

Breeding gazelles in unique facilities to avoid their extinction

LOCATION: Almería

DURATION: 1'37"

SUMMARY: At the foot of the Alcazaba of Almeria is one of the only facilities of its kind in the world and contingent of the CSIC, the Superior Council of Scientific Investigations. There stands the Experimental Farm named La Hoya. They have been working here since 1971 to fend off the extinction of at risk gazelle species from North Africa. A captive breeding program whose goal is that each species has a large enough population to ensure its future prosperity and ultimately can be reintroduced into its natural habitat. Zoos in Germany, France, Portugal, and Italy have collaborated in this effort.

VTR:

It could be in North Africa, but we find ourselves at the foot of the Almerian Alcazaba. An excellent place where the most unique facilities in the world were built to breed in captivity, various African gazelle species at risk of extinction.

GERARDO ESPESO
Vet

"This began in 1971 when professor Valverde of CSIC realized that in the Saharan military barracks, remained the last specimens of these species and decided, in collaboration with the Spanish Government, to bring them here to Almeria."

Thanks to the idea of this biologist, the reserve in the experimental building of the CSIC La Hoya was born. Along with the reproduction of species, there is another objective.

GERARDO ESPESO
Vet

"The ultimate ending and the most basic is for the animals to be reintroduced to their original place."

Like the 43 Cuvier's gazelles this year-that have been sent to Tunisia.

EULALIA MORENO
CSIC researcher

"We intended to maintain the controlled breeding at the least for two springs or during the two reproductive seasons; so from there we could first make a pre-release in a zone that has a fenced in perimeter within the park, containing around 100 hectares, and then release them into freedom."

In 2003 they started an artificial reproduction program, giving rise in 2005 to a historical fact:

GERARDO ESPESO
Vet

"The captive birth of the first gazelle insiminated with frozen sperm."

The success of this animal reserve is clearly shown through their numbers: of the 14 Dama gazelle specimens that arrived more than 40 years ago, today they counted 2,106 births, the majority of which were produced in Almeria and in the European and American zoos that participated in the project.