

Donkey massacres in Eastern Africa

A focus area of the Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW) conference held in 2022 was the skins trade, specifically cross-border movement of donkeys and the trade in East Africa.



Population facts

The recent 2019 National Population Census in Kenya placed the donkey population within the country at 1.1 million as compared to the 2009 census that stood at 1.8 million. This figure paints a gloomy picture – that within a span of 10 years, Kenya had lost an estimated 700,000 donkeys, mainly through slaughter for their skins by the four licensed donkey abattoirs in the country with a combined slaughter capacity of 1,260 donkeys a day.

Grappling with the diminishing supply of donkeys in Kenya, the abattoirs turned to the neighbouring countries Tanzania, Uganda, South Sudan, and Ethiopia to meet the growing demand. This saw an influx of donkey smuggling and theft across their borders with Kenya, all headed to the slaughterhouses.

The killing of donkeys was temporarily halted in Kenya when donkey slaughterhouse licenses were withdrawn by the Government in February 2020. Kenya's slaughterhouses challenged the closure of the abattoirs and succeeded when the High Court lifted the slaughter ban. The Kenyan government has hesitated to renew the abattoirs' licenses, quoting the low numbers of donkeys in the country.



ANAW has published its Annual Report for 2022.
www.anaw.org/Reports_and_Publications/ANAW-Annual-Report-2022.pdf
and also in our DfA library.

In 2022 ANAW's continued joint campaign with The Welttierschutzgesellschaft e.V. (WTG), and other animal welfare organizations resulted in a greater awareness amongst donkey owning communities on Kenya-Tanzania (Migori County) and Kenya-Ethiopia (Moyale, Marsabit County) borders. Local Service Providers (LSP's), national and international media houses were also engaged in awareness creation and educating the masses on the plight of donkeys.

Media Workshop

The goal was to invest in a culture of journalism in Kenya that goes beyond the reporting of isolated and disconnected events, to an analytical driven approach that pays particular attention to issues of the donkey hide trade and cross border movement of donkeys.

A media workshop held at Bomen Hotel in Isiolo County in February was attended by over 20 media delegates drawn from national and international media houses representing print (newspapers), electronic (television and radio) and web media (online platforms).

The workshop was designed primarily to create awareness within the media on the cross-border donkey movement and trade along East African borders and its effects on community livelihoods. The importance of informing media should be recognised more often and also in different countries.

Watch the K24 programme about the plight of donkey owners as high mortality rates are reported.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Es15UB0Aut0&t=3s





Zambezi Working Donkey Project (ZWDP)

www.facebook.com/zambeziworkingdonkeyproject/

The ZWDP team visited Libuyu Market in Livingstone, Zambia, where many communities from surrounding villages sell their products. The use of heavy, unsuitable ox-yokes on the working donkeys persists where alternatives are not readily available. ZWDP is working hard to replace these yokes with humane harnesses and treat the wounds the yokes cause. The working donkeys that benefit will be more comfortable and pain free.



The heavy yoke rests on the donkeys' necks where it hinders the pulling power of the animals and causes wounds.



Worn and hard harnessing materials also cause wounds and scarring.



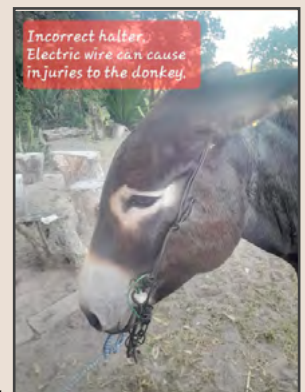
Okavango Animal Welfare Trust (OAWT)

www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100081846036614

During March Maun Animal Welfare Society (MAWS) sent a team consisting of volunteer veterinary surgeons, a volunteer veterinary nurse, and assistants to seven different villages in the Okavango panhandle area in northern Botswana. The Kgosis (chiefs) and the VDCs (Village Development Community) contacted the OAWT to make sure that MAWS would reach their communities.

Thanks to the preparatory efforts of the Okavango Animal Welfare Trust the communities understood the importance and benefits of the planned interventions and close to 200 pets were sterilised, vaccinated and treated for parasites. Increasingly owners of donkeys and horses are also requesting that their stallions be castrated. In this way the lives of the working animals will be improved, through the examples of benefits to pets.

Education about proper donkey care and harnessing is a priority.



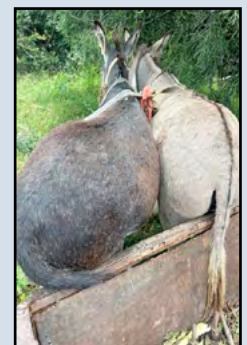
MARES (Matabeleland Animal Rescue & Equine Sanctuary)

www.facebook.com/mareszimbabwe/

A successful outreach took place in March at the dip tank in Mabale, a community adjacent to the Hwange National Park area in Zimbabwe. Injured donkeys were treated and particular attention was needed from the farrier, as the recent good rains had resulted in soft ground, preventing natural wear of hooves.

Land has been allocated for the creation of a community donkey sanctuary, where injured donkeys can be kept to recover and fodder grown to feed them. Moringa trees are being grown for this purpose.

Incorrect harnessing hurts donkeys and makes them unproductive.



The Meru Animal Welfare Organisation (MAWO)

www.facebook.com/Meruanimalwelfare/

The Meru Animal Welfare Organisation (MAWO) carried out a donkey clinic at Ngarenanyuki Village, Tanzania, in March 2023. Wounds caused by incorrect harnessing were treated and donkeys were dewormed.

Eighteen village women were trained in making humane harnesses from locally available materials. In addition three students from the Tengeru Livestock College participated in the outreach action.

MAWO has recently published their Annual Report which is available at www.meruanimalwelfare.org. It is also in the DfA library.



MARES, MAWO and ZWDP were supported by Animal Aid Abroad. www.animalaidabroad.org



* *Eseljtjiesrus*, in English, translates as “place of rest for donkeys”.

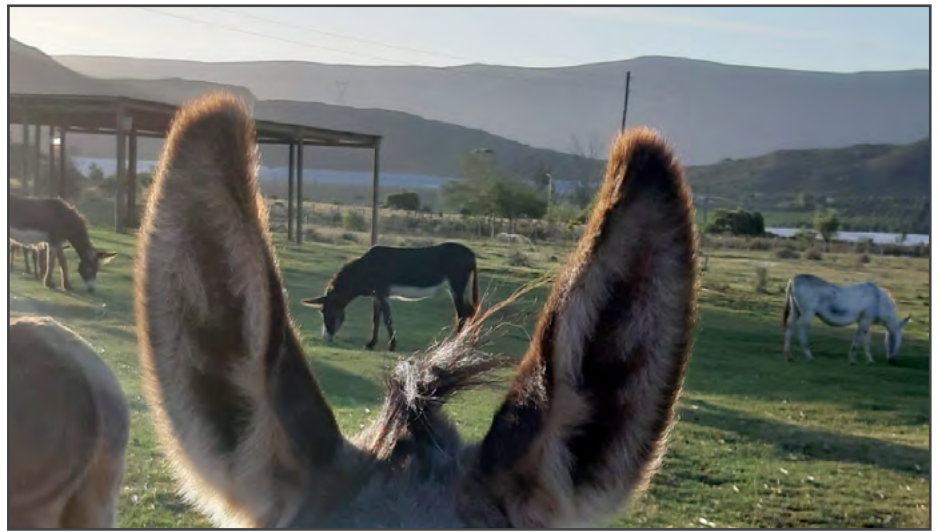
Eseljtjiesrus Donkey Sanctuary

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www.facebook.com/eseltjiesrusdonkeysanctuary



Eseljtjiesrus is situated at the foot of the tranquil Langeberg mountains in the Western Cape.



The mission of this Sanctuary is to promote the status and welfare of donkeys. By addressing their status, which is often perceived to be low, the worth of donkeys will be recognised and their welfare will receive greater attention.

History

Eseljtjiesrus Donkey Sanctuary (EDS) was registered as a welfare organization in 2007 to provide a permanent home for retired, neglected or destitute donkeys in the Western Cape Province, South Africa. Initially land was rented and slowly the number of rescued donkeys grew. Through careful financial management the organisation was able to acquire its own property in 2012.

Over the years nineteen donkeys have ended their lives peacefully at the Sanctuary, surrounded by their herd mates and the people who cared for them and loved them.

Currently, there are 31 donkeys and a mule in permanent care at the Sanctuary, as well as four donkeys in a foster home. Suitable homes have been found for numerous healthy donkeys that have not been taken in at the Sanctuary. A helpline for donkey queries is available around the clock.

Visitors are welcomed from Thursdays to Sundays and are accompanied into the fields by trained Guides. Eseljtjiesrus acts as a “shop window” for donkeys in general, sensitizing the public to the charm and needs of donkeys. Each visitor should leave as a Donkey Ambassador, better informed and promoting the standing and welfare of the species.

Education

Even now, donkeys are often neglected in academic curricula and in practical training of the veterinary profession. A strong component of the work of the Sanctuary is education, not only for people who may own or come across donkeys but also for professionals such as veterinarians, State vets, students and animal welfare workers in general.

Eseljtjiesrus presents workshops on One Health, One Welfare and welfare assessment. These workshops are accredited by the SA Veterinary Council for Continued Professional Development (CPD) points: the only donkey-related activity registered as such. The workshop manual is available in the Donkeys for Africa library at www.donkeysforafrica.org/Resources/OneHealth.pdf



Donkeys are well cared for at their retirement home. They are fed three times a day with supplementary feed. Daily grooming and regular dental, farrier and veterinary care are included.

H.R. 5203 The Ejiao Act - California, USA
www.brookeusa.org/#ejiao-act



This bill prohibits the knowing sale or transport of ejiao (or products containing ejiao) made using donkey skin, in interstate or foreign commerce. Emily Dulin, CEO of Brooke USA Foundation says: "We commend the Center for Contemporary Equine Studies for its efforts to ban the import and sale of ejiao in the State of the California. This work will support our efforts to pass the Ejiao Act at the Federal level and will increase awareness of the plight of donkeys caused by the ejiao trade. The end result of our cumulative work will make a significant difference in reducing the Donkey Hide Trade which in turn will benefit the welfare of these animals and

improve the lives of the individuals who rely upon them. The Ejiao Act will be re-introduced in Congress this Spring and, hopefully, we will have some exciting news to report."

World Donkey Day

This is celebrated in many countries on 8th May each year. Let us know what YOU are doing to honour this humble, hardworking species.



Survey of donkey welfare organisations

Please look at the map of Donkey Welfare organisations in South Africa, at www.google.co.za/maps/d/viewer?mid=1ppkjst2e9DQyXS1XSF8l8uqoBx-RBs&usp=sharing and add any information that is missing.

World Enterprise Hand Skills Ltd (WEHS) and Finnegan's Tools

This team aims to provide, advise, and fund sustainable animal welfare education with craft and technical hand skills training to empower families in rural and semi-rural communities throughout the developing world.

They encourage an alternative to leather (expensive and needs treatment) or webbing straps for harnesses, which can be made by communities themselves, using simple hand tools in a new weaving technique developed by Finnegan Tools.

A full set of donkey working harness can be woven in under five hours by one person with a minimum of training. Charitable organisations can facilitate workshops in harness weaving for local owners of working equines.

Contact Patrick Finnegan at pfinnegan44@gmail.com for more information on the weaving sets available to welfare organisations.

From the Editor

After attending the African Donkey Welfare Workshop presented by The Donkey Sanctuary in Bela Bela in June 2015, we were determined that the contacts and friendships forged there must not wither and die.

The workshop focussed on six themes as in the diagram. In those days 'tracking emerging themes' touched on the donkey meat and skin trade, largely unknown at that time. Who could have predicted the current situation?

This meeting also led to the founding of Donkeys for Africa (DfA) in April 2017. DfA cares about the underdogs, the forgotten species, the "un-fashionable" animals that deserve attention as much as the most beautiful, dramatic or critically endangered species. We also care about the people and communities that depend on their donkeys for survival. There is a symbiotic relationship with their working animals – mutual dependency for mutual benefits. The better the donkey is cared for, the better it will work.

Donkeys can lead a better life

DfA not only acts as a communication portal promoting donkey welfare, but also connects organisations and projects to the benefit of all. We are always delighted to hear of collaboration between organisations, the sharing of knowledge and experience, and support given freely. Much has been achieved on a day-to-day basis, with each working donkey

helped through greater awareness, leading a better life.

Reading about successful projects also inspires welfare workers to keep on actively investing in the labour of care at every level of their functioning.

Let us be inspired by the quote from Archbishop Desmond Tutu: "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse, and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality."

All strength to all of you, working tirelessly to improve the lives of donkeys and the people who depend on them. Please feel free to send us information about your work, or challenges faced by donkeys. Raise your profile, get your work known and share with like-minded organisations and individuals.

We thank Eseltjiesrus Donkey Sanctuary who has agreed to provide the necessary funding for DfA to continue operating into 2023.



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DfA is supported by
 **Eseltjiesrus Donkey Sanctuary**
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