

ICS Letter

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Migration record broke in the heart of Iran's central desert!



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The analysis of camera-trapping data from two cheetah reserves has revealed astonishing results. Researchers from the Iranian Cheetah Society have identified a male cheetah that has travelled more than 415 kilometers between South Khorasan and Yazd provinces. A team from National Geographic in Naybandan Wildlife Refuge first detected this cheetah, named “Pouyan”, on December 7, 2011. During the second phase of our cheetah monitoring **program**, Pouyan once again was photo-captured on December 1, 2014, but this time in Dare-Anjir Wildlife Refuge in Yazd province, about 215 km away from Naybandan. Pouyan’s journey is the first confirmed report of cheetah dispersal between these geographi-

cally distant key reserves in central-eastern **Iran**.

In September 2015, we deployed several camera traps in Naybandan Wildlife Refuge in an attempt to confirm rumors of the presence of a female cheetah with two cubs in the reserve. Despite our efforts we were unable to photo-capture the cheetah family after one month of intensive survey work however, three solitary male cheetahs were recorded inside the **reserve**. By comparing the unique spot patterns used to identify individual cheetah, surprisingly Pouyan was once again detected! The new photo shows Pouyan returning from Dare-Anjir Wildlife Refuge, which means that he has walked at least 415 kilometers within the past 9 months.

Very little is known about the movement ecology and ranging behavior of Asiatic cheetahs. No information is yet available to confirm if this long-distance movement is a consequence of the recent anthropogenic pressures and habitat fragmentation in areas used by cheetahs or just reflects the subspecies’ adaptability to its natural habitat in Iran. In 2013, researchers from the Iranian Cheetah Society **reported for the first time** the confirmed movement of cheetahs between multiple reserves in central Iran.



Winners of 2015 Yahya Prize revealed at award ceremony

The second Yahya Prize ceremony took place at Ezzatollah Entezami House Museum in Tehran, on the evening of July 25th. Established by the Iranian Cheetah Society in 2014 through a generous donation by an Iranian artist couple, Mojtaba Ramzi and Paridokht Moshkzad, the Yahya Prize recognizes individual rangers who have suffered serious injuries to protect Iran's wildlife and natural environment. This year the Award honored six rangers from different provinces across Iran, who was selected by the award committee through an

intensive five-month effort. The Yahya Prize has been featured in the Iranian news media, including a popular family TV show on Iran's National TV.



© E. Jannati

The flight of the Iranian cheetah

The first cheetah airplane in the world, a Meraj Airlines Airbus A320, featuring an image of an Asiatic Cheetah on its nose, made its first flight on 13 September 2015 at 08:00 from Tehran to Mashhad. Meraj Airlines started collaborating with the Iranian Cheetah Society in educational awareness activities in 2015.



© Meraj Airlines

Status of the Syrian brown bear in northern Iran

Golestanak area in northern Iran is bear country. The Iranian Cheetah Society has studied the ecology and status of brown bears in this area **since 2005**. A new article from the research team focusing on the population status of Golestanak bears has been recently published in the Journal of Threatened Taxa. Read more about this study [here](#).



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The 4th Persian Leopard radio-collared in northeastern Iran

The Persian Leopard Project in northeastern Iran led by the Iranian Cheetah Society's researcher Mohammad Farhadinia, successfully radio-collared another male leopard in Tandoureh National Park, Razavi Khorasan Province. As part of Mohammad's PhD study with University of Oxford's WildCRU and in collaboration with the Iran Department of the Environment and Panthera, the project seeks to address a number of ecological and conservation-oriented questions regarding the persistence of Persian leopards in fragmented key habitats in northeastern Iran along the border with Turkmenistan. The 4th leopard was anesthetized by Jacques Kaandorp, a well-known vet from Beekse Burgen Safari-park, Netherlands.. Read more about this project [here](#).

Updates from the male and female Iranian cheetahs in captivity

The National Director of the Conservation of the Asiatic Cheetah Project and the project vet presented the most recent news about the two Iranian cheetahs in captivity in the 22nd Wild Talk seminar. The male cheetah, named "Koushki", was confiscated from a local herder in Touran National Park in 2008 when it was only between 7 to 8 months old. Prior to moving to Tehran to form a part of the captive breeding program, Koushki, now 7 years old, was kept in a large enclosure in semi-captive conditions at Miandasht Wildlife Refuge. Delbar, the female cheetah, was recovered from a poacher from Touran in 2012 and kept at a small enclosure in the reserve. Both individuals are now closely monitored by a team of Iranian experts and international advisors in an enclosure in Iran's capital Tehran.



Another successful Cheetah Day



© N. Amiri

The ninth annual ceremony to celebrate National Cheetah Day was successfully held in Tehran, as well as in several population centers in the periphery of cheetah reserves across 13 Iranian provinces. The event included numerous educational and awareness activities for both adults and children focusing on the gloomy status of cheetahs in Iran, the last stronghold of the subspecies in Asia. The ceremony's main slogan was #70survivors, referring to the total number of cheetahs believed to exist in Iran. The National Cheetah Day is held every year by the Iranian Cheetah Society in collaboration with several Iranian NGOs and the Conservation of the Asiatic Cheetah Project.

Iranian Cheetah Society awarded for its education and environment awareness campaigns

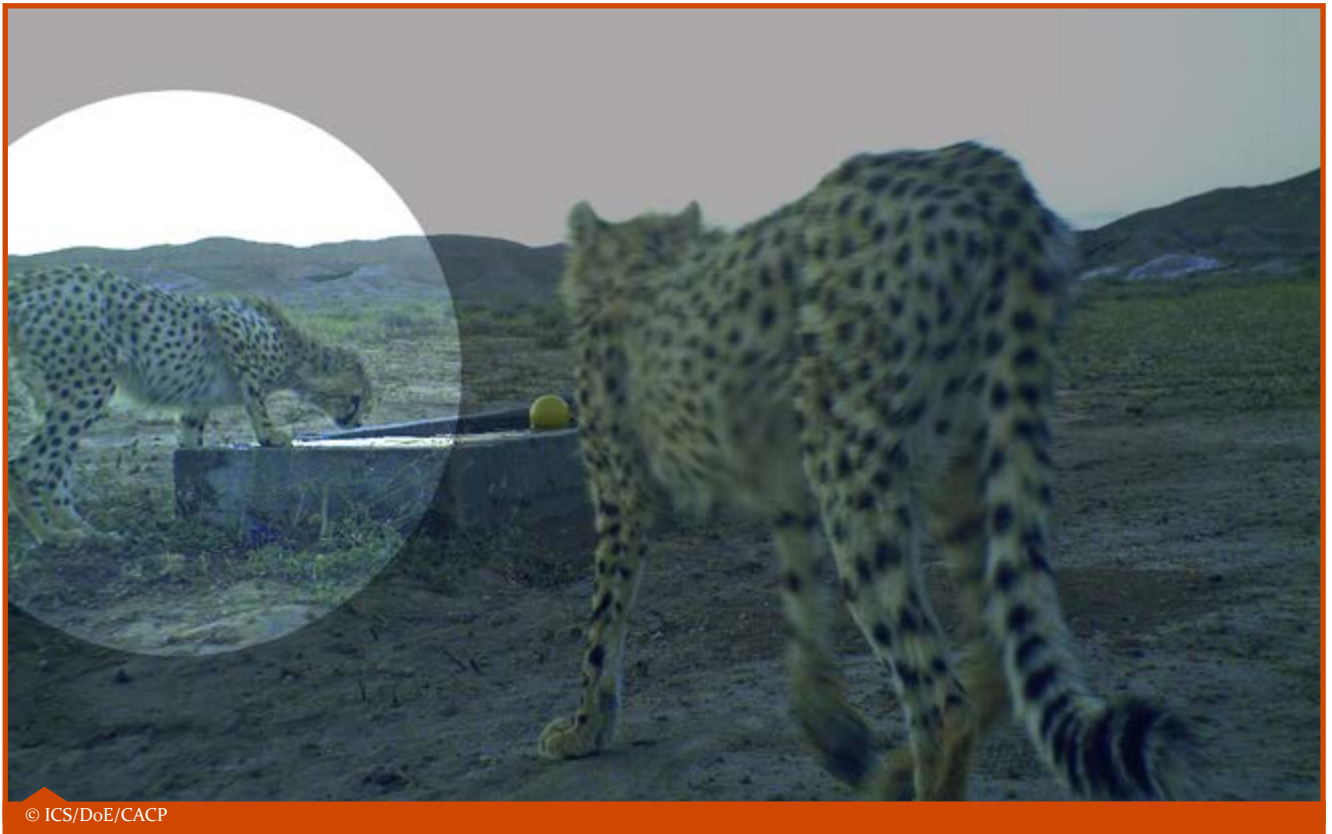
An event, jointly held by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and Iran Department of the Environment, celebrated the collaboration of Iranian conservationists and athletes involved in education and environmental awareness efforts. Iranian Cheetah Society's CEO, Morteza Eslami, received the prize in the final ceremony from the national managers of the Conservation of the Asiatic Cheetah Project. Additionally, the head of the Society's documentary production unit, Fathollah Amiri, was recognized with an award for best environmental documentary maker.



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The Iranian Cheetah Society's CEO featured on the National TV of Iran

The interview on the National TV of Iran premiered on "The Other Side" series, about wildlife documentaries in Iran. Morteza Eslami, CEO of the Iranian Cheetah Society discussed the Society's experience in production of wildlife documentaries in Iran, focusing on the critically acclaimed movie "In search for the Persian leopard" released in 2011.



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The mother of three cubs in Miandasht was a cheetah cub photo-captured in 2013!

In late August 2015, staff of the North Khorasan Department of the Environment photographed a female cheetah with three cubs in Miandasht Wildlife Refuge, northeastern Iran. Experts from the Iranian Cheetah Society compared this photo with camera-trap pictures obtained in previous years in the reserve, and were thrilled to discover that that the new cheetah mother had been in fact photographed in 2013 as a cub in a family group comprised of appropriately a female cheetah with three cubs including our new mother. This finding is crucial as very little is known about the population demography and reproduction biology of the critically endangered Asiatic cheetah.

Iranian Cheetah Society celebrated Cheetah Photography Exhibition



© A. Tak Tehrani

On May 7, 2015, the Cheetah Photography exhibition premiered at Gallery 26, Tehran. The exhibition featured 17 award-winning images of the critically endangered Asiatic cheetah, illustrating the majesty yet vulnerability of cheetahs in Iran. The event brought out the talent and vision of each photographer to all who visited. A panel of experts judged all the entries and eventually selected the top photographs. “Arash”, the winner of BBC Wildlife Camera-trap **Photo of the Year 2014**, was also featured in the exhibition, which was accompanied by talks about the status of cheetahs and wildlife conservation in general in Iran.



The “Iranian” GPS satellite collared leopard visits Turkmenistan

On October 5th, 2015, one of the four male Persian leopards GPS-collared as part of the Persian Leopard Project in northeastern Iran, crossed the Iran-Turkmenistan border. “Borzou”, an old male of over 10-years-old, has been continuously monitored since February 22nd 2015, when he was captured in Tandoureh National Park, Razavi Khorasan province. Borzou has been roaming outside the national park since September 26th, and has walked about 20 kilometers through several villages and developed areas to reach the Turkmenistan border. The research team has been closely working with local wildlife authorities during this period to minimize the risk of human-leopard conflict. There has been no claim by local people of livestock loss or attacks on humans by leopards during this period. Interestingly, Borzou remained unspotted within this human-dominated landscape before crossing the border into the Turkmenistan’s Kopet Dag Mountains. Borzou’s successful dispersal to Turkmenistan is the first verifi-

able record of leopard movements between Iran and Turkmenistan, stressing the need for transboundary cooperation and conservation initiatives between these two countries. The research team has been trying to contact Turkmen authorities to ensure Borzou’s safe journey inside the country. This is not the first time that Borzou has left his territory in Tandoureh National Park. About two months ago in August he left the reserve and spent 23 days in the surrounding villages, where it killed several domestic dogs and one ewe.



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The Iranian Cheetah Society (ICS) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization devoted to saving the rich but fast disappearing biodiversity of Iran. Carnivores are an essential priority within the ICS activities and various research and conservation projects have been implemented for several species, such as Asiatic cheetah, brown bear, striped hyena, grey wolf, Eurasian lynx, caracal, and Persian leopard, the latter with more than two thirds of its wild population occurring in Iran. The ICS was established in 2001 (registration number 13640) and celebrated its first decade of biodiversity conservation recently.

To learn more about the Iranian Cheetah Society (ICS) visit: www.wildlife.ir



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