



Foundation for the Protection of the Arabian Leopard in Yemen

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"Working to ensure a sustainably managed wild population of Arabian Leopards living in harmony with local communities in Yemen"

"Friends of the Arabian Leopard"

More than 200 members around the world!

Update No. 14: January 31, 2011

1. Waleed and Murad Make History!



Waleed and Murad check the memory and change the batteries on one of our Reconyx trail cameras



The first image ever taken of a wild Arabian leopard in Yemen

On January 18th, Murad Mohamed called from Hawf to say that he and fellow researcher Waleed Al-Ra'il had succeeded in photographing a leopard with one of the 12 trail cameras that they are operating in and around the Hawf Protected Area. By doing so, they have become the first people ever to photograph a wild Arabian leopard in Yemen. This is the most recent proof that Arabian leopards persist anywhere in the world outside of Oman, and now that we have proven the existence of at least one leopard in eastern Al Mahrah Governorate, we face the difficult task of bolstering protection of the area. *Alf Mabrook* ("1000 congratulations") to Waleed and Murad for this hard-won success! We are extremely grateful of the Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund which supports this crucial research and to Malini Pittet for training these two Yemeni biologists in trail camera research so effectively. A PDF of Malini's report from two months of camera trapping in Hawf is available by writing to contact@yemenileopard.org



The second image ever taken of a wild Arabian leopard in Yemen
(Now you see it, now you don't!)



Mike and Carol prior to setting off for Hawf

2. Mike Jennings and Carol Qirreh Volunteer in Hawf: On Sunday, January 16th British volunteers Mike Jennings and Carol Qirreh joined Waleed and Murad in Hawf where they assumed responsibility for the Hawf



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Leopard Survey while our two anchors recharge their batteries with their families in Ibb. Mike, author of the *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Arabia*, is an old “Arabia hand” who has conducted more than 42 surveys and expeditions to the remotest corners of the peninsula during the past 27 years. During their second day in the field, Carol and Mike were with Waleed and Murad at that exciting moment when the first leopard images from Yemen appeared on the Foundation’s memory card viewer; not a bad start to their four-week stay in Hawf!

3. Governor of Ibb Pledges Support for Leopard Research: The New Year started off in fine fashion as Dr. Mohamed Al-Doais and David Stanton met with His Excellency Ahmed Abdullah Al-Hajri, Governor of Ibb on January 1st. Governor Al-Hajri pledged his commitment to the conservation of Yemen’s National Animal. In a subsequent meeting with Dr. Al-Doais, Governor Al-Hajri agreed to support a governorate-wide research program designed by and to be conducted by Dr. Al-Doais. This program has two objectives: 1) to use GIS predictive spatial modeling to assess the likelihood that Ibb may still harbor a few wild leopards, and 2) to scout locations for a “safari park” type of exhibit in which captive leopards from Taiz Zoo can live in a semi-wild state. Pending the outcome of the first phase of the program, we intend to institute a full-sized camera survey along the lines of the Hawf Leopard Survey. Governor Al-Hajri is to be commended for his vision and commitment to preserving the Arabian leopard, and we hope that other governors will soon follow his example. Also on January 1st, Mohamed and David paid a courtesy visit to Professor Dr. Abdulaziz Mohamed Al-Shouabi, Rector of Ibb University to thank him for his strong support of the Foundation. Dr. Al-Shouabi has granted Mohamed time off to attend the training in Oman last November and to conduct the Ibb survey, and has provided us with two excellent workers in the form of Ibb University graduates Waleed and Murad.



His Excellency Governor Ahmed Abdullah Al-Hajri with David Stanton and Dr. Mohamed Al-Doais at “The Green House” in Ibb.



Dr. Mohamed Al-Doais is a key member of the Foundation team.

4. Three trail cameras stolen in Hawf: Leaving expensive trail cameras unattended in the wilderness puts them at risk so it was not totally unexpected when Murad Mohamed called on New Year’s Day to say that three of the Foundation’s trail cameras had been stolen in the Hawf Protected Area. However, this story has a happy ending in that villagers tracked the thief and recovered the cameras in perfect working order where he had buried them. The fact that trail cameras automatically take pictures of any warm-blooded creature that passes in front of them helped the police in their investigation since the memory cards on all three cameras contained clear images of the thief in action.

5. Omani delegation invited to Yemen: Official correspondence has been sent from the Yemen Ministry of Water and Environment to the Diwan of the Royal Court of the Sultanate of Oman, inviting three members from the Arabian Leopard Survey and Arabian Oryx Project to Yemen for a ten-day tour of the Foundation’s activities in Ibb, Amran, Mahwit, and Taiz. The visit, which is tentatively scheduled for March is a follow-up to the training mission to Dhofar that was so generously hosted by the Diwan last November. We believe that this visit will strengthen the cooperative effort to preserve the Arabian leopard in the wild in its two “key range states.” Stay tuned for further details.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” - Margaret Mead

