

On the historical distribution and present situation of Gazelles, *Gazella* spp., in Turkey

by Max Kasperek

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1. Introduction

Only the Goitred Gazelle (*Gazella subgutturosa*) has been included in the list of Turkish mammals by KUMERLOEVE (1967, 1969, 1975). Two records of Dorcas Gazelle (*Gazella dorcas*), by DANFORD & ALSTON (1877) and by MISONNE (1957), were not accepted by this author as he assumed misidentification and confusion with the Mountain Gazelle (*Gazella gazella*). KUMERLOEVE considered that the distribution-area of *G. subgutturosa* did not extend further westwards than the Euphrates valley. Old records from the Adana plain were thought to refer to *G. gazella*.

As Kumerloeve did not check the literature on gazelles in Turkey very carefully, a number of older papers are reviewed here for their data on distribution and species-identification. A short review of the present status of *G. subgutturosa* in Turkey is also given.

2. Distribution

The most western record of gazelles is by AINSWORTH (1842): On 11.11.1839 he saw "herds of gazelles and flocks of bustards" on the plain of Bolvadin in the Afyon province of Central Anatolia. As regards the plain of Adana, there is an observation by RUSSEGGER (1843) who visited the area together with TH. KOTSCHY in 1836. He writes: "We chose the way from Adana via Messis [Misis] in order to see the Dschihun [Ceyhan], and we therefore moved exactly eastwards right from the beginning. The uncultivated plain, full of numerous gazelles and deer, stretched out in front of us in an incredible uniformity." AINSWORTH (1842) also saw gazelles at the same place three years later. After passing the Taurus, he reached the plain of Adana (Çukurova) at the end of November 1839. He described it: "its most remarkable tenants are gazelles, foxes, hares, jerboas, ground squirrels, and large and small bustards." On December 1st, he wrote in his journal: "we crossed over the wide plain of Adanah, diversified by its peculiar vegetation and frequent gazelles, ...". From the Adana area, KOTSCHY (1858) again reports the occurrence of gazelles: "In this forest ... large herds of wild pigs

live, also deer, antilopes (gazelles) and squirrels occur abundantly." In another paper on the animals of the Adana plain, KOTSCHY (1856) reports that the gazelles prefer the dry, steppe-like plains, close to the mountains, and "single individuals are always found". He also describes hunting on horseback.

On his first trip to Asia Minor in 1875/76, DANFORD found gazelles not uncommon in the Çukurova and around Tarsus and Adana (DANFORD & ALSTON 1877). During his second visit in 1878/79, he found gazelles "common all along the valley of the Pyramus [= Ceyhan], on the plain of Bazardjik [= Pazarcık, SE of Kahramanmaraş], the stony oak-wooded uplands on the right bank of the Euphrates, and in many other localities" (DANFORD & ALSTON 1880).

TURAN (1984) gives the following localities where the Goitred Gazelle has been found: The surroundings of Kırıkhan and Hassa (both in the Hatay), Suruç, Akçakale, Viranşehir, and along the Syrian border from Ceylanpınar up to Cizre. He also reports records from Iğdır and Aralık in the extreme east of Anatolia. Unfortunately, no details are available to support these data.

3. Species-identification

AINSWORTH (1842) reports his observation on the plains of Bolvadin and Adana only as "gazelles". In a chapter on the fauna of the plains of Adana and the upper Euphrates, RUSSEGER (1843) mentions "several species of gazelles, especially *Gazella dorcas*". However, this chapter is based mainly on AINSWORTH'S observations and may not therefore contain any original observation by RUSSEGER. KOTSCHY (1856) reports on "one species of gazelle" which inhabits the Adana plain. "It seems to be a species larger but closely related to *Gazella dorcas*. Its underparts and its summer coat are buff-coloured. It exceeds the common gazelle in size by about one-fourth." After a second visit to the area, KOTSCHY (1858) pointed out that there were two different species of gazelle living on the Adana plain. DANFORD identified all the records of gazelles seen on his first trip as *G. dorcas* (DANFORD & ALSTON 1877). However, he referred to AINSWORTH (1838), saying that the species was replaced at the Tigris by *G. subgutturosa*. Unfortunately, DANFORD was unable to get proof of this on his first journey, but he was on his later journey for he brought a specimen (or specimens?) of *G. dorcas* to England. DANFORD & ALSTON (1880) also announced "another gazelle, which was reported to Danford as being found on the banks of the latter river [Euphrates], will probably prove to be *G. subgutturosa*".

Finally, reference should be made to RUSSELL (1794). In his description of the area of Halep he writes: "the country around Aleppo abounds in Gazelles or Antilopes (*Capra Dorcas* Linn. S.N. p. 96), which are

distinguished by the natives into those of the mountain, and those of the plain. The former is the most beautifully formed, its back and neck are of dark brown colour, and it bounds with surprizing agility; the latter is of a much lighter colour, its limbs are not so cleanly turned, and it is neither so strong nor active...".

4. Discussion

Summarizing these observations, we can state that the former distribution area of gazelles extended as far as Central Anatolia. At least two species occurred up to Çukurova. The size and colour of one species as described by KOTSCHY fits *G. subgutturosa*. Unfortunately, he did not collect any material from the Middle East, or at least none can be found in the Natural History Museum at Vienna (F. SPITZENBERGER, pers. comm.), where KOTSCHY's material is deposited. Nevertheless, it seems certain that the former range of *G. subgutturosa* extended at least as far west as the Adana plain. For the Haleb (Aleppo) region, RUSSELL's description of the colour of one of his forms (dark brown) resembles *G. gazella*; furthermore, his statement that this form lives in the mountains also supports this identification. His other species, living on the plain and much lighter in colour, might refer to *G. subgutturosa*. Unfortunately, we do not have any description of the second species inhabiting the area from the Adana plain to the Euphrates. Although it seems probable that it was *G. gazella* (occurrence in the Halep area), *G. dorcas* also has to be seriously considered, as DANFORD's identification of Dorcas Gazelle is based on material sent to England. Whatever the true fact may have been, the distribution ranges of *subgutturosa* and *gazella* (and *dorcas*?) were overlapping over large areas: there was no geographical separation, as was suggested by KUMERLOEVE.

5. Present Status of *G. subgutturosa* in Turkey

Nowadays, only *G. subgutturosa* is found in Turkey and only in a very limited area. This is the area of the Ceylanpınar state-farm near the Syrian border. KUMERLOEVE (1969) estimated the population to consist of 1,500 to 2,000 animals. A report on the "present situation of some game animals in Turkey" (ANONYMOUS 1979) cites a recent study which estimates the number of Goitred Gazelles in Turkey to be 200. Although KUMERLOEVE's figure seems to be much too high, based on exaggerations by local people, a rapid decrease in the population has been noticeable. For example, ERKAN (1978) reports that herds of about 100 gazelles were not rare around Ceylanpınar in former times, but up to the middle of the 1960's the size of herds commonly seen decreased to 40 - 50. Although gazelles have been strictly protected by law in Turkey for a long time, hunting, taking baby gazelles for rearing, and

agricultural chemicals are the main reasons for the decrease according to ERKAN (1978).

A breeding farm was founded at Ceylanpınar in 1977 in order to breed stocks for re-introduction. Breeding started in 1978 with five gazelles. Two of them were brought from Savur (Mardin) and two from Tarsus (Mersin), where they had been reared by farmers (ANONYMOUS 1978, ERKAN 1978). In 1982, M. STIERING (pers. comm.) saw 24 animals in the enclosures at Ceylanpınar. At present, 80 animals are found there (ANONYMOUS 1986). In the zoo of Ankara, five Goitred Gazelles are kept which were brought from the surroundings of Urfa (KASPAREK).

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**The Sperm Whale, *Physeter macrocephalus*,
in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea**

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1. Introduction

Although reported since the classical Greek and Roman periods from Korinthos (Greece), Jope/Jafo (Israel) (LENZ 1856, KELLER 1909), and Konstantinopolis/Istanbul (TOYNBEE 1983) records of the Sperm Whale (*Physeter macrocephalus* Linnaeus, 1758) from the eastern Mediterranean Sea are very rare. There are only six published records:

Greece: Island of Tinos, one before and one around 1840 (ERHARD 1857). – Island of Evvia 1951 (KANELLIS & HADJISSARANTOS 1963).

Israel: Tel Aviv 1934 (AHARONI 1944).

Egypt: Port Said before 1908 (FLOWER 1932). – Alexandria 1838 (HECKEL 1853).

An additional record from Greece thus seems to be worth describing and publishing here.