

# ICS Letter

Winter 2014/2015

Iranian Cheetah Society/DOE/CACP/UNDP/Panthera



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## The Society's Cheetah Project Selected as the 'Project of the Month' by IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group

**T**he Critically-Endangered Asiatic cheetah occurs across a vast landscape of fragmented habitats in Iran, yet our knowledge of the species' ecology and conservation status is very limited. In order to fill this gap, in 2011 the Iranian Cheetah Society (ICS) launched a nation-wide cheetah monitoring project in the species' key reserves across the country.

The first phase of the project was carried out

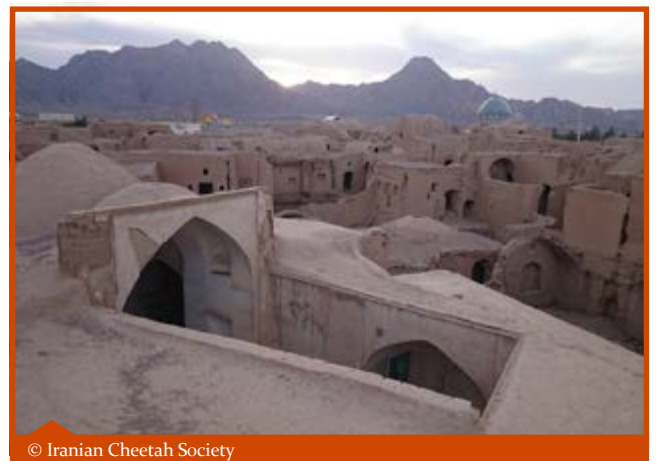
during 2011-2013, and the project team has just started the second phase of camera-trapping surveys in the selected cheetah reserves. The Society's cheetah project has received international support, and recently was selected as the "Cat Project of the Month" by IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group". Click [here](#) to read more about our cheetah project in Iran.



## Local People Engages With Conservation of the Asiatic Cheetah

**I**nvolvement of local communities in conservation of endangered wildlife populations is known as an effective wildlife steward. Inspiring and enthusing local people for conservation of the cheetah and its habitats in Iran can give new hope for long-term survival of the critically-endangered species in Iran. The Society is now working on methods of local people's engagement in cheetah conservation in some key reserve in central Iran. In the second year of nation-wide cheetah monitoring project, ICS seeks ground for this in Dare Anjir Wildlife Refuge in Yazd province as a pilot site. The Society hopes this exercise provides critical information for a large-scale community-based project

for conservation of Asiatic cheetahs in the third year of the cheetah monitoring program.



## ICS' Cheetah Photo Awarded in BBC Wildlife Camera-Trap Competition

**I**n October 2013, during the first phase of the Society's cheetah monitoring project, a cheetah appeared in one of the camera traps installed in Naybandan Wildlife Refuge, South Khorasan Province. The cheetah, later called 'Arash', was one of the best camera-trap photos of Asiatic cheetahs ever captured in the wild.

In November 2014, Arash's photo was selected as the overall winner of the 'Research' categories and winner of the 'Rare Species' category by BBC Wildlife Magazine. Another ICS' stunning camera-trap photo of Goroitered gazelles near a waterhole in northeastern Iran was also

awarded as Runner-up in the 'Animal Behaviour' category. Follow [here](#) to read more about the competition and to see the award-winning photos.



© BBC Wildlife Magazine

## Urgent Actions Required to Mitigate Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions in Iran

**R**oads have been the major cause of mortality for the Asiatic cheetahs, forming 40% of the mortality records during the past decade. Just very recently, a female cheetah and its cub have been killed in vehicle collision in Semnan province, vicinity of Touran Protected Area. Iranian Cheetah Society supports an expert group consisting of conservationists, decision makers and stake holders to mitigate the impact of roads on the Iranian wildlife.

Different solutions to reduce the negative influence of road infrastructures have been so far suggested. The specialist group in Iran is going to review these suggestions, and formulate an action plan for the country. So far, five hotspots of wildlife mortality, particularly for the cheetahs, have been recognized in Kalmand-Bahadoran Protected

Area, Yazd province, and Touran National Park, Semnan province. New measures will be implemented for these hotspots in order to reduce vulnerability of cheetahs and other wildlife.



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## Iranian Cheetah Society awarded in the International Exhibition of Environment in Tehran

**B**etween 21 and 24 February 2015, the 14th International Exhibition of Environment launched in Tehran. With representatives from several European and Asian countries, as well as provincial offices of Iran Department of the Environment, environmental NGOs, and Iranian firms and companies; the exhibition is the most important annual event about environmental issues in Iran. As the past years Iranian Cheetah Society attended the event, presenting its conservation activities about Iranian wildlife, particularly the Asiatic cheetahs. The ICS' booth was one the most busy spots in the exhibition, and visitors received the most recent information about our work in remote habitats of Iran. In the final ceremony of the exhibition, attended by Iran's VP and Head of Iran Department of the Environment, Dr. Masoumeh Ebtekar, the Iranian Cheetah Society awarded for its participation and role as an environmental NGO in this event.



## The Society Participation in Cheetah Workshops in Central

**I**ranian Cheetah Society (ICS) presented its 3-year-old nation-wide cheetah monitoring project in a workshop in Ardakan County, Yazd Province. Held jointly by Conservation of the Asiatic Cheetah Project and Yazd Office of Iran Department of the Environment; together with ICS, Yazd DoE's managers, deputies of Wildlife & Biodiversity Bureau, Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation, local wildlife authorities, cheetah reserves' wardens, and a local mining company participated in the one-day workshop. The workshop aimed to gather local and national cheetah conservationists and decision makers in order to share the most up-to-date information about the status of the Critically Endangered Asiatic cheetah in Iran, and to form a participatory framework to discuss urgent actions required to save the subspecies.

In January 2015, in a ceremony held by Esfahan Office of Iran Department of the Environment, wardens of Abbas Abad Wildlife Refuge were awarded. Participated by the Society's CEO Morteza Eslami and local wildlife authorities, the awards were given to the reserve wardens because of their efforts to save the area's wildlife and critical habitats as the last known cheetah reserve in the Esfahan Province, central

Iran. Additionally, Morteza presented the Society's national plan for monitoring and conservation of cheetahs and acknowledged the valuable contribution of local wildlife authorities and wardens in such nation-wide efforts.



## The Dog-eating leopard Successfully Captured

**I**n December 2014, a team of vets and conservationist leading by the Iranian Cheetah Society's expert Mohammad Farhadinia, successfully captured a Persian leopard in Tazeh Qal'eh village in North Khorasan province. After a series of attacks to villagers' domestic stock and herding dogs, the North Khorasan Office of Iran DoE asked the ICS expert and his his team to capture the problem leopard. Tazeh Qal'eh is located just near the Iranian border with Turkmenistan. The number of leopard attacks had been sharply increased during this fall, and even in two separate incidents two residents had been injured by the leopard. The local wildlife authority had tried different traditional methods to keep the leopard away from the village, including setting fire, using torch lights, and frequently patrolling around the village. However, these efforts had been failed to reduce the leopard depredation incidents.

The captured team deployed three foot snare traps in and

around the village and in less than three nights they could successfully captured the problem leopard. Early investigations revealed that indeed the leopard ages 12-14 years, one of the oldest Persian leopards so far detected in the wild. The male leopard, later name "Omid" meaning hope, was found to lost his canine teeth and suffers from severe mouth and dental problems. The team decided to transfer Omid to Tehran where a he can receive medical treatment. Omid stayed at Iran DoE's Pardisan Rehabilitation Centre, and later in February 2015 passed away as a result of the health problems.

## The Iranian Cheetah Society Awarded for Wildlife Conservation

**O**n January 28, the Society awarded the Dr. Ghahari Award for its commitment to conservation of the Iranian wildlife. Held in Farrokhi Yazdi Hall of Iranian Art Garden Museum, ICS' CEO, Morteza Eslami, received the prize in a ceremony which gathered members from several Iranian environmental NGO's and organizations.

Dr. Javard Ghahari Award bestowed in a number of categories by Madad Charity Foundation in recognition of spectacular humanitarian and environmental achievements by Iranian NGOs or individuals.



## The Society's Video of Asiatic Cheetahs Wins Top Prize in WLT Trail Camera Competition

**A**nother footage of Asiatic cheetahs captured by the Iranian Cheetah Society received worldwide recognition. In conjunction with The Times, World Land Trust (WLT) run International Trail Camera Competition 2014. A group of world-known conservationists and photographers judged this year's competition. ICS, as one of the WLT partners, submitted a rare footage of cheetah encounters with a camel in northeastern Iran.

Simon Barnes, writer and WLT Council member and one of the competition judges, describes the ICS' video as the one that "sparked no debate: we were unanimous from the first viewing. It's a glorious tale in miniature and it

begins – but only begins – with a camel." The camera was sat on a water point in Miandasht Wildlife Refuge, North Khorasan province. Late at night a free-ranging camel comes to the water point. After a few seconds, suddenly, two cheetahs appear in the scene. The cheetahs try to approach to the water point but, apparently, the camel easily drives them back. This footage rejects this myth that cheetahs predate on adult camels in Iran, which frequently claims by local camel breeders in some cheetah reserves in Iran.

To read more about WLT's trail camera competition and to see the cheetah's footage follow [here](#).



# Water for Cheetahs

**T**he Society is working on a project to improve water supplies in key cheetah reserves in Iran. Thanks to private donors supporting the project after a public campaign by the Society, Miandasht Wildlife Refuge's water supplies were repaired. The Society is also

working on easy solutions to camel-proof water holes in desert cheetah habitats, as in has been raised as a concern for both the cheetahs and its prey in recent years. A progress report of the project in Farsi can be found [here](#).



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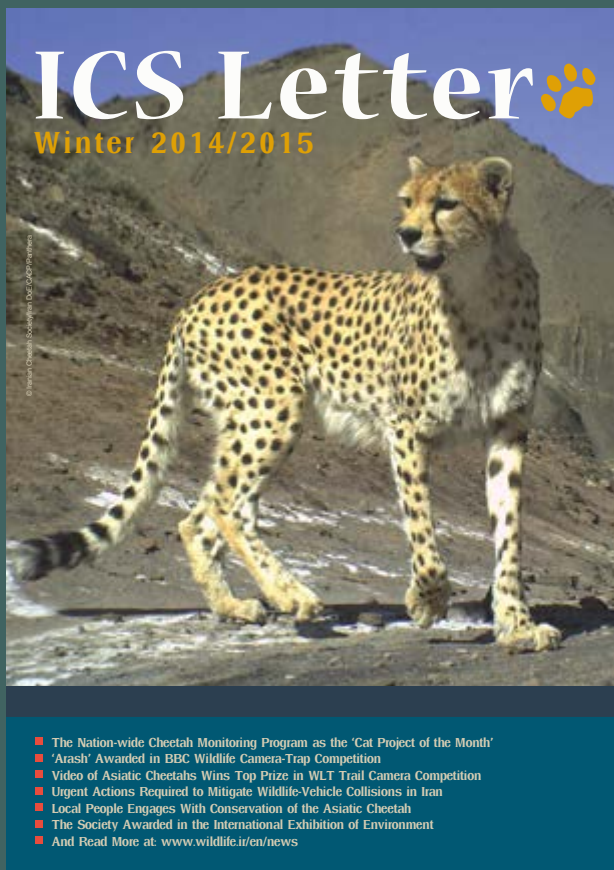
# Iranian Cheetah Society's CEO at Hamshahri Magazine

**C**“heetahs in Iran?! How it might be possible?” The most common question almost everyone asked us when we started our efforts for conservation of the Asiatic cheetahs in Iran. Said Morteza Eslami, CEO of ICS, in an interview with “Hamshahri- My Neighborhood Magazine”.

Hamshahri is one of the largest circulation publishers in Iran and its My Neighborhood Magazine is widely circulated in Iran's Capital Tehran. The Interview with ICS' CEO which released in February 2015, focuses on history of the Iranian Cheetah Society, its progress as a leading conservation unit in the country, and ICS' efforts for conservation of cheetahs and other endangered wildlife of Iran.

The image shows a screenshot of a magazine article from Hamshahri. The main headline reads "دست‌های مهربان برای حفاظت از یوز ایران" (Gentle hands for the protection of the Iranian leopard). Below the headline, there is a photograph of Morteza Eslami, the CEO of the Iranian Cheetah Society, sitting in a chair. The article text is in Persian and discusses the challenges of cheetah conservation in Iran. At the bottom of the page, there are several yellow callout boxes with text in Persian, including one that says "مشارکت منطقی ما را می‌شناساند" (Our logical participation is known) and another that says "تغذیه یوز" (Leopard nutrition).

(C) Hamshahri



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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](http://www.wildlife.ir)



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