



## Arabian Leopards

[Source: DTE](#)

A study published on **World Arabian Leopard Day (10th February 2025)** confirmed the presence of the **Arabian leopard** in Oman's **Nejd plateau**, contrary to earlier beliefs of local extinction due to **hunting and habitat loss**.

### Arabian Leopard (*Panthera pardus nimr*):

- **Key Characteristics:** It is among the **smallest leopard subspecies**, with **males weighing 30-40 kg** and **females 25-35 kg**.
  - It has **pale buff-colored fur with small, closely spaced rosettes**.
- **Habitat & Population:** Native to the **Arabian Peninsula**. Found in isolated pockets across **Saudi Arabia, Oman, Yemen, and the UAE**.
  - The global wild population is estimated to be **100-120 individuals**, with the largest group in **southern Oman**.
- **IUCN Status:** [Critically Endangered](#)
- **Threats:**
  - **Habitat loss** due to **urbanization, farming, and overgrazing**.
  - **Poaching and illegal wildlife trade**.
  - **Declining prey populations**, leading to food scarcity.

### Nejd Plateau:

- The **Nejd Plateau** in **Dhofar, Oman**, is a **dry region** with **plateaus, wadis, and low cliffs**.
  - Wadis are **low-lying valleys** that are **usually dry, except during the rainy season**

### Leopard Population in India (2024):

- **Total:** 13,874 (1.08% annual growth since 2018).
- **Highest population:** **Madhya Pradesh**, followed by **Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu**.
- **Conservation Status:** [IUCN Red List](#) (Vulnerable), [CITES](#) (Appendix-I) and [Indian Wildlife \(Protection\) Act](#) (Schedule-I).

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**EAT**

- True carnivores that are excellent ambush predators
- Feed on anything they can overpower, from mid-size ungulates, to domestic livestock, dogs, birds, and rodents

**ACTIVITY**

- Mostly solitary, nocturnal creatures, also seen at dusk and dawn in forests. Entirely nocturnal close to human presence
- Territorial.
- Leopard densities can reach 5 animals per 100 sq km in densely populated human landscapes like western India

**BLACK PANTHER**

- Dark morphs or black leopards, often called black panthers, are the same species, but with recessive melanistic genes
- Spots are hidden under the dark coat

**PANTHERA PARDUS FUSCA**

# INDIAN LEOPARD

Highly adaptable big cat can live close to humans

<b>POPULATION</b> around 7,910 (2014 census in surveyed areas); thought to be around 12,000-14,000 across India	<b>WEIGHT</b> 50-77 kg (males); 29-34 kg (females)	<b>GEOGRAPHIC RANGE</b> Indian subcontinent (all states), Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, China	<b>HABITAT</b> Forest, shrubland, savanna, grassland, rocky areas, mountains, desert
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Large head, powerful jaws

Have an easily recognisable sawing/rasping call

Coats have black rosettes

Each coat pattern is unique and makes individuals identifiable

**CUBS**

- Females usually give birth to two cubs after a gestation period of 90-105 days
- Only the female cares for the cubs, who remain with the mother for about 1.5-2 years

**AGILE CAT**

- Excellent at climbing trees
- Can run down a tree head-first
- Can carry large prey up a tree to protect it from other carnivores including tigers and wild dogs

**THREATS**

- A TRAFFIC study reports that between 2001-2010 at least **2 leopards were killed each week** for the illegal wildlife trade in India
- Population has declined by **75-90%** in the last two centuries
- **Poisoning** and retaliatory killing
- **Poaching** for pelts and body parts.
- Become **roadkill** when roads and highways run through forests
- Conflict with **livestock herders**
- **Hunting**

**PROTECTION STATUS:**  
**VULNERABLE** on the IUCN Red List

Read More: [Status of Leopards in India 2022](#)

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/arabian-leopards-1>