

# Barbary Macaque News

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

ISSUE 6 - JANUARY, 2012



Sponsored by the Royal  
Zoological Society of Scotland,  
Edinburgh, UK

## The BMCRif Football Tournament



The 2<sup>nd</sup> BMCRif Football Tournament was an even bigger success than the first one! This time, with the help of Youssef Salama of the Tetouan Football Association (who also provided the trophies); we tripled the amount of boys who took part in the games and reached 100s of people with our conservation message about the Barbary macaques. The qualifying matches took place over three weeks

in October. Teams from villages around Jbel Kelti in the isolated calcareous massif also took part. The team from Lahcen came 2<sup>nd</sup> last year and they were determined to win this year so well done to them. Runner up was Ihihyne, a team from Jbel Kelti who had to walk 2 hours before reaching the track where Ahmed and the Monkey Bus were waiting for them. Third place went to Tayenza and Bou Serwes came fourth. Before each qualifier, Sonia and Ahmed gave a short talk about the Barbary macaque. Some of the boys had already met the team at their schools so they could answer lots of the questions. Many said they would observe the macaques now instead of chasing them and throwing stones. Let's hope they will!



BMCRif is enormously grateful to Youssef Salama, Ayoub Setti, Soulaïman El Harrad, Abdesalam Ahnin & Redoine Khlifate. The headmasters of Moulay Abdsalam & Tazroot schools assisted in making the tournament a big success. Huge thanks to Folly Farm Adventure Park & Zoo for their support.

## The BMCRif Volunteer Experience by Berta Alzhaga

For 8 days in October I had the opportunity to volunteer with BMCRif to find out firsthand what they do. I started work immediately upon arrival, helping with the preparations for a qualifier of the BMCRif Football Tournament. Before the matches, Sonia and Ahmed gave the large group of men and boys lots of information about the Barbary macaque. It was good to see that some boys already knew things about the macaques because the BMCRif team had visited their schools.

After this experience, I wondered how the lessons would be in the village schools. I didn't have long to wait to find out as I found myself the next day in the Monkey Bus travelling toward the village of Maizha. I have to say that I deeply admire the BMCRif team - it took us three hours to reach the school, not because we got lost or we stopped to enjoy the scenery but, because we had to drive almost two hours on dirt and rocky tracks in the middle of the forest. This allowed me to enjoy the forest but it makes access to these remote villages very time consuming.

Sonia and Ahmed explained to the children how the macaques live in the forest,

and why they are important for the health of the forest.

Information was given to the older children about the water cycle and why the forest is fundamental to ensure water supplies all year round. The most interesting thing about the education programme is that it includes lots of information on the whole environment but it is always connected in some way to the forest and its relationship with the macaque. Finally after the



serious bit, the children split into groups and made a mural describing the water cycle using recycled plastic (e.g. yogurt pots, boxes and old juice and milk containers) which is a very good strategy as the children learn to give a second life to rubbish! The little ones made a monkey mask and so did we! After three hours in the car, we arrived home. Tired but happy, we began preparations for the rabies vaccination campaign.

We begin work in the village of Slalem and I noted how Sonia and Tamlin kept remarking on how well people treat their dogs here. For me, the dogs seem very frightened of their owners who responded well to the directions they were given on how to manage their dogs. We also encountered 3-4 cases where the dogs were well treated. This also makes me think that little by little people will their attitude and understand that with some good treatment, their dogs are a great help in the forest and also very good companions. The villagers demonstrated their gratitude for this important campaign by inviting us into their houses for honey and eggs, olives and jam.... always accompanied by hot sweet tea!

In between the hectic campaigns, observations of the macaques continued as it is important not to forget the reason BMCRif is here! It was fantastic to see the macaques in their natural habitat. My BMCRif experience made me realise that that, with very little in the way of resources and with cheap, but very effective actions, it's possible to improve the lives of the local people as well as raising awareness about the macaques and their importance for Moroccan ecosystems. Many thanks to Siân Waters for allowing me to share this busy time with her and her team and to everyone for making me feel so at home with all of them!

## BMCRif Dog Health Programme – Tamlin Watson

The dog health project team had another successful vaccination period again this year. We had some setbacks due to lack of availability of rabies vaccines and a recent change in the law which in turn meant we now have to pay for a vet to be present at all vaccinations. Unfortunately this had not been made clear by government vets so funding had not accounted for the extra expense; however, we managed to enlist the help of Dr Bouzzati who proved himself to be extremely competent and a very welcome addition to the team.



We vaccinated and gave parasite treatments to a large number of dogs again this year and, because we had a vet in attendance, we were also able to offer simple medical treatments for sarcoptic mange, various wounds to ears, paws and legs and to offer advice to owners who needed it. We were also able to offer help to a badly injured mule who had been chased and fallen, his nylon hobble had cut through his leg and he had badly lacerated his face. His owners did not understand the need to clean the wound which had become seriously infected. We were able to show the owners how to clean the wound, how to make a hobble out of softer cotton material and gave the mule antibiotics, anti-inflammatory medication and pain relief.



Although we treated fewer dogs than last year, the villages were some of our remotest and are at very high risk of rabies outbreaks. In fact Remla has had 16 cases of rabies in the last two years, and when we arrived in October the villagers had recently killed three dogs infected with the disease. This disease is a serious problem for humans, dogs and wildlife alike. To really ensure an effective eradication of the disease in

this area a widespread neutering programme has to be implemented which is our aim next year.

We have also been developing a bite prevention strategy for schools with information about the benefits a well trained dog can bring to human lives, we aim to develop a further course of training and dog handling workshops to enable children to better understand their dogs and lessen the chances of being bitten. The team have worked tirelessly again this year and the additional support from Dr Hamedy and his colleague Dr Bouzzati is appreciated so much by us all at BMCRif.

### **New PR person for BMCRif**

We are very pleased that Josie Purcell has joined the team as our volunteer PR and Communications Officer. Josie works as a freelance journalist and professional photographer but it is her love of Morocco and her interest in conservation projects that led her to BMCRif. She is keen to share the project's stories and the way it combines its care of the macaques with its care for the people in the local community around Barbary macaque habitat. We are very happy to welcome Josie to the team. If you want to contact Josie her email is [josie@barbarymacaque.org](mailto:josie@barbarymacaque.org)



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

### **Don't forget our Facebook Group**

If you have are on Facebook then please join our group there – over 1,000 members <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=108304019192845>. 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.

**Grateful thanks to our donors in 2011  
We couldn't do it without you!**

