

· **Foundation for Endangered Wildlife (Yemen)** ·

· **Foundation for the Protection of the Arabian Leopard in Yemen** ·

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

**Update No. 31: June 30, 2012**

**I am proud that NTMC is the leading sponsor of the *Foundation for Endangered Wildlife/Foundation for the Protection of the Arabian Leopard in Yemen*, this country's most active and effective conservation organization.**

**- Sheikh Tawfik Saleh Abudullah Saleh, Executive Chairman**

**1. Foundation is Awarded Research and Conservation Grant by the Prince Bernhard Nature Fund:**

Working in conjunction with Mr. Koen Cuyten and Mr. Erwin Van Maanen of the Netherlands-based *Rewilding Foundation* (formerly known as the *Anatolian Leopard Foundation*), FEW/FPALY has been awarded a significant research and conservation grant from the *Prince Bernhard Nature Fund*. The grant is sufficient to enable year-long trail camera surveys in the two most important as yet unsurveyed sites in Yemen: Wadi Sharis, Hajjah and Jebel Khor, Abyan. Scats collected in Wadi Sharis in January 2009 were positively identified as leopard scat through DNA analysis, and Jebel Khor is the site where at least two Arabian leopards have been captured in the past 14 months (see following article). In addition to the long-term research component of the Prince Bernhard funded project, the activities include a major awareness/education campaign incorporating workshops with local stakeholders, informative sessions in area schools, and the free distribution of 500 copies of *Vanishing Spots* to families with school-age children in and around each of the two project sites. Activities will commence almost immediately in Wadi Sharis where the security situation is believed to be relatively stable. The situation in Abyan is a bit more speculative, however, due to the ongoing presence and anti-government activities of AQAP in the governorate. We will proceed there as soon as we are reassured by our ally, Mr. Ahmed Ali Al-Qufaish, the Director General of Lawdar District, that it is safe for our trainers to begin working.



**2. “Shabwa Leopard” Rescue Reaches an Impasse:** In spite of numerous promises of help in liberating the “Shabwa leopard” from various parties we have reached an impasse. In the words of a confederate from Shabwa, “The problem is the tribal issues in Shabwa. Bin Naji [the man holding the leopard] is not from a large tribe, but still he has his own men.” In other words, any attempt to forcefully liberate the Shabwa leopard will result in armed conflict that might lead to human casualties and blood feuds that could last for decades. A letter to the Governor of Shabwa requesting his assistance in rescuing the leopard has been drafted, and a petition to Yemen President Abduraboo Mansoor Hadi is being developed. Progress is admittedly much too slow, but because security in Yemen remains so unstable and the consequences of a poorly conceived and executed rescue plan are potentially so disastrous, we have to be careful.

**3. ENHG Renews its Support:** One of the *Foundation's* staunchest supporters is the Abu Dhabi Chapter of the *Emirates Natural History Group* (ENHG/AD) which funded the groundbreaking exchange with the *Arabian Leopard Survey* (now the *Arabian Leopard Conservation Project*) in Dhofar, Oman in November 2010 (see Update No. 12, November 2010). Much of what the *Foundation* has been able to accomplish since has been a direct result of this initial grant. A follow-up grant in 2011 funded a second exchange with Oman in September of that year, the October 2011 workshop in Hawf, and a variety of other activities (see Updates No. 22 and 24). We were therefore delighted when on June 10 ENHG/AD Chairman Dr. Andrew Bean informed us that the ENHG/AD committee voted to approve its third consecutive grant to the *Foundation*. This grant has been designated for underwriting three month's worth of biodiversity monitoring at the Hawf Protected Area and will keep the Hawf Leopard Survey funded until the end of 2012 by which time we expect to have secured additional support to finance the cost of continuing the work through the end of 2013. We remain extremely grateful to the administration and members of the Abu Dhabi chapter of the *Emirates Natural History Group* for their continuing confidence in the *Foundation* and for their generous support of the work that we do.



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

FPALY/FEW, P.O. Box 7069, Sana'a, Republic of Yemen - Tel: 00967 733916928 - [contact@yemenileopard.org](mailto:contact@yemenileopard.org)

**4. FEW/FPALY Takes Steps to Understand Yemen’s Role in the International Cheetah Trade:** We continue to get depressing news from Guenther Wirth and Janice Bowdery about the fate of Yemen-bound Cheetah cubs in their area



**Djin in the litter box a few days prior to his death. Notice the lack of long, grey dorsal hair characteristic of healthy Cheetah cubs of Somaliland.**

**Djin and the only surviving cub shelter Sahrir’s corpse**

At the end of May Guenther and Janice rescued three badly malnourished and dehydrated cubs in Hargeisia including a pathetic individual called Djin that was barely recognizable as a Cheetah. Unsurprisingly, Djin and another cub named Sahrir both died in spite of Guenther and Janice’s experience and skill in nursing sick Cheetahs back to health. Subsequently, they have received reports of an additional 20 cubs that were confiscated by Somaliland authorities including a massive confiscation of 18 individuals. As often happens, these animals have “disappeared” without traces. Given the difficulty of Cheetah care and the lack of expertise of those engaged in the illegal Cheetah trade, it is likely that a proportion of the confiscated cubs died. However, given what we know about Yemen’s role as a major transit country for Gulf-bound East African Cheetahs it is probable that a proportion of the cubs have been smuggled into this country for resale to wealthy customers in neighboring countries where Cheetah “ownership” has become fashionable. In an effort to help the *Cheetah Conservation Fund* determine the origins of some of the Cheetahs that are funneled through Yemen, *Foundation* conservationists Waleed Al-Ra’il and Murad Mohammed have collected DNA samples from the Cheetahs at Sana’a and Ibb zoos and from a privately “owned” individual that died in April. Additionally, a *Foundation* Friend who will be working with Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Haradh throughout the summer has volunteered to investigate the wildlife trade there and, if possible, to collect additional DNA samples from Cheetahs held by traders there. According to CITES regulations, permits for DNA samples from Appendix I species including the Cheetah must be issued by both the exporting (i.e. Yemen) and the importing countries, in this case Namibia where the issuing authority has proven extremely cooperative in such cases. The samples that we collect will be sent for analysis as soon as Yemen’s CITES officer issues the necessary export permits.



**Murad Mohamed collects a sample of hair ‘with the roots’ for DNA analysis from one of Sana’a Zoo’s two Cheetahs**

**An employee of Ibb Zoo collects a hair sample from one of the zoo’s Cheetahs under the supervision of Waleed Al-Ra’il**





**4. Arwa Produces 10,000,000 “Leopard Labels” and Distributes Them Nationally:** This June the Arwa Mineral Water Co. produced more than 10,000,000 bottles of Shamlan mineral water with special “leopard labels.” Many thousands



Some of the more than 10,000,000 leopard bottles being filled on the production line. Trucks loaded with cases of “leopard label water” at the Arwa ware- house, ready for national distribution.

of cases of the water have been distributed to all Yemeni Governorates and populated islands including Kamaran and Socotra. This brings to 21,000,000 the total number of Shamlan bottles beseeching the Yemeni public to protect their National Animal that have been distributed nationwide since Arwa management initiated this public service program in 2009; that’s almost one bottle for every Yemeni man, woman, and child! 21,000,000 thanks to Shamlan for caring!

**6. Donating to FEW/FPALY is Now Possible Through Amazon Payments:** It is a basic fact that every organization needs money in order to remain active. We try to keep our overhead to a bare minimum, but bringing our operating expenses to zero is simply not possible; we pay office rent and utility bills, purchase consumables, buy, repair and replace equipment, hire people, and utilize public transport for work-related excursions. Friends and their allies who would like to contribute to these running costs can now do so through Amazon Payments. Simply log onto <https://payments.amazon.com/> and go to "Send Money." You can then make a donation in any amount to the following address - [contact@yemenileopard.org](mailto:contact@yemenileopard.org) Pass it on; your support is essential and greatly appreciated!

**7. FEW/FPALY Facebook Page nears 200 Likes:** While it is unlikely that the *Foundation* Facebook page will ever go “viral,” the exposure gained from our Facebook page is crucial to our long-term growth. *Foundation* volunteer Rasha Skybey continues to do a superb job of keeping the page fresh and up to date and the number of “likes” has recently neared the 200 mark. One of the easiest ways that people can show support for the FEW/FPALY is simply by spreading the link to our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/yemenileopard>) and encouraging your friends, family, and colleagues to “like” us, too! Our goal is to reach 1,000 likes by the end of 2012 and we are almost 20% there.

**8. Hawf School Issues a Certificate of Appreciation to the *Foundation*:** In recognition of almost two years of outreach to students and staff at Hawf School, the school’s administration awarded the certificate of appreciation pictured to the right to FEW/FPALY. We are honored by this unexpected affirmation of the important contribution to the personal growth of Hawf schoolchildren that our work has engendered and look forward to increasing our impact on the conservation outlook of the schoolchildren and their families there.



**“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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