

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

November 2010 - Newsletter Number 24

Dear Wild Camel Supporter,

Trustees and Patrons

Last June, Gerald Kidd, who was introduced to us by Lady Bute, became a Patron of the WCPF. Mr. Kidd is a partner in a firm of solicitors, which deals mainly with charities and advises on charity law. He has visited the Zakhyn-Uus breeding centre in Mongolia with Lady Bute and rode on a domestic Bactrian camel to the nearby holy Buddhist Mother Mountain. We welcome him as our 10th Patron.

VERY IMPORTANT NEWS - A NEW SPECIES

We were delighted to learn from Dr Pamela Burger of the Institute of Population Genetics, University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna in a recently published a paper the following:-

'Based on genetic and historical evidences the Mongolian wild camel (Camelus ferus) is a distinct species with an independent evolutionary history and clearly separated from its domestic relative, the Bactrian camel (Camelus bactrianus). However, Hybridization between wild and domestic Bactrian camels occurs and threatens the unique gene pool of the Mongolian wild camel population. Future genetic and ecological studies should also include the highly endangered wild camels in China. Conserving the genetic integrity and uniqueness of the last wild camels must rank among the highest priorities for developing conservation strategies in both Mongolia and China.'

For years our critics have alleged the wild camel was a Silk Road runaway - a feral camel. The Trustees have been saying since 1993 it was a separate species and it is good

to be proved we were correct.

The wild camel is a separate species and has been around for 700,000 years.

As a result of this discovery, the wild camel will no longer be referred to as, the wild Bactrian camel (*Camelus Bactrianus ferus*) but simply, the wild camel (*Camelus ferus*).

MONGOLIA

AUGUST 2010 WORKSHOP - 'NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION AND STRATEGY FOR THE WILD BACTRIAN CAMEL IN MONGOLIA'

As Managing Trustees, Kate Rae and I attended a Workshop in Hustai, Mongolia in August-September 2010 - **WILD CAMEL MONGOLIAN NATIONAL CONSERVATION PLAN** which was hosted by the Ministry Nature Environment and Tourism (MNET), the Wild Camel Protection Foundation UK, the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and the Wild Camel Protection Mongolian NGO. The aim of the Workshop was, with the participation of national and international stakeholders, to develop and agree a Mongolian Ministry approved National Conservation Strategy and Plan for the protection of the wild camel in Mongolia. Participants included leading MNET government officials, local government governors and officials, international wild Bactrian camel experts, officials and rangers from GGSPAA, and scientists from ZSL. The Workshop considered all current knowledge of *Camelus ferus*, and discussed actions necessary for the species' survival. Conclusions reached at the Workshop will form the basis of the National Plan adopted by the MNET. This plan, based on International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) guidelines will cover every aspect of wild camel protection - including future plans for the Hunter Hall Wild Camel Conservation, Breeding and Research Centre at Zakhyn Us. As the only herd of wild camels in captivity should wild camels disappear in the wild it is crucial that the Centre is part of the National Plan and its planned programme of activities. WCPF also held discussions with ZSL on the future of the Centre at Zakhyn Us, and the importance of preparing a release programme for a small group of these wild camels, bred at the Centre into the Mongolian Gobi desert their natural habitat. Two sites are being considered the GGSPA 'A' and GGSPA 'B', however with the mining threat to Gobi 'A', GGSPA 'B' which is a former wild camel habitat might be a better release site.

Apart from discussing the contents of the National Plan at the Workshop, what became apparent from the national speakers is the URGENT problem of illegal mining by 'ninjas' in the Great Gobi Strictly Protected Area 'A' and the pressure being exerted on the Mongolian Parliament by western mining companies to de-gazette Protected Areas in Mongolia so they can become mining sites. Unfortunately for this new species the wild camel the Gobi desert appears to have large gold deposits.

Dr. Pamela Burger spoke at the Workshop and identified another serious threat to the new species, *Camelus ferus* **hybridization from cross breeding with the domestic Bactrian camel and strongly recommended that this be stopped at all costs.**

1. **Legal and illegal Gold Mining**
2. **Hybridization (cross breeding with the domestic Bactrian camel).**

To try and counter these threats additional annual funding for the renamed, Hunter Hall Wild Camel Conservation, Breeding and Research Centre at Zakhyn-Uus, will be required. WCPF has agreed to try and provide additional funding for the Great Gobi Specially Protected Area "A" (GGSPAA) staff so they can undertake more ranger patrols to deter illegal miners and initiate local education campaigns. There has been rapid increase in mining in Mongolia by Mongolians as well as western mining companies. The catalyst for western investors was a decision by Mongolia's new president to repeal a windfall tax on copper and gold profits imposed in 2005 by a previous government with a green agenda. The present government has finalised a deal with the Canadian-listed Ivanhoe Mines to develop a \$5 billion gold and copper mine and another 15 areas have been identified as being \$15 billion sites. Mongolia's projected wealth is enormous and Ulaanbaator now resembles a boom town. Unfortunately for this species, the wild camel which has been around for over half a million years, one of the gold mining areas is situated in between the Gobi 'A' and Gobi 'B' Protected Areas. As the Gobi 'A' is the home of the wild Bactrian camel this news impacts seriously on our work trying to protect the wild Bactrian camel and its habitat. It has been established by the illegal 'ninja' miners in the protected area that there is gold within Gobi 'A' and dozens of illegal miners have already entered the protected area. Gold mining legal and illegal is particularly hazardous to the fragile desert ecosystem and destroys the water points for the wild camels.

Earlier this year the WCPF has given funding to the Gobi 'A' Park Administration Director for the Rangers for their field patrols within the GGSPA 'A'. It is mainly for the cost of petrol as the area which the patrols have to cover is vast and the cost of petrol very expensive. **We would like if possible to make a regular contribution of US\$1,500 every quarter, for the cost of their patrols. So if any member would like to fund a ranger patrol, please contact me at the Wild Camel head office.**

The Mongolian NGOs are mounting a vigorous campaign to try and stop the de-gazetting of the Mongolian wildlife reserves and protected areas, which have been identified as sites of mineral wealth. WCPF is monitoring the situation closely and we will do all in our power to assist these NGOs and resist possible de-gazetting of the Great Gobi 'A'. The critically endangered Gobi bear and the endangered wild ass and black-tailed gazelle also live in Gobi 'A' so we are co-operating with all national and international organisations interested in protecting this fragile desert ecosystem.

However, Mongolian 'gold fever' is everywhere there now and mining will change the country, its land and its people irrevocably.

In view of this, WCPF issued a Press Release on 29th May 2010 as follows:

DESERT DESTRUCTION

Recent information just received by the Wild Camel Protection Foundation indicates illegal mining pressures in the Great Gobi Specially Protected Area 'A' in Mongolia, the natural habitat of the critically endangered wild Bactrian camel, are extremely serious and out of control.

The wild Bactrian camel, which acts as an 'umbrella' species in this remote and pristine desert, protecting other critically endangered species such as the wild ass, the Gobi bear and the black-tailed gazelle is under threat in a Protected Area, a National Nature Reserve.

Over 200 illegal miners, nicknamed 'ninjas' have entered the reserve and are using primitive and intensely destructive methods to mine gold. The Park Authorities do not have the financial and/or manpower resources to deal with the problem, which is occurring in a vast area covering over 55,000 square kilometres

.The recent winter in Mongolia has been severe, but this did not stop the miners mining gold. They have overwintered in the heartland of the Park - the ONLY wild Bactrian camel habitat in Mongolia - leaving the area littered with rubbish, plastic bags and tins and the desert torn up by vehicle tracks.

There are only 450 wild Bactrian camels in Mongolia and fewer than 600 in north-west China and in both areas they are threatened with illegal gold and iron-ore mining.

Pressure is being put on the Mongolian government by miners and speculators to de-gazette the Specially Protected Area 'A' and allow gold to be legally mined.

The Park established in 1978 by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Mongolian Government is home to both endangered large and small mammals, including species of gerbils, jerboas and also to rare endangered desert flora.

The situation cannot be controlled with the resources currently available and awareness needs to be raised world-wide to the threats to this and other Parks and Reserves in Mongolia, and pressure put on both illegal miners and legal mining companies to respect the laws and the National Nature Reserves.

To assist the GGSPA'A'A will mean an annual Budget increase to \$55,000 a year for Mongolia. In addition, the genetic statement gives additional importance

and urgency to the field expedition and survey in the Taklamakan Desert in China in 2011 in which I will participate (*see under China, below*).

After the workshop I visited with ZSL and Vienna University scientists the Conservation, Breeding and Research Centre at Zakhyn Us, while the Viennese scientists micro-chipped and blood-tested the wild camels there.

CONSERVATION, BREEDING AND RESEARCH CENTRE

WCPF is now managing a successful breeding programme and this means concentrating our resources on the Centre itself to ensure it is managed well. We are about to agree an MOU with the MNET which will mean closer co-operation with the GGSPA' A' Director on the activities of the Centre. As the Centre is situated in the Buffer Zone of the GGSPA' A' it is important we work closely together and use all the resources available. WCPF will help the Director and the rangers whenever possible and they will work closely with Tsog-erdene giving him extra help when required, particularly during the breeding season. By concentrating our resources on the Centre we hope to develop a group of wild camels which can with the guidance of ZSL be released as a family group within the next three to five years.

CAMEL CONFERENCE (Institute of Population Genetics, University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna)

Then in early October, I was invited by Dr Pamela Burger to attend a two-day international camel conference at the Institute in Vienna, which has been responsible for undertaking the genetic tests on wild camel samples from China and Mongolia. International representatives spoke on many different and fascinating aspects of the Dromedary and Bactrian camel including archaeology through history, camel milk, genetics and disease. The announcement of a new and separate species of wild camel was made to the conference and great interest was shown both in this and in recent developments concerning wild camel protection both in China and Mongolia. Unfortunately no delegates from Mongolia were able to attend, but Yuan Lei from the Lop Nur Wild Camel National Nature Reserve, Xinjiang China attended and outlined recent developments there and protection of the wild camel in China. I was able to have many productive discussions especially in relation to the proposed release of wild camels back into the Gobi in Mongolia.

HAY APPEAL - MONGOLIA BREEDING CENTRE

Winters now are very harsh in Mongolia, with snow arriving early in October and not disappearing until May. Last winter Mongolia experienced a terrible winter and many domestic animals died. Some herdsman lost all their flocks. Fortunately, the wild camels at Zakhyn-Us Breeding Centre survived because we had purchased enough hay. This year to ensure we have enough bales of hay for what could be another long winter, we have already purchased the Hay. TsogErdene our herdsman had to travel to Altai to buy the best quality hay. This year the hay and transport cost WCPF \$12,000 (£10,000) which puts a huge demand on our resources. The costs are high because the transport costs are high. Why do we have to transport Hay? Because of the change in climate, less rainfall and increased desertification means there is not enough local hay and what there is available locally is, due to less water of a poorer quality. We tried to hold funds in reserve earlier this year but the urgency of the ranger patrols to evict illegal miners depleted our reserves. **So we are putting out a HAY APPEAL to those members who feel they are able to make a contribution however small to fund these costs.**

CHINA - A NEW EXPEDITION - APRIL/MAY 2011

The start date for the expedition I will be doing with four Chinese scientists into the Chinese Taklamakan Desert is now in April/May 2011. After the completion of the motorised survey, the expedition team will proceed to the Arjin Mountains, Hongliugou valley where we hope to rendezvous with domestic Bactrian camels and undertake a survey of the area between Hongliugou and Lapeiquan spring. This area is a known wild Bactrian camel habitat and was last surveyed in 2006. It is important to discover if any major changes, detrimental or otherwise, have taken place since that date. If there are unprotected wild camels in the Taklamakan Desert, then WCPF will work closely with the Xinjiang Environmental Protection Bureau and the scientists and staff from the Lop Nur Wild Camel National Nature Reserve to prepare a proposal for a new Reserve in this area of the Taklamakan Desert, and submit it to the Chinese State Environment Protection Administration (SEPA) for approval.

All the Funding for this expedition has been gratefully received from Prince Albert of Monaco's Foundation for Environmental Protection, the Transglobe Expedition Trust (TET) and the Xinjiang Environmental Protection Bureau.

NEW WCPF WEBSITE

Please look at the new WCPF website <www.wildcamels.com> and for those members who are interested I also have a website www.johnhare.org.uk We would like to thank

Jump Media for all their hard work putting the new website together. We also have a Wild Camel page on Facebook so members please do join.

IDLICOTE WILD CAMEL DAY

Joe and Rebecca Fossett organized a second successive camel day in June this year at Idlicote in Warwickshire to raise funds for WCPF. The sun shone, it was warm under a cloudless sky, and although this year the Idlicote belly dancers were sadly unable to attend they were replaced with camel polo. Admittedly it was only two aside and the ball was the size of a small football but member Romy Shovelton gamely turned up all the way from Wales with bells around her waist and a winning smile on her face. I partnered her in a team representing WCPF against a team representing Joseph and his Amazing Camels. At first, all the Bactrian camels entered into the spirit of the game and twisted and turned like the best polo ponies. And then, all four of them suddenly stopped. They had made up their collective minds they were engaged in something, which was utterly pointless. In vain the jockeys tried to move them forward like frustrated Thelwell children. But the camels would have none of it. By this time WCPF were leading 2 -1 and so the entertaining match was decided in their favour. Side shows and pig racing again provided great fun. Unfortunately, the date coincided with the day English football team were playing in South Africa and attendance, especially by men, was down on the previous year. However, £1500 was raised and we would like to say a very big thank you to the Fossetts, the wild camels are very grateful.

KENYA CAMEL POLO AND SAFARIS

John and Amanda Perrett in Kenya organized a successful camel polo match together with camel racing on Ol Maisor in October this year and plan another camel polo match in February 2011. I hope to be on Ol Maisor in February to play in this match. Any members who would like to come please let me know. As mentioned in the last newsletter, John and Amanda also organize highly individual safaris with camels. If any members would like to go alone or with friends on a Perrett camel safari please contact John and Amanda at olmaisor@africaonline.co.ke or me at harecamel@aol.com.

WCPF PATRONS' LUNCH

A WCPF Patrons' Lunch held on Tuesday, 29th of June at the Reform Club was a great success and all but two of our Patrons attended Jane Goodall, Life Patron was able to fit us into her busy schedule and many Patrons were able to meet her for the first time.

EXPLORERS CLUB NEW YORK, VISIT TO ZAKHYN US

The WCPF agreed in 2009 to provide a prize of a stay at the Breeding Centre for an Explorers Club fund-raising auction. Professor Michael Manyak the winner, with two friends arrived in Zakhyn-Uus to go on a camel safari to Mother Mountain, a holy Buddhist mountain in Mongolia, and visit the wild camel Hunter Hall Breeding Centre at Zakhyn Uus and stay in the ger at the Centre. The trip was a success and Professor Michael Manyak agreed to try to raise funds for the wild camels in the United States. At the same time, a German television crew visited Zakhyn Uus and the Hustai workshop. They were fortunately on hand when the announcement of the new and separate species was made. They hope to make a film on the wild camel and the efforts being made to save it from extinction in China and Mongolia.

OPEN DAY AT WCPF HEADQUARTERS

In order to raise awareness locally in the Benenden area where the WCPF headquarters is sited, the Trustees would like to hold an Open Day in June next year. Local schoolchildren and villagers will be invited to visit the headquarters to see the work of the Wild Camel Protection Foundation. There are many camel items and educational booklets and displays relating to wild camel protection and conservation. We hope to have a domestic Bactrian camel. WCPFUK sees this as an opportunity to raise awareness amongst local children and adults, but also to raise funds for the WCPF. Members are also invited to come for the day and further details will be announced to members in the next Newsletter.

PLEASE PUT THIS DATE IN YOUR DIARY

June 19th 2011 - ANNUAL EVENT IDLICOTE WILD CAMEL DAY

WHERE: The Old Farmhouse, White House Farm, Idlicote, Near Shipston-on-Stour. Warwickshire CV36 5DN

DIRECTIONS: There will be signs from Halford, Honington and Idlicote. From London you take the M40 and leave at J11, follow the A361 for 12m until left turn for Halford in Pillerton Priors and then follow signs for **Open Day**. From the North M6 or M1 to M40 leave at J15 and follow A429 to Halford.

TIME: 12.00 pm - 6.00pm
More in the next Newsletter.

NEW ITEMS FOR SALE ON THE WEBSITE

Dark green Jerseys, sweaters, fleeces and cloth hats adorned with the WCPF logo are now available to order. They can be ordered from the website <www.wildcamels.com>. With Christmas so close remember the shop on the website, especially the chocolate Bactrian camels.

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 bank transfer details. Could Many of our long-standing members pay by **direct debit or standing order** from their bank account to the WCPF UK account. This helps us keep costs down. Please SEND an email for the WCPF bank details.

As the WCPF pays ALL the costs of the Hunter Hall Conservation Breeding and Research Centre at Zakhyn-Us these regular payments help cover these recurring costs. A very big thank you to those members how have sponsored a camel at the breeding centre as this covers the cost of the drugs and the vet and transport costs for the vet to travel regularly to the Centre.

To all our supporters all over the world I send our thanks. You are our lifeblood and a constant source of encouragement and inspiration. Our Patron Jane Macmorland Hunter has been running again for the wild camels and raised over £600. Well done and thank you.

NEWSLETTER EMAIL ADDRESS

TO CUT POSTAGE COSTS, PLEASE IF YOU HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS THEN EMAIL IT TO US AT <harecamel@aol.com> or <krae77777@aol.com>

ALSO PLEASE REMEMBER TO SEND US A CHANGE OF EMAIL ADDRESS. COPIES OF BACK NUMBERS OF THE NEWSLETTER ARE ALSO AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE www.wildcamels.com.

Very best wishes and renewed thanks for your continued support.

John Hare
Founder
Wild Camel Protection Foundation

PS I was awarded the Lowell Thomas medal by the Explorers Club of America and travelled to New York in late October to receive it. It also gave me an excellent opportunity to raise awareness about the wild camel and inform the members and their guests of a new species - the wild camel.