



Atar – Boû Nâga - Nouakchott

November 2005. Nissan Patrol 2.8D (José Brito)

Total kms: 615

Description: This piste connects Atar with several villages located on the western flank of the Adrar Atar and the remote mines of Boû Nâga with Nouakchott. These mines were open in the 1970's for exploring rare earth oxides (bastnasite and monzanite) but soon were closed due to the devaluing of these minerals and the remoteness of the mines. You will be able to observe several camel herds and plenty of nomadic lifestyle especially in the mountain areas.

The piste heads mostly south until about 30km before Boû Nâga mines where it turns southwest to cross several regs and chotts and afterwards dune corridors. This is an alternative route to avoid the paved road from Atar to Nouakchott. The most scenic parts are the mountain areas until km 163 and the escarpments and chotts around Boû Nâga mines. Afterwards the piste is relatively monotonous running inside dune corridors.

Route findings and markers: There are no markers however the piste is mostly clear all the way. In the mountain areas the piste is very clear although there are several crossroads to small villages. After km 163 and until km 190 the piste is less clearly visible, especially around Toûf el Henna dam (km 173). After km 190 the piste continues unmarked but it is clear all the way to the paved road.

Fuel: Atar, Nouakchott and in local traders at least in Oujeft and Ouagchodda villages.

Water: Atar, Nouakchott, Oujeft and Ouagchodda villages and in several wells along the piste (Timinit, Nouâkil, Aguilâl Fai)

Traffic: Until Ouagchodda village there is some local traffic. Between Ouagchodda and Aguilâl Fai well do not expect traffic and the area around Boû Nâga mines is especially remote. After Aguilâl Fai well there are local cars. A minimum of 2 sound vehicles, better 3, navigation instruments and maps are mostly advisable.

Driving: Until km 34 and after km 545 the piste runs in a paved road. Between km 34 and 106 the piste crosses mountain areas, thus progression is generally slow and the terrain is rough. Between km 106 and 163 the piste runs mostly inside oueds with a sandy but relatively firm terrain. Between km 163 and 190 the piste crosses several sandy dune fields for which it is necessary to deflate tyres. A relatively difficult section is located before Toûf el Henna dam (km 173). Between km 190 and Aguilâl Fai well (km 448) the piste crosses several fast and firm regs, with occasional dune fields, allowing a fast driving. After Aguilâl Fai well and until the paved road (km 545) the piste follows corridors between dunes, where the terrain is very soft but relatively fast.

Suggested duration: 3 to 4 days. Allow 1 day to cross the rocky areas until km 106, another day to reach Boû Nâga mines and a final day to cross the dunes until the paved road.