

# Aggression Management at Fossil Rim Wildlife Center

Really?! Almost 2000 acres and you guys still can't get along?



# Learning in the old days at Fossil Rim



- In the beginning this was a rich man's weekend hobby ranch. Lots of animals--nothing very scientific.
- We learned from mistakes—like how many bulls can cohabitate?
- We had some VERY large herds!

# Early Research



- We did some aggression trials with GnRH and MGA implants in scimitar horned oryx
- We hosted a PhD student studying the addax herd



# The GnRH and MGA study

- Scimitar bulls aren't as tolerant as addax bulls.
- We looked at MGA and GnRH implants to see if we could house them together.
- We couldn't. That's not entirely true—the implants should get more study.
- What we did learn is that when these drugs wear off there is about one day before they return to the exact behaviors prior to dosing.



# The Addax PhD Project

- We began the project by identifying every addax in the 426 acre pasture.
- He studied the behaviors of the herd and learned a lot about bull behavior and dominance.
- We ran multiple bulls and learned that they set up territories and there was very little competition.
- But there was some.



# Current Management at Fossil Rim



- Interestingly—we aren't doing very many studies on aggression inhibition at this point
- Mainly learning from previous interactions and not putting multiple bulls together in any breeding groups

# P Horse Improvevest study

- Not really a study!
- We have two mismatched males that need to be housed together



# Potential Giraffe Improvest

- Mananasi is our current bull
- New young male is coming in soon
- Breeding females

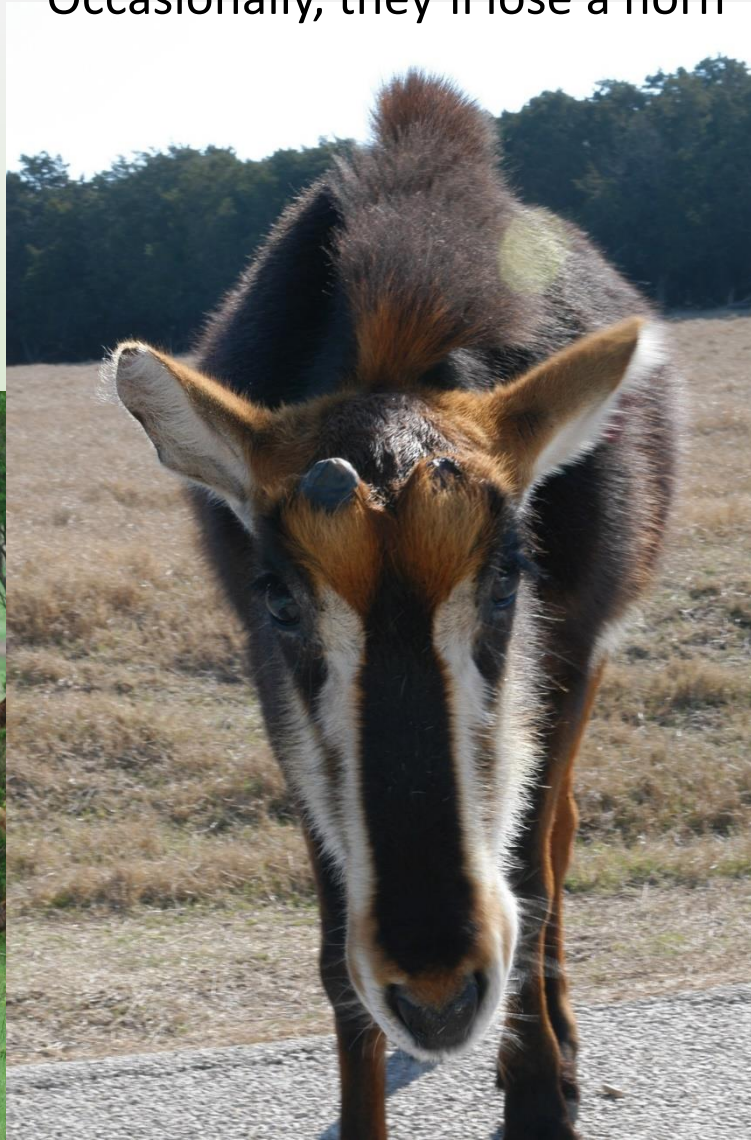


# But we still have to house multiple males

Cervids will fight during rut—  
and sometimes out of rut



Occasionally, they'll lose a horn



Blackbuck—small territories

Male to Male aggression  
isn't the only interaction  
we are concerned about



# Zebra species—Plains, Hartmann's, Grevy's

- Plains — aggressive to others
- Grevy's— aggressive to everything
- Hartmann's— aggressive to each other



Mountain Zebras are notoriously hard on each other.



# Many ungulates are matriarchal



- The dominance hierarchy is fragile
- The fight for dominance can be more aggressive in females than males, but we don't see deaths.
- Once the older matriarch is too old to dominate, the takeover can be quick and relatively non-violent

# Bull aggression to subadults—both male and female

- We see this occasionally
- The bull singles out a young female. We assume this is in relation to reproduction, but we haven't proven or disproven that yet.
- We definitely see a LOT more paternal care of the sable than we do in other species—and what we expect from their wild counterparts.



# Vasectomized/Epididymectomized and Intact Bulls

- We want the secondary sex characteristics--and the behaviors that go along with them
- But NOT babies year round



# Interspecies conflict—usually bulls—but not always

- SHO and addax
- Gemsbok and Sable
- Sable and Kudu
- White rhino and Sable
- Giraffe and Arabian Oryx



# The Ultimate Goal

