



Foundation for the Protection of the Arabian Leopard in Yemen

P.O. Box 7069

Sana'a, Republic of Yemen

Tel: +967 733916928

Fax: +967 - 1 - 370193

Email: contact@yemenileopard.org

"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. 22: September 30, 2011

1. Ibb Developments:



Ibb Governor HE Ahmed Abdullah Al-Hajri accepts an award from the Foundation in recognition of his support for wildlife conservation in Ibb



A portion of Al-Mahjar Forest in Shi'r District, Ibb



Jallal Abdullah Naji Kaid (left) and Zaher Ali Abdullah Al-Maskary take a break in Al-Mahjar

On Friday, September 2nd a Foundation team consisting of Dr. Mohammed Al-Doais, Mr. Yousuf Mohageb, and David Stanton went to Ibb for an intensive two-day program. In Yarim, the team liaised with the Foundation's newest researchers, Ibb University biology graduates Jallal Kaid and Zaher Al-Maskary for lunch. Afterwards, the young recruits underwent a primer course in camera trapping. The expanded team proceeded to Al-Mahjar Forest in Shi'r district where Dr. Al-Doais, coordinator of the *Ibb Leopard Survey* has heard intriguing reports of recent leopard activity. Mahjar resident Mr. Abdu Al-Makhmal took the team on a tour of the Forest where they found extensive evidence of Striped Hyena and Indian Crested Porcupine and possible Arabian Caracal sign. Mr. Al-Makhmal was later videotaped as he described his and other residents' encounters with leopards as recently as five months ago. On Saturday, September 3rd all the Foundation team met with Ibb Governor HE Ahmed Abdullah Al-Hajri to present him with a plaque in recognition of his support of the Foundation's work. During the ceremony His Excellency stated, 'There are a lot of organizations working in your area, but the only time we hear anything from them is when there is a dispute about money.' At the conclusion of the meeting Governor Al-Hajri said, 'Thank you, Mohammed, for encouraging young people to be involved in your [the Foundation's] activities.' Two and a half weeks later, Jallal Kaid traveled to Hawf for two weeks of training in leopard field research with Waleed and Murad who recently returned from Oman after a week of advanced training with the *Arabian Leopard Survey* in Dhofar (see next article). Jallal and Zaher will monitor four trail cameras in Al-Mahjar.



Mr. Abdu Al-Makhmal



Dr. Mohammed Al-Doais



Mr. Yousuf Mohageb



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2. Waleed and Murad Complete Advanced Leopard Field Research Training with Khaled and Hadi Al-Hikmani:



The team in the "leopard cave" on Jebel Qammar.

L to R: Murad, Waleed, and Khaled (not pictured Hadi)



The team standing in front of a Dhofari Baobab Tree.

R to L: Murad, Waleed, and Khaled (not pictured Hadi)

Waleed Al-Ra'il and Murad Mohammed continue to do an exceptional job in the *Hawf Leopard Survey* having succeeded in being the only people ever to photographically document wild Arabian Leopards in Yemen. Their trail camera research has yielded thousands of photographs of wildlife in the *Hawf Protected Area* and shattered the results of previously published studies including one by a major international development agency, which, in a November 2010 report stated "...few large mammals such as the Arabian leopard, ibex, gazelles, wolves, hyenas, foxes, wild cats and porcupines are expected to live in [Hawf] and its environs." Their research has also generated new bird and reptile records which add greatly to our knowledge of the biodiversity of eastern Yemen. Between September 6th and 12th the Foundation's two dedicated researchers received advanced training from Hadi and Khaled Al-Hikmani of Oman's *Arabian Leopard Survey*. The Foundation is grateful to the *Diwan of the Royal Court of the Sultanate of Oman* for approving the course and to Eng. Salah Al-Mahthori for arranging it. The continuing collaboration between the Arabian Leopard's two most important range states is enormously valuable. The Foundation would especially like to thank Hadi and Khaled for designing an excellent course and to the Abu Dhabi Chapter of the Emirates Natural History Group for financing Waleed and Murad's participation in it.

3. New and Old Friends Band Together to make "Kickstarter" a Success: On August 30th the Foundation launched a "crowdfunding" appeal called "Nightwatch – Catching Arabian Leopards with Camera Traps" on



www.kickstarter.com The ensuing, global effort by a broad coalition of people ensured the success of the appeal which ended today after raising more than \$18,000. Old and New friends made pledges, wrote emails, tweeted, and utilized Facebook and other social media to get the word out quickly. Bolstering the efforts of individuals on six continents were numerous organizations including: Atlas of Breeding Birds of Arabia (ABBA), the Centre for Middle Eastern Plants (CMEP) at the Royal Botanical Garden Edinburgh (RGE), Wildlife Extra, Wild-Cat.org, Bluebeetle Web Design, Dubai Kennels and Cattery, the Ornithological Society of the Middle East (OSME), the British-Yemeni Society and many others. In addition to raising a lot of desperately needed funding, the worldwide exposure engendered by the appeal also raised the profile of leopard conservation in Yemen and strengthened the Foundation's bond with old friends such as "Catalyze Communications" while developing strong relationships with new friends including Sekari Search and Social Optimization Agency. The Foundation is, of course, hugely indebted to all of the people who helped make the appeal a success. To get a glimpse of the effort made on the Foundation's behalf please log onto the following links:

<http://cmep.org.uk/2011/09/21/nightwatch-catching-arabian-leopards-with-camera-traps/>

<http://www.osme.org/news/index.shtml>

<http://www.wildlifeextra.com/go/news/leopards-yemen.html>

<http://leopards.wild-cat.org/>

<http://www.slideshare.net/arabianleopard/>

<http://www.talking-naturally.co.uk/tn61-conference-calls-20-sept-11/>

"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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