



Donkey Walk

In January we organized our thirteenth walkathon. About 120 participants and 3 donkeys had a lot of fun. Although the number of participants was a bit down, we may look back on a successful event. And of course we can learn from the diminishing number of walkers: we probably should focus on more publicity. Nevertheless our three donkeys, Igor, Diva and Simba, did great: Igor and Diva, who are



experienced walkathon donkeys, took Simba beneath their wings. Simba, however, is experienced in shining in the spotlight, though: she performed in a Swedish comedy in the summer of 2017. Not only the number of participants is dwindling: we are also facing a dwindling number of volunteers at the shelter. This is a big problem.



Trampolines

A request on Facebook has resulted in us becoming the proud and happy owners of seven old trampolines. No, the donkeys do not jump on them: they are used to protect the trees in the new addition of the sanctuary. Donkeys love to nibble on the trunk of trees, which causes them to die. The trampolines hail from all over the island – picking them up was a job in itself. Fortunately we could count on a good-sized group of volunteers who were doing a final school project for Amy Richardson and Diana Croes. They are studying at IPA on Aruba. The group has cleaned the surroundings of the first three trees and they have dug the necessary holes.



The first three trampolines are now in place – the rest will soon follow. We even have used the opportunity to film an ad for new volunteers:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxxUQjWpY7o>



Keto

As you know, there are still quite a few roaming donkeys on the island. Normally that is no problem – should there be a need, they can always come to the sanctuary. There is a small herd at Seroe Colorado, the most eastern part of the island. In this area a construction company had dug a cesspool, but they had forgotten to cover the hole. One of the roaming donkeys had fallen in and could not get out. We were asked to assist by the police and the fire brigade. Joint forces and a sling got him out. He was very intimidated by his experience, and he was very quiet. That is why we baptized him Keto, which means quiet in Papiamentu. Keto stayed quiet during a few weeks – he also gave us much concern, as he did not like our feed. Fortunately there was quite a bit of rain during that time, so there was grass to eat. We cut the grass, mixed it with kwihi pods and fed this mixture to Keto. He loved it. Nowadays he is used to our normal feed. In the meantime he is impatiently awaiting the arrival of a few lovely lady donkeys from St. Eustatius....



SOS

From the island of St. Eustatius we received an SOS: there are about 70 donkeys on the island, which no one cares for. They will



starve to death if nothing is done. We are now looking at possibilities to divide this herd between the various donkey sanctuaries in the Caribbean (or outside the Caribbean). We have offered to house four young, not yet castrated donkey males and ten healthy mares. This will keep our herd healthy. We had

already come up with a breeding program, but we had not yet activated it.



The donkey males on Aruba have all been castrated to prevent inbreeding – last year we tried a donkey male from Curaçao, but he was not a success. He tried his best, but proved to be infertile. The project with the donkeys from St. Eustatius is still in the early stages. A lot should be figured out and arranged before the first donkeys will set foot on Aruba. But we are concerned about the SOS situation and we are trying our best to rescue the poor animals as soon as we can.

Aruba Doet

In the Netherlands as well as on the islands there is a two-day volunteering event called Aruba Doet. An example is Running with the Blind, an outing with the elderly, a beach clean-up or



painting and clearing the garden of the donkey sanctuary. This year a whopping total of 90 volunteers of the Bucuti Hotel, De Palm Tours and the Schakel College helped us with a lot of chores. The two days were filled with painting, cutting, cleaning and building sheds. These sheds were also at our previous location: the donkeys can find shelter there against rain and sunshine. So now we have four sheds and we are super happy with them and with fantastic efforts of Aruba Doet!

Hay and kwihi pods

Since January we have experienced problems getting hay. It usually came from Venezuela: good quality and a reasonable price. However, last January the frontiers with Venezuela were closed and with it the arrival of hay. And that is still the case: we are not getting one single stalk of hay from Venezuela to this day. So now we need to buy it elsewhere – sometimes inferior quality and three times as expensive. Fortunately, donkeys love sweet kwihi pods. So we asked everyone to gather these pods and deliver them at the sanctuary. We have received bags full of pods, and we still need them. The pods are very nutritious and they are a good addition to hay. And should you know an affordable supplier of hay: please let us know!





Sad result



Because we struggled getting the donkeys their hay and other feed, we have had to say a final goodbye to our little Black Diamond. He literally could not stomach the change in diet. Black Diamond was already a weak donkey due to inbreeding; he had bad teeth as well. The new feed was not digested well and he died of kidney failure at the end of March. Because donkey mothers often die of sadness in cases like this, we have kept an eye on Big Momma and tempted her with juicy carrots and apples for a while. That has obviously helped a lot, as she has been doing really well.

King's Day

On King's Day, April 27, restaurant Bingo! annually organizes a flea market in honor of Dutch King Willem-Alexander of the



The Netherlands' birthday. The proceeds of the activities is then donated to a good cause. Of course we had put up the sanctuary's name as a beneficiary, but another charity was the lucky one. But in the end they could not make it and our sanctuary received the

donation. A sizeable cheque was handed over: with this money we are going to build more sheds for the donkeys.

Amalia School

Regularly schools on Aruba are organizing drives for a good cause. The children of the Amalia School have adopted Diva and raised a whopping AWG. 1000,-- for her. As gorgeous divas do, she went to get the money herself!





Barkeeper

The Donkey Sanctuary is 21 years old – our oldest donkey Esmeralda is about 35 now. Time flies! As does our new barkeeper. Unfortunately for our guests he does not speak any language, so a nice chat is not possible. He only speaks peacocks! Come and meet him!



MacCactus?



Donkeys are finicky about what they eat. This can lead to unexpected moments, because to our great surprise they also eat cacti. Not for dinner, just as a snack. Can you believe that?

Early visitors.

We have tried to lure two donkeys inside. They have been castrated, and we believe that they might have lived with us before. They have been roaming around for so long, that we do not recognise them anymore. We have not been able to catch them, although it seems that they were in front of the gate at 7 am when no one was around to let them in. We hope to catch these early birds one of these days...



Hooligan



In Seroe Colorado things are not always peaceful: there is a hooligan donkey around, who is fighting for authority within the herd. We receive many calls about this donkey, who is riddled with battle wounds. We would like to catch him (and castrate him), because in this group too there is a lot of inbreeding. This patriarch fights with everyone in the herd, even his own offspring! Catch him and castrate him as soon as possible: that is what we need to do as soon as we can.



Houdini

In Seroe Alejandro there is a stallion with a swollen knee due to inbreeding. We call him Houdini, when Desiree found him inside her garden.



But Houdini found a hole in the gate and had disappeared before he could be castrated. And now there are quite a few offspring with swollen joints, some of them living in the sanctuary. Diassa and Skeena are two of them who are suffering with joint pains. In June we got a message that there was a baby donkey who slept the whole day long. This proved to be untrue: the baby of 5 or 6 months old could not stand up because of the pain in his or her joints and knock-knees. The x-rays showed inflammation and arthrosis throughout the body. We had to make a most difficult decision: to put an end to his suffering. Something like this is so hard and it goes against everything that we are working for. We could not even name him or her.

It was a difficult day for all of us.

But sometimes there is good news too: a young female donkey in front of Desiree's home. She was not quite right, as she walked in a strange way. Desiree and her Canadian guest Rose lured her inside the garden and it appears that she is a descendant of Houdini, just like Diassa. Fortunately, her illness is not so severe that she could not lead a happy life. We baptized her Skeena, after a river in Canada. Yes, on the request of Rose.

