BEZA MAHAFALY SPECIAL RESERVE AND SURROUNDING AREA
ASSESSMENT OF A MOBILE VETERINARY CLINIC FOR HUMANE LOCAL FERAL DOG AND CAT POPULATION CONTROL
2011

PROJECT SUMMARY

The problem:

Recent research from the scientific research station at Beza Mahafaly Special Reserve ("Beza") has indicated that the local population of feral dogs and cats, uncontrolled animals, are having detrimental effects on the wild animals, especially lemurs, in the reserve often resulting in lemur mortalities.

IUCN Red List Extracts:

Ringtail Lemur and Verreaux's Sifaka Lemur.

Our proposal:

To assess the suitability of a mobile veterinary clinic in the area surrounding Beza, to provide veterinary health care with a special focus on the humane population control of feral dogs and cats through a spay and neuter program.

Malagasy stakeholders:

We will work closely with Madagascar organisations including the Département des Eaux et Forêts de l'Ecole Supérieur des Sciences Agronomique, Université d'Antananarivo (ESSA) and Madagascar National Parks (MNP), local veterinarians and the local Mahafaly people, seeking the agreement of all stakeholders'.

Local partners:

Please see details below.

Assessment Visit Objectives:

To reach agreement with all stakeholders upon an appropriate humane feral dog and cat population management plan and to join local veterinary health providers in implementing that plan.

Reporting:

Detailed reports will be provided to all stakeholders, sponsors and donors.

Outreach: We will be happy to offer our help in whatever way we can as requested by local Malagasy veterinarians and veterinary health care workers, when the clinic starts.

Funding:

PAW Madagascar is seeking sponsors and donors for this project. If you wish to help please contact Julie or Romy or George at george@pawmadagascar.org for further details.

Contact information:

Julie or Romy or George. Please see below.

PROJECT DETAIL

The problem of feral dogs and cats impacting on the wildlife in the Beza Mahafaly Special Reserve. For many years BMSR has played an important role as a research station focusing on the wild life within its borders. The Anthropology Faculty of the University of Colorado at Boulder headed by Dr Michelle Sauther has been conducting research there since 1987. A series of studies have been made on the impact the population of feral dogs and cats has had on the lemurs and other animals. A systematic record of how the lemurs have died has been maintained. In 2008 camera traps recorded the night visits of dogs. The conclusion reached is that the number of feral dogs and cats living in and entering the reserve is of serious concern for wildlife conservation efforts at BMSR. The following pictures were taken at BMSR

Dog picture taken by camera trap in the reserve

Journal Article

Evidence of Invasive *Felis silvestris* Predation on *Propithecus verreauxi* at Beza Mahafaly Special Reserve, Madagascar

Journal	International Journal of Primatology
Publisher	Springer Netherlands
ISSN	0164-0291 (Print) 1573-8604 (Online)
Issue	Volume 29, Number 1 / February, 2008
DOI	10.1007/s10764-007-9145-5
Pages	135-152
Subject Collection	Biomedical and Life Sciences
SpringerLink Date	Friday, February 15, 2008

Link to article

IUCN Red List Extract:

Ringtail lemur mother and daughter

Common Name/s: English - Ring-tailed Lemur
French - Lémur Catta, Maki Catta

Red List Category & Criteria: Near Threatened

Year Assessed: 2008

Justification:

Listed as Near Threatened as the species is thought to have undergone a reduction of 20-25% over the past 24 years (assuming a generation length of 8 years) due primarily to a decline in area and quality of habitat within the known range of the species and due to known levels of exploitation. Almost qualifies as threatened under criterion A2cd.

Population Trend: Decreasing

Habitat and Ecology

This species inhabits many habitat types throughout its range in the southern third of Madagascar, including spiny bush, lowland gallery forest, anthropogenic savanna, dry deciduous forest, rock canyons and upland inland areas. Indeed, at the upper portion of its elevation range on Andringitra, the species occurs in a zone above the forest line and in a vast expanse of vertical rock, with up to 400-m tall talwegs, surrounded by ericoid savanna. It encounters the most extreme climatic conditions on the island from the hottest and driest to the coldest (Andringitra Massif). It has a varied diet, and does not seem to be constrained by available water sources (Goodman et al. 2006). This is the best-studied of Madagascar's lemurs; its biology and ecology have been summarized most recently by Jolly (2003) and Mittermeier et al. (2008).

IUCN Red List Extract:

Verreaux's Sifaka Lemur

Common Name: English - Verreaux's Sifaka
French - Propithèque De Verreaux

Red List Category & Criteria: Vulnerable

Year assessed: 2008

Justification:
Listed as Vulnerable as the species is thought to have undergone a reduction of more than 30% over the past 30 years (assuming a generation length of 10 years) due primarily to a decline in area and quality of habitat within the known range of the species and due to levels of exploitation.

Population Trend: Decreasing

Habitat and Ecology
This is a diurnal lemur that inhabits tropical dry lowland and montane forest, including spiny bush, brush-and scrub thickets, and riparian forests, and is also recorded in lowland rainforest in the south-east. It tends to live in small to medium multi-male groups that range from 2-14 (average five to six individuals), with home ranges sometimes exceeding 10 ha. Breeding is seasonal, with mating taking place in January and February. Infants are almost completely independent at six months (Mittermeier et al. 2008, and references therein). The age at which sexual maturity is reached varies with habitat. For example, in the spiny forests of Beza Mahafaly fewer than half the females have reproduced by six years of age (Richard et al. 2002), but three-year-old females are routinely seen with newborns at Berenty (Jolly 1966).

Our proposal is to assess the following 5 points:
1. Address the interests of all stakeholders.
Madagascar Government departments
We will present and discuss this proposal with ESSA and MNP and seek agreement on a suitable humane feral dog and cat population control plan. Following agreement we should obtain all necessary official approvals and authorisations for the project to proceed.

Local veterinarians and veterinary health providers
We will present and discuss this proposal with them and seek agreement on a suitable humane feral dog and cat population control plan.

The Mahafaly People living in the area surrounding BMSR
We will hold assessment discussions in the Beza Mahafaly area with the local people to fully understand their attitudes, interest and cultural sensitivities to the introduction of a mobile veterinary clinic. We will seek agreement on a suitable humane feral dog and cat population control plan. Questioning how far the Western concept of animal rights can be transferred to Beza and looking into any local incidence of zoonotic disease infections in the local population.

2. Characteristics of a suitable mobile clinic
We will gather information and assess under the following criteria to ascertain the most suitable characteristics of a mobile veterinary clinic.
. The geography and type of terrain in the area and roads and tracks.
. Population numbers and statistics of owned and feral cats and dogs.
. Estimate of numbers of cats and dogs for the trap neuter release (TNR) program.

3. Availability of suitably qualified staff.

Estimated staffing requirements in total, both trained and lay people. Local availability of staff and what overseas volunteer staff we will need over and above ourselves.
4. Mobile clinic estimated set up budget and estimated annual operating budget
Current estimated budgets will be improved with the benefit of our assessment information on local costs.

5. Commence a veterinary relationship with the local people.
Offer routine (non invasive) veterinary health care to animals owned by the villagers. This might be veterinary care for their livestock or their companion animals to show that we can help them by helping their animals.

Local organisation we will work with:
Animal SOS in Antananarivo

An animal charity shelter in Antananarivo

Objectives of the assessment visit:

To reach agreement with all stakeholders upon an appropriate humane feral dog and cat population management plan always taking into account local needs and cultural sensitivities.

Objectives of a complete 10 year project:
*Implementation and controlling and monitoring the agreed humane feral dog and cat population management plan.

*Maximise local involvement in this project, introduce training programs and build local capacity to carry it on alone in the future.

*Contributing to wildlife conservation efforts at Beza.

*Improve the welfare of both owned and feral dogs and cats.

*Build local animal ownership awareness through education and advocating responsible pet ownership.

*Minimising the occurrence of zoonotic disease infections in the local population.

Reporting:

A detailed assessment visit report will be provided to all stakeholders and sponsors and donors with details of any agreed plan for implementation. Reports will be delivered within a reasonable period of time following the visit.

Outreach:

We will offer our help in whatever way we can as requested by local Malagasy veterinarians and veterinary health care workers when the project commences.

Funding:

PAW Madagascar is seeking sponsors and donors for this project. If you wish to help please contact Julie or Romy or George for further details. All veterinary drugs and consumables that we do not use will be donated to Animal SOS in Antananarivo, a charitable animal shelter.

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