



## **Addax, *Addax nasomaculatus***

**Legal Status:** CITES regulates international commerce of addax by listing them as an Appendix I species. Although rare and highly endangered in the wild, they are not protected by the Endangered Species Act. Today addax probably number less than 250 in the wild.

**Description:** Addax are large, sand-colored antelopes with long, thin, spiral horns that slant back and upward. They stand about 42 inches at the shoulder and have large splayed hooves for walking in soft sand. On their forehead is a prominent brown tuft of hair; a white chevron crosses their nose.



**Range:** Historically addax ranged over the entire Sahara Desert of Africa. Today, they are restricted to isolated populations in Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Chad. Populations in western Sudan are probably extinct.

**Habitat:** Addax inhabit true desert, physically covered by sand dunes and hard-packed desert terrain containing little water and scant vegetation.

**Diet:** Addax feed on desert grasses and tender young shoots of shrubs and trees. They get their water from the plants they eat.

**Social Organization:** Addax do not establish long-term territories but



move back and forth across their range following 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. Today addax are only found as isolated individuals or in groups of two to four.

**Threats to Survival:** Motorized illegal hunting following WW II is the primary cause of their decline. Recently, motorized intrusions by tourists have resulted in addax being chased until exhaustion and death. Prolonged droughts and wars in the region have further reduced their numbers. Only the inaccessibility of the desert has prevented their complete extirpation.

**Zoo Programs - SSP:** - While addax breed well in captivity, few animals can be traced to their origin to the wild. Currently there are approximately 200 addax in the SSP population, and over 1,000 registered in zoological collections worldwide. In the United States, approximately 2,000 addax are owned by private individuals. An international studbook is kept to manage captive populations. Some genetic studies of captive herds have determined some relationships between individuals.

**Conservation:** Effective protection of the remaining wild addax is generally unlikely to be feasible because of the remoteness and inaccessibility of most of the species' last refuges. More likely prospects for preventing the species' extinction may involve reintroduction of captive-bred animals to securely protected areas within its natural range. Reintroduction was initiated in North Africa in 1985-1988 when 14 addax from the Hannover Zoo, Germany and the San Diego Zoo, USA were released within a 20 sq. km. fenced enclosure in Bou-Hedma National Park, Tunisia. This population, which had increased to 50 in 1997, is in a region where addax had not been seen for decades. In 1994-97, a coalition of European zoos supplied ~75 addax for release into an enclosure in Souss-Massa National Park, Morocco. It is hoped that reintroduction efforts will also be made in the southern part of the species' former range. To assist this effort, 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. Within original range countries, most people have never seen an addax though it is an important part of regional culture.

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