

## Conservation Flight for Dama Gazelles

MAF planes carry all kinds of cargo such as bibles translated into the local language, furniture for a new mission family or medical supplies for a remote hospital. We occasionally transfer pets with a family but it is unusual to carry animals on board. Recently, however, Becki flew some Dama gazelles that arrived on a flight from UAE and took them to the Ouadi Rimé-Ouadi Achim Faunal Reserve (OROA) in the North of Chad.



Daughter Shaika (left) with Becki (right)

Previously, in January 2020, we worked with the Sahara Conservation who are attempting to increase the population of the critically endangered dama gazelles. Half of the estimated 100 dama gazelles that are currently left in the world, live here in Chad. By flying at low altitude and in communication with teams on the ground, they were able to capture 3 gazelles from the Manga region of Chad and transfer them to the OROA reserve to live amongst the protected population



there. One of the 4-legged passengers that day was named Becki and she has since had three fawns - 2 females (Shaika and Hiti) and 1 male (Kallé). The genetic diversity of the offspring is very important for protecting the population from being wiped out from a disease or natural event such as draught. The conservationists at Sahara Conservation plan to breed them with other gazelles in the reserve to secure their genes and then release them into the wild.



To further increase the local population, while maintaining genetic diversity, five dama gazelles were flown to Abeche from a conservation project in the UAE. MAF were asked to transfer the gazelles on the final leg of their journey to OROA, which meant a 35 minute flight instead of a 10 hour trip by road. John Watkin, CEO of Sahara Conservation explained, "for no reason at all dama gazelles can take off. If they're not used to being in an enclosed space, they will often run into fences and do themselves terrible harm. We wanted to reduce that risk as best we could so we took the decision last year to sedate them and fly them across."

(top) Securing the gazelle in the Caravan in Abeche

(bottom) Unloading one of the gazelles that arrived by road

Becki landed in Abeche at the time that the flight from UAE was expected but it was delayed and when they finally started loading the gazelles on to the Cessna Caravan time was running out. She

explained to the accompanying handlers that the last-take-off time was rapidly approaching and if they weren't airborne by then the aircraft couldn't leave until the morning (the airstrip at the reserve has no lighting so we are unable to fly at night). In the end, there was only time to load three gazelles onto the aircraft so two of the gazelles had to go by road along with some oryx who were also being relocated. Thankfully all the gazelles made it safely to their new home. After their release John was pleased, saying "They (gazelles) seem to be very happy with the situation".

There is no such thing as a normal flight for a MAF pilot, but this was certainly one of the more unusual ones. We were glad to work with Sahara Conservation and play a part in helping to re-establish this beautiful animal in a country where there was once a thriving population but which has been driven to near-extinction.

## Home Assignment 2022

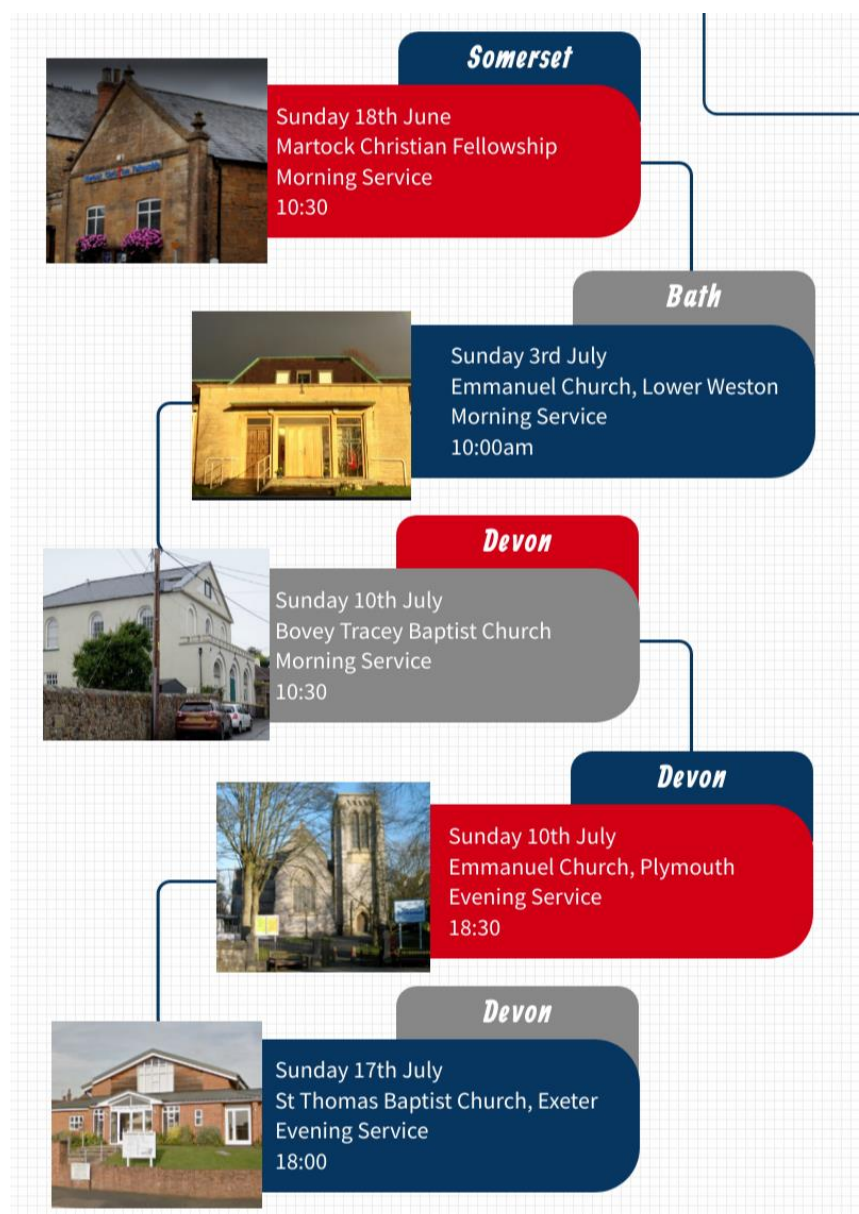
We will soon be visiting the UK for a 4-week home assignment and 2 weeks of holiday. We have confirmed dates for church services that we will be attending in June and July, shown below. We are looking forward to returning to all our supporting churches and excited about visiting Emmanuel church, Plymouth for the first time. Although we will not be at a Sunday service at St Andrews, Buckland Monachorum this year, we will be joining much of their congregation at Parish camp. There is also a cream tea event in Buckland to raise money for MAF, give people an opportunity to find out about MAF in Chad, and of course enjoy some delicious homemade scones.

Church services that we are attending can be seen on the right.

### Other Events:

Wednesday 13th July - 3pm  
Cream Tea  
Buckland Chapel, PL20 7LZ  
Free ticketed event - please contact

[davelikeatree@outlook.com](mailto:davelikeatree@outlook.com)



## Improving lives in Abeche

Last month we received a request from a Swedish organisation, asking to fly two of their staff and their Chadian facilitator to Abeche to meet with missionaries in the town. Abeche is near Chad's eastern boarder with Sudan and would take around 10 hours to travel there by road. The team were only in Chad for a few days so taking a 2.5 hour MAF flight meant they could make the most of the short time they had available.

They wanted to find out about the needs of the people in Abeche with the aim of raising money for a project to meet those needs, so they met with a missionary and local Christians. Different ideas were discussed including setting up a project for women as an alternative to prostitution, to give them skills and a better way to make a living. There is also a problem with young people turning to alcohol and drugs so a project to help prevent this from happening would give them a brighter future. The missionary explained that the only Christian schools in the area were French-speaking so children who only spoke Arabic were not able to attend. He also proposed setting up an Arabic speaking school that follows a Christian curriculum.



(top) Dried out river near Abeche. (bottom) Street in Abeche (Photo credit Joelle)

This was just an initial meeting to discuss potential projects but we pray that the team will return to Sweden with a clear vision and will be able to raise the money needed to bring it to fruition. In the last few months, there have been discussions between MAF Chad and various partners to see how we can work together in the coming years to set up new education or healthcare projects in Chad. We hope that a project in Abeche will be one such project.

## Prayer

\* Pray that our home assignment will go according to plan, the schedule for which is now close to being finalised. We arrive in England on Friday 17th and over the next 3 days we will travel 400 miles and attend our first church engagement. Later that week we will take a family holiday in Wales before continuing to visit supporters.

\* While Becki has been the only pilot in program during the last 6 weeks, she has been flying regularly but thankfully, she has not been overwhelmed by a huge demand for flights. It has been tiring however, as she juggles her different roles, training courses and visitors to the program. Pray that there won't be any unforeseen difficulties for Becki and Leon as they each take a turn at being the only manager in program until August.

\* Pray for continued reliability for both aircraft as we fly without a chief engineer in the country.

## Praise

\* The position of program manager has been filled. We will welcome him and his wife in September, having already met them last month, when they came for a look-see visit for a week.

\* John and Tracey Feil, who work for MAF in South Sudan, have joined us for a month to help ease the burden on Becki with all our other international staff away at the moment. John is the ops-manager in Juba, where they recently switched to a new operations computer program. He has managed the same switchover here and is training all our staff in how to use it.

\* We are able to take our home assignment in time to return to Chad for the start of the new school year. An ex-MAF pilot recently did some refresher training in Uganda and visited Chad for a few weeks in preparation for taking over from Becki while she is away.

\* Our temporary program manager, Leon has been working on an exciting new vision to work with our existing partners and develop new partnerships in Chad that will bring the Gospel to unreached areas and start initiatives that improve quality of life and future prospects for Chadians.



## Bethan's Blog

Last week we went to a British pudding competition to celebrate the Queen's jubilee. My pudding was made of ice lollies - each ice lolly was red (watermelon & mint), yellow (mango) and blue (dyed pineapple), to look like the Chadian flag. They were stuck onto an ice base to make it look like a crown. It was a very hot day so it melted very quickly. My friend Sophie (age 2) said the other puddings were "not very good" but when she saw mine she said "wow".

I recently created my own board game where you have to clean up all the pollution before animals become extinct. I've also set up a restaurant in the MAF guesthouse.

I am looking forward to going to England soon, especially going camping with my cousins and going climbing.



## A Letter from Luke

This week I learnt to swim. I managed to swim a length of our pool without any help. I drew lots of pictures for Mummy and my friend Tracey. I especially like drawing otters and music notes. I really like otters, so Mummy found me a game about them on the internet, which she printed out for me. Hopefully I will see some real otters in England. When we are staying in Wales the red arrows will put on a show and I can't wait to watch them. In August I will start school and my teacher is going to be Miss Coggins. Last week I had a meeting with her all by myself and she showed me around my classroom.