1. The Foundation Hits Two: On November 18th the Foundation silently celebrated its second birthday. Registered with the Yemen Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor as Moassassah Hemayat Al Nimr Al Arabi Fi Al Yemen (The Foundation for the Protection of the Arabian Leopard in Yemen), the Foundation has focused on the preservation of Arabia’s most critically endangered large mammal as a means of engendering conservation of entire ecosystems. Drawing its inspiration from the annual Conservation Workshops for the Biodiversity of Arabia held at the Breeding Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife in Sharjah, UAE and the IUCN Cat Specialist Group,

the fundamental beliefs of the Foundation are: 1) that the Arabian Leopard should be protected, 2) that Yemen is a critical partner in the regional effort to conserve the Arabian leopard, and 3) that though it is not yet too late to prevent the extinction of Arabian leopards in Yemen, action is urgently needed. Following is a summary of some of the Foundation’s accomplishments during the past two years:

- 24 consecutive information-packed monthly Newsletters published in English and most in Arabic
- [www.yemenileopard.org](http://www.yemenileopard.org), designed and sponsored by BlueBeetle web design (Dubai) with support from the Dubai Kennels and Cattery, launched on May 8, 2011
- Corporate sponsorship obtained from the National Tobacco and Matches Company, the Griffin Group, Total E&P Yemen, Murjan Travel, Rehab Construction, and the Shibam Holding Corporation
• Successful project proposals submitted on behalf of the Foundation to Idea Wild, the Abu Dhabi Chapter of the Emirates Natural History Group (2), the Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund (2), the Panthera Foundation, the Governor of Ibb (2), and the Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

• Successful project proposals submitted on behalf of the Yemen Ministry of Water & Environment to the World Bank (2) and the South-South Experience Exchange Trust Fund

• Successful project profile and funding appeal launched on www.Kickstarter.com

• Two groups of Yemeni leopard researchers trained with the Arabian Leopard Survey in Dhofar, Oman

• Six Yemeni conservationists trained by South African National Parks in the Northern Cape Province

The team visiting the Anatolian Sheepdog Project in Namaqualand

Moses Johannes Beukes demonstrating the “Cybertracker”
• Third and Fourth SIS Walks to Save the Arabian Leopard held

• More than 6,000,000 Shamlan "Leopard labels" printed and distributed nationwide

• Numerous print and web articles about the Foundation published in English and/or Arabic

• The first and only pictures ever taken of wild Arabian leopards in Yemen captured

• More than 20 presentations on Arabian leopard conservation given in Yemen and the UAE
  Partial list of venues: Emirates Natural History Group (Abu Dhabi and Dubai Chapters), Dubai English Speaking School (DESS), Sana'a International School (SIS), Yemen Society for the Protection of Wildlife (YSPW), Horizon School (Dubai), Zayed University, Total E&P Yemen (TEPY), Oilsearch (ROY), Yemen Ornithological Society, International Women's Association, Basement, Ministry of Water & Environment, World Bank, Shibam Holdings, National Tobacco and Matches Company, Ibb Government offices, etc.
• Thousands of images of 15 mammal, 30 bird, and 10 reptiles species captured in the Hawf Protected Area providing the best quantitative and qualitative data available about the zoodiversity of the area, including many new mammal, bird, and reptile records for eastern Yemen.

• Leopard workshops held in Mahwit and Al Mahrah with support from the MoWE and ENHG

• 24 minute documentary Saving the Leopard produced by Think Tank Films broadcast on Al Jazeera International, posted on numerous websites, and screened at the Royal Geographic Society in London

• Six full-time Yemeni researchers and one full-time driver recruited, trained and employed
• Three Yemenis employed on a part-time basis for translation, interpretation, logistics, planning, and various other essential supporting roles

Fadhl Abdulrahman Al-Eryani  
Yousuf Mohamed Omer Mohageb  
Mohammed Ahmad Shamsan Galeb

• Numerous committed foreign volunteers recruited to work in Yemen and remotely from abroad

Malini Pittet  
Stephanie Cappucci  
Rasha Skybey  
Daniel Mahoney  
Carol Qirreh  
Kate Dixon and Barbara Settles

• Strong links with several sister feline conservation organizations around the globe established: http://wild-cat.org/pardus/leopards/index.htm?habitat.htm

The Foundation’s mission has remained essentially unchanged in the past two years, but the vision and strategy continues to evolve as the organization matures. The Foundation focuses primarily on identifying talented, passionate Yemenis and providing them with the tools that they need to do their jobs. Its commitment to the preservation of leopards has always had the added benefit of fostering the conservation of entire ecosystems for a healthy leopard population cannot exist without an adequate prey base, which cannot exist without sufficient vegetation which must rely on healthy soil and pure water in order to thrive. However, this reality is not immediately obvious to every observer and the Foundation’s goals for 2012 include expanding and transitioning to a more obviously comprehensive conservation organization. Thus, the Foundation is maneuvering to become a suitable platform from which Yemeni conservationists of all disciplines (e.g. marine biology, botany, ornithology, entomology, etc.) can launch conservation projects. Another goal of the Foundation as it enters its third year is to transition to Yemeni leadership.
2. Disturbing YouTube Video of Tormented Arabian Leopard Has a Positive Side: On November 6th the Foundation was alerted to the existence of an unsettling video showing a group of Yemeni tribesmen tormenting a captive leopard in Lawdar District, Abyan Governorate. Subsequently, almost 100 people posted negative comments on YouTube and wrote to Engineer Omer Baeshen, Director of the Endangered Species Unit and CITES officer at the Yemen Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), to demand that he investigate the criminal actions depicted. While the video was soon pulled by the individual who posted it, the Foundation has learned from the Director General of Lawdar district that the leopard was captured at an undisclosed location close to Lawdar in May and was subsequently sold to a man in Dhamar for YR 700,000 (about US$ 3,000). The leopard is said to have died shortly after being sold and further disclosures are expected pending the ongoing investigation. In that this animal possibly represents more than 1% of the wild population of Arabian Leopards, the video documents a tragic loss for those who wish to protect these critically endangered mammals. On the positive side, the video also proves that Arabian Leopards still exist in an area where they had previously been thought locally extinct. In talks between the Foundation and the EPA it was decided to continue the investigation and conduct an awareness campaign in Lawdar cooperatively, thus strengthening the connection between these two entities. It is expected that this will eventually result in stronger protection for Arabian Leopards in Lawdar and elsewhere in Yemen.

3. Hawf Leopard Survey Featured in the Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund 2010 Annual Report:

Neither the rapid growth of the Foundation nor its many successes would be possible without the support of numerous friends, sponsors, and donors. Chief among these is the Abu Dhabi based Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund (MBZSCF), sponsors of the Hawf Leopard Survey. Fund Manager Dr. Nicolas Heard is a true friend of the Foundation and never fails to take time from his busy schedule to discuss the implementation of the two grants that the Foundation has thus far received from the MBZSCF. A short summary of the Hawf Leopard Survey is featured in the 2010 Annual Report of the Fund which can be downloaded at the following links:

In English: http://www.mbzspeciesconservation.org/media/mbz-species-conservation-fund-23.pdf


4. Volunteer Rasha Skybey Launches "Friends of the Arabian Leopard" Facebook Page from Down Under: "The Foundation has a new Facebook page! To keep up to date on the latest Arabian leopard news, view photos including the most recent camera trap sightings and find out more about our volunteer opportunities, click on the following link and hit the 'like' button on the top of the page: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Foundation-for-the-Protection-of-the-Arabian-Leopard-in-Yemen/171154712978798?ref=tn_tnmn"

5. Hawf Leopard Workshop Solidifies Local Commitment to Safeguarding the Wildlife in Hawf: On October 30, representatives of the Foundation and the Yemen Ministry of Water & Environment held a leopard workshop in Jadeb Village, in the Hawf Protected Area. Organized by the Foundation in conjunction with Mr. Mohamed Shamsan (Director General for Environmental Policies and Programs at the Ministry), Mr. Yousuf Mohageb (Founder and CEO of Arabian Ecotours), Mr. Ali Abu Khaled (Director General of Hawf District), and Mr. Saeed Ali Bakrait (President of the Hawf Social Society for Development), the workshop was attended by more than 40 members of the local community. A special effort was made to invite leaders of the settlements in Hawf forest as these are the people who have the most impact on and are most impacted by wildlife. The workshop was opened by Mr. Shamsan, with statements from Mr. Abu Khaled and Mr. Bakrait. A brief discussion David Stanton lectured on "The Importance of Protecting Yemen’s National Animal in the Hawf Protected Area." Waleed and Murad spoke enthusiastically on the nature, importance, and results of their work, and Mr. Mohageb spoke extensively on the potential benefits of ecotourism to the residents of Hawf. Proceedings were skillfully managed by Mr. Shamsan and though the discussion was often highly energetic, the results of the workshop were entirely positive. The Hawf Director General pledged his continuing support for the current and future work
of the Foundation, and many participants thanked the presenters for speaking truthfully and passionately about an issue that they had not previously fully understood the importance of. (See additional photo on Page 4)

5. Sebastian Battles a Cyclone to Fulfill His Mission in Hawf: Within days of arriving on site, German conservation photographer Sebastian Kennerknecht had set up three of his five high-resolution camera traps with the assistance of Waleed and Murad. Unknown to the team at the time was that a tropical storm was brewing in the Indian Ocean. The storm, which caused 14 deaths in Oman, hit Hawf on November 3rd with torrential rains that led to devastating flashfloods in the protected area. Roads were washed out and one of Sebastian’s sophisticated setups was ruined. The flooding also destroyed three of the Foundation’s trail cameras. Undaunted by this setback, Sebastian and the Foundation set about restoring their batteries of equipment. A spare camera and two flashes were couriered from Berkeley to Foundation friend Jerry Scott in Durango, Colorado. Jerry brought the equipment to Sana’a on November 20th and it will be sent with Waleed to Hawf on December 1st. In the meantime, temporary Foundation employee Khaled Abdullah Abdu Taher brought three trail cameras to Hawf on November 17th to replace those that were lost. The Hawf Leopard Survey is now back up to full strength.

“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

TOTAL E&P YEMEN Supports the Protection of the Arabian Leopard in Yemen