

# Barbary Macaque News

[www.barbarymacaque.org](http://www.barbarymacaque.org)

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## Education & Awareness Work - Local



In accordance with our mission statement, BMCRif has been working in raising awareness about the Barbary macaque both locally and internationally this year.

During the last few months, Sonia and Ahmed have worked very hard delivering a conservation education lesson to several schools in the project area. They talk about the macaques and the work of BMCRif and also give a

lesson to the children on the forest's role in the water cycle.

This initiative has received huge support from the education authorities and teaching staff in every school visited. In fact we are overwhelmed with requests to visit other schools outside the project area but due to time and funding constraints we need to focus on the villages close to macaque habitat for now and expand the education work in the future.

Sonia's ideas have gone down really well with the kids and include making monkey masks and collecting rubbish to recycle as materials for art lessons. In one school the children wore their monkey masks until they fell apart!





Sonia is also a very talented artist and develops all the education materials for the lessons herself (see left).

Information about BMCRif's education and awareness work is on our new website – [www.barbarymacaque.org](http://www.barbarymacaque.org) where you can find out more about the project and access photos. So far the website pages are in English but we hope to have them in Arabic, French and Spanish as soon as we find willing volunteers to do the translations! If you'd like to volunteer then please

contact me on [sian@barbarymacaque.org](mailto:sian@barbarymacaque.org). We are still seeking funding for our education work so if you or your organisation would like to make a contribution do please contact me.

### Education and Awareness Work – International The Straits Campaign

The Straits Campaign organised by DEPANA and Barcelona Zoo and supported by Foundation AAP took place over two weeks in July. BMCRif staff were instrumental in the development and translation of the campaign materials including "The Story of Muna" in four languages, which tells the sad tale of what can happen to a primate taken from its family in the wild and sold as a pet.



Both the illustrated story (below left) and the campaign leaflet can be downloaded off our website [www.barbarymacaque.org](http://www.barbarymacaque.org). BMCRif staff Ahmed



and Sonia were accompanied by BMCRif volunteer, Mohamed Amin Abouraka from Tetouan. Everyone worked hard in the hot sun handing out campaign materials to passengers waiting to board the ferry in Algeciras.. Other volunteers came from Spain, The Netherlands and Algeria – a truly international campaign against the trade in infant Barbary macaques. This kind of international collaboration is essential if we are to halt this horrible trade.

## Barbary Macaques

Just days before the team left for Spain, Ahmed received a call from a local person telling him that an infant macaque was being held captive in a village in Bouhachem. Ahmed went to the house and was shown the infant (below) who was being kept in a plastic barrel with no bedding, no light and being fed with bread and milk. The family had stumbled across the infant when his family group was raiding their wheat fields. Not knowing what else to do, the family picked him up and took him home. He was alone in this dark and frightening situation for six days. The family told Ahmed they didn't want the baby so he was able to take it away immediately.

The infant's inappropriate diet resulted in him being severely dehydrated with bloody diarrhoea. Luckily, Sonia (who is a qualified veterinary assistant) was able to rehydrate and feed him. He ate well in the evening and by the next morning was much more active, did not have diarrhoea but was showing signs



of distress and psychological trauma after his experience of being separated from his group. He was fit enough to be released and the team decided it would be better for him if they returned him to his group as soon as possible.

Luckily the team managed to locate the infant's group very quickly and Ahmed took the baby and placed it on the forest floor. It began to yell and two males came down to defend the baby against Ahmed. When Ahmed backed away, one male picked up the infant and ran into the forest. It was impossible to see what happened next and the team left because they did not want to traumatise the group more. This infant would definitely have died very quickly if it had not been rescued.

The birth season in April and May is a stressful time for the macaques as the pregnant females, the newborn infants and the previous year's offspring are all very vulnerable to attack from predators. BMCRif team member, Mohamed Chitwan, was just in time to save one infant during a surprise attack on its group by domestic dogs. He managed to grab the infant (who was left on the forest floor in the general panic) and frighten off the dogs. He then waited quietly until the group descended from the trees and placed the baby in a tree so that its mother could come and get it. He then left the

group in peace. In another incident, a shepherd, Ahmed Chitwan, was in the forest with his goats when he saw dogs attacking a macaque group. He saw a baby suddenly fall from the back of an adult male macaque (who was carrying two babies). Ahmed was able to get the baby before the dogs did and then give it back to the males who returned once the danger from the dogs had gone. As you can see from the photo the infants are a huge focus for the macaques. The adult males do their best to defend both them and the group but sometimes infants (who can be very independent even when very small) get left behind on the forest floor in the groups' rush to get away from the dogs.



In total, three infants were returned to their groups due to BMCRif's work this year. The project's remit of identifying each group in Bouhachem means we can return captive infants very quickly if we know where they are captured. Informing shepherds of the danger their dogs pose to the macaques means that they are aware of the problem and can try to limit the damage as in Ahmed Chitwan's case.

In addition shepherds from a very remote village in Bouhachem recently admitted that they used to kill many macaques when they were in the mountains with their goats. They told us that they stopped the killing after meeting the BMCRif team because they feel differently about the macaques now. We make it a point not to condemn people for doing these things. Instead we supply them with information that might lead them to change their behaviour on their own – this is more likely to lead to long term change. Hopefully this will mean that the harassment, torture and killing of macaques for sport in Bouhachem will soon be a thing of the past and that, like Ahmed Chitwan, the shepherds will begin to rescue them instead.

### **Project Plans**

Autumn will be very busy for the team as Tamlin Watson will return to conduct the BMCRif Dog Health Programme in four more villages in October. In addition, the qualifying matches and final for the BMCRif Football Tournament will be held in September and October. This year we are expanding the Tournament to more villages in Bouhachem and initiating a Tournament in the villages in the area of Jbel Kelti.

## Website

**[www.barbarymacaque.org](http://www.barbarymacaque.org)**

A long term project goal realised this summer with our new website beautifully designed by Aoife Healy, a graduate of the Primate Conservation MSc at Oxford Brookes University. We hope that the site becomes a useful resource for those interested in Barbary macaque conservation.



Contact Us: [info@barbarymacaque.org](mailto:info@barbarymacaque.org)

Website: [www.barbarymacaque.org](http://www.barbarymacaque.org)

### Don't forget our Facebook Group

If you have a Facebook page then please join our group, **Barbary Macaque Conservation in the Rif**

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=108304019192845>. We now have almost 700 members. If you are already a member then please add your friends and help us give the Barbary macaque a higher profile both nationally and globally.

