



## ANIMAL CARE IN CHAD PRE-RELEASE

Our team of 5 animal welfare experts will be looking after the Oryx at the pre-release facility in the Ouadi Rimé - Ouadi Achim Game Reserve. They will be feeding and watering the animals as they transition to a natural diet and monitoring the animals behaviour. The wildlife rangers and anti-poaching team are also stationed adjacent to our pre-release facility. They too will become more familiar with the behaviour of the Oryx prior to their release into the wild.



## NEXT STEPS

- Fitting of collars on the 25 animals in Chad is anticipated to occur during July. The collars have been thoroughly tested by the Smithsonian Institute and Fossil Rim Wildlife Center in the U.S. A further month of testing the devices and data gathering will take place in Chad prior to the release. It will also provide us with useful data on the animals' behaviour pre-release.
- The first release of the Oryx into the wild will be after the commencement of the rainy season when pasture is at its most abundant. (Anticipated August/September, 2016)



هيئة البيئة - أبوظبي  
Environment Agency - ABU DHABI

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD) is leading a major initiative to reintroduce the Scimitar-horned Oryx to its historical range in Chad. Inspired by the late Sheikh Zayed's legacy and efforts to protect endangered species and sustain them in their natural habitat, the Scimitar-horned Oryx Reintroduction Programme was initiated on behalf of the UAE government in close collaboration with the Government of Chad. This is possibly the world's most ambitious large mammal reintroduction programme and a huge step in the field of conservation.



# RETURN TO THE WILD

ISSUE NO. 2

Scimitar Horned Oryx Reintroduction Programme

## BACKGROUND

The Scimitar-horned Oryx is classified as "Extinct in the Wild" by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List. There have been no sightings for more than 25 years due to unregulated hunting, loss of habitat, and lack of resources for conservation. At present the Scimitar-horned Oryx can only be found in captivity. The UAE is home to more than 3,000 individuals, the world's largest single population. They are adapted to high temperatures, harsh environments and can live for a long periods without drinking water.



## BACK WHERE THEY BELONG!

The first shipment of Scimitar-horned Oryx to our pre-release facility in the Ouadi Rimé-Ouadi Achim Game Reserve in Chad, took place on 16<sup>th</sup> March.

The logistics of ensuring the safe transportation of 25 Scimitar-horned Oryx

from Abu Dhabi to a remote location in Chad cannot be understated.

After careful preparation at our facility in Delaika, Abu Dhabi, certifying that the Oryx were fit to travel, the animals were loaded into crates in the early morning and

transported on trucks to Al Ain Airport. After customs and security clearance the Oryx were loaded onto a charter plane kindly provided by the Crown Prince Court, Abu Dhabi. They then commenced the journey to a small provincial airport in Abéché, Chad.

The animals were fed and watered in flight and checked upon by EAD's veterinary team. As the plane was just about to land, it started to rain which is unheard of in Chad in March, but this was seen as a wonderful sign of hope

### OUR PARTNERS



Ministry of the Environment and Fisheries - Government of CHAD



Sahara Conservation Fund



Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute



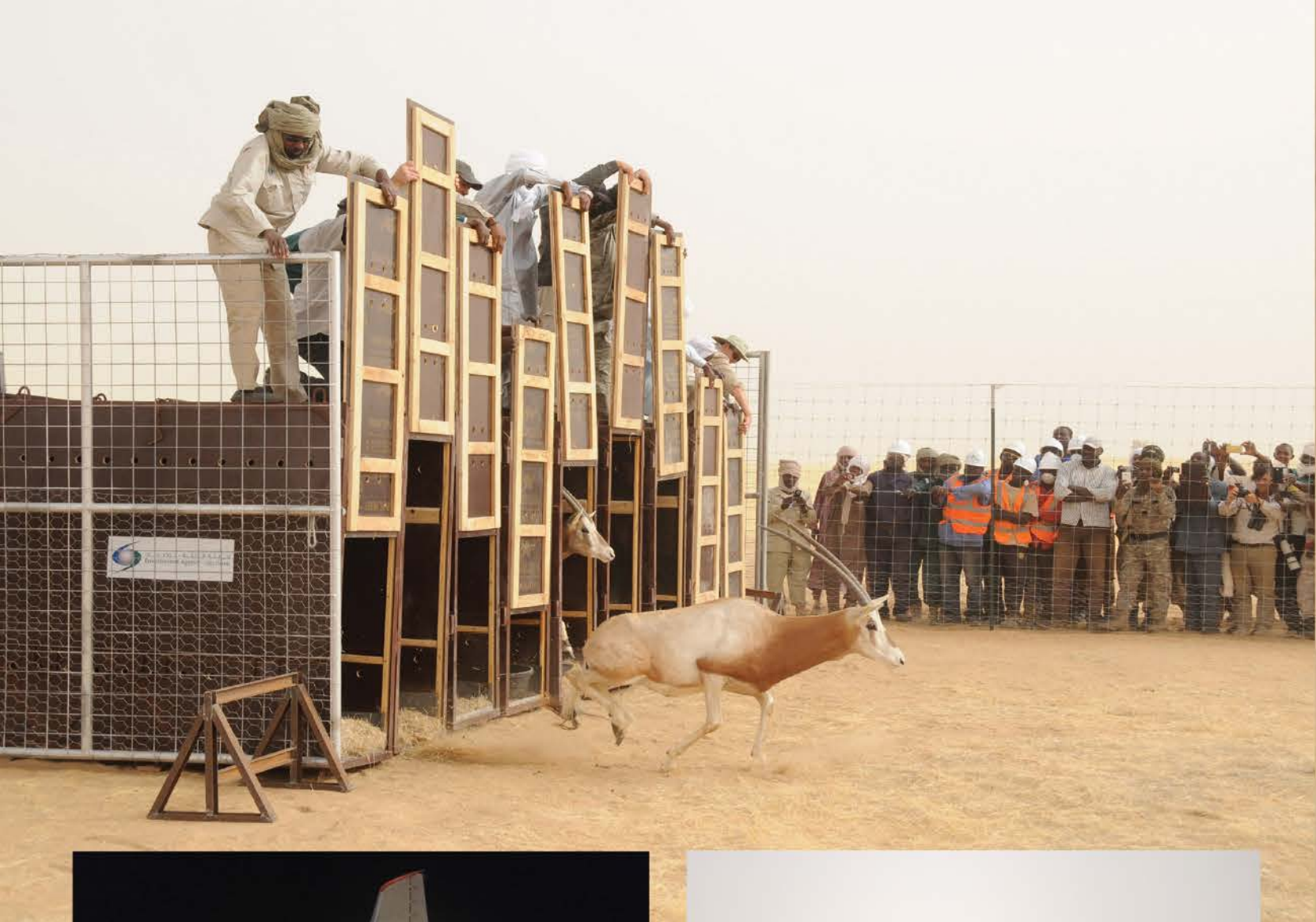
Zoological Society of London



Fossil Rim Wildlife Center



Royal Zoological Society of Scotland



by the Chadians. (The nomadic herders used to follow the Oryx to find good grazing as they can smell rain from up to 100 miles away).

The Oryx were then unloaded from the plane and onto trucks by members of the French military stationed in Chad, who had heard about the project and volunteered to help.

After a ten hour drive through the night, the Oryx convoy arrived at the pre-release facility. By which time, a significant sand storm

had arrived. It was tough for the crew, but a blessing for the Oryx – it had been blisteringly hot the few days before but the winds kept the temperatures nice and low. So the first Oryx to be on Chadian soil since becoming extinct in the wild over 30 years ago were given a very nice reception.

When released, all 25 Oryx trotted out unscathed by their journey and very quickly settled into their expansive pre-release pen, where they started grazing almost immediately.



## WINNING HEARTS AND MINDS

In the lead up to the shipment of the Scimitar-horned Oryx to Chad and before their release into the wild, in cooperation with the Sahara Conservation Fund, EAD has been undertaking an outreach programme among the nomadic herders and farmers that border the game reserve. This face to face interaction involved meetings with the local community to educate them on the work that we are doing, rekindle their passion for the Oryx and encourage them to contribute to our monitoring efforts. The local community have been encouraged to report any signs of poaching, injured animals or other anomalies.

Furthermore, as part of this project, capacity building is being carried out for the Chadian rangers as well as UAE nationals who are shadowing the ex-situ team.

## CURRENT STATUS

### PREPARING THE WORLD HERD AT DELAIKA TO ENSURE GENETIC DIVERSITY

Our efforts are continuing to add to our "World Herd" and breed animals at our facility in Delaika, Abu Dhabi, UAE to maximise the genetic diversity of individuals for eventual release.

