



ARAB ORIX



Description :

Beautiful animal with mainly white skin and some dark or light brown spots on the face and legs. It has two black horns longer in the female than the male. Legs are like these of cows but adapted to walk on sand.

Habitat :

One of the rarest animals in the world in the time being. It used to live during some periods in all parts of the Arabian Peninsula. It lived also in Saini, Palestine, Syria, Jordan and Iraq. Now few are left in the southern part of the eastern desert of Robi El-Khali.

The Orix resists drought and depends for its food on dry materials. It can stay in the sun for long periods. It occupies desert areas with plants coverage and stays in oasis and places of natural green cover.

Orix and ancient Egyptians :

Ancient Egyptians cared for the Orix and hunted it. Drawings are on walls of tombs and papyrus. The tombs are in the hills of Bani Hasan in Minia. The drawings explain most of the nature of the animal, ways of hunting, capturing and care.

Orix today :

Herds of Orix are now extinct, only few scattered animals live in different parts of the desert. Unwise hunting is still going on.

Bedouins slay many animals. Dangers increased during the time of exploration of Petroleum, and the spread of military forces, and the use of modern automatic weapons and fast cars. This resulted in the destruction of many animals in a short time and caused the Orix to be threatened by extinction.

Efforts for maintenance :

The British Society for the Conservation of Animals started an international campaign in the summer of 1961 to save the Orix. It collected some animals for breeding under expert observation. Two males and one female were captured in Robi El-Khali and transported to Pheinx Zoo in Arizona because of the similarity of conditions with its natural habitat. The Amir of Kuwait offered a female and Saudia four animals to the international herd. Sheikh Jasem Al-Thani started an Orix farm in Qatar. The second phase for restoration of the Orix started lately by returning it back to its natural habitats.

Do you know ?

■ The region of Bani Hasan of El-Minia Egypt was called Orix.

That is the name given to the animal by ancient Greek and Romans.

■ One reason for Orix hunting was because of a belief that it gives strength and competence and that the horns when ground increases sexual desire.

References :

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