



Photo from Disney's Animal Kingdom

Mhorr Gazelle - *Gazella dama mhorri*

Legal Status: Mhorr gazelles are protected by the U.S. Endangered Species Act and are listed as an Appendix I species. The IUCN Red List considers them to be endangered (CR A2 cd). They are extinct in the wild.

Description: Mhorr gazelles have a white coat with reddish brown or chestnut on the neck. The face is whitish with red cheek patches and thin black stripes running from the eyes to the corners of the mouth. The rump, tail, chest and stomach are white. Horns are found on both sexes, though are generally larger and thicker in males. The horns are “S” shaped, slanting backwards, then curling upwards, growing approximately 20-40 cm long. The mhorr gazelle stands approximately 90-120 cm at the shoulder and weigh between 40-75 kg.



Photo by C. Dresner, Saint Louis Zoo

Range: Extinct in the wild, the mhorr gazelle was distributed in the past from Morocco, Western Sahara, Mauritania and Senegal in the west of Africa to Egypt and Sudan in the east. There are several reintroduction projects occurring.

Habitat: This species inhabits arid areas with sparse vegetation. It is diurnal and nomadic and changes habitats depending on the season. In the rainy season the Mhorr gazelle prefers the pastures of the Sahara desert while in the dry season it prefers semi-deserts and open bushlands south of the Sahel.

Diet: Mhorr gazelles eat shrubs, herbs, succulents, trees, woody plants and acacia. To maximize the amount of food available they may stand on their hind legs in order to reach leaves above the normal browsing height. Most of their water intake comes from dew and food.

Social Organization: Adult males are believed to be territorial during the breeding season. They can occur singly or in small groups of 15 to 20 individuals including both males and females out of the breeding season.

Threats to Survival: The Mhorr gazelle has been declared extinct in the wild since 1980, with the last animals observed in the 1950's. Hunting and habitat loss due to grazing by domestic animals played a huge role in their extinction in the wild.



Photo by C. Dresner, Saint Louis Zoo

Zoo Programs: The AZA North American Regional Studbook for Mhorr Gazelle has been maintained and represents the reported history within the North American captive community ranging from 1981 through 2007. There are currently 12.40.0 (52) in 8 institutions.

Conservation: . Five reintroduction projects have been carried out with animals from the Parque de Rescate de la Fauna Sahariana in Almeria, Spain; the Frankfurt Zoo, the Tierpark Berlin and the Munich Zoo of Hellabrunn (Cano et al., 1993; Abaigar et al, 1997; Wiesner and Müller, 1998). In 1984 seven mhorr gazelles were introduced into semi-captivity in Guembeul Faunal Reserve in Senegal. In 1992 the herd had grown to 13 individuals and in 2003 it had 57 animals. In 2003 a group of gazelle were transferred to the Ferlo North Faunal Reserve in Senegal. In Tunisia, a group of mhorr gazelles was introduced in 1990-1992 and 1994 into a 20 square kilometer enclosure in Bou-Hedma National Park. In Morocco two reintroduction projects have been carried out. Eleven animals were introduced in Souss-Massa National Park in semi-captivity in 1994-1995. In 1992 one male and two females were introduced in the Domaine Royal R'Mila, and these numbers have grown significantly.

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Resources:

Sorensen, T. 2007. AZA North American Regional Mhorr Gazelle Studbook

www.aza.org

Barbosa, André 2005. International Studbook for Gazella Dama Mhorr

Sausman, K. AZA North American Regional Mhorr Gazelle Studbook 1998