

Taxonomic, distributional and ecological data on gazelles in Iran

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Abstract. As there is much misunderstanding and misinformation in the literature about the three species of gazelles living in Iran. We review the taxonomic status, distribution, ecology, reproduction and conservation of Iranian gazelles. The population of the Goitred Gazelle (*Gazella subgutturosa*) living west of Zagros mountains seems to be different from eastern populations. The Jebeer Gazelle (*G. bennettii*) has a much more limited range and presently encompasses three well differentiated subspecies. The Arabian Gazelle (*G. gazella*) has been reported only from Farrur Island in the Persian Gulf.

Kurzfassung. Da es in bezug auf die drei Arten von Gazellen, die im Iran leben, in der Literatur viel Missverständnisse und Fehlinformationen gibt, referieren wir hier den taxonomischen Status dieser Arten, Verbreitung, Ökologie, Fortpflanzung und Schutz. Die Population der Kropfgazelle (*Gazella subgutturosa*), die westlich der Gebirgskette des Zagros vorkommt, scheint sich von den östlichen Populationen zu unterscheiden. Bennett's Gazelle (*G. bennettii*) besiedelt ein geographisch eng begrenztes Areal und ist in drei Subspezies vertreten. Die Echthgazelle (*G. gazella*) ist nur von der Insel Farrur Island im Persischen Golf bekannt.

Key words. *Gazella*, Persia, Middle East, Persian Gulf, conservation.

Introduction

Recent surveys of gazelles in Iran (LAY 1967, GROVES 1993, KARAMI & GROVES 1993, HARRINGTON 1977) list three species of gazelles as follows:

1. *Gazella subgutturosa* (Goitred or Persian Gazelle; Ahu in Farsi, Rheem in Arabic), distributed throughout Iran except in the far northwest, along the Caspian sea, and in the south-east;
2. *Gazella bennettii* (Bennett's or Indian Gazelle, or Chinkara; Jebeer or Gebir in Farsi), distributed through central, southern and southeastern Iran;
3. *Gazella gazella* (Arabian Gazelle; Idmi in Arabic), known in Iran only from Farrur Island in the Persian Gulf.

As there is much misunderstanding and misinformation in the literature about these species, and considerable fresh information has accumulated over the past few years, it is appropriate to review their status and distribution, and to give some ecological data.

Taxonomy and distribution

Gazella subgutturosa (Guldenstaedt, 1780)

Surveys by one of us (M.R.H.) have recorded this species in the following provinces of Iran: western Kermanshah, Ilam, southwestern Lorestan, Khuzistan, western Bushehr, Zanjan,