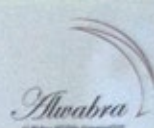




The unique characteristic is its long stiff tail – hence the Somali name "Dabataag" – which means upright tail



## The Dibatag Antelope (*Ammodorcas clarkei*) : In-situ conservation efforts for a threatened species in Ethiopia by AL WABRA WILDLIFE PRESERVATION (AWWP), QATAR

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### Aims:

The project's goal is to contribute to sustainable conservation measures for the Dibatag Antelope in the Ogaden region of Southeast Ethiopia, this is to be achieved in two phases:

**Phase 1: Field research on the ecological and population parameters of the Dibatag Antelope in Ogaden**

**Phase 2: Ex-Situ Breeding for the Dibatag Antelope**

The reason behind setting up an ex-situ breeding group is to have a safety net, given the probability that the fragile political situation will continue to worsen. The Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) of the IUCN Species Survival Commission strongly endorses the ex-situ breeding proposal.

### Obstacles:

- The Dibatag, one of the least known antelope species, is endemic in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia - a biodiversity hotspot, where neither a national park, a sanctuary nor even a controlled hunting area is established.
- The presence of weapons, the uncontrolled shooting of animals, the lack of wildlife conservation and environmental degradation is the reason for the decline of the Dibatag.
- Civil war had made the area inaccessible to scientific investigation during the last decades.
- It took almost one year to get access to the region and to local communities whose willingness and assistance was essential.

### Methods:

- Establishing a base camp and a field station
- Total survey area: 48.000km<sup>2</sup>
- Standardized polls amongst the local communities
- Stalking and distance sampling observations on foot
- Observations around feeding grounds
- Distance sampling by car
- Awareness campaigns
- Identification and collection of feeding plants
- Evaluation of typical Dibatag habitat



### Achievements:

- Intensive field surveys on population parameters, ecology and distribution of the Dibatag have been done.
- Facts which had hitherto been unknown about the Dibatag, could be established and published.
- Surveillance on the status of the Dibatag estimated a maximum of 2300 individuals (2005).
- Extensive awareness activities in the region leading to a decline of wildlife hunting.
- A proposal for a Dibatag conservation area was presented to the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCO) (2009).
- Established a wildlife information centre, regularly visited by schools and local people.
- Established guest accommodation for researchers.
- Botanical studies in co-operation with the National Herbarium, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) and University Uppsala (Sweden).
- Records of other prevailing wildlife in this remote area were evaluated and published.
- Phase 2, the ex-situ breeding, has not been achieved yet.

Reference: Wilhelmi F., Kaariye XY., Hammer C., Heckel JO (2006) On the status of wild ungulates in the Ogaden Region of Ethiopia, Proceedings of the 7th Annual SSG Meeting, May 2006, Tunisia.

Photos © AWWP- Wilhelmi, Hammer

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