
Addax 98 Fact Sheet (10/1/98)

Addax (*Addax nasomaculatus*)

Description: The addax is a large, sand-colored antelope with long thin spiral horns that slant back and upward. It stands about 42 inches at the shoulder and has large splayed hooves for walking in sand. It is marked by a brown tufted patch of hair on its forehead and a band of white hairs across its nose.

Range: While addax formerly ranged over the entire Sahara Desert of Africa, they are now restricted to isolated populations in Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Chad.

Habitat: The addax inhabits desert sand dunes and hard-packed desert terrain with little water and scant vegetation.

Diet: The addax feeds on desert grasses and tender young shoots of shrubs and trees. It gets all its water from the plants it eats.

Social Organization: Addax do not establish long-term territories but move back and forth across their range following the rains. Before they were eliminated from most of their range, addax probably lived in family groups of five to twenty individuals led by a dominant male. Addax in the wild are now found as isolated individuals or in groups of two to four.

Conservation Status: Less than 250 addax are estimated to be left in the wild. It is listed as an Appendix I species by CITES, and as endangered in the IUCN Red Book.

Threats to Survival: Among the causes for the addax's decline was indiscriminate hunting with automatic weapons from motorized vehicles. Also, intrusions of tourists have chased addax to exhaustion and death. Prolonged droughts and wars in the region have further reduce their numbers.

Zoo Programs - SSP: While addax herds have bred well in captivity, few pedigrees were kept on this species. Therefore, genetic studies of captive herds will have to be done in order to determine how the herds are related. There are currently about 230 addax in the SSP population, and over 1,000 registered in zoological institutions worldwide. The availability of space for animals and placement of surplus animals continues to the

most significant problems facing the SSP. An international studbook that was recently completed should help captive breeding efforts.

Conservation: The newly created Air/Tenere Reserve in Niger has set aside prime addax habitat. Enforcement of hunting laws in these regions is difficult, however. Large captive herds are being studied to better understand the dynamics of addax behavior.

Education: Education of local residents is an important component of conservation efforts. Many people have never seen an addax though it is an important part of regional culture.

Reintroduction: Reintroduction of captive-bred addax to the wild is now possible. Addax from the Hannover Zoo in Germany and the San Diego Zoo were recently reintroduced to Bou Hedma National Park in Tunisia, a country where addax have not been seen in decades. Currently, the World Wildlife Fund and the London Zoological Society, in cooperation with the government of Niger, are planning to reintroduce zoo-bred animals to add to the herds of the Air/Tenere Reserve.

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