



## 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"

*Hundreds of members around the world!*

#### Update No. 17: April 30, 2011

**1. Saving the Leopard Enthusiastically Received by the Public:** *Saving the Leopard*, Kevin Rushby's film for Al Jazeera English, was aired for the first time on April 19<sup>th</sup>. Seen by many thousands of people on television, Al Jazeera.net, and YouTube, the film has received widespread accolades. In the opinion of Dr. Luke Hunter, Executive Vice President of the Panthera Foundation, "It's terrific!" The film spawned a campaign by viewers who were outraged by the poor treatment of leopards in Yemeni zoos and the lack of support for leopard conservation. If you would like to express your concerns with regards to these issues, please address your comments to: [Media@yemenembassy.org](mailto:Media@yemenembassy.org), [counselor@yemenembassy.org](mailto:counselor@yemenembassy.org), and [contact@yobserver.com](mailto:contact@yobserver.com).

If you haven't yet watched the film we urge you to do so at either of the following links:

<http://english.aljazeera.net/programmes/witness/2011/04/201141991337978595.html>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IA2yIaY4w4I>

Please share these links with anyone who you think might be interested in our mission.

To clarify one point, towards the end of the film David Stanton, Executive Director of the Foundation, stated that "Apart from captive breeding, this is the first regional effort to share knowledge for the conservation of Arabian leopards." This, of course, is not strictly true. The Environment and Protected Areas Authority (Sharjah), the Breeding Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife, and the IUCN Cat Specialist Group have been promoting Arabian leopard conservation regionally (principally through the annual conservation workshops for the Fauna of Arabia) for more than a decade. The point David was attempting to make is that the training mission to Oman on which *Saving the Leopard* was based is the first time that conservationists in these two range states have worked together *on the ground* to advance the in-situ conservation of Arabian leopards.

**2. Diwan of the Royal Court approves Training for Waleed and Murad:** On April 12<sup>th</sup>, His Excellency Dr. Sheikh Mohamed Said Rashid Al-Balushi, Director General of the Office of the Environment, Diwan of the Royal Court of the Sultanate of Oman, approved a training in Arabian leopard field research for Waleed Al-Ra'il and Murad Mohamed with Khaled Al-Hikmani of the Arabian Leopard Survey in Dhofar (you can see Khaled in action in *Saving the Leopard*). While Waleed and Murad continue to do excellent work in Hawf, improving their capacity through this cooperative training exercise will better prepare them for the anticipated Phase Two of our Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund sponsored research in Eastern Yemen.

**3. Foundation Work Continues in Spite of Widespread Unrest:** The so-called "Arab Spring" which is causing so much unrest in the region is certainly having an impact on Yemen. Nevertheless, the work of the Foundation continues unabated. David Stanton recently paid a field visit to Hawf with Fadhl Al-Eryani and Rayman Aryani to monitor the morale and progress of Waleed and Murad who continue to do excellent work under difficult conditions. Both are concerned about the welfare of their families in Ibb, but they are comfortable with the work in Hawf and uploaded another 36,000 photos to the Foundation computer. Nasser continues to operate Hans Schmidt's three trail cameras at Jebel Milhan, and Dr. Mohamed Al-Doais is laying a solid foundation for the *Ibb Leopard Survey*. We hope that Yemen will emerge from this period as a happier country, but we see no reason to suspend or postpone our activities. We believe that conservation of the environment should always be a priority, even in the face of political crises such as Yemen is experiencing.

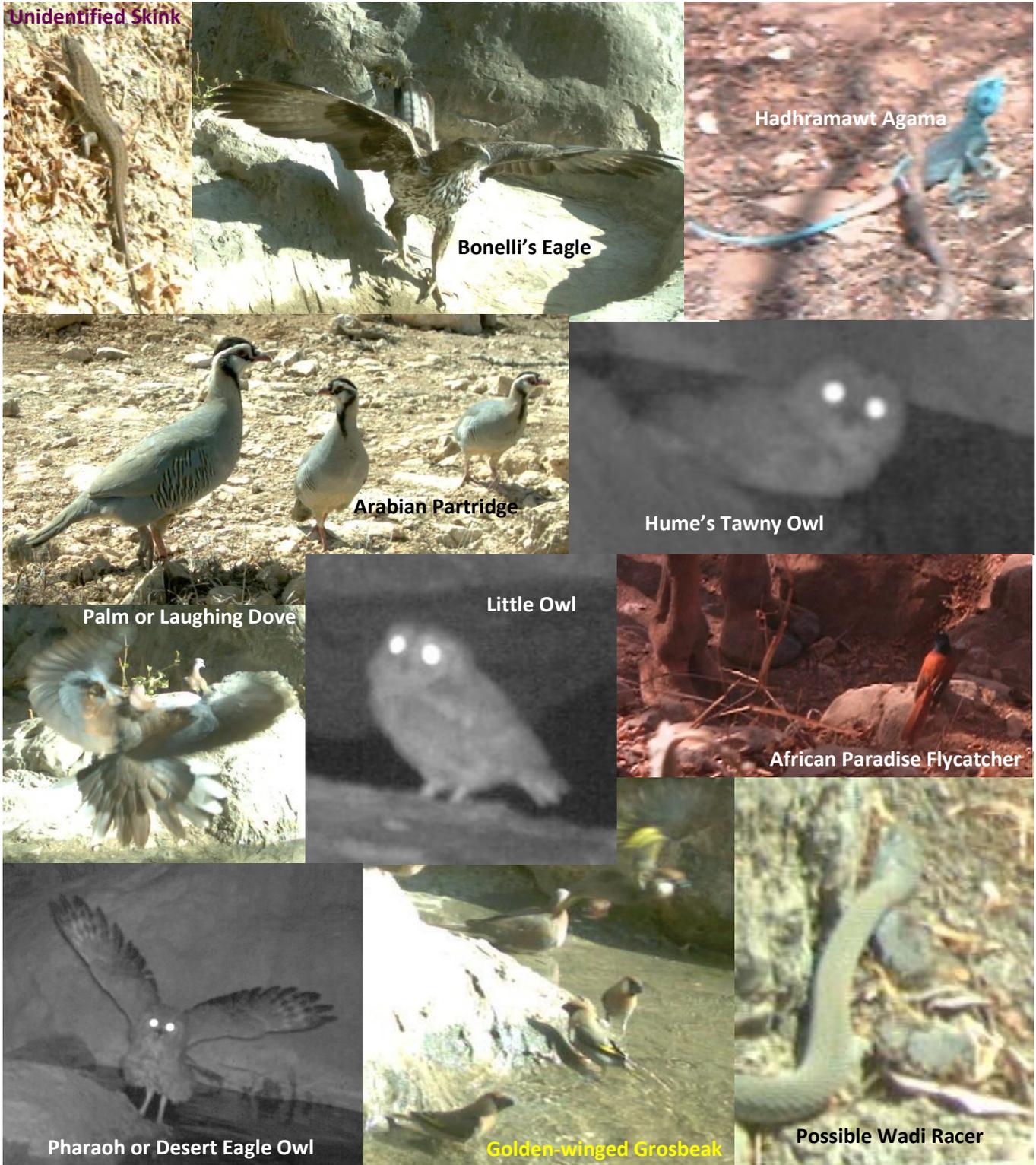
**4. National Tobacco and Matches Company Donates 1,000 Posters for Raising Awareness:** 1,000 posters with the message "The Arabian leopard is almost extinct, let's work together to save them" are attracting widespread interest in Al Mahrah, Ibb, and Sana'a where a pilot distribution program is underway.



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**5. More Results from Hawf:** So far we have analyzed more than 60,000 photographs from seven months of trail camera research in Hawf. Though most images show livestock, people, or absolutely nothing, we have obtained thousands of images of creatures ranging from leeches and snails to owls and leopards. Our March update featured some of the more spectacular mammal photographs we have obtained. This month, we feature a few of the birds and reptiles that we've captured. All have been cropped to isolate the subjects.



**“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**



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