

Twiga Tracker Initiative: Giraffe Tagging Report

Zakouma National Park, Chad

March 2023

Background

The Greater Zakouma Ecosystem in Chad is a unique habitat with extreme variation between its wet and dry seasons. Kordofan giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis antiquorum*) are a subspecies of the Northern giraffe (*G. camelopardalis*) and are listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List. The total population is estimated at 2,500 individuals with almost half of them living in Zakouma National Park (NP). Understanding giraffe habitat use, movements in and outside the park, and the potential threats they face is vital for conserving this important population.

The Giraffe Conservation Foundation's (GCF) Twiga Tracker Initiative is the largest GPS tracking programme of giraffe in Africa. Since 2018, GCF has partnered with African Parks Network to track and analyse giraffe movements in and around Zakouma NP to assist with practical, science driven management.

Objective

The main objective of this operation was to tag nine Kordofan giraffe in Zakouma NP and Siniaka Minia Reserve using Savanna Tracking GPS tail units and at the same time deploying six Ceres Trace ear tags on the same giraffe to evaluate the potential future use of these tags for

management and tracking purposes in Central Africa.

Results

The operation took place from 20-25 March 2023. A total of nine giraffe (six female and three male) were safely fitted with GPS tail units; six of these giraffe were also fitted with Ceres Trace ear tags (three female and three male). The male giraffe are the first-ever giraffe bulls that are remotely tracked in Zakouma NP. The mission in Siniaka Minia Reserve had to be postponed due to inclement weather. The insufficient road network required the use of a helicopter for darting and capture, which was not available at the time.

Tissue samples for future genetic analysis were collected from all individuals.

Acknowledgements

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