

DONKEYS for AFRICA

Promoting communication about donkey welfare in Africa www.donkeysforafrica.org ISSUE 17 - DECEMBER 2019

“2020 is going to be a significant year for donkeys in Africa”

Simon Pope from
The Donkey Sanctuary

Donkeys in Lamu Town,
Shela Island, Kenya.

Image: Alamy, Donkey - Creative Commons



“Donkeys are Better Alive” *The telling slogan at the conference*



Feedback from the donkey skin trade conference recently held in Nairobi

The conference was convened by The Brooke and the regional Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa. More than 200 delegates from 13 countries including Kenya, Tanzania, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Niger, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, Zimbabwe as well as China and the UK attended.

Representatives of donkey owning communities, government agencies, religious groups, animal welfare & humanitarian and conservation organizations, media, academia, owners of slaughterhouses and donkey welfare organisations came up with nine resolutions to combat this crisis in the region.

9

Resolutions were passed at this conference:

1. Collaborations and partnerships:

Given the porous nature of borders in the region, governments in the region should collaborate to find sustainable solutions including increasing investments in donkey breeding programmes as a possible long-term plan to stem the decline in donkey population.

2. Halting the decline in donkey numbers:

National and local governments of Kenya and Tanzania are urged to consider enacting legislation to ban all trade in donkey skins, meat and associated products to allow the population of donkeys to recover from the steep decline since the slaughter started.

3. Community level support structures:

It is proposed that Kenya and Tanzania Veterinary Services form local technical committees which will initiate local level policies that will operationalize the halt & ban of donkey slaughter. In Kenya, it is suggested that the team works through intergovernmental structures such as sector working groups, County Executive CECMs caucus and Joint Agriculture sector steering committee (JASSCOM).

4. Control of cross-border smuggling:

That governments in the region and especially Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia strengthen security along their borders to curb cross border smuggling of donkeys as they also

pose a serious risk of transmitting zoonotic diseases across borders.

5. Data and information:

The proponents of the halting of the trade in donkey and donkey products undertake to collaborate to generate quality and timely data and information on the impact of donkey trade to inform decision making at local, national and regional levels.

6. Global policy makers:

The meeting urged regional, continental and global policy makers and advocates to lobby counterparts in region and in countries affected by the trade to push for the imposition of sanctions to curtail the negative impacts of the donkey skin trade.

...continued/

Read the report at <https://igad.int/programs/95-icpald/2310-regional-conference-on-donkey-skin-trade-2019>

9 Resolutions from the conference in Nairobi:

7. Commonality of purpose:

It is proposed that security agents and communities collaborate in stemming out the rampant theft of donkeys and to implement initiatives to protect their animals while discouraging and reporting illegal donkey trade business.

8. Community education:

It was agreed that all stakeholders will rigorously promote community awareness on donkey welfare.

9. Wider awareness creation & publicity:

It was agreed that the concerns and subsequent action plans regarding donkey

hide trade be strengthened within animal welfare and related strategies at country, regional, continental and global levels and relevant resolutions. Key platforms to include regional economic communities (e.g. IGAD, EAC, ECOWAS, etc), African Union bodies such as AU-BAR as well as global platforms such as UNEA.

Simon Pope from The Donkey Sanctuary comments about the conference:



"I've now been working on this campaign for three years and the voices of distress and anguish at how lives have been ruined by donkey thefts are some of the most powerful and passionate I have heard. A panel of representatives from each of the national vet authorities that border Kenya spoke about how the donkeys in their countries were being trafficked into Kenya for slaughter. Many countries are turning a blind eye to this trade which is operating illegally.

I notice a growing sense of disquiet and anger manifesting about this issue across Africa. Civil society organisations are linking up and working with regional bodies and governments. The push-back against this horrendous trade has begun in earnest and is becoming more organised and powerful as a consequence.

2020 is going to be a very significant year for donkeys in Africa."

UNDER THE SKIN report – updated with alarming statistics

Three years after the original report revealed the scope and impact of the trade in donkey skins, The Donkey Sanctuary produced an updated version.

Nigerian launch

The new report was launched in Nigeria, in tribute to the work of the visionary The Honourable Datti Garba. He believes that part of his mandate is to be the voice of the voiceless. When he became aware of the unregulated and unsustainable slaughter of donkeys in his own constituency, he knew that he had to act on their behalf. Last year he introduced a Bill into the Nigerian Parliament to stop the slaughter of donkeys in his country. This will mean that one million donkeys will not be slaughtered in Nigeria next year. Nigeria has sounded an alarm that other countries are now hearing – *"Protect your national donkey herd before it is too late, stop the slaughter and say no to the trade"*.

Shocking statistics from around the world

With just under five million skins needed every year for Ejiao production, the industry will need more than half the world's donkeys over the next five years to meet this demand.

"The skin trade is the biggest threat to donkey welfare we have ever seen. Urgent action needs to be taken."

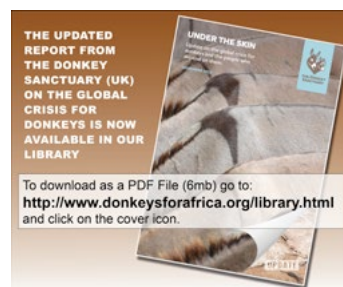
Mike Baker, Chief Executive of The Donkey Sanctuary

Donkey populations in China have collapsed by 76% since 1992. Since 2007 donkey populations have declined by 28% in Brazil, by 37% in Botswana and by 53% in Kyrgyzstan.

Welfare abuses

The report reveals appalling animal welfare abuses and biosecurity risks at every stage of the skin trade in its legal and illegal forms.

Tens of thousands of donkeys endure long journeys to slaughterhouses on crowded trucks without access to food, water or rest with an estimated 20% of animals dying en route. In addition there is the biosecurity risk of anthrax, strangles and equine flu throughout the trade. Conditions in many slaughterhouses are also appalling.



ACTION CALLED FOR:

- 1) The Ejiao industry should immediately cut links with the global skin trade.
- 2) There should be a move towards more sustainable sources of raw materials such as the use of artificially grown donkey-derived collagen.
- 3) The Chinese Government should suspend the import of donkeys and their products until both can be proven to be disease free, humane, sustainable and safe.
- 4) Governments around the world must take immediate steps to stop this cruel and environmentally damaging trade.



Images in the report show the scale of the slaughter.



Zambia

Mwamfumba Animal Welfare Society goes to new areas with mobile clinic

A report from Samson Nyendwa, after the Mwamfumba Animal Welfare Society's mobile veterinary clinics worked in the Kazungula and Livingstone districts on the border with Zimbabwe.

"Wells and some boreholes are completely dry and no grazing has survived. Ox yokes are still used on donkeys, causing serious sores and wounds. These animals are suffering and neglected, emaciated, weak, sick and

miserable and are working for over 10 hours every day without food and drinking water, with fresh deep wounds and sores on the body."

The mobile clinics will return to carry out treatments and provide humane education. As with most organisations, funding challenges limit the effectiveness and scope of interventions. Mwamfumba has also developed and tested innovative harnesses that last for years, using local readily available materials.

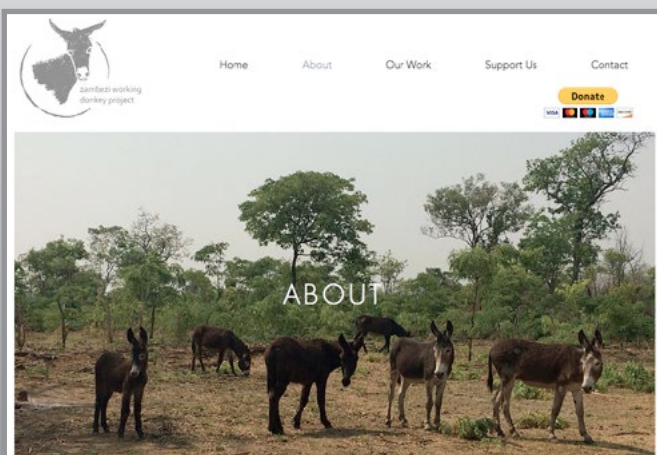


Caring, treating and teaching by the Mwamfumba Animal Welfare Society.

Breakthrough in outlawing yokes

A breakthrough was achieved by the Zambezi Working Donkey Project in the Livingstone area when a request to Chief Makuni to outlaw the use of ox yokes in his chiefdom was granted and the Chief informed his headmen of this ban.

Less positive is that owners around the Livingstone area have been approached by dealers to buy their donkeys for the skins trade and already some donkeys have been stolen.



<https://www.zambeziworkingdonkeyproject.org>



Tanzania

SPANA – now also in Tanzania

After many years of working with partners in Tanzania, SPANA Tanzania has been created to provide focussed attention on working animals there. Donkeys are used extensively for both domestic and economic activities as they can get to places that vehicles can't, and can cope with poor road conditions. Their status, welfare and value are low, compounded by poverty and ignorance. There are estimated to be over 363,000 donkeys in Tanzania. They play an important role in agriculture and in gold mines, construction sites and brick kilns, where they carry packs and pull backbreaking loads in the scorching heat. In the Mtera Dam region, submerged up to their necks in water, donkeys transport goods directly from boats to the shore.

SPANA Tanzania has trained donkey welfare champions to educate owners about their animals' needs, health, correct harnessing and related matters. They also provide humane education particularly in remote regions where children are often responsible for tending their family's animals. Veterinary training is being supported. Drought relief responses are in place and the impact of the skins trade is being addressed. SPANA Tanzania will bring more sustainable treatment, care and protection for working animals across Tanzania.

LAUNCHING SPANA TANZANIA



Content approved by:
Director of Veterinary Programmes, Dr Ben Shugart



This launch document is available in our library for perusal.



Namibia



Water,
a precious
resource in
Namibia.

Credit: Dirk Helmrich

Drought is killing our donkeys

President Hage Geingob has declared a state of emergency due to the drought in this arid country. This has affected the donkey population and has impacted the lives of many rural people who rely on these animals for transport and farm labour.

Unlike cows and goats, donkeys and horses feed on leaves and twigs and also graze on grass. When a lean cow fails to stand up, it can be assisted to stand and be fed until it recovers its strength to do so on its own. Donkeys do not have that privilege. When they are emaciated they are often abandoned and that is - sadly, the end of their lives.



The 8th Donkey Welfare Symposium brought together donkey welfare workers and enthusiasts from across the globe, with Africa being well represented. 228 people, including veterinarians, animal scientists, sanctuary managers, and donkey owners attended.

In addition to practical demonstrations, the wide range of presentations included the brick kiln project in Egypt, how to understand blood tests, gelding, pain recognition in donkeys and mules, hoof trimming and care, endocrine diseases and laminitis, nutrition, Equine Cushing's Disease in the donkey, anaesthesia, dental problems, tropical diseases of mules and donkeys, parasites, dermatology, and harness construction.

Next year the Symposium will concentrate on the issues of feral and wild donkeys. These have often been regarded as "invasive" and destructive, but recent research shows that they may have positive effects on the environment.

See <https://www.facebook.com/pg/DonkeyWelfareSymposium/posts/>

Hobbling

Please do not encourage hobbling, especially if it is not common in your area! It seems to occur in regions. If hobbling is practised, it is crucial to inspect the animal daily.

The hobbles must be broad so as not to cut into the skin. If string must be used, wrap it in cloth or other soft substances.



Scarring from inhumane hobbling.



Advice from the Gambia Horse and Donkey Trust newsletter:

"In order to effect human behaviour change we must treat people with understanding and kindness and try to see their point of view. We need to earn their respect and work as a team to make life better for their animals." Read the full newsletter at <http://www.gambiahorseanddonkey.org.uk/autumn2019.pdf>



The Brooke East Africa Fact File

This ideal teaching supplement about the crisis caused by the skin trade is in our library.



A poem for donkeys

A touching donkey poem written by Aguri Alexis, the head teacher and Humane Education teacher at Doba Junior High School in Ghana was forwarded to us by Animal-Kind International.

Thank you Mr Alexis, you teach students to see donkeys in a compassionate light.



by Aguri Alexis

Hihoo hihoo hihoo

Here comes the strong one
Humility and hard work are my traits
I am a proud animal
A friend and a servant
Jesus Christ of Nazareth
Rode me into Jerusalem

I am common in most parts of the world
The rich and poor can afford me
Before the agricultural revolution
I was very useful to the farmer
And even today I serve the rural folk
Hmm! my usefulness becoming obsolete?
Has civilisation rendered me useless?

Hmmm, hihoo hihoo hihoo
This sound might soon elude your ears
For I may face extinction in time to come
I am no longer reared in many homes
Now my meat brings money into pockets
It's a delicacy and common in many posts
Yes, you can ask the 'nyoro' woman

Hihoo hihoo hihoo
Before you enjoy my body
Do you imagine how my life is taken?
I leave the world in a horrible manner
I am suffocated to death
is that honourable?
Certainly not?

Donkey Quiz

TEST YOUR WORKING DONKEY KNOWLEDGE

Q: The best cart design for two donkeys has:

1. One shaft
2. Two shafts
3. Three shafts

Email editor@donkeysforafrica.org your answer.

In our previous issue we asked; "From what age can a donkey be made to work?" A: From the age of three to four years on.

"The loss of a donkey has the effect of immediately reducing me to a donkey. I will have to take its place do all the daily tasks it used to do."

Kenyan farmer.



From the editor

Another year has passed, another set of crises have been met as far as possible. I am sure many of us working in donkey welfare feel as though we will never win the battles we face daily. The same problems keep recurring: low status of donkeys, drought, floods, bad harnessing, overwork, ignorance, poverty, funding challenges and the greed pushing the skins trade.

Donkeys for Africa aims to reassure you all that you are not alone – and these problems have been addressed successfully in the past. Remain strong and motivated and you will gain successes, however small they may seem.

Let us all tackle 2020 with the belief that we will make a difference!



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