



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

Distribution: General

UNEP/CMS/COP12/Doc.25.1.9
12 June 2017

Original: English

12th MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Manila, Philippines, 23 - 28 October 2017
Agenda Item 25.1

**PROPOSAL FOR THE INCLUSION OF
THE CHINKARA (*Gazella bennettii*)
ON APPENDIX II OF THE CONVENTION**

Summary:

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has submitted the attached proposal* for the inclusion of the Chinkara, or Indian gazelle (*Gazella bennettii*) on Appendix II of CMS.

*The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CMS Secretariat (or the United Nations Environment Programme) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.

PROPOSAL FOR THE INCLUSION OF THE CHINKARA (*Gazella bennettii*) ON APPENDIX II OF THE CONVENTION

A. PROPOSAL:

Inclusion of the Chinkara *Gazella bennettii* to the CMS Convention's Appendix II

B. PROPONENT: Islamic Republic of Iran

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1. Taxonomy

- 1.1 Class: Mammalia
1.2 Order: Cetartiodactyla
1.3 Family: Bovidae
1.4 Genus: Gazella
1.5 Species: *Gazella bennettii* Sykes, 1831
1.6 Subspecies:
Gazella bennettii bennettii Sykes, 1831 - Deccan Chinkara
Gazella bennettii christii Blyth, 1842 - Gujarat Chinkara
Gazella bennettii fuscifrons Blanford, 1873 - Eastern Jebeer
Gazella bennettii karamii Groves, 1993 - Bushehr Gazelle
Gazella bennettii salinarum Groves, 2003 - Salt Range Gazelle
Gazella bennettii shikarii Groves, 1993 - Western Jebeer
1.7 Scientific synonyms: *Antilope bennettii*, *Gazella gazella bennettii*, *Gazella christyi*
1.8 Common names in all applicable languages used by the Convention:
English: Indian Gazelle or Chinkara
French: Gazelle de l'Inde
Spanish: Gacela india
German: Indische Gazelle
Russian: Indiyaskaya gazel'

2. Overview

Gazella bennettii remains numerous in India but has been reduced to small and scattered populations in Iran and Pakistan. The species is included in the CMS Central Asian Mammals Initiative and it is proposed for listing on the CMS Appendices to facilitate enhanced conservation in Iran and Pakistan under this Initiative.

3 Migrations

3.1 Kinds of movement, distance, the cyclical and predicable nature of the migration:

Chinkara is a nomadic and semi-nomadic species of deserts, semi-deserts and arid rangelands, adapted to movements in search of ephemeral and seasonal forage and water.

3.2 Proportion of the population migrating, and why that is a significant proportion:

The whole population is semi-nomadic. In the Thar Desert, the population historically had a transboundary character, but cross-border movements have been increasingly affected by militarisation and fencing of the India-Pakistan border. The Seistan Basin lying between eastern Iran, SW Afghanistan and western Pakistan is also considered to hold a transboundary population.

4. Biological data

4.1 Distribution (current and historical)

The range covers much of western and central India, extending through Pakistan, possibly south-western Afghanistan, and into north-central Iran. The Thar Desert of western India remains the stronghold. Distribution in Pakistan has been greatly reduced by overhunting and although still widespread, populations are scattered (Habibi 2001b). In Iran, distribution is also scattered and the species is mainly restricted to protected areas, extending to Kavir NP in Tehran Province (Hemami and Groves 2001).

4.2 Population

Numbers in India have been estimated at more than 100,000 with 80,000 in the Tahr Desert (Rahmani 2001) and although some local declines have been reported anecdotally, no up-to-date census has been carried out. Numbers in Pakistan have declined greatly due to overhunting, but no current estimate is available (Habibi 2001b). The current status in Afghanistan is unknown but they are also believed to be very rare (Habibi 2001a). Around 1,300 were estimated for Iran (Hemami and Groves 2001).

4.3 Habitat

The Chinkara inhabits arid areas, including sand deserts, flat plains and hills, dry scrub and light forest. Ranges to 1,500 m in Pakistan (Habibi 2001a). They are facultative drinkers, and so can live in very arid areas. They sometimes raid fields cultivated with rape seed and sorghum in desert regions (Habibi 2001b).

4.4 Biological characteristics

It stands at 65 cm (26 in) tall and weighs about 23 kg (51 lb). It has a reddish-buff summer coat with smooth, glossy fur. In winter, the white belly and throat fur is in greater contrast. The sides of the face have dark chestnut stripes from the corner of the eye to the muzzle, bordered by white stripes. Its horns reach over 39 cm (15 in).

4.5 Role of the taxon in its ecosystem

The Chinkara is adapted to semi-arid and arid grasslands and deserts where it is one of the largest grazing species. It therefore plays a key role in maintaining vegetation cover in semi-arid and arid rangeland ecosystems and is an important prey species for large predators, notably the Critically Endangered Asian Cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus venaticus* and the Grey Wolf *Canis lupus*.

5. Conservation status and threats

5.1 IUCN Red List Assessment

Least Concern (Mallon, 2008)

5.2 Equivalent information relevant to conservation status assessment

The Indian population was estimated at certainly >100,000 and stable by Rahmani (2001a) and although there are anecdotal reports of declines in India, there is no evidence to support a global decline sufficient to qualify for a threatened category. However, populations in Pakistan and Iran are small, scattered and greatly reduced by over hunting. Numbers in Iran were estimated at c. 2500 in 2015 (Iranian DoE pers. comm.). Although the Iranian population has not yet been formally assessed for the Red List it would qualify as Endangered under criterion C (D. Mallon, Co-Chair IUCN Antelope Specialist Group, pers. comm. 2017). Numbers in Pakistan are likely to be similar to those in Iran, or lower, but a robust national estimate is not available.

5.3 Threats to the population

Indiscriminate hunting has adversely affected gazelles in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan (hunted for meat and to a lesser degree for trophies). Habitat loss through overgrazing, conversion to agriculture and industrial development is also a factor.

5.4 Threats connected especially with migrations

The border fence between India and Pakistan restricts the movement of gazelles between those two countries. Fencing may also be a problem at local level, impeding movement and dispersal. Small, scattered populations in Iran and Pakistan are separated, and often isolated, by extensive areas of human-modified habitats that also impede movement dispersal.

5.5 National and international utilization

International trade is not considered a major factor. The Chinkara is hunted for meat, horns and sport in many parts of its range.

6. Protection status and species management

6.1 National protection status

Chinkara occur in more than 80 protected areas in India, 5 in Pakistan and 9 in Iran. In parts of western India Chinkara are protected by villagers for religious reasons. The species is fully protected by law in India, Pakistan and Iran.

6.2 International protection status

Listed in IUCN Red List.

6.3 Management measures

Management for the species is included in protected area management plans.

6.4 Habitat conservation

The species occurs in many protected areas.

6.5 Population monitoring

In Iran, the Department of Environment conducts an annual census of ungulates present in protected areas

7. Effects of the proposed amendment

7.1 Anticipated benefits of the amendment

CMS will raise the profile of the species especially for the populations in Iran and Pakistan which are low in number and threatened.

7.2 Potential risks of the amendment

No risks have been identified.

7.3 Intention of the proponent concerning development of an Agreement or Concerted Action:

The Chinkara is included in the CMS Central Asian Mammals Initiative and listing on the CMS Appendices will facilitate increased action at national and regional level under this initiative.

8. Range States

India; Iran, Islamic Republic of; Pakistan, Afghanistan (possible)

9. Consultations

IUCN/SSC Antelope Specialist Group (D. Mallon)

10. Additional remarks:

N.B. Proponents should refer to Resolution 11.33 [Guidelines for assessing listing proposals to Appendices I and II of the Convention](#) to ensure the proposal includes all relevant information to enable the Scientific Council and the Conference of the Parties to evaluate the merits of the proposal made.

11. References

- Habibi, K. 2001a. Pakistan. In: D. P. Mallon and S. C. Kingswood (eds), *Antelopes. Part 4: North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia*, pp. 122-128. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.
- Habibi, K. 2001b. Afghanistan. In: D. P. Mallon and S. C. Kingswood (eds), *Antelopes. Part 4: North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia*, pp. 119-121. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.
- Hemami, M. R. and Groves, C. P. 2001. Iran. In: D. P. Mallon and S. C. Kingswood (eds), *Antelopes. Part 4: North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Global Survey and Regional Action Plans*, pp. 114-118. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.
- Mallon, D.P. 2008. *Gazella bennettii*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2008: e.T8978A12945880. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2008.RLTS.T8978A12945880.en>.
- Rahmani, A. R. 2001. India. In: D. P. Mallon and S. C. Kingswood (eds), *Antelopes. Part 4: North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Global Survey and Regional Action Plans*, pp. 178-187. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.
- Prater, S. H. (1971). *The Book of Indian Animals*. Oxford University Press, 2005 reprint.