

· **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. 36: November 30, 2012**

**I am proud that NTMC is the leading sponsor of the *Foundation for Endangered Wildlife (Yemen)*, this country’s most active and effective conservation organization.**

**- Sheikh Tawfik Saleh Abdullah Saleh, retired Executive Chairman**

**1. Happy Third Birthday to FEW/FPALY!:** On November 18, FEW/FPALY quietly observed its third anniversary as an official NGO. For the past three years FEW’s strategic direction has resulted primarily from the vision and initiative of founder and Executive Director David Stanton. Having recently resumed the teaching career that he temporarily left in order to start FEW/FPALY, Mr. Stanton is confident that newly appointed Associate Director Dr. Mohammed Al-Duais will lead the NGO into a new and even more effective era in the near future. As he stated in a recent meeting with conservationists Esmond Bradley Martin and Lucy Vigne, “The first stage has expended most of its fuel and we’ve climbed pretty high. Now the second stage is firing up and taking us even further.” We expect that future updates will be filled with exciting disclosures about FEW’s growing conservation program in Yemen.

**2. Editorial - “Conservation and People”:** Without people there would be no need for conservation, nor anybody to effect it. While we may conceive of conservation as a means of “protecting” nature, like most everything we humans do, conservation is basically all about doing those things that we perceive to be in *our* best interest. Humans focus their too-modest conservation efforts on those species that they either find useful or irksome. Much of conservation falls under the aegis of “wildlife management,” which generally fits into two basic categories: 1) ensuring a ready supply of game to hunt, and 2) dealing with “problem” species. In either case, the motivation behind policy and action is generally economic. For a relatively few species (often the “charismatic megafauna” like pandas and elephants), some aesthetic quality and/or collective human guilt inspires us to try and “save” them from an extinction that we are causing. Who can imagine, for example, a world without ‘tygers, tygers burning bright?’ Nevertheless, we get closer to a tigerless world every day! Currently, more than 1,100 species of birds are in danger of global extinction. Many of the proportionately few people who support conservation do so simply because they believe that because people have the power to destroy nature, it is our responsibility to protect it. These people are prepared to swim against the tide of humanity and try to slow the most devastating mass-extinction event Earth has ever known. E.O. Wilson of Harvard University estimates that current rates of habitat destruction and environmental overexploitation are likely to result in a 50% loss of all biodiversity within the next 38 years. If true, this means that according to the low estimate of 30 million species that are thought to inhabit the Earth, an average of 400,000 unique life forms will become extinct every year until the middle of this century. Nobody can predict what the outcome of such a catastrophic loss of biodiversity will be, but it is ultimately almost certain to be contrary to *our* best interests. It is with these sobering thoughts that we dedicate FEW Update No. 36 to the people who give Yemen’s endangered wildlife its best hope for survival.

**3. FEW Welcomes Dr. Tony Miller as its Botanical Adviser:**

On November 1<sup>st</sup> FEW contacted Dr. Tony Miller to see if he was interested in serving as our Botanical Adviser. At the time Dr. Miller was busy conducting a botanical training course aimed primarily at the leopard rangers on Jebel Samhan, but he quickly replied in the affirmative. Days later the FEW Board of Trustees unanimously approved his nomination. Dr. Miller, a veteran of well more than 50 expeditions and field surveys to the Middle East (including many to Yemen) is the Director of the *Center for Middle Eastern Plants (CMEP)* at the *Royal Botanical Garden of Edinburgh (RBGE)*. When informed of the Board’s decision, Dr. Miller responded with typical enthusiasm, “I was delighted that the Trustees agreed to my nomination for the position of Botanical Adviser to FEW. I am very much looking forward to working with FEW and hopefully contributing to the development of biodiversity conservation in a country which has given me so much pleasure over the years.” A first-class scientist and



**Dr. Miller on one of his 50+ missions to the Middle East**



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prolific author, Dr. Miller has published many papers and books on Middle Eastern flora including the seminal *Ethnoflora of the Soqatra Archipelago*; he is also the editor-in-chief of the journal *Flora of Arabia*. In addition to his work in Arabia, Tony has recently headed several missions to Iraq and Afghanistan where he presented environmental workshops to a variety of stakeholders including teachers, journalists, and young scientists. In an email sent from Iraq on November 11<sup>th</sup>, he stated, "It's never enough to be 'just a scientist' these days!" Needless to say, we are thrilled to welcome a Botanist of Dr. Miller's caliber and vision to the FEW team and are confident that his input will be instrumental in helping FEW along the path to reaching its full potential and impact as a conservation organization.

**4. Some of the Faces of FEW:** You are FEW! We now have hundreds of friends around the world, and it is clear that without your interest, support, and encouragement we would not exist. Although you have met them before, the following gallery will reacquaint you with some of the many people who make the FEW team what it is, the most influential and effective conservation organization in Yemen.



**FEW's Board of Trustees (L to Rt): Mr. Haitham Alaini, Dr. Abdul Karim Al-Iryani (President), Eng. Abdulrahman Al-Eryani, Mr. David Stanton (Executive Director), Mr. Adnan Jumman. Not present in photo: Mr. Marco Livadiotti.**

**Dr. Abdul Karim Al-Iryani (President - Board of Trustees):** Dr. Al-Iryani, a former Prime Minister of the Republic of Yemen, has served as the President of FEW's Board of Trustees since June 2010. He was an adviser to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh and currently advises Yemeni President Abdulrabuh Mansoor Hadi. A true "Renaissance Man" and a dedicated conservationist, Dr. Al-Iryani has won many awards and accolades during his long political career. Dr. Al-Iryani's support for and involvement in FEW affairs is instrumental in the success of the NGO.

**Engineer Abdulrahman Fadhl Al-Eryani (Member - Board of Trustees):** An original board member, Engineer Al-Eryani has a Masters degree in Animal Science from the University of Colorado at Fort Collins. Yemen's Minister of Water and Environment from 2006 until April 2011, Engineer Al-Eryani co-sponsored (with then Minister of Tourism Nabil Al-Faqih) a successful motion in the Yemen Council of Ministers to declare the Arabian Leopard as Yemen's National Animal on April 29, 2008. Engineer Al-Eryani has been supportive of conservation in Yemen for many years and has had a huge impact, especially on Socotra which was declared as a UNESCO World Heritage Site during his term as Minister of Water and Environment. He was recently appointed Water and Environmental Adviser to the Office of President Abdulrabuh Mansoor Hadi. Engineer Al-Eryani's impact on FEW continues to be enormous.

**Mr. Haitham Mohsen Alaini (Member - Board of Trustees):** Mr. Alaini has been an active member of FEW's Board of Trustees since June 2010. Founder and CEO of the Griffin Group, Mr. Alaini has provided vital technical, moral, and financial support to FEW virtually since the NGO's inception. Mr. Alaini has been an active and avid conservationist for many years and in the 1990s spearheaded Arabian leopard conservation in Yemen by confiscating four captive leopards from private hands, thereby making a significant dent in the market for wild-caught leopards here.

**Mr. Adnan Ahmed Jumman (Member - Board of Trustees):** One of two original members of FEW's Board of Trustees, Adnan is skilled in graphic design, communications, and printing and has worked as a graphic artist with UNICEF,



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UNDP, WHO, UNFPA, GTZ, YLNG, and many other NGOs in Yemen. Among his many contributions to FEW's conservation program, Adnan produced the 20 lavish illustrations for FEW's flagship publication, *Vanishing Spots*.

**Mr. Marco Livadiotti (Member - Board of Trustees):** - Marco first came to Yemen in 1960 when his father served as the personal physician to the Imam and has been here for most of the past 52 years. He joined FEW's Board of Trustees in November 2010 and his dedication and devotion to the natural and cultural heritage of this nation is unparalleled. In the mid-1990s, Marco was instrumental in securing "Arnold" (aka "Nimrod Felix") from an entrepreneur near Bilqis Cinema, Tahrir Square and helped organize his transfer to Sharjah where he became a founder member of the then nascent captive breeding program there.

**Mr. David Stanton (Founder and Executive Director of FEW):** A 21 year-resident of Yemen, Mr. Stanton took a three-year hiatus from teaching in order to start the NGO. Although his time is now quite full in meeting his professional duties, Mr. Stanton continues to devote a considerable amount of energy ensuring that FEW is embarked on a clear course to effective Yemeni ownership into the future.

**Dr. Mohammed Al-Duais (Associate Director of FEW):** Now in his second month as FEW's Associate Director, Dr. Al-Duais is working overtime building links with government institutions, academia, and international stakeholders in the cause of conservation in Yemen. Many of FEW's activities are now being driven by Dr. Al-Duais's initiative (see Update No. 35 for more details).

**Mr. Yousuf Mohageb (FEW Bird Conservation Officer):** Mr. Mohageb is a veteran of multiple FEW initiatives and has been involved with the NGO since the very beginning. The founder and owner of Arabian Ecotours, Mr. Mohageb most recently represented FEW at the *1st Meeting of the AEWA Northern Bald Ibis International Working Group* in Jizan, Saudi Arabia from November 19 – 22 (next article).



Dr. Mohammed Al-Duais



Mr. Yousuf Mohageb



Mr. Richard Porter

**Mr. Richard Porter (FEW Adviser for Ornithology and Conservation):** Mr. Porter first visited Yemen in 1979 and has been coming here on conservation missions ever since. It was with mutual pleasure that we welcomed Mr. Porter as a foreign adviser for Ornithology and Conservation in October (see Update No. 35 for more details).

**Dr. Tony Miller (FEW Botanical Adviser):** Dr. Miller is the latest addition to the FEW team (Please refer to article number 3 on the first page of this update for more information)!

**Ms. Rasha Skybey (FEW Facebook Page Master):** A resident of Australia, Ms. Skybey is a veteran of a Biosphere Expedition to Dhofar, Oman on the trail of the Arabian leopard. Rasha is our most active volunteer and has fulfilled many roles in her more than two years with FEW. She is the founder and sole organizer of FEW's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/yemenileopard>), and as such, does more to raise our profile than virtually anyone.



Ms. Rasha Skybey  
in Dhofar, Oman



**Mr. Murad Mohammed (Field Researcher, Administrative Assistant, Trainer):** Murad joined FEW in November 2010 when he and Waleed Al-Ra'il were trained by Malini Pittet to run the *Hawf Mammal Survey*. Murad worked in Hawf until the end of 2011 when he relocated to Sana'a to study English on scholarship with the *Modern American Language Institute* (MALI). Murad returned to Hawf briefly in March 2012 while Waleed Al-Ra'il commenced his English studies at MALI. Murad has trained several individuals in trail camera research including Bessam Asha, Hisham Al-Taqry, Nasser Aswot, and Bilal Al-Wada'i.

L to R: Sebastian Kennerknecht, Waleed Al-Ra'il, Murad Mohammed



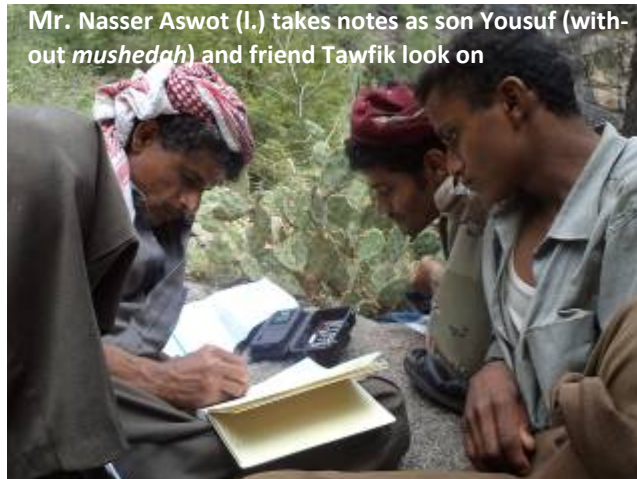
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**Mr. Waleed Al-Ra'Il (Field Researcher, Administrative Assistant):** Like Murad, a graduate of the Biology Department at Ibb University, Waleed is a veteran of 16 months of trail camera research and, with Murad, three overseas training missions. As Waleed and Murad continue their English studies at MALI, they are regularly involved in a variety of administrative support functions and partially co-manage several projects.

**Mr. Hisham Al-Taqry (FEW Field Researcher - Hawf Mammal Survey):** A graduate in Agriculture from Ibb University, Hisham continues to run the *Mohammed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund* - funded *Hawf Mammal Survey* in Al-Mahrah, a position he took in April this year and which he assumed single-handedly starting in June.



Hisham Al-Taqry installs a trail camera while training in Hawf

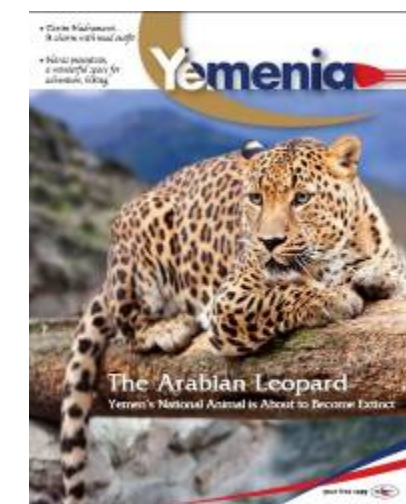


Mr. Nasser Aswot (l.) takes notes as son Yousuf (without *mushedah*) and friend Tawfik look on

**Mr. Nasser Aswot (FEW Field Researcher – *Jebel Milhan Mammal Survey*):** Working with his son Yousuf, Nasser has been responsible for the *Jebel Milhan Mammal Survey* since the beginning of December 2011. Nasser is also a veteran of the *Emirates Natural History Group* – funded mission to Dhofar in Oman (with Dr. Mohammed Al-Doais, Mr. Yousuf Mohageb, Mr. David Stanton, and others) in November 2010, and one of the stars of the Al Jazeera International program *Saving the Leopard*.

Many others have been short-term employees or served as volunteers in a variety of capacities with FEW. Most have been recognized in previous updates. To all who continue to support us, including the many *Friends of the Arabian Leopard*, thank you for making our first three years, years to be proud of.

**5. FEW Represented at Important Regional Conservation Meeting:** On November 19 – 22 Yousuf Mohageb, FEW’s Bird Conservation Officer, represented Yemen and FEW at the *First Meeting of the AEWA Northern Bald Ibis Working Group* in Jizan, Saudi Arabia. The last free-living population of Northern Bald Ibis (NBI) lives near Palmyra, Syria and the few remaining birds annually migrate through Yemen on their way to summering grounds in Ethiopia. In addition to presenting a country report about NBI for Yemen, Yousuf contributed to the drafting of the ten-year action plan for this iconic, critically endangered species. In the words of BirdLife International’s Sharif Jabour, “Yousuf made a very useful contribution to the meeting and had very useful input for the conservation of the [Northern Bald] Ibis in Yemen.”



**6. FEW Article makes the cover of Yemenia’s In-flight Magazine:** At the invitation of Mr. Mohammed Alabsi, the Managing Editor for Yemenia’s in-flight magazine, David Stanton submitted an article entitled “The Arabian Leopard – Yemen’s National Animal is About to Become Extinct.” When he received the copy, Mr. Alabsi replied, "The article is great with its invaluable information and brilliant writing style," and decided to make it a cover feature. Many thousands of passengers will see the article in the coming months. Since copies were placed on all Yemenia flights early this month, membership on FEW’s Facebook page has soared.

The full magazine can be seen at:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/113495771/Yemenia-magazine-Oct-Dec-2012-%D9%85%D8%AC%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A%D9%85%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9#page=120>

“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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