

UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL OF CHAMELEONS



Beautiful coloured male Jemen-Chameleon (foto: Jan Harteman)

The weeks from mid July to Mid August were more busy that expected. Early one evening, an unusual phone call was received at ARCO from SEPRONA the Guardia Civil for environmental protection. They were requesting immediate help in the rescue of “about 100 Chameleons”.



Two engaged collaborators from Seprona/Guardia Civil were also helping to remove the chameleons. These had been discovered in a cortijo in the North of the province. An elderly British man, who had been living in appalling conditions, had died unbeknown to anyone. There were dogs, parrots and around 20 adult and 40 newborn Chameleons and many dead amongst them.



Some of the new born chameleons being packed for the transport by our volunteers Astrid, Korbinian and Mathias. Without their keen and enthusiastic help this action would have been almost impossible to be carried out.

Foto: Korbinian Schleich

The ARCO centre took care of these precious rather big Jemen-chameleons (*Chamaeleo calyptratus*), leaving others to caretake the remaining animals. In addition to the tiny hatchlings there were innumerable eggs so the original number of live rescued ones has been increasing by the day. After 2 weeks of caretaking, feeding and individually separating the animals a new home needed to be found and they were transferred to Oasys Thematical Park and Zoo at Tabernas. Here they received a tropical indoor enclosure where the animals even in September still are becoming pregnant and also laying eggs.



A completely new big terrarium measuring 6 x 6 x 3m had been given to the chameleons at OASYS – Parque Tematico y Zoo at Tabernas by its Director Jose-Maria Rodriguez Linde (foto right).

Now installed, the Jemen Chameleons are attracting many visitors but better still they have become pregnant and are already laying eggs. Thus, we are hopeful to incubate them for the months development which they need to hatch successfully.

Jemen chameleons grow to a size of 50 cm and live in Jemen at altitudes between 1200 and 2000 m in vegetation covered areas. They are the most commonly kept chameleons of recent years and their reproduction is also possible in captivity. They do feed on most kinds of insects but need tropical conditions to be kept successfully.

Foto: The Jemen chameleons after the rescue venue were transferred to OASYS - Parque Zoologico, Tabernas.