

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 *Gazella dorcas* (Dorcas gazelle) in Appendix I.

B. Proponent

Algeria

C. Supporting statement

Species at risk of extinction and endemic to North Africa.

1. Taxonomy

1.1 Class: Mammalia

1.2 Order: Artiodactyla

1.3 Family: Bovidae

1.4 Genus, species or subspecies, including author and year: *Gazella dorcas* (Linnaeus, 1788)

1.5 Scientific synonyms: *Capra dorcas*, *Antilope kevella*, *Antilope corinna*, *Gazella lisabella*, *Antilope dorcas*, *Gazella littoralis*

1.6 Common names: English: Dorcas gazelle
French: gazelle dorcas, gazelle dorcade
Spanish: gazela dorcas

1.7 Code numbers:

2. Overview

The Dorcas gazelle used to be found throughout the Sahelo-Saharan region, from the Atlantic to the Red Sea, throughout the Sinai Peninsula and southern Israel, and from the Mediterranean to the south of the Sahel (Yom-Tov *et al.* 1995). Available information confirms that, apart from the hyper-arid deserts and the highest altitudes of the mountain masses of the Central Sahara, the species was uniformly distributed and locally common or abundant over this whole area (Whitaker 1896, Lavauden 1926b, Joleaud 1929).

The distribution of *Gazella dorcas* began to decline slightly (owing to fragmentation) in northern Africa at the end of the 19th century. Around the middle of the 20th, it had largely disappeared from the Atlas Mountains and the coastal zones along the Mediterranean, but further south, as far as the

Sahel, the population remained relatively well distributed. During the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, hunting from motor vehicles and, to a lesser extent, habitat degradation and loss had a grave impact on the species throughout its range. Even if its general distribution remained intact, numbers were sharply reduced (Dupuy 1967) – probably halved (Dragesco-Joffe 1993) – and the species was eliminated from significant parts of its range. It is still threatened by illegal hunting and habitat loss resulting from overgrazing by cattle.

3. Species characteristics

3.1 Distribution

The Dorcas gazelle used to be found throughout the Sahelo-Saharan region, from the Atlantic to the Red Sea, throughout the Sinai Peninsula and southern Israel, and from the Mediterranean to the south of the Sahel (Yom-Tov *et al.* 1995).

3.2 Habitat

The Dorcas gazelle is a desert and sub-desert species.

3.3 Biological characteristics

The Dorcas gazelle lives in family groups ranging from two to around 15. Some herds may comprise around 60 individuals, or even more, the size of the groups varying from region to region.

The males are territorial, most often marking their territory by piles of droppings.

Mating generally takes place between September and December and the pregnant females generally form herds without males. Gestation takes between 160 and 180 days and births, of singletons, take place between March and May.

If the fawn dies at birth or while still suckling, the female goes back into heat and may be covered again, which may result in a second birth within the same year.

Sexual maturity is reached around the age of two.

3.4 Morphological characteristics

A small gazelle with a pale fawn-coloured coat and a white belly. The transition from the dorsal to the ventral area is marked by a band along the flanks, the darkness of which is variable. The rump is white. The light-coloured head has a russet-coloured median marking on the forehead as well as a darker line running from the eye to the nostril; between the two, a white band stretches on either side from the upper lip to the base of the horns. The horns, found on both sexes (those of the males being longer and thicker than those of the females), are lyre-shaped, annulated, curved rearwards and divergent then curving back inwards, with the tips pointing upwards. Generally bulkier in the body than the females, males also have a thicker neck.

Body length:	90-110 cm
Tail length:	15-20 cm
Height:	55-65 cm
Weight:	15-20 kg
Horns:	25-38 cm

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

The habitats occupied by the Dorcas gazelle include wadis, plateaux, canyons, grassy plains, sand and arid deserts, the outskirts of oases, ergs, regs, saline lakes, sebkhas and dunes (Lavauden 1926c, Dupuy 1966, Osborn and Helmy 1980, Kacem *et al.* 1994). The species is found from the coastal plains and desert depressions (Osborn and Helmy 1980) up to altitudes of 2,000 m in the mountains of the Hoggar (Dupuy 1966). It is thought to avoid the very highest altitudes within desert zones.

Wooded river-bank habitats are often used during the dry season, while more open habitats, such as stony piedmonts, are more used in the wet season (Newby 1974, Grettenberger 1987).

4.2 Population size

Even if its general distribution has remained intact, numbers have been sharply reduced (Dupuy 1967) – probably halved (Dragesco-Joffe 1993) – and the species has been eliminated from significant parts of its range.

Most recent information on *Gazella dorcas* indicates that it is still found in all the countries making up its range, except for Senegal. However, it is still threatened by illegal hunting and habitat loss resulting from overgrazing by cattle.

Having been very abundant in the past over all of its range, the species has been utterly decimated in most regions and sharply reduced in numbers in those where it has maintained a larger presence.

The survey undertaken by the *Direction Générale des Forêts* [Directorate-General for Forests] in order to identify the ranges of the Sahelo-Saharan antelopes in Algeria, which started in March 2005 and will continue until the end of 2008, gave an estimate for the period 2005 to 2006 of 619 Dorcas gazelles, essentially distributed in the semi-arid and arid (Saharan) zones of the country.

4.3 Population structure

According to the survey referred to above, populations of the Dorcas gazelle are present in 21 communes, in 13 *wilayas* (departments) (two of them in the Tellian Atlas, five in the semi-arid region and six in the arid region).

4.4 Population trends

Population numbers tending to diminish, unless measures to conserve and protect the habitat are taken.

4.5 Geographic trends

The populations tend to occupy semi-arid and sub-humid zones.

5. Threats

Primarily poaching and overgrazing by the cattle of the indigenous populations.

6. Utilization and trade

6.1 Legal trade

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 at risk of extinction.

The Dorcas gazelle is treated in Algeria as a highly protected species.

7.2 International

Bonn Convention: Appendix I, Resolution 3, 2, 4.

Washington Convention (CITES): Appendix III (Tunisia).

8. Species management

8.1 Management measures

The Dorcas gazelle populations are 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 and national parks such as the Ahaggar National Park in the *wilaya* of Tamanrasset.

8.2 Population monitoring

A survey has been launched by the *Direction Générale des Forêts* in order to identify the ranges of the Sahelo-Saharan antelopes. This started in March 2005 and will continue until the end of 2008, the aim being to determine the gazelle populations in existence at national level, and their habitats, and to draw up a national plan for the management and protection of these antelope populations.

8.3 Control measures

8.3.1 International

Application of CITES.

Application of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS).

8.3.2 Domestic

By the forest wardens with responsibility for the territory.

8.4 Captive breeding

Breeding station for the Dorcas and slender-horned gazelles in the *wilaya* of El Bayadh, administered by the *Agence Nationale de la Nature* (A.N.N) [National Agency for Nature].

There is a plan to establish a national centre for semi-captive breeding of the Sahelo-Saharan antelopes at El Menea, in the *wilaya* of Ghardaia.

8.5 Habitat conservation

The species is found in protected areas reaching from the sub-humid zone as far as the frontier with Mali. It is found in national parks such as that at Belezma (26,500 ha), the Djebel Aissa hunting reserve (500 ha) and in particular in the *wilayas* to the south (Tamanrasset and Adrar).

8.6 Safeguards

A joint UNDP/*Direction Générale des Forêts* project on the restoration and protection of the ecosystems of the arid zones in the region of Taghit (*wilaya* of Bechar).

9. Information on similar species

Areas shared by Cuvier's gazelle and the Dorcas gazelle are found in the *wilayas* of M'Sila, Naâma, Batna, Khenchela, Relizane and Sidi Bel Abbés, in the Tellian regions of the country.

10. Consultations

11. Additional remarks

12. References

CMS Technical Series Publication N° 10, Antilopes Sahélo-Sahariennes (Statuts et Perspectives)
Edité par: Institut royal des Sciences naturelles de Belgique avec la collaboration de SCF – SSIG
(Novembre 2005).

L'enquête Nationale sur l'identification des aires de répartition des antilopes sahélo-sahariennes en Algérie lancée par La Direction Générale des Forêts (2005/2008).