CMS project. Hopefully in the Spring of 2021 we will have some interesting pictures of autumn and winter activity in the GGSPAA. Our thanks to Prague Zoo as it has generously agreed to fund one of our teams and the batteries..

Sheffield University

Anna Jemmett's application to Sheffield University to use their facilities to undertake genetic work on wild camel samples was successful, although at the moment she cannot take advantage of this because of Corona restrictions. Nevertheless we hope she will soon be able to undertake work there, as genetics form an important part of her PhD as can be seen from this extract from her report:.

The application for the genetics lab at the University of Sheffield was successful. This six month project was started in February 2020 and although it is currently on hold due to covid-19, I will return to the lab as soon as possible. This placement aims to analyze wild camel genetic samples collected from the GGSPA "A", using microsatellite markers. This will give greater understanding of population structure and hybridization of wild camels in the GGSPA "A".

2020 Planned Trip to Mongolia

The scientific trip to the breeding centre planned for April 2020 had to be postponed because of the travel ban. This was unfortunate as in addition to the veterinarian from Knowsley Park, the Chief Veterinarian from Prague Zoo was to accompany the team. His advice on finalising the Stud Book of the captive wild camels and also help with ear-tagging and micro chipping would have been invaluable. But the visit has only been postponed and will take place as soon as the Corona virus situation allows.

Toli Bulag

Toli Bulag is the name of the proposed second wild camel breeding centre. The existing centre at Zakhyn Us is full with 35 wild camels enclosed in 150 acres (60 hectares). In 2019 Dr. Adiya and myself identified a new site at Toli Bulag, also in the Buffer Zone of GGSPA "A" as was explained in Newsletter 42. Since then, Adiya has submitted an excellent proposal to the Ministry of Nature for the establishment of the site and obtained permission from local government officials. As I write he has travelled to see the Governor of Bayan Hongar in whose province Toli Bulag lies. They will travel to Toli Bulag and I hope that next time I write there will be good news of the agreement to establish a new wild camel-breeding centre in Mongolia. At this stage of progress we are now starting fund-raising for the US \$65,000, which will be required for the construction of the new breeding centre. We are delighted that Prague Zoo has given their full support for this second site at Toli Bulag.

Births at Zakhyn Us

This year there were seven births (a record) – 3 females and 4 males. Sadly, one female died and an autopsy is being undertaken. All the others are well and have been successfully ear-tagged.

New Office.

Adiya has obtained a new (and cheaper) office premise in Ulaan Baator. With the camera trap data analysis in full swing a new office in which to work is important. It also has good storage facilities for the security of our field equipment, i.e. camera traps and batteries.

Zoom meeting October 2020

The meeting held last year at the ZSL offices with the WCPF's scientific advisors in London last October cannot be repeated this year because of the Corona virus. Instead there will be a Zoom meeting involving our scientific advisors including Jaroslav Simek of Prague Zoo and Dr. Pamela Burger of the Veterinary University in Vienna, Anna Jemmett, Kathryn Rae and myself together with Adiya in Mongolia. The date is to be finalised but it will take place during October.

Environmental Clubs

When Toli Bulag is established, the plan is with the full support of the Soum local council officials, to extend the environmental awareness programmes and eco-clubs and to distribute booklets about the wild camels to local schools and communities. This will be an extension of the work we are already doing in the Soums near the existing Zakhyn Us breeding centre. Yorkshire Wildlife Park is generously funding our four-year environmental educational programme.

Lucy McLean is in contact with Basan Bata – leader of a village eco-club near Toli Bulag. Please click **KIDS** on the WCPF website <www.wildcamels.com> and go to **Great Gobi Kids Corner** to see the work Lucy is doing promoting the wild camels to younger wild camel enthusiasts.

CHINA

Dr. Yuan Lei is now back in charge of the wild camel office near Urumchi and this is the latest report he sent to me recently. Unfortunately, for Corona virus and political reasons it is not possible to visit the Lop Nur Wild Camel National Nature Reserve at the moment but it is excellent to learn that Leilei is back in charge of things.

I have started my work this week (June). The reserve's new address is long way from original place. It will take over one hour to drive on the office way.

At present, Lop Nur nature reserve office have total 17 staff. We have four departments. They are education department, ecological supervise department, scientific monitoring department and executive office.

Works:

- 1, Public awareness education: the staffs went to 2 schools to do wild camel protection and Lop Nur ecological environmental protection.*
- 2, Sanlongsha checkpoint has been improved and increase several facilities last year.*
- 3, keeping on illegal human activities management.*
- 4, Wild camel protection association cooperate post office issue a wild camel first day cover.*

Plan

- 1. We are going to cooperate with Prof.Liushaochuang to do another project for wild camel's GPS collar. This project will help us to know more detail what about wild camel's home range and migration. This project is supported by Xinjiang Forestry and Grassland Administration.*
- 2. Regular patrol inspection,.*
- 3. Do more public awareness education.*
- 4. Enhance human activities supervise.*
- 5. Carry on camera trap in the Spring points.*

WILD CAMEL PRINT

Charlotte Williams, a highly talented wildlife artist, has painted a terrific portrait of a wild camel in its natural environment in the Gobi Desert. WCPF has limited edition prints at £200 a print plus postage. The original is also for sale framed at £7,000 – the normal price her work commands. The prints are selling steadily and have been well received. Please look at Charlotte's website www.charlotte-williams.com. She is a great camel lover and is determined to help us raise funds for our work. Dr. Jane Goodall, our Life Patron, has given us full support for this project, and the wild camel print and portrait information has gone out on her personal Facebook and Twitter feeds.

FUNDRAISING

Without a Camel Day this year we have had to look at other ways to raise funds and selling the wild camel prints is one opportunity. The sale of the original portrait will provide us with another excellent opportunity to raise funds for the new breeding centre. We would welcome suggestions from our members and supporters on how best to sell the portrait i.e. at an auction or through a display in an art gallery. Do please send in any suggestions. You can see the portrait on WCPF's website at www.wildcamels.com. Incidentally, the website is maintained for us by the excellent Deborah Swain in Italy and her work is funded by a generous member.

To help us with ideas for maximising publicity and also to increase our social media profile, WCPF has recruited **TAMSYN HAYWARD** to help with the enhanced publicity programme. She is beavering away and results of her efforts are starting to show.

We would like in particular to thank the zoos in the UK and the USA who have continued to give us financial support in spite of the very difficult times they have been going through. We are extremely grateful to them all.

PERFECT PLANET – Sir David Attenborough

Some members may recall I visited Mongolia in January 2019 – the coldest time of year. The reason, which I was unable to speak about at that time, was the BBC were making a programme about the mating habits of the wild camel which takes place when the temperatures hovering at around – 35 Celsius. The film is due to be shown on the BBC in January 2021 and Sir David Attenborough is giving the voice-over. The camera crew obtained the material they required both at the breeding centre and in the Gobi "A" and were very pleased with the results. This will raise awareness of the wild camel and of our work to protect this remarkable animal. These nature programmes are extremely popular world-wide and we are hoping to use the publicity to raise funds for our work in Mongolia.

ZOOM MEETING

Lulu Lytle, is interviewing me about the wild camel on Zoom on **Monday 5th OCTOBER at 6.00 p.m.** which will go out to 100 'first come first serve' selected viewers. **IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE ONE OF THE 100 PLEASE LET ME KNOW AS SOON AS YOU RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER. I will then send you the MEETING LINK.**

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Many thanks, to all our supporters world-wide. 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, then send £20.00 (or its equivalent in foreign currency) to WCPF. With over 600 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 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 the regular income is essential for WCPF and the long-term sustainability of our work to protect the wild camel.

SPONSORING A YOUNG WILD CAMEL

Many thanks to our Members, who are currently sponsoring young wild camel calves at the Zakhyn Us, Breeding Centre. Five calves were born this year (all males). If you want to sponsor a captive wild camel calf please contact me direct. There is a sponsorship form on the website. Sponsorship covers vaccines, veterinary advice, hay and medicines. Sponsors please remember your annual payment, is due on 1st March each year.

LEGACIES

WCPF has received several bequests in Wills, from wild camel supporters. All bequests WCPF receive are spent either directly at the breeding centre or to fund wild camel research. So if you are making a Will do please remember the Wild Camel Protection Foundation.

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 generous support that we are able to achieve so much.

GIVE SOMEONE A WCPF MEMBERSHIP THIS CHRISTMAS

Members can buy gifts or Christmas presents by going to SHOP on the website www.wildcamels.com and orders should be sent directly to me at harecamel@aol.com. Postage always presents a problem, however, by sending the order directly to me, I can respond with the exact cost of postage.

Very best wishes,

John

John Hare OBE FRGS
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www.johnhare.org.uk

PARADISE DAMMED – a book for Christmas

I managed to use “lock-down” to write a book about our journey with camels (dromedary) around the Rift Valley Lake, Lake Turkana in Kenya in 2006. That journey was a “first” as the lake had not been circumambulated with camels in recorded history. Jane Goodall DBE has written a generous foreword and Robin Hanbury-Tenison OBE (an amazing Corona virus survivor and founder of Survival International) has written a generous paragraph of support. The book also explains what has happened to the lake since our journey and the devastation to the tribes we encountered due to the construction of huge dams. See johnhare.org.uk for more details.

Available from John Hare at School Farm, Benenden, Kent TN17 4EU UK at a paperback price of £15.50 plus £2.50 postage. Outside the UK, please add £5.00 for postage.