

THE WILD CAMEL PROTECTION FOUNDATION

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Dear Wild Camel Supporter

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

During the last twelve months and in spite of Covid, there has been a great deal of positive activity. As many supporters will know, Anna Jemmett is undertaking a PhD on the wild camel funded by WCPF at the University of Kent with the emphasis on wild camel genetics. Adiya (Mongolian wild camel expert and consultant to WCPF) recently supervised the collection of hair, taken from underneath all 46 wild camels' tails at the breeding centre, including the five wild camel calves born this year. These samples have arrived in Sheffield University where there is a superb genetics department and Anna has been given permission to test the DNA of the hair samples using Sheffield University facilities. We hope this pioneering work will enable us to undertake finalisation of the wild camel stud book which is an urgent priority.

Fortunately, Dr Pamela Burger of the Veterinary University of Vienna, who spent five years testing wild double-humped camels blood, bone and skin samples for WCPF and published a paper in 2008 on the wild camel being an entirely separate species of camel, is voluntarily monitoring her work. The results of this DNA sampling will also help us to select the appropriate number of wild camels, which will be transferred to the new Breeding Centre at Toli Bulag (see below).

MONGOLIA

We have been running a programme in cooperation with the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and ZSL Mongolia to cover the 55,000 square kilometer Great Gobi Specially Protected Area Gobi "A" - the Mongolian habitat of the wild camels - with camera traps. Anna Jemmett is the overall supervisor of the project as part of her PhD. The objective is to ascertain the exact number of remnant wild camels in Gobi "A". At the moment it is suggested there are approximately 450 wild camels there but a good number of people think it could be more.

The camera traps have been put in place and now cover the whole of the reserve. Unfortunately current travel restrictions have meant that Anna could not travel to

Mongolia. However, Adiya has been very active in supervising the project, coordinating with Anna, and collecting data. In particular he placed the traps in a highly sensitive area encompassing the Chinese/Mongolia border. This section of the project was funded by the Convention for Migratory Species (CMS). He travelled there recently with a representative of ZSL Mongolia and we await the results of the data, which will be analyzed by ZSL and funded by WCPF.

Toli Bulag

The new breeding centre site of Toli Bulag, 300 miles away from the existing breeding centre, is situated 20 miles from an old Russian research centre at Ekhyn Gol in the buffer zone of Gobi "A".

The excellent news is that all the relevant local authorities and the Mongolian government have approved the project.

However, the Covid situation has meant that we cannot obtain fencing and posts of good quality from China. The border is closed at the moment and fencing and posts of the required quality are not obtainable in Mongolia. This delay in constructing the site has meant that we have had to delay the transfer of the approximately 12 wild camels from Zakhyn Us which will form the nucleus of the herd at Toli Bulag. It is planned to transfer the wild camels on foot as it is felt it will be far less traumatic for them than if they were sedated and made to travel by truck. Prague Zoo, with whom we have a cooperation agreement, has generously sent us plans for the camel buildings, which will be required on site and we are hopeful that we will end up with a "state of the art" breeding centre once we can begin construction. Prague Zoo's Deputy Director, Jaroslav Simek, generously devised the building plans.

Adiya has also been shortlisted with an application to the Yak Foundation, which was introduced to us by Dr Pamela Burger. The funding from this will cover tree and orchard planting at the site of the new breeding centre. We are frequently asked why are we establishing a new centre so far away from the old centre. The reason is that if disease struck in one of the two centres, the other one would be sufficiently far away to prevent spread. This does however mean that an entirely new staff will have to be recruited for the new centre and Adiya is currently vetting applicants. The new centre is in the Buffer Zone of Gobi "A" and is in wild camel habitat.

Fundraising for Toli Bulag

Our financial goal for Toli Bulag is £125,000 and so far we have raised £25,000. WCPF co-Trustee Lulu Lytle is planning a fund-raising event at her shop Soane in the Pimlico Road, London in late September and it is hoped we can circulate a date for this shortly. Meanwhile, if members have fund-raising ideas please do get in touch with either Kate Rae or myself – we are determined to reach our goal.

The public's reaction to the David Attenborough programme Perfect Planet which featured the wild camels on January 19th 2021, is the prime reason we have so far raised £25,000 for the Toli Bulag.

Zakhyn Us Breeding Centre

Knowsley Safari Park near Manchester has also been involved with camel welfare and veterinary management at the breeding centre at Zakhyn Us and we are particularly grateful for their help. Adiya has been awarded a veterinary training scholarship from the World Conservation Network in the USA and we are also extremely grateful for this. He will train with Prague Zoo's eminent chief veterinarian (Covid permitting) later this year in Prague and will undergo further training at Zakhyn Us. This will not turn him into a qualified vet, but will give him skills in veterinary procedures which will be extremely valuable at the two breeding centers.

Five wild camel calves were born this year at Zakhyn Us (two females and three males). One of the main reasons we are developing Toli Bulag is because Zakhyn Us has reached its carrying capacity of 35 wild camels on its 150 acres (60 hectares).

CHINA

Unfortunately the Lop Nur Wild Camel National Reserve, which WCPF mapped, established and obtained funding is in the centre of the area where the Uighur people live. As a result, we do not have as much direct contact with what is happening at the reserve as we would like. On the 26th of May this year the Director Yuan Lei, my good friend and the son of Professor Yuan Guoying with whom I undertook 5 expeditions into Lop Nur in the nineteen-nineties, sent me this short report:

"We still work hard on wild camel protection. In recent months, we have done many things.

- 1. We have collared total 8 wild camels with Beidou collaring. This project cooperates with Prof. Liu Shaochuang. We have done this work 15 days ago.*
- 2. We also have organized a multi-disciplinary scientific research team. They will work in the field in this year.*
- 3. We have started to do master plan of the reserve and the reserve will be developed according to this master plan. This plan will be finished at the end of this year.*
- 4. We will start to another project with 10 Beidou satellite collaring to monitoring wild camel in the reserve."*

SPONSORSHIP

If you would like to sponsor a captive wild camel calf please contact me direct. There is a sponsorship form on the website. Sponsorship of a young wild camel at the Breeding Centre covers vaccines, veterinary advice, hay and medicines. Sponsors please remember your annual payment, is due on 1st March. We will allocate one of the new camel calves to you and you can choose its name. You will also be sent photographs of the calf.

PUBLICATIONS

We have revised and updated the three highly successful books for children about the

wild camel to include new maps and plans for the Toli Bulag breeding centre. The Korkeasaari Zoo Helsinki has generously agreed to help fund the updated reprint and sponsor the new books in Mongolian. We will be reprinting the booklets in Mongolian for distribution to Mongolian school children. The British Ambassador in Mongolia has kindly written a Foreword.

WEBSITE, TWITTER and FACEBOOK

Tamsyn Hayward and Anna Jemmett continue to successfully manage our social media sites and Lucy McLean, a Scottish schoolgirl who has volunteered, as part of her Duke of Edinburgh award, to set up a junior page on our website is working hard. Do have a look at her efforts on behalf of junior supporters on www.wildcamels.com - **Gobi Kids Corner**.

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 very beginning. Please visit our Website and Facebook page, as they are updated regularly and contain a great deal of wild camel information and pictures from both China and Mongolia. Photos and a commentary on the wild camel releases are also on the site, as is the link to the French TV documentary. Please see: www.wildcamels.com; www.facebook.com/WildCamels/; www.twitter.com/WildCamels

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.

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.**

GIVE SOMEONE A WCPF MEMBERSHIP AS A GIFT

Members can buy gifts 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. We will send a pack of 6 free wild camel postcards to those of you who

recruit a new member.
Very best wishes,

John Hare

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