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ASG Members are an important network of individuals and experts working across disciplines throughout Africa, Asia and America. Contributions (original articles, field notes, other material relevant to antelope biology, ecology, and conservation) are welcomed and should be sent to the editor. Today **GNUSLETTER** is published in English in electronic form and distributed widely to members and non-members, and to the IUCN SSC global conservation network. To be added to the distribution list please contact asgpo@marwell.org.uk.

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Front Cover. *Formerly extinct in the wild, Scimitar-Horned Oryx are now on the road to recovery, Ouadi Rime Ouadi Achim Game Reserve, Chad, 17 November 2021 (© John Newby / Sahara Conservation Fund)*

Recent sightings of antelopes in Djibouti

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Introduction

Djibouti's landmass is 90% desert with an area of 23,200 km² and lies on the western side of the Red Sea where it enters the Gulf of Aden (Figure 1). It is situated within the Afar Depression, a branch of the Rift Valley. The landscapes are composed of made of mountains and rocky plateaus, deep dry valleys, and plains, with elevations ranging from 155 m below sea level at Lake Assal, the lowest land point in Africa, to 2021 m at Mousa Ali peak. Despite its extreme semiarid to arid climatic conditions, the country is characterised by a wide variety of terrestrial and marine ecosystems which are home to rare species of fauna and flora which are understudied or not yet studied at all.



Fig 1. Djibouti (© mapsoftheworld.com)

Information on antelopes comes from East (1999), the extensive 1999 Status Assessment Survey on Wildlife in Djibouti (Künzel *et al.* 2000) and Laurent and Laurent (2002), who summarised the status of mammals in Djibouti. There has been no detailed scientific research on Djibouti's antelopes, except for the Beira *Dorcatragus megalotis* (Künzel & Künzel 1999, Heckel *et al.* 2004, Giotto *et al.* 2009, 2013).



Fig. 2. Soemmerring's Gazelle on the Grand Barra plain (© D. Mallon)

Current status

Although there have been no targeted surveys, antelopes remain widely distributed in the country and are found in areas close to human settlements like Djibouti city, the capital, and other towns and villages. This 'natural conservation' without human intervention is linked to Djiboutian traditional culture from the nomadic pastoralist lifestyle that does not hunt or trap wildlife for food. Seven species of antelopes currently occur, including some that are endemic to the Horn of Africa. Two more species, Lesser Kudu *Tragelaphus imberbis* and Greater Kudu *Tragelaphus strepciseros*, formerly occurred in the southern half of Djibouti, but there is no information on recent presence.



Fig. 3. Gerenuk (© Houssein Rayaleh)



Fig. 4. Salt's Dikdik
(© Houssein Rayaleh)

A brief summary of the current status of antelopes based on Kunzel *et al.* (2000), Laurent and Laurent (2002), and some recent sightings:

Soemmerring's gazelle *Nanger soemmerringii* (Figure 2)

Found throughout light bush, of the country, including plains such as Grand Barra, Petit Barra, Goba'ad, Hanle, Doda, Andaba and the northeastern plains and Goda plateau.

Dorcas gazelle *Gazella Dorcas* (Figure 5)

Widespread throughout, in hills, plains, and bush. Occurs down to 155 m below sea level in the Lac Assal depression.

Gerenuk *Litocranius walleri* (Figure 3)

Occurs locally in small areas in the southern part of the country with *Acacia-Commiphora* bush.

Beisa oryx *Oryx beisa*

Known on the Gammaré Plateau in eastern Djibouti, on the border with Ethiopia.

Klipspringer *Oreotragus oreotragus* (Figure 6)

Occurs in the Goda and Mabla and mountains north of the Gulf of Tadjoura, including in the Forêt du Day protected area,

Beira *Dorcatragus megalotis*

Occurs only in mountains around Assamo in the far south, on the border with Ethiopia and Somalia (Somaliland). This locality is the northwestern edge of its global range.

Salt's dikdik *Madoqua saltiana* (Figure 4)

Widespread in light bush and scrub.



Fig. 5. *Dorcas gazelle* (© Houssein Rayaleh)

Fig. 6. *Klipspringer* (© Houssein Rayaleh)

Recent records

Opportunistic records of antelope species observed or reported by locals were collected during Association Djibouti Nature's field expeditions for scientific research or birdwatching tours from April 2012 to March 2020 (Table 1). Because the data were collected in an irregular way and data collection was rapid and mostly subject to time limitation, I am not in a position to formulate population estimates. However, these findings may suggest that the population of five of the seven antelope species occurring in Djibouti, seem to be decreasing in most areas where observations have been made, despite a lack of baseline information for comparison. I did not observe Beira antelope nor Beisa Oryx, but the local people confirm that these species are still present in their natural habitats, in Ali-Sabieh in the south and in Dikhil in the west, respectively. This brief note may help document current antelope distribution and provide a baseline for more detailed inventory work and help to identify natural areas that have conservation importance in Djibouti which is in the process of rapid development.

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Table 1. Recent sightings of antelopes in Djibouti (V = vehicle; W = walking)

Date	Group size	Total	Site	Region	GPS	Method
Soemmering's Gazelle <i>Nanger soemmerringii</i>						
27/12/2014	4	4	Diksa	Dikhil	11°04'59.13''N 42°10'44.24''E	V
16/01/2015	1-3	11	Petit Bara	Arta	11°21'12.09''N 42°43'16.30''E	V
18/02/2020	1-7	29	Doda/Dorra	Tadjourah	11°08'47.62''N 42°23'26.60''E	V
18/02/2020	3	12	En route to Doda/Dorra	Tadjourah	11°57'53.55''N 42°33'35.29''E	V
Dorcas Gazelle <i>Gazella dorcas</i>						
29/12/2013	1-3	5	Damerjog	Arta	11°29'37.28''N 43°11'38.00''E	V
10/01/2014	1-5	13	Kouta Bouya	Diksa/RN6	11°00'24.38''N 42°00'48.24''E	V
10/01/2014	2-3	7	Lake Abbe	Diksa/RN6	11°05'27.16''N 42°53'41.93''E	V
10/01/2014	2	6	Diksa/RN6*	Dikhil	11°00'19.04''N 42°05'50.30''E	V
10/01/2014	1-13	25	Grand Bara	Dikhil	11°09'32.44''N 42°29'00.25''E	V
25/12/2014	3	3	Balambaley	Dikhil	11°07'51.11''N 42°25'18.09''E	V
26/12/2014	1	1	Grand Bara/ RN1	Dikhil	11°11'11.64''N 42°33'33.21''E	V
27/12/2014	3	3	Diksa	Dikhil	11°03'46.65''N 42°11'19.15''E	V
16/01/2015	1-3	9	Grand Bara	Dikhil	11°15'16.65''N 42°40'14.97''E	V
16/01/2015	1	1	Petit Bara	Arta	11°20'58.01''N 42°42'20.46''E	V
11/03/2018	1	5	Goubetto	Ali-Sabieh	11°25'13.46''N 43°02'20.57''E	V
11/03/2018	1-3	13	Gachamaleh/RN5	Ali-Sabieh	11°11'42.13''N 42°56'28.45''E	V
22/12/2018	1-3	6	Oboley/Arrey	Ali-Sabieh	11°07'49.71''N 42°43'48.04''E	V
17/08/2017	1	3	RN9/Qaid	Arta	11°25'31.02''N 42°43'22.20''E	V
17/08/2017	1	1	Karta	Arta	11°25'44.11''N 42°36'38.24''E	V
30/03/2018	1-3	6	Arta Plage	Arta	11°34'40.69''N 42°48'44.74''E	V
15/12/2019	3	3	Douda	Arta	11°35'09.36''N 43°10'47.47''E	V
20/12/2019	3	3	Goubetto	Ali-Sabieh	11°25'13.90''N 43°02'42.73''E	V
20/12/2019	1-3	6	Shebelley	Arta	11°30'25.52''N 43°05'18.07''E	V
13/02/2020	1-3	10	RN9/Sagallou	Tadjoura	11°40'06.44''N 42°43'29.04''E	V
13/02/2020	1-3	31	RN1/PK21	Arta	11°32'56.44''N 42°57'41.30''E	V
13/02/2020	2-5	13	RN9	Arta	11°25'20.09''N 42°44'46.19''E	V
13/02/2020	4	4	RN9	Arta	11°25'23.08''N 42°44'39.52''E	V
13/02/2020	1-5	6	Qaid/RN9	Arta	11°25'26.84''N 42°44'11.24''E	V
13/02/2020	2	6	Karta	Arta	11°26'08.34''N 42°35'58.87''E	V

13/02/2020	1	1	Ghoubet	Tadjoura	11°28'13.57''N 42°34'11.42''E	V
13/02/2020	3	12	RN9/Raisa	Tadjoura	11°37'17.17''N 42°33'06.57''E	V
18/02/2020	1-9	55	Doda/Dorra	Tadjoura	11°08'47.62''N 42°23'26.60''E	V
18/02/2020	2	2	RN 9 near Tadjoura city	Tadjoura	11°46'29.47''N 42°55'05.77''E	V
18/02/2020	1-3	7	AsDorra	Tadjoura	11°57'21.41''N 42°34'20.79''E	V
18/02/2020	1-5	25	En route to Doda/Dorra	Tadjoura	11°57'53.55''N 42°33'35.29''E	V
14/03/2020	1-5	11	RN9	Tadjoura	11°29'07.19''N 42°33'05.38''E	V
Gerenuk <i>Litocranius walleri</i>						
10/01/2014	1-3	4	Balambaley	Dikhil	11°07'39.87''N 42°25'09.91''E	V
10/01/2014	2	4	Diksa/RN6	Dikhil	11°00'19.04''N 42°05'50.30''E	V
25/12/2014	1	1	Balambaley	Dikhil	11°07'51.11''N 42°25'18.09''E	V
27/12/2014	1-5	10	Diksa	Dikhil	11°03'46.65''N 42°11'19.15''E	V
11/03/2018	1-3	5	Assamo	Ali-Sabieh	11°00'12.09''N 42°48'55.54''E	V
17/08/2017	1	1	RN9/Qaid	Arta	11°25'31.02''N 42°43'22.20''E	V
Klipspringer <i>Oreotragus oreotragus</i>						
17/04/2012	1	1	Gerenle	Tadjoura	11°43'32.68''N 42°36'35.80''E	V
07/04/2017	1-2	4	Forêt du Day	Tadjoura	11°46'12.20''N 42°39'07.23''E	W
22/02/2019	1-3	7	Dittilou	Tadjoura	11°47'13.16''N 42°41'11.71''E	W
16/03/2020	1-3	5	Dittilou/Forêt du Day	Tadjoura	11°47'01.11''N 42°41'14.06''E	W
Salt's Dikdik <i>Madoqua saltiana</i>						
11/03/2018	2	4	Holl-Holl	Ali-Sabieh	11°20'05.14''N 42°56'22.02''E	V
22/12/2018	2	2	Deg weyn	Ali-Sabieh	11°03'39.11''N 42°46'56.48''E	V
07/04/2017	2	2	Forêt du Day	Tadjoura	11°46'12.20''N 42°39'07.23''E	W
15/12/2019	2	2	Douda	Arta	11°35'09.36''N 43°10'47.47''E	V
20/12/2019	2	2	Goubetto	Ali-Sabieh	11°25'13.90''N 43°02'42.73''E	V
13/02/2020	2-3	5	RN9	Tadjoura	11°37'37.47''N 42°33'25.24''E	V
14/03/2020	2	6	RN9	Tadjoura	11°36'56.89''N 42°32'59.07''E	V
17/03/2020	2	4	Dittilou/Forêt du Day	Tadjoura	11°47'01.11''N 42°41'14.06''E	W

* Note: RN = *Route Nationale* (National Road)

