



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

Scimitar Horned Oryx Reintroduction Programme

## BACKGROUND

The Scimitar Horned Oryx has been 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 15 years due to unregulated hunting, loss of habitat, and lack of resources. At present, the Scimitar Horned Oryx can only be found in captivity. The UAE is home to more than 3000 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.

## WHY CHAD?

The Scimitar Horned Oryx was native to the Sahelian areas of Central Africa, including Chad.

Following extensive research the Ouadi Rime-Ouadi Achim Game Reserve in Chad, was deemed to be the optimal habitat for the Oryx reintroduction. The reserve is unfenced and extends over an area of 77,950 square kilometres.

## PERFECTING GENETICS

EAD, the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland conducted genetic studies and computer modelling to determine the number of individuals and the genetic diversity of the population required to give the best chance to not only survive but proliferate in the wild. Our target is to achieve 500 individuals in the wild which is deemed sufficient to be a viable population.

## MONITORING THE ORYX

Initially every single Oryx released will be fitted with a satellite collar. Data from these collars will be monitored by the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute. This data will be used to track and help protect individuals and also to gather behavioural data on the species, which in turn can aid other species reintroduction efforts.



## CURRENT STATUS

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

In an effort to ensure maximum diversity and quality of stock for reintroduction, we are establishing a "World Herd" of Scimitar Horned Oryx in the UAE. This includes the collection and selection of a variety of Oryx from 16 institutions from several European countries, the United States, and the UAE.

We have received 42 Scimitar Horned Oryx from the United States, originating from six different facilities including the Association of

## NEXT STEPS

- The Smithsonian Institute and Fossil Rim Wildlife Center in the U.S. are currently testing collars on animals in their collections prior to fitting them on animals that will be released into the wild.



- The first shipment of Oryx will take place circa March 14th, 2016. They will first acclimatise in the pre-release pen and will be released after the commencement of the rainy season when pasture is at its most abundant. (Summer, 2016)

Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) and private collections. Fourteen Scimitar Horned Oryx have recently been added to the collection from Marwell Wildlife Centre in the UK. These genetically diverse individuals, originated from seven different institutions including zoos in Germany, France, Denmark, Poland and the UK.

EAD is working on breeding the species at the Delaika Breeding Centre for eventual release into Chad.

### PRE-RELEASE PREPARATION

The pre-release facility in Chad has been constructed and is ready to receive animals and a Project Manager and Rangers are on site.

### OUR PARTNERS

