

# *Gazella cuvieri*

## 1. TAXONOMY AND NOMENCLATURE



### 1.1. Taxonomy.

*Gazella cuvieri* belongs to family Bovidae, subfamily Antilopinae, tribe Antilopini, which comprises about twenty species in genera *Gazella*, *Antilope*, *Procapra*, *Antidorcas*, *Litocranius*, and *Ammodorcas* (O'Regan, 1984; Corbet & Hill, 1986; Groves, 1988). Genus *Gazella* comprises one extinct species, and from 10 to 15 surviving species, usually placed in three subgenera, *Nanger*, *Gazella*, and *Trachelocele* (Groves, 1969, 1988; Corbet, 1978; O'Regan, 1984; Corbet & Hill, 1986). *Gazella cuvieri* is generally included in the subgenus *Gazella* and considered a monotypic species (O'Regan, 1984; Corbet and Hill, 1986). Groves (1969) treated it as a northern representative of the Sahelo-Sudanese gazelle *Gazella rufifrons*, but later (Groves, 1988) confirmed, on the contrary, its isolation in the genus *Gazella*, and made it the only element in one of the five groups into which he divides this difficult genus.

*Gazella cuvieri*. Chaambi NP. Tunisia.  
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### 1.2. Nomenclature.

#### 1.2.1. Scientific name.

*Gazella cuvieri* (Ogilby, 1841)

#### 1.2.2. Synonyms.

*Antilope corinna*, *Antilope cuvieri*, *Gazella vera*, *Gazella cineraceus*, *Gazella kevella*, *Dorcas subkevella*, *Dorcas setifensis*

#### 1.2.3. Common names.

English: Cuvier's Gazelle, Edmi Gazelle, Edmi, Atlas Mountain Gazelle

French: Gazelle de Cuvier, Gazelle de montagne

German: Echtagazelle

Arabic: *Edmi*, *Ledm* or *Edem* (Algeria and Tunisia), *Dama* (Eastern Morocco), *Harmouch* (South-western Morocco)



#### 1.2.4. Description.

Cuvier's Gazelle is a fairly robust gazelle, larger than the Dorcas and Slender-horned Gazelles. The hair is rather long, rough and coarse. The general colour of the coat is dull fawn, darker than that of the Dorcas Gazelle. Face markings are distinct. The central band is brownish fawn, with a black patch on the top of its nose. The front of the muzzle is white. A dark line joints the mouth to the eye. There is a brown band, darker than the back, along the flanks. The belly and rump patch are white, the rump patch surrounded by a fairly indistinct dark band. The tail is black. The horns are long (25-37 cm), thick in the male, strongly annulated, fairly straight, rising vertically before diverging slightly out and back; the smooth tips curving in and forwards. (Slater and Thomas, 1897; Groves, 1988; Kingdon, 1997). Shoulder and hindquarter heights are similar (Panouse 1957). Females are smaller than males (average weight for female = 30 kg, for male = 35 kg, Abaigar, comm. pers.).

TL (male and female): 105-116 cm;

T (male and female): 19 - 21 cm;

Greatest length of skull about 20 cm; facial stripes well marked; males without a swelling on the throat (N.W Africa) (Corbet, 1978).

H: 60-80 cm

Shoulder height: up to 68 cm

Pp: 33 cm; Ear: 17 cm;

Weight : 15-35 kg; Female: 15 - 20 kg (33 - 44 lb); Male: 20 - 35 kg (44 - 77 lb).

Horns: 309.7 +/- 21.1<sup>1</sup> (3 Males); 204.2 +/- 22.8 (6 Females) Groves, 1969

Trophy: Record 378 mm, Algeria, G.K. Whitehead.

## 2. BIOLOGY OF THE SPECIES

### 2.1. General Biology

#### 2.1.1. Habitat.

Cuvier's Gazelle occurs from sea level to an altitude of 2.600 m (Cuzin, 2003). It lives mainly in hills and low mountains, but may frequent piedmont plains as well as very steep slopes, of up to 45° (Cuzin, 2003). It avoids heavy snow cover areas, where it may be present only in summer (Cuzin, 2003). The species seems mainly characteristic of the middle and low slopes of the folds in the Maghreb, occupying the relatively dry forests of semi-arid Mediterranean type dominated by *Pinus halepensis*, *Juniperus phoenicea*, *Tetraclinis articulata*, *Cedrus atlantica*, *Quercus ilex*, *Argania spinosa* and perhaps, before their destruction, *Olea europaea*, with an undergrowth of maquis or garrigue which can be relatively thick or relatively open, and often includes *Rosmarinus officinalis*, *Phyllirea angustifolia*, *Pistacia lentiscus* and *Globularia alypum* (Sclater & Thomas, 1898; De Smet, 1989, 1991; Karem *et al.*, 1993; Kacem *et al.*, 1994, Cuzin, 2003, Abaigar, comm. pers.). In arid Mediterranean climate, it also frequents steppes of *Stipa tenacissima* and *Artemisia herba-alba* (De Smet, 1991; Karem *et al.*, 1993), and various other kinds of steppes (Cuzin, 2003). These forests were formerly much more widespread (Le Houérou, 1986); steppes of *Stipa tenacissima* constitute the first stage of substitution and have themselves greatly regressed (Le Houérou, 1986). In the Saharan part of its range its distribution appears limited to *Argania spinosa* and *Acacia* spp. woods (Cuzin, 2003).

#### 2.1.2. Social behaviour and food preferences.

Cuvier's Gazelle lives in small groups of 5- 6 individuals, or solitary. It favours young alfa shoots (*Stipa tenacissima*), and other grasses, young leaves of leguminous plants and Holm Oak's acorns (*Quercus ilex*). Cuvier's Gazelle needs to drink regularly. Gestation lasts around 170 days. Births, usually of a single calf, occur in April and May.

