

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties
The Hague (Netherlands), 3-15 June 2007

CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENT OF APPENDICES I AND II

A. Proposal

Inclusion of *Cervus elaphus barbarus* (Atlas deer) in Appendix I.

B. Proponent

Algeria

C. Supporting statement

Species endemic to North Africa (Algeria and Tunisia), threatened with extinction.

1. Taxonomy

- 1.1 Class: Mammalia
- 1.2 Order: Artiodactyla
- 1.3 Family: Cervidae
- 1.4 Genus, species or subspecies, including author and year: *Cervus elaphus barbarus*,
Bennett. 1833.
- 1.5 Scientific synonyms: ---
- 1.6 Common names: English: Atlas deer, Barbary red deer
French: cerf de Barbarie
Spanish: ciervo de la Berberia
- 1.7 Code numbers: ---

2. Overview

In the past, the species *Cervus elaphus barbarus* lived in all of the forests of cork oak and Algerian oak in the eastern part of the country. Its range has fragmented and shrunk as a result of changes in its environment (fire, urbanization and poaching).

Currently, it is localized in a coastal strip in eastern Algeria, extending some small way into the territory of Tunisia.

3. Species characteristics

3.1 Distribution

In the north east of Algeria, more specifically in the *wilayas* (departments) of Guelma, Souk-Ahras and El Tarf.

3.2 Habitat

The Atlas deer prefers forests comprising principally cork oak and Algerian oak. It is found:

- In the Beni Salah (Guelma) reserve, located in the north-east of Algeria.
- In the forests of El Tarf located in the extreme north-east of Algeria.
- And in the forests of Ouled Bechih and Boumézrana (*wilaya* of Souk-Ahras) located in the north-east of Algeria.

3.3 Biological characteristics

The antlers are the primary characteristic of these deer. They are between 80 and 120 cm long, chestnut colour with white and pearl-like tips. Development depends on genotype, age and weight of the animal, and the antlers are also impacted by the environment, habitat and food.

The deer shed their antlers in February-March, and they have fully grown back by July. The skin or velvet surrounding the antlers during the growth phase has a system of very fine blood vessels. It dries out when blood circulation stops, and the deer then rubs its antlers against tree trunks in order to dispose of the residual scraps of skin.

The rut starts towards the end of August and continues until the end of October. During this period, the dominant deer claim their territories and set about establishing a harem of does that they defend against their rivals, barely eating.

Eight months later, between May and June, the doe gives birth to a single fawn, born with a pretty speckled coat which it loses at the age of three months.

3.4 Morphological characteristics

The coat is light-brown shading into russet in the summer, and dark-brown shading into grey in winter. It has whitish spots of varying degrees of visibility, often arranged in longitudinal lines along the flanks. This feature clearly differentiates the Atlas deer, or Barbary red deer, from the European red deer. These spots are lost once the young deer reaches three or four years of age and never return in dominant males.

- The belly and hindquarters are light-coloured.
- The male measures 120 cm at the withers, weighing 140 to 200 kg.
- The female measures 100 to 110 cm at the withers, weighing 100 to 140 kg (Burthey, 1991).

3.5 Role of the species in its ecosystem

The species plays an important role in the region's biological equilibrium.

4. Status and trends

4.1 Habitat trends

Degradation of its natural ecosystem (cork oak and Algerian oak forests) resulting from urbanization, fires and overgrazing. In the past (18th and 19th centuries), the range of this deer extended from the area around Algiers to Tunisia in the north and from the coast to the Saharan Atlas in the south.

4.2 Population size

Between 50 and 60 individuals (*in situ*).

4.3 Population structure

This population is found in the *wilayas* of El Tarf, in the north, Guelma and Souk-Ahras (southern limit of the population).

4.4 Population trends

This is a population reproducing at a very slow rate.

4.5 Geographic trends

Very low trend by comparison with the total area of the country and in relation to the extent of its historical range.

5. Threats

Poaching and forest fires.

6. Utilization and trade

6.1 National utilization

None.

6.2 Legal trade

None.

6.3 Parts and derivatives in trade

None.

6.4 Illegal trade

None.

6.5 Actual or potential trade impacts

None.

7. Legal instruments

7.1 National

Law No. 04-07 of 14 August 2004 dealing with hunting (Articles 54, 55, 56, 57 and 58)

Order No. 06-05 of 15 July 2006 dealing with the protection and preservation of certain animal species threatened with extinction.

The Atlas deer (*Cervus elaphus barbarus*) is treated as a highly protected species in Algeria.

7.2 International

Listing in Table C of the World Conservation Union (IUCN).

Species listed in CITES Appendix III.

8. Species management

8.1 Management measures

Algeria's Atlas deer population is managed at the national level by the authority responsible for hunting (the *Direction Générale des Forêts*) and at the regional level by the conservation authorities for forests, national parks (El Kala Park) and reserves (Béni-Salah Natural Reserve).

8.2 Population monitoring

Counting of the existing populations by the technique of listening to the belling during the rut (late August to the end of October) and by direct observation of the species.

8.3 Control measures

8.3.1 International

Application of CITES.

8.3.2 Domestic

By the forest wardens with responsibility for the territory.

8.4 Captive breeding

Breeding (*ex situ*) at the Centre for Cynegetics in Zéralda.

8.5 Habitat conservation

Work is in progress under the programme for reintroduction of the Atlas deer into its traditional biotope.

8.6 Safeguards

The Centre for Cynegetics in Zéralda has been working since 1995 on reintroduction of the species *Cervus elaphus barbarus* into its historical range. The region of Bejaia (forest of Akfadou) and Skikda (forest of Collo) have been selected as the first sites for reintroduction of the species.

9. Information on similar species

There is a population of fallow deer in the Tlemcen region.

There is a population of European red deer within the Zéralda Hunting Reserve.

10. Consultations

11. Additional remarks

12. References
