

## NEWS AND EVENTS

### Sahelo-Saharan Interest Group

The Sahelo-Saharan Interest Group (SSIG) is an informal network of individuals and institutions with a common interest in the conservation of the wildlife of the Sahara and bordering Sahelian grasslands. Organized by the Sahara Conservation Fund (SCF), SSIG brings together people from many disciplines, including the zoo community, research establishments, government wildlife departments and NGOs. Membership is open to all and the group stays in contact via a dedicated listserve. To subscribe, drop a line to [ssig@saharacconservation.org](mailto:ssig@saharacconservation.org). A full account of the SSIG meeting at Hanover Zoo in Germany, where some 60 participants from 16 countries heard presentations on a broad range of Sahelo-Saharan conservation issues is available for download from the WME website.



Sahara Conservation Fund Logo.

### Zoo Research Camp at the Al Wabra Wildlife Preservation, Qatar

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The Al Wabra Wildlife Preservation (AWWP), owned by Sheikh Saoud Bin Mohd. Bin Ali Al-Thani, hosted the Zoo Research Camp (ZRC) 2007, in collaboration with the Division of Zoo, Exotic Pets and Wildlife (DZEPW) of the Vetsuisse Faculty, University of Zurich. The ZRC 2007 consisted of 8 veterinary students accompanied by 1 professor who visited AWWP in March 2007 to undertake research projects in aspects of veterinary management of wildlife. The research topics ranged from Iron Storage Disease in Birds of Paradise, establishing Radiographic Reference Ranges for Spix's Macaws to Pathology and Medical Management of the Gerenuk and Investigation of a Respiratory Epidemic in Beira Antelopes. In addition to the research work, the students participated in the daily veterinary treatments and diagnostic work at AWWP, with activities like vaccination of large cats using a blowpipe, distance immobilization in gazelles, sedation, examination, and blood collection in birds, and routine postmortem examinations. With the main emphasis, however, on veterinary research, it was not surprising that the efforts invested by the students culminated in meaningful recommendations that were presented to the AWWP staff at the end of the research camp. Not only did these findings provide significant inputs to the routine veterinary service provided at AWWP, but the quality of research warrants consideration for future publication. In fact, a study on Immobilization of Beira Antelopes has already been presented at the 43rd International Symposium of Zoo and Wild Animals, Edinburgh, 2007. The success of the ZRC 2007 made it a wonderful experience for all parties involved and has consolidated the resolve of the AWWP as well as the University of Zurich to make it an annual event!



Hoof trimming at Al Wabra Wildlife Preservation

### Biosphere Expeditions Confirms Evidence of Arabian Leopard

The Land Rover sponsored second Biosphere Expeditions research project has conclusive evidence that the Arabian leopard still exists in the region.

Supported by the Office of the Advisor for Conservation of the Environment, Diwan Royal Court, the Ministry of Regional Municipalities, Environment and Water Resources and the Ministry of Tourism, this expedition supported wildlife conservation and conducted a survey on the existence of the Arabian leopard in the Musandam peninsula, its current status and distribution.

Biosphere Expeditions team members heard a leopard calling and evidence such as leopard tracks, claw rakes and scrape were also visible. Signs were also found of other wildlife including caracal and fox.

This expedition is especially significant, since the Arabian leopard is the last surviving species of big cats in the Arabian Peninsula and is a severely endangered species.



Biosphere expedition team



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