



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 an expanding population of wild Arabian leopards in Yemen"

"Friends of the Arabian Leopard"

133 members around the world!

Update No. 3: February 18, 2010

Dear Friends of the Arabian Leopard,

Today marks the end of the first quarter of the foundation's existence. In spite of the enormity and difficulty of our task, we continue to move steadily towards our target of an expanding population of wild Arabian leopards in Yemen. Our third "Update" will fill you in on what has happened in the past month with regards to the foundation's work. If you know anyone who you think might be interested in receiving this and future updates, please have them write me at david@yemenileopard.org

Thank you,

David

1) Recent confirmed evidence of Arabian leopards in Yemen: Little more than a year ago, foundation board member Dr. Abdul Karim Nasher and Dr. David Mallon of the IUCN Antelope and Cat Specialist Groups carried out a rapid assessment of some key sites in western Yemen. At an undisclosed location in the west they collected some scats which were subsequently analyzed by Dr. Carlos Fernandes of the Centre of Environmental Biology at the University of Lisbon, Portugal. Dr. Fernandes, who specializes in "landscape genetics," confirmed from DNA in the scats that they came from an Arabian leopard. **This is the most recent confirmed report of Arabian leopard existence from the Arabian Peninsula outside of Oman and confirms the continued existence of leopards in Yemen.** The foundation intends to deploy trail cameras in the area without delay.

2) Foundation well represented at the Sharjah Conservation Workshop and Conference on Biodiversity Conservation in the Arabian Peninsula:



مؤتمر الحفاظ على الحياة الفطرية
في شبه الجزيرة العربية - الشارقة ٢٠١٠
Conference on Biodiversity Conservation
in the Arabian Peninsula - Sharjah 2010



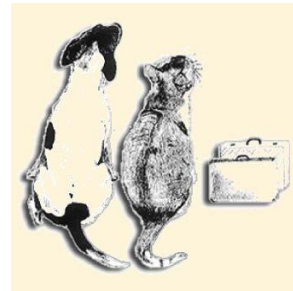
Foundation board members Dr. Abdul Karim Nasher, Dr. Masaa Al-Jumaily, and I were invited to attend the 11th annual Conservation Workshop for the Fauna of Arabia where we participated in two days of intensive training in the IUCN Red Data list of endangered species, and GIS and Systematic Conservation Planning. After a much needed rest, we then participated in the first ever *Conference on Biodiversity Conservation in the Arabian Peninsula*. Both events were organized by the Environment and Protected Areas Authority – Sharjah (EPA) under the patronage of HH Dr. Sheikh Sultan Al-Qassimi, Ruler of Sharjah, with much of the organization being handled by the staff of the Breeding Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife (BCEAW). In addition to the training and many excellent presentations, the workshop and conference constituted an excellent networking opportunity where we forged many new ties and strengthened existing

ones. We were fortunate to meet Dr. Marijcke Jongbloed, the person who started the Arabian Leopard Trust and thereby put Arabian leopard conservation on the World map.

3) Strategy for the Conservation of the Leopard on the Arabian Peninsula Published: The Sharjah EPAA recently published its *Strategy for the Conservation of the Leopard in the Arabian Peninsula*. The foundation's work plan is tightly aligned with the strategy and will be refined to bring it into even closer alignment. In the preface, H.H. Dr. Sheikh Sultan Al Qassimi, wrote, "...without intervention there is a real chance that the leopard could follow the lion and the cheetah into extinction in the wild in the Arabian Peninsula." It was further stated in the introduction that, "Only on-the-ground action will [save the Arabian leopard from extinction]! It is therefore of outstanding importance that the recommendations of this strategy are implemented by the range countries without further delay." This is exactly what the foundation is doing!

4) Capacity building mission to Oman moving forward: At the biodiversity conference, foundation members met with Dr. Andrew Spalton, Office of the Advisor for Conservation of the Environment, Diwan of the Royal Court, Sultanate of Oman. Dr. Spalton remains positive about the prospect of training six Yemenis in leopard field research at Jebel Samhan Nature Reserve in Dhofar and stated that, "[We] will do our best to make sure the YLRP visit goes ahead earliest." The Abu Dhabi Chapter of the Emirates Natural History Group has generously donated \$3,000 towards this mission, but we are still seriously under budget and seek additional sponsors for this essential capacity building exercise.

5) Foundation's website: On Tuesday, February 3rd I had a very productive meeting with Mr. Todd Carson of the Dubai Kennels and Cattery (DKC), and Mr. Mark Hirst of Bluebeetle Solutions regarding the development of the foundation's website. DKC is sponsoring the site and Bluebeetle is building it. The sitemap has been approved by the board and we are aiming for a launch within six months.



6) How can you help: Achieving the foundation's objective of an expanding population of wild Arabian leopards in Yemen parallels exactly the long-term vision of the *Strategy for the Conservation of the Leopard in the Arabian Peninsula*: "To have viable and sustainably managed populations of the Arabian leopard, its wild prey, and natural habitats in co-existence with local communities across its range in the Arabian Peninsula." The strategy further states, "A comprehensive series of field surveys is urgently required to establish leopard presence in all potential areas and to assess the status of all subpopulations." We cannot afford to wait for 'foreign experts' to come to Yemen to carry out this essential and long-overdue work. The foundation has the vision, the knowledge, and the will to save Yemen's national animal from extinction. What we don't yet have are the resources. A few modest corporate sponsorships or even a single generous benefactor is all that we need to achieve the foundation's objective. Please spread the word. Thank you.

"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