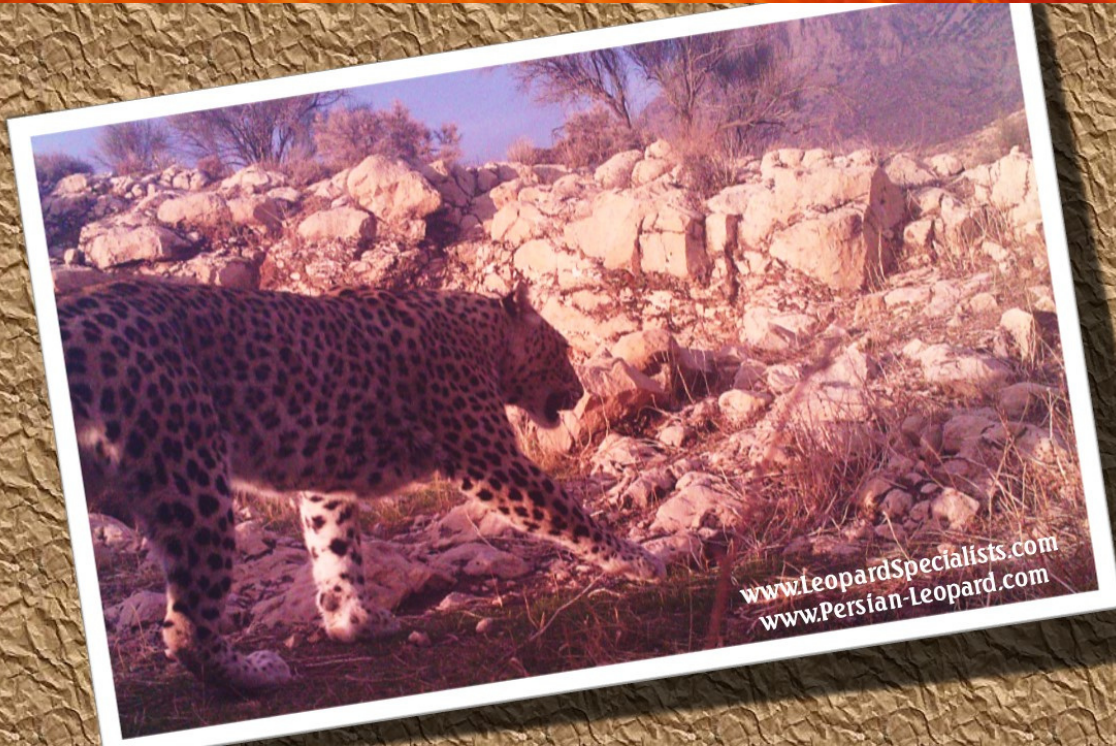


ASIAN LEOPARD SPECIALIST SOCIETY

Newsletter - Autumn 2021



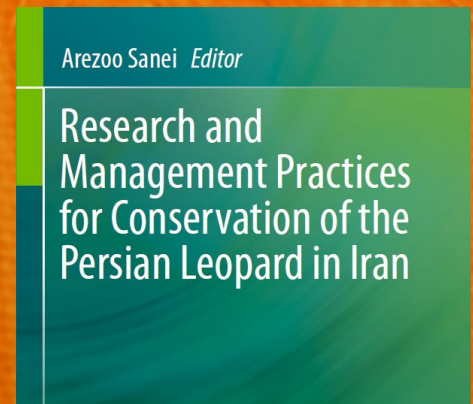
IN THIS ISSUE, LEARN MORE ABOUT:



**PERSIAN LEOPARD PROJECT
IN IRAN WON FIA PLATINUM
AWARD, 2021**



**OUR NEW PLATFORM TO
MONITOR THE LEOPARD
POPULATION AND HABITAT**



**RESEARCH, CONSERVATION
AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
ELABORATED IN A BOOK ABOUT
THE PERSIAN LEOPARD**

**WE PRODUCE
HISTORICAL
PERSIAN RUGS TO
SAVE THE
PERSIAN LEOPARD**



Active involvement of local communities to establish the Persian Leopard Monitoring Scheme in Iran

PERSIAN LEOPARD PROJECT WON FIA PLATINUM AWARD

In a wide view, the project aimed at establishment of an innovative and sustainable platform for the long-term monitoring of the Persian leopard population and habitat suitability status in Iran. All ten targets set for the community-based aspect of the project were successfully achieved and even all but one were notably exceeded.

This community-based program started when a key challenge was identified during the project under execution. After conducting a probabilistic sampling, it was realized that most of the identified monitoring sites (called reference areas) were outside the protected habitats where logistics and human resources are readily available for monitoring purposes. As a result, there was an essential need to develop a program with the active involvement of local communities to collaborate in monitoring activities as well as developing a financial mechanism to support the expenses of the monitoring program.

For the financial mechanism to be long lasting it needed to be:

- developed with the participation and local knowledge of the communities in the monitoring reference areas
- based on a production program aligned with the local livelihood and lifestyle, traditional capacities and environmental and cultural characteristics in the identified sites

Over a two-year period, project team members successfully conducted a pilot program that along with the main purpose of the project, could create local groups in three monitoring sites. A local group in North Khorasan Province (namely HAZAZ) produced grape syrup as a quick win activity while developing a local fund to support the monitoring scheme in the area. The members of the group decided to use a percentage of the income for supporting the scheme in the habitat nearby.

Local communities were involved in nominated pilot sites through meetings and workshops focused on awareness raising, trust building, capacity building, group and job creation and income generation for local communities.

These processes established the fundamental platform required to implement the monitoring techniques in each of the selected sites. The start of the project coincided with the covid-19 pandemic outbreak. Working in the Asian Leopard Specialist Society, the facilitators took an agile approach to adapt processes and make use of online facilitation and train the identified local coordinators.

This meant the project could go ahead while other community-based projects in Iran were generally being postponed due to the pandemic. This project was designed and conducted in accordance with the Persian Leopard National Action Plan in Iran.

The innovative procedure developed for the leopard monitoring scheme not only helps us to monitor the status of the species for further conservation and management planning; but it also elevates the actual conservation status of the non-protected areas due to the active involvement of local communities. The scheme is independent of external funding which supports the sustainability of the procedures and the results. The scheme also strengthens the protection status of the habitats by decreasing illegal activities, such as illegal hunting of the leopards and the prey species, and encroachment of habitats.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PERSIAN LEOPARD NATIONAL
CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN IN IRAN

Establishment of the Persian Leopard Monitoring Scheme

AUGUST 2018 - APRIL 2021

**GRANTEE: Asian Leopard Specialist Society
PROJECT LEADER: Dr. Arezoo Sanei**

Project No.: IRA/SGP/OP5/Y7/CORE/BD/2018(203)

AN INNOVATIVE SCHEME FOR THE LEOPARD MONITORING

The activities in this project mainly focuses on an article highlighted in the Persian Leopard National Action Plan in Iran to design and establish an innovative monitoring scheme to provide a basis for systematic monitoring of the Persian leopard population and habitat across the country. The project started since August 2018 and extended until April 2021. Several innovative platforms are developed during the execution of this project while additional activities are added to ensure sustainability of the achievements as well as management of the risks arisen because of Covid-19 pandemic.

Focusing on the establishment of an individual monitoring site in a network of selected sites with development of a related financial mechanism, the entire process is on the basis of a participatory platform with active involvement of members of the relative local community. This is a win-win platform that is independent from external funds while it is integrated into the local livelihood in selected sites. Five working groups were involved in this project to focus on: (i) community based programs, (ii) monitoring techniques, (iii) updating the Persian Leopard Online Portal and the related App, (iv) documentary, advocacy and knowledge management as well as (v) artists and the National Backup Fund. Three local groups are established during this project in provinces of North Khorasan, Golestan and Chahar Mahal and Bakhtiari. Four levels of jobs generating income for various individuals are created. These include: - kilim and carpet weaving for a National Backup Fund, - production of grape syrup and other products and services (e.g. ecotourism) to establish Micro Funds by local people, - conducting monitoring techniques in each site by trained individuals, - training and capacity building by educators, trainers, academicians and experts in related fields concerning required skills for the members of each local group.

DISTINCTIVE AND REMARKABLE FEATURES OF THE PROJECT:

-DEVELOPING INNOVATIVE MECHANISMS AND LONG TERM BENEFICIAL PLATFORMS

-INFLUENCING POLICIES AND SECONDARY CONSERVATION EFFECTS

-ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND ADDED VALUES, COVERING LARGER AUDIENCE AND TRAINING MORE PARTICIPANTS AS WELL AS COVERING WIDER AREAS

COMPARING TO THE PROJECT ORIGINAL PLAN

-ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

-PRODUCING TECHNICAL MATERIALS (E.G. GUIDELINE, BOOK) TO SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE

-SUCCESSFUL RISK MANAGEMENT

- AWARDED PROJECT

RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR CONSERVATION OF THE PERSIAN LEOPARD IN IRAN

Editor: Dr. Arezoo Sanei Published by: Springer on Dec. 2020

Countrywide Distribution Modelling of the Persian Leopard Potential Habitats on a Regional Basis in Iran

Arezoo Sanei, Mohamed Zakaria, Laleh Daraei, Mohamad Reza Besmeli, Faramarz Esfandiari, Heidar Veis Hossein Absalan, and Farid Fasihi

FIRST HAND RESEARCH FINDINGS

Ground Validation of the Persian Leopard MaxEnt Potential Distribution Models: An Evaluation to Three Threshold Rules

Arezoo Sanei, Mohamed Zakaria, Hossein Mohamadi, Mohamad Reza Masoud, Behrouz Jafaari, Hossein Delshab, Eskandar Gordmardi, Mehdi Jamadi, Khosro Darvishi, and Sadegh Poursaleem

An Innovative Approach for Modeling Cumulative Effect of Variations in the Land Use/Land Cover Factors on Regional Persistence of the Persian Leopard

Arezoo Sanei, Mohamed Zakaria, Mohamad Roslan Mohamad Kasim, and Abdullah Mohd

The book is consisted of a total of 10 chapters with two separate sections. The first section covering 7 chapters is about continuous and successive research programs that pay close attention to cumulative effects of land use and land-

INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO ASSESS CUMULATIVE EFFECTS OF LAND USE AND LAND COVER CHANGES ON THE PERSIAN LEOPARD PERSISTENCE

cover changes on the Persian leopard regional persistence in Iran. Eventually, in chapter 6, a set of innovative math formulas are introduced to predict the status of the species by assessing the values of each regional formula in relation to the provided indices.



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RESEARCH-BASED MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

In the last section of the book, three different topics about the Persian Leopard National Conservation and Management Action Plan, an innovative insurance model to mitigate livestock-leopard conflicts as well as a case study with respect to the wildlife trafficking law enforcement in Iran is discussed.

To download this book visit: [Research and Management Practices for Conservation of the Persian Leopard in Iran](#) / Springer for Research & Development

Arezoo Sanei *Editor*

Research and Management Practices for Conservation of the Persian Leopard in Iran

FROM HISTORICAL PERSIAN RUGS TO CONSERVATION OF THE PERSIAN LEOPARD IN IRAN

Persian rugs with traditional symbols called motifs, particularly in the case of Kilim, have stories behind to illustrate the environmental conditions that is documented by mental weaving at a time. We produced our first Kilim-Carpet collection according to the traditional motifs from various areas across the Persian leopard range in Iran. The collection was named "Zhin & Avin" after two Kurdish words meaning "Life & Love". These kilim-carpets are produced by local kilim weavers in Zanjan province. The collection includes three designs namely "Ashti" which in Kurdish language means "Peace" as well as "Tahmineh & Palang" and "Rostam & Palang". "Palang" means the leopard in the Persian language while Tahmineh is a female character in the tenth century Persian epic of Shahnameh and Rostam is a legendary hero in the Persian mythology. These products are very unique in a number of characteristics and are also financially valuable. We developed this program primarily as a financial backup mechanism to support our ongoing participatory leopard activities with active involvement of local communities.



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