



ARABIAN LEOPARD FACT SHEET

2025

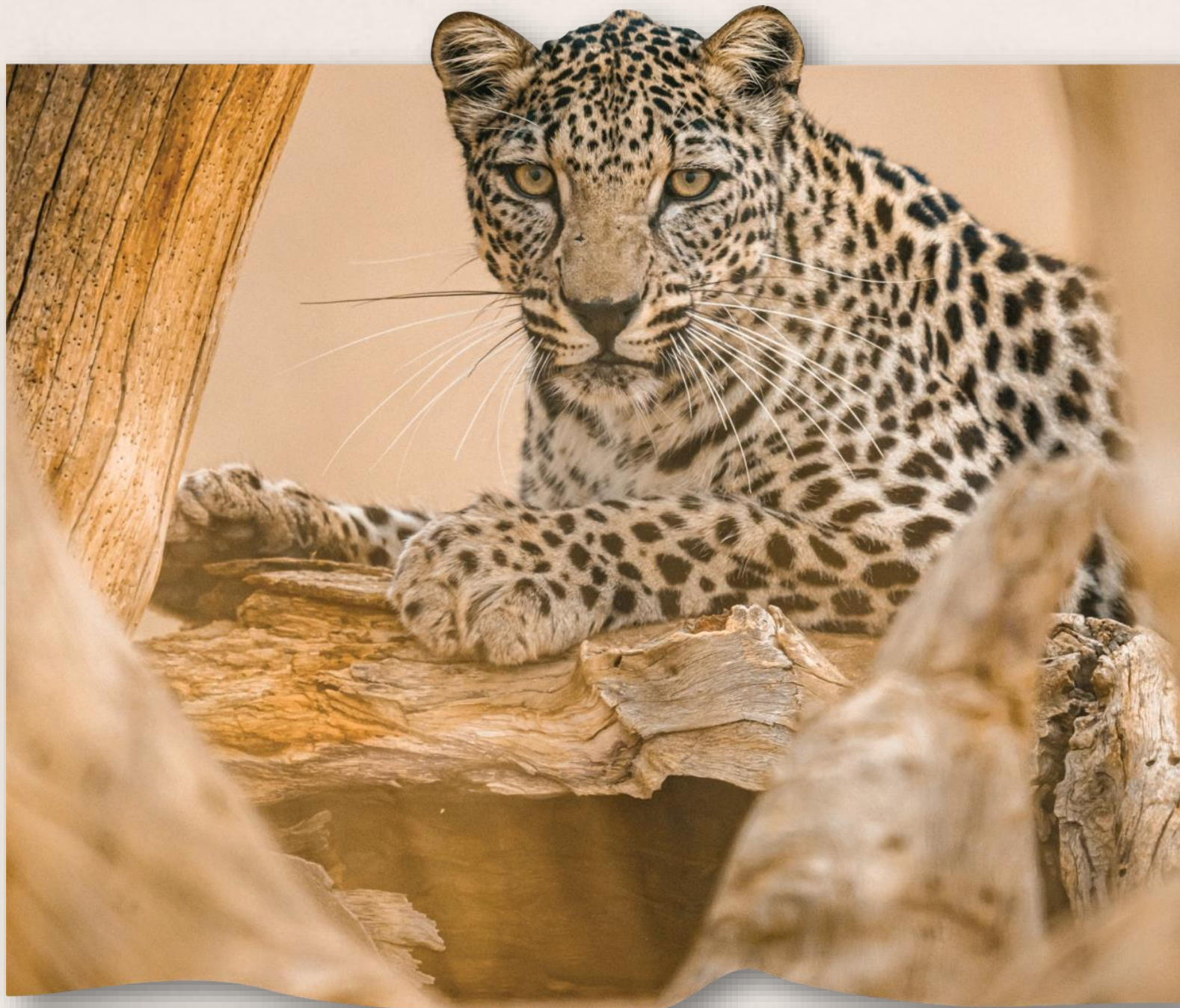


WHY IT MATTERS

The Arabian Leopard population has dwindled, and the subspecies is classified as “Critically Endangered in the wild.” Recognizing the urgency, the relevant entities are committed to conservation efforts through the Arabian Leopard Conservation Programme in Saudi Arabia. The approach includes habitat restoration, public awareness initiatives, and enhancing breeding in captivity for reintroduction into the wild, ensuring its survival for future generations.

Amidst expanding human settlements and dwindling prey populations, the Arabian Leopards’ survival hangs in the balance. Human activities, including hunting and habitat encroachment, have pushed this majestic species to the brink of extinction. With no accurate count of remaining individuals, urgent action is essential to prevent their disappearance from the wild. Saudi Arabia and the wider region recognise the critical need for conservation efforts.





Quick Facts

Scientific name: *Panthera pardus nimr*.

Conservation status: Critically Endangered (IUCN Red List).

Size: Males typically weigh between 30-38kg, while females are smaller, weighing around 20-30 kg. 1.5-2.2 meters, including the tail. Smaller and more compact than other leopard subspecies.

Coloration: Golden-yellow fur with rosettes and spots, paler on the underbelly.

Lifespan: 10-15 years in the wild, up to 20 years in captivity.

Diet: Rock hyrax, Cape hare, gazelle.

Threats



Habitat loss

Expanding human settlements and agricultural activities are encroaching upon the leopards' natural habitat, leaving them with dwindling space and resources



Depletion of prey

Over-hunting by people has significantly reduced populations of ibex, gazelles, and other prey animals, forcing leopards to seek alternative food sources, such as livestock, which often leads to conflict with humans



Human persecution

Fear and misunderstanding can lead to the direct persecution of leopards, escalating to poisoning, trapping, and even shooting



Inadequate awareness and protection

A lack of awareness about the leopards' plight and insufficient protected areas further contribute to their vulnerability

Felidae Family and the Arabian Leopard

Similarities and Differences Among Felidae Species: How Do We Distinguish Them?



Cheetah



Leopard



Jaguar

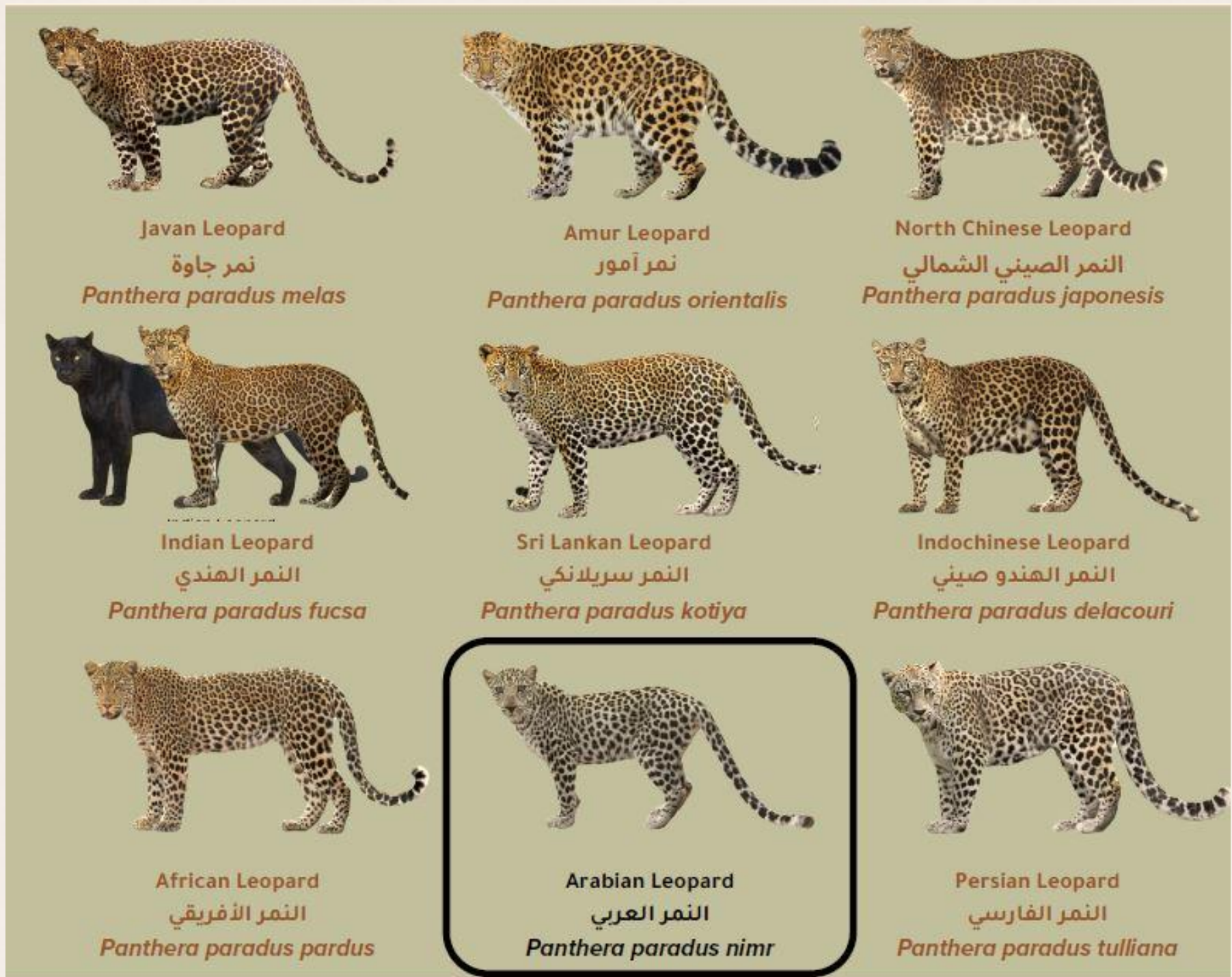


Tiger

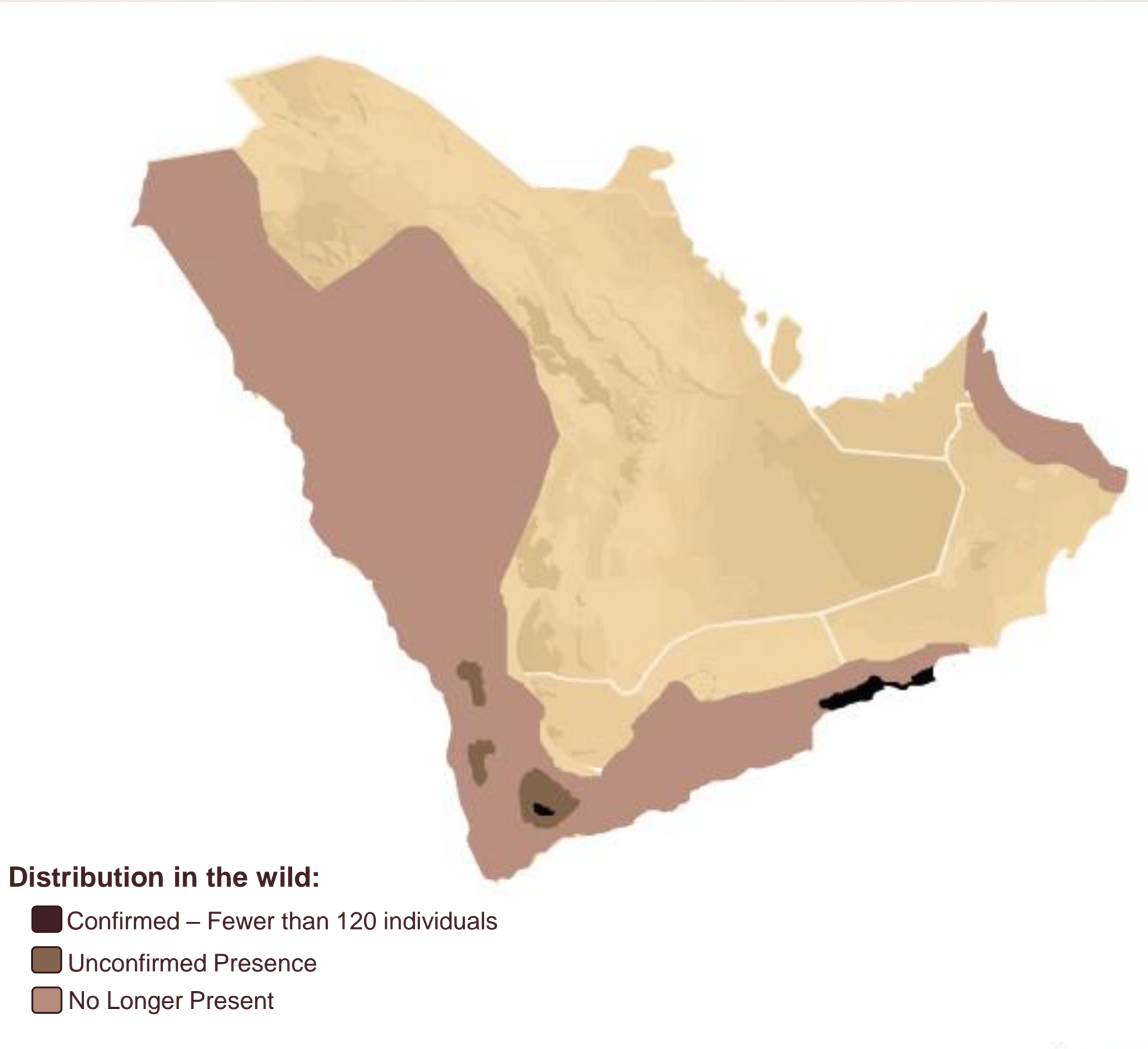
Felidae Family and the Arabian Leopard

The Arabian leopard is a subspecies of the leopard family

The Arabian leopard (*Panthera pardus nimr*) is the smallest subspecies of leopard, characterized by its pale coat, an adaptation to the arid and mountainous terrain within its range



Geographic Distribution of the Arabian Leopard



A close-up photograph of an Arabian leopard's head, showing its distinctive spotted coat and intense gaze. The leopard is partially obscured by large, light-colored rocks, creating a sense of being in its natural habitat.

Arabian Leopard Conservation Programme

RCU recognises the urgency of preserving the region's biodiversity and natural heritage, particularly focusing on the critically endangered Arabian Leopard. RCU's Arabian Leopard Conservation Breeding Centre is one of the world's active site for the conservation breeding of the subspecies, and has more than doubled its numbers since taking over the project in 2020.

Protecting a Symbol

The Arabian Leopard, a symbol of pride for Saudi Arabia and the Arabian Peninsula, faces imminent threats, including habitat loss and human persecution. Emerging from Africa around 500,000 years ago, it is one of the most important mammals native to the Arabian Peninsula.

Amidst expanding human settlements and dwindling prey populations, the leopards' survival hangs in the balance. Human activities, including hunting and habitat encroachment, have pushed this majestic species to the brink of extinction. With no accurate count of remaining individuals, urgent action is essential to prevent their disappearance from the wild. Saudi Arabia and the wider region recognise the critical need for conservation efforts.



Arabian Leopard Cubs

On 19 June 2024, the Royal Commission for AlUla's Arabian Leopard Conservation Breeding Centre welcomed the extremely rare birth of triplet cubs – one female and two males. This is the first time three cubs have been born together in captivity in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The youngsters are a major boost to RCU's ongoing efforts to safeguard the leopards' future.

The cubs are believed to be only the third-ever litter of Arabian Leopard triplets born in captivity anywhere in the world during the past 30 years. Staff at the centre are monitoring the cubs' progress.

Their father, Baher, is on a loan exchange from the Wild Mammal Breeding Centre in Oman. Baher is boosting the genetic diversity of the RCU facility's Conservation Breeding Programme, which is vital to the long-term success and the eventual reintroduction of Arabian Leopards back into the wild of Saudi Arabia.

The world's only active site for the conservation breeding of Arabian Leopards, RCU's Arabian Leopard Conservation Breeding Centre welcomed new births in 2023 and 2024. There are now more than the double number the original since RCU took over the centre in 2020.

FAQ

01 **Why has the Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU) chosen to protect the Arabian leopard?**

- The Arabian leopard is classified as Critically Endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

02 **Are there similar conservation programs in the region?**

Yes, there are two major conservation programs dedicated to the Arabian leopard in the region:

- The Breeding Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates
- The Arabian Leopard Breeding Center in Taif, Saudi Arabia, managed by the Royal Commission for AlUla



FAQ

03 **Are there currently any wild leopards in AlUla or Taif?**

No leopards have been confirmed in the wild in Saudi Arabia since 2014, despite extensive camera trapping efforts.

04 **When will the leopards be reintroduced into the wild?**

The reintroduction is planned to take place by 2035.

05 **Do leopards attack humans?**

Arabian leopards are shy and elusive by nature, and they typically avoid humans.



معلومات عن الشركاء

الهيئة الملكية لمحافظة العلا
ROYAL COMMISSION FOR ALULA



The Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU) was established by royal decree in July 2017 to preserve and develop AlUla, a region of outstanding natural and cultural significance in north-west Saudi Arabia. RCU's long-term plan outlines a responsible, sustainable, and sensitive approach to urban and economic development that preserves the area's natural and historic heritage while establishing AlUla as a desirable location to live, work, and visit. This encompasses a broad range of initiatives across archaeology, tourism, culture, education, and the arts, reflecting a commitment to meeting the economic diversification, local community empowerment, and heritage preservation priorities of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 programme

معلومات عن الشركاء



مندوق النمر العربي ARABIAN LEOPARD FUND

Established by Royal Decree in 2020 with an initial endowment of USD 25M by RCU, the fund aims to conserve the Arabian leopard and protect it from extinction, support local and international efforts, and urge communities to contribute to preserving one of the most endangered ecosystems, in line with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's vision for environmental sustainability. The fund's key focus areas include supporting Arabian Leopard Conservation across the Arabian leopard's range, including providing grants for research and on-the-ground projects, Capacity Building by sponsoring priority training and educational programs to enhance the capabilities of conservation practitioners, and Advocacy and Outreach by formulating advocacy strategy and implementing advocacy programs and community engagement initiatives to amplify the conservation effort.

معلومات عن الشركاء



Founded in 2021 by HRH Princess Reema Bandar Al-Saud, Catmosphere is a foundation dedicated to improving our interconnected wellbeing through collective actions that drive transformation across all the spheres that collectively comprise our planet's environment. Born out of big cat conservation, Catmosphere challenges us all to take action to address our collective wellbeing. Catmosphere's initiatives fuse the concepts of health and conservation in uniquely impactful ways.

Since its inception, Catmosphere has had a particular focus on raising awareness for the plight of the Arabian leopard. Working with partners, Catmosphere produced the first ever educational, bilingual film collection about the subspecies, and worked to achieve greater international recognition, culminating in the proclamation of 10 February as the annual International Day of the Arabian Leopard by the United Nations. In celebration of this, Catmosphere's flagship awareness raising campaign, Catwalk, was moved to take place on this date in 2024.