



PERSIAN WILDLIFE

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Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation Newsletter



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Editorial

National value or nuisance?

Most people react negatively to formal methods of education and instead tend to learn through what they experience in their surroundings, particularly through what they see. Children, in particular, are less inclined to learn through parental advice or formal teaching in school and instead learn many things by way of seeing what goes on around them and act on that basis too. It is for this reason that we think inculcating values associated with nature and wildlife and developing love and appreciation for them requires more than classrooms, educational brochures, and other text-based educational means. What we need most is a coterie of visual methods of representation of nature's values, from documentaries and animation to painting exhibitions.

Unfortunately in our country there are a host of factors that inhibit the use of such visual means of nature education. Among them we can mention difficulties associated with finding wildlife in settings that lend themselves to good photography or filming, dearth of professional equipment, lack of knowledge or concern on the part of the education, and investor reluctance to make it difficult for the few this country to make nature and, worse yet, to get them channels once such films are all the odds.

It may be worth mentioning that act as receptors, responsible for most of the our environment: 75 percent of 13 percent for hearing, 6 percent for our senses of smell and believe that visual media have a In addition to being very effective, of people with comparatively lesser That which in Iran's nature we seek first and foremost to be shown to the understood and acknowledged by much knowledge among different citizens to decision makers and officials by grandiose plans and/ or allocating nature conservation should be given to people's education; i.e., to inculcating values of our country's nature among all kinds of people. Once this is done, there will be fewer experts in this or that official board or committee or fewer council members in this or that village council who would respond to conservationists' calls for safeguarding the lives of animals and preventing habitat destruction in such terms as though they are dealing with a nuisance and, instead, would look up to nature conservation as a national duty and respect intrinsic values that rightfully belong to our natural heritage.

Because of the importance of the role of visual communication in promoting values of nature and wildlife, we have devoted this issue of the Persian Wildlife Newsletter to conservation-related visual media.



officials to promote or fund this kind of to invest in this kind of activity for Such reasons are combined documentary filmmakers in documentaries or animations shown on the national TV indeed produced in spite of

that among our five senses our sense of vision is information we receive from such information compared to for touch, and 3 percent each taste. This is ample reason to decisive role in shaping our minds. visual media can teach a wide range costs.

to conserve by various means needs largest group of people and its values them. Wildlife of which there is not groups of people – from ordinary – cannot be managed and saved handsome funds. Highest priority in

Masoumeh Safaei

Objectives of Persian Wildlife Newsletter:

- Reporting on conservation activities and conservation-related studies of the PWHF and other affiliated NGOs and environmental groups
- Providing information on major conservation activities in Iran and in the world
- Increasing environmental awareness with regard to wildlife conservation
- Dissemination of information for improving the management of protected areas and of wildlife of Iran
- Providing space and a forum for researchers and practitioners in the field of natural environment to present their scientific achievements and to discuss their field experiences



PWHF was established in 2008 to help protect biodiversity in Iran. It is active in wildlife research, conservation, and educational programs designed to raise public awareness about the state of the wildlife and environment in Iran. It is a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization. All PWHF activities are supervised by a Board of Trustees. Projects are coordinated with the Islamic Republic of Iran's Department of Environment. All funds for projects are raised from individuals concerned about the state of wildlife in Iran and socially responsible corporations. The Board of Trustees sets and ratifies goals and helps to find necessary financial resources for successful accomplishment of goals. Projects and day-to-day affairs of the Foundation are run by a Board of Directors composed of wildlife managers, academics and experienced conservationists.

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Erratum: PWN issue no. 6, winter 2013, "Calling the deer, but not to hunt it this time!" red deer photo. [Deer call: Male deer calling other males to compete in forming harem. Photo by Houman Jowkar.]

Hawksbill turtle by Naeemeh Naeemaei

This artwork was sold at the Golestan Gallery during the "Artists for Conservation" program from which half of the proceedings were donated to the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation for the conservation of the Asiatic Cheetah and the Persian Leopard. The work was then donated by its buyer to the Ramsar Hotel as a symbol of the Ramsar International Convention for the conservation of wetlands and migratory birds.

“YUZ”¹ and “Homa”²

awareness-raising animations for children

► Leila Ranjbar Aghdam

Iran is home to various rare species that still continue to live in their traditional habitats. Lack of information on these species, their values and roles in Iran's natural heritage is among the main factors which can lead to their extinction. Hence, we in the conservation society are trying to promote tools for public awareness.

The animations “Yuz” and “Homa,” in addition to depicting beautiful sceneries from Golestan National Park (GNP), describe the behaviors and characteristics of the animals living in the area in the context of a creative storyline that renders an easier perception of the environment and natural resources and a better appreciation of our national treasures.

“Yuz” was first proposed by “Saba Animation Center”³ and its screenplay was written by Ali Minai. It was produced as a trilogy, each 45 minutes in length. In the first episode, a cheetah cub accidentally meets a herd of gazelles and befriends a fawn. Chivalry and kindness to others form the axis of this story. In the second episode, livestock sense an upcoming earthquake and alert the game guards. The third episode is about a fox that deceives the cheetah cub of our story and takes him to human's land. They get captured by a sheep dog and are finally rescued by game guards and brought back to the wild.

The technique used in these films is two-dimensional (2D), while all the frames are hand-drawn. Due to higher quality and higher

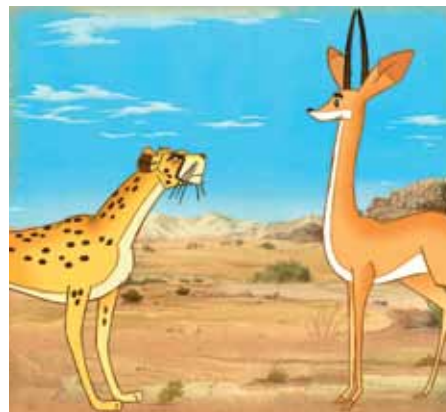
number of characters, this project took more time to finalize, but movements have been made smoother and the story pace is faster. Background music for the “Yuz” animation, combining Khorasani instruments with modern music, is composed by Mehrdad Jenabi. Narration of the film is in Khorasani accent of a game guard in order to reflect the geographic location of the work and as a means of gratitude towards hardworking game guards. Locations and sceneries resemble the landscapes of the GNP. “Yuz” was broadcasted last year in IRIB.⁴ The bearded vulture is the central character of “Homa” animation. This bird survives in the GNP in small numbers. In the animation, every animal tries to exhibit its peculiar abilities upon the arrival of “Homa”. Apart from promoting the conservation of this bird, the animation also emphasizes values like altruism, cooperation, kindness, and unity. This project is hoped to become complete by early 2014. Alireza Kavianrad has directed and produced both films.

1. Cheetah

2. Bearded vulture (Lammergeier)

3. Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting's Animation Center

4. Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting





Author while filming on top of cliffs, Kavir National Park

► Behzad Yousefi

“The King of Rocks,” a documentary about wild goat behavior

Producing documentaries on wild animal behavior is often very difficult and sometimes impossible. Hence, many documentaries are made in non-natural environments such as zoos or animal parks, where wild animals have no fear of their human visitors. For example, on page 8 of this Newsletter's second issue, the picture shows a film producer calmly filming an elephant herd, not worrying about spooking the animals. But according to George Schaller,¹ it's quite the contrary in Iran. “Wildlife is really wildlife” in Iran, he has once said, and animals do not tolerate human presence. Making documentaries in such conditions is therefore very difficult and sometimes impossible. This explains why we don't have detailed documentaries on the behavior and life cycle of species such as wild goat or wild sheep.

Considering the above-mentioned factors and my deep passion for wildlife, I decided to dedicate my remaining years of field work to making a complete series of documentaries on animal behavior, focusing on wild goat, wild sheep and if possible wild cats of Iran -- an arduous but at the same time enjoyable task.

I began this project in 2008 on wild sheep and wild goat in general, and wild cats in particular. Wild goat habitats are generally located on high altitude mountains with steep cliffs. This makes filming them a big challenge,

but I continued my activities regardless. The documentary, “The King of Rocks,” depicts scenes of how kids are being nursed, how they are taught to maneuver on the rocks and their acrobatic movements and playfulness, puberty, jumping and running through the rocks and techniques of abrupt halt not to fall over the cliffs. The film also provides detailed description of the animal's physique and anatomy, its coloration, feeding and rumination mechanisms, water intake in the desert and arid areas, ways of sleeping, and preparations for mating and its details. Many of these scenes are filmed for the first time. Scenes in which males fight to take control of a harem and the subsequent injuries they take, females' reactions, the molting process which takes place in early spring, description of the horns and their different types, and again birth of kids and their curiosity in exploring the world that surrounds them and their journey towards becoming the true kings of rocks -- all filmed in high quality close-ups.

I feel obliged to pay my debt to the beautiful and spectacular wildlife and nature of my country. At the same time, I need the support of environmentalists, nature lovers and related NGOs to be able to fulfill my mission and complete this project.

1. Prominent wildlife expert, Panthera's Vice President

Conservation of the Asiatic cheetah and its cohabitants in Turan Biosphere Reserve (TBR)

► Delaram Ashayeri¹, Amir-hossein Khaleghi Hamidi¹, Sheyda Ashayeri¹, Hamed Abolghassemi², Taher Ghadirian², Ahmad Ajami³

1. Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation (PWHF), 2. Plan4Land Society, 3. Local project expert

Conservation of the Asiatic Cheetah Project in Turan Biosphere Reserve (TBR) started in May 2012. In the context of a combination of scientific research and conservation activities in the field, this program seeks to improve the conditions of the Asiatic cheetah in its natural habitat. This project is being implemented by the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation (PWHF) under the supervision of the Semnan Province General Office of the Department of Environment and the Conservation of the Asiatic Cheetah Program (CACP).

A coherent series of conservation activities have been defined by the executive group of the project based on the previous work done by Plan4Land and Eco-researchers¹ with the support and supervision of CACP and UNDP/GEF/SGP². Conservation of the Asiatic cheetah and its cohabitants and consolidation of various and diverse conservation efforts in the region are the main objectives of this program.

Nowadays, "Asiatic cheetah" has become synonymous with "endangered," with Iran becoming its last habitat. With an area of 1,441,523 hectares, TBR is the world's second largest biosphere reserve and one of the main habitats of the Asiatic cheetah. Its cohabitants, the Persian leopard, onager, gray wolf, striped hyena, caracal, sand cat, wild cat, Blanford's fox, goitered gazelle, Jebeer gazelle, wild goat and wild sheep, are environmentally valuable as well. The Pleske's Ground Jay, Iran's only endemic bird, can also be found in Turan. To the above species we should add various reptiles, birds, insects and plant species. The conservation of the Asiatic cheetah as the target species of this project paves the way for overall habitat improvement, which will ultimately result in the conservation of other species in the region

as well.

Conservation activities through scientific and biological research

The first phase of the project that focused on estimating minimum cheetah population through camera trapping ended in April 2013. 7500 night- effort camera traps were planted in 110 points and captured cheetahs in 13 spots. After analyzing the spot patterns, 4 individuals (3 males and 1 female) were identified. 15 camera traps were left until June 2013 and captured 2 pre-recorded male cheetahs and one new female. The details of this research will be reported after data analysis is completed. Additional information on other species captured on camera traps, including leopards, wolves and hyenas, will be reported after the analysis. Some cameras have been left behind to continue monitoring the cheetah population and its distribution and movements over time.

In addition to the current research on the cheetah and other carnivores, a study of the condition of cheetah's preys (wild goat, wild sheep, goitered gazelle and Jebeer gazelle) is also considered in this research from an ecological and environmental point of view for a possible improvement of their condition in the future.

Research and conservation from a social standpoint

We cannot separate Turan from human communities that live around it. Although human activity is usually the main cause of degradation of Turan, any improvement in the conservation situation of the area can potentially benefit local communities. Past efforts to improve conditions of the area have been effective and continued monitoring and assessment of current

operations seems necessary. Hence, exploring the social conditions of the local communities around Turan, identifying their beliefs and attitudes towards this biosphere reserve, studying the reasons and motivations for poaching of wild herbivores as the main source of food for the cheetah and other carnivores, holding workshops and joint activities with the local communities, and education and empowerment of interested groups to make a direct contribution to conservation efforts are the main objectives we intend to pursue in this project. We hope to take steady steps toward effective conservation of this exceptional region with the supervision of CACP and Semnan Province DoE, and with the financial support of the project's sponsors.

Acknowledgements

We wish to extend our special gratitudes to Mr. Zohrabi, the General Manager of the Semnan Province DoE Office, Mr. Ghorbanlou, the Manager of Turan National Park, and the game guards Bakhshi, Haghighat, Khani, Zolfaghari, Fazeli, Karami, Kalantari, Gari, Moradi, Najafi, Heravi and Yousefi. We also thank Mr. Houman Jowkar, Manager of Conservation of the Asiatic Cheetah Program (CACP) for his ongoing support. We also thank the volunteers of the project: Yasaman Talebi, Bahar Zaferani, Ahmad and Hamid Jarollahi, Vahid Dezfuli, Amirhesam Khaleghi Hamidi and Mahmoud Sufi. We also appreciate the financial support of Semnan Province DoE, Bicarbonate Sorkhe Company, Minoudasht Olive Oil Company and Mr. Mahmoud Haghighi for their assistance during the first phase of the project.

Finally we wish to thank the kind and hospitable people of the village of Qale Bala for rendering whole-hearted support to our fieldworkers.

1. Bum Pajuhan

2. United Nations Development Program/Global Environmental Fund/ Small Grants Program



Kushki, the Asiatic cheetah, Miandasht Wildlife Reserve, Photo by Amirhossein Khaleghi Hamidi

Aunt Dena and Shapalak

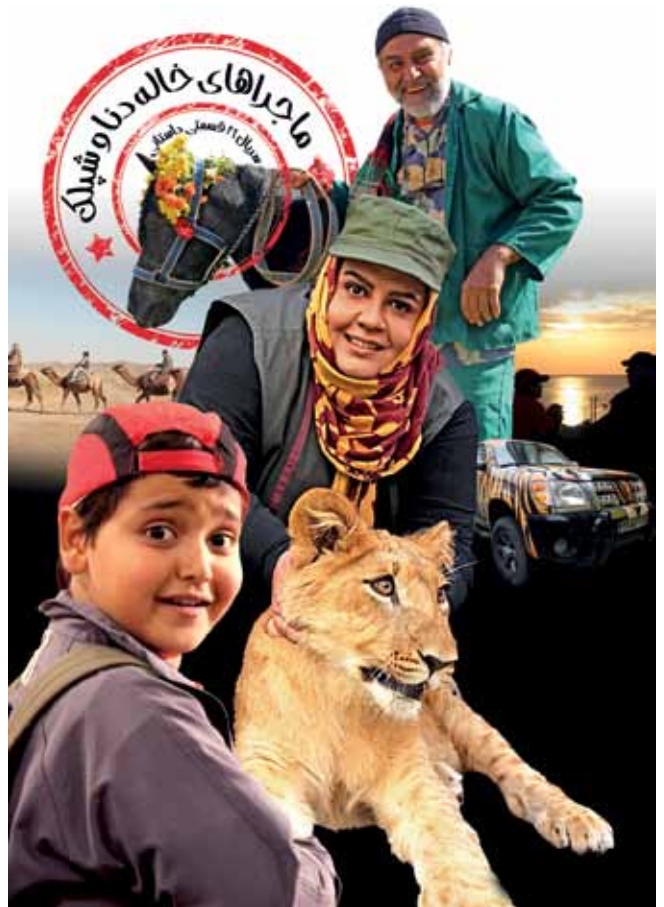
► Dena Ziaee

Observations from eight years of work with children in more than 500 schools and kindergartens have revealed that our children and teenagers know more about animals of the rest of the world than those in our own country. Watching foreign wildlife documentaries that are broadcasted from our T.V. channels might be the main reason for this. Sparseness of educational documentaries for children and teenagers on Iran's wildlife is the major cause of ignorance about the incredible diversity of our wildlife. Most of these children have not even heard about onagers or Asiatic cheetahs that are only found in Iran and are known by the name of this country.

Realizing that producing a TV program requires experience and knowledge, we consulted with and received guidance from Ms. Laleh Daraie, the National Coordinator of the Global Environment Facility/ Small Grants Programme (GEF/SGP) in Iran, who has a strong background in producing educational programs both in Iran and abroad. We also needed the expertise of producers and directors; therefore we presented our ideas to Shohreh Lorestani, a renowned actress and director. Being an enthusiastic advocate of environment and animal rights herself, she welcomed the idea. With her support and with the help of experts and experienced individuals, the story of "Aunt Dena and Shapalak" was written in 26 episodes and presented to the IRIB².

The goal of this TV series was to introduce wild animals of Iran and their habitats and values to the children, while changing superstitious beliefs about animals² with a humorous storyline and educative content.

The story begins with Aunt Dena and her nephew Shapalak. Shapalak has a strange habit of hurting animals; therefore he is sent to live with Aunt Dena for a while. Aunt Dena runs a wildlife educational organization and helps injured animals until they can be released back into the wild. During his stay with Aunt Dena, Shapalak attends some educational programs, visits various natural habitats and finally overcomes his bad habits of cruelty to animals. Finally, Shapalak who has realized the importance of nature and wildlife turns into a nature and wildlife supporter himself.



This series, made up of 26 20-minute episodes, is produced by Shohreh Lorestani. Davoud Monfared, well-known among children, enriches the atmosphere with the role of Aziz Agha, who is a superstitious old man. I play the role of Aunt Dena myself. I hope that this program will be a starting point for more educational wildlife programs to come and a new generation that is more nature-friendly.

1. Channel 2 of the Republic Islamic of Iran Broadcasting.

2. Such as owls being ominous, lizards being venomous and salamanders being born from fire.





Workshop held in Salman Abad Village, Varamin Township

The art of nomadic women at the service of wildlife conservation

► **Afsaneh Ehsani**

Avay-e Tabiat-e Paydar

Following the implementation of the project "Raising the Livelihoods of the Local Community by Promoting Handicrafts for Ecotourists," that was supported by the SGP of the Global Environmental Facilities of the UNDP, Avay-e Tabiat-e Paydar, with the assistance of Tehran Province Nomadic Affairs Bureau and the Middle East Women Group for Regional Cooperation, has designed and started a similar program in Tehran Province. The objective of this project is to lower the negative impact of livestock grazing in Tehran Province's pastures, particularly in the Lar Valley, by means of developing supplementary livelihoods for pastoralist women on the basis of their skills in production of marketable handicrafts. After consulting with experts from Tehran Province Nomadic Affairs Bureau and a representative of the provincial union of the pastoralists, focal townships for the project were determined. Then, after holding several meetings with the representatives of the township unions, the target villages were specified. The representatives of the township unions identified the pastoralist families who were still active in producing handicrafts and made arrangements for our fieldworkers to get to know them and establish a presence in the area.

In the first phase of this project, handmade textiles and other handicrafts of 27 villages in the pastoralists' summer grazing lands were photographed and published in a book entitled "A Look at the Handicrafts of the Nomads of Tehran Province." Our study revealed and documented 43 types of handicrafts. According to the local women, it is no longer possible to revive the production of many of these handicrafts and perhaps they have become museum items by now. Lack of proper tools and facilities, feebleness of the elderly women who still know these arts but are unable to transfer their skills to the next generation, and lack of enough motivation to revive these handicrafts were the main reasons that they mentioned.

In the second phase of the project, after we studied and compared the potentials of women in different villages and consulted with experts from the Nomadic Affairs Bureau, Salman Abad Village of Varamin Township was selected as our

main site. We then organized various workshops to introduce to the local women the kind of small products that they could make from natural material at their disposal that could satisfy different tastes and be marketable. At the present our work group in the area is involved in raising the quality of the products and their marketing as well as finding effective means of strengthening the ties between nature conservation and nomadic culture through art of handicrafts production.

The main domicile of the pastoralist nomads is not Tehran Province and they only come here during part of the year. Some of the problems they face create challenges for our project too. Seasonally low rainfall, sensitivities of the Lar National Park (the outer area of which is open to grazing), improper



A handicraft sample made by nomads

routes to move the livestock herds, and livestock theft are among difficulties that these communities encounter every year. Conflicts inherent in making animal husbandry sustainable and yet profitable have made decision-making difficult for the nomads. In the past the nomadic women's role in producing livestock derivatives, handicrafts, and contributing to the general sustenance of the nomads was quite considerable, but vast changes in lifestyles have also affected nomadic communities. As an example, although inhabitants of Salman Abad village have nomadic roots, there

are only a few who experience anything that resembles nomadic life. Remembering the values of indigenous nomadic life and strengthening the belief in the values of nomadic identity is a time-consuming and challenging work. When we began our work there we thought that the presence of livestock meant ample primary resources for the women to produce various handicrafts, but we soon realized that the herders relied on Afghans to have their sheep sheared, and there were very few women who had any skill in spinning yarn or dyeing wool. In the initial days of the project women did not show much enthusiasm in participating in such activities and their presence in our meetings was less than active and eventful. They also found it unconventional that we were trying to persuade them to use their own indigenous arts and skills to innovate products that could sell and help them out. As a result, it took us a rather long time to gain their trust and to ensure their participation in our project. Given the fact that Salman Abad lacks touristic attractions, direct sales of local products to visitors are not possible and they can only be sold at handicraft fairs and other similar outlets. Therefore, making the new practices sustainable would require double effort.

In spite of all challenges, the following are some of the accomplishments we have made:

- Revival and preservation of some local arts such as *tirchin* style¹ in weaving a sack that is used in the summer pastures to hold salt
- Motivating women and raising their hopes that they could contribute to family incomes
- Recalling authentic nomadic lifestyles and reviving a sense of pride in them
- Job creation and income generation
- Creating a sense of enthusiasm in women for group activities and creation of indigenous arts
- Providing opportunities for women to discuss and exchange views on topics valued in the local culture including attention to indigenous nomadic identity along with conservation of natural resources
- Transfer of skills and experiences from the older generation to the younger one
- Empowering women and raising their spirits
- Creating change and diversity in their routine lives.

1. This style of weaving has its roots in the practices of nomadic peoples of the Fars Province, as the inhabitants of Salman Abad originally came from that province.



“Mam¹, the Baluchi Black Bear,” a wildlife documentary

► Mehdi Chalani

“Mam, the Baluchi Black Bear” documentary can be classified as a “Cinema-Vérité” work due to its realistic point of view. This kind of documentary is considered as one of the most influential types of documentary films. Jean Rouch, the founder of Cinema-Vérité, employed film as a method to conduct anthropological studies on the people of Africa. Some of his most influential films in this genre are: “Les magiciens de Wanzerbé” (1948), “Bataille sur le grand fleuve” (1950) and “Les maîtres fous” (1954). Africans first protested and accused him of selling their culture in European universities and advocating France’s colonial interests. Responding to these accusations, Rouch opted for an innovative procedure. He involved the people who had been filmed by showing them the movie in the process of filming or at the end to incorporate their points of view. Rouch would further record people’s reaction in the film. Such methods not only helped Rouch achieve a higher level of sincerity in showing reality, it also allowed the film subjects to see themselves from a stranger’s standpoint. Fernand Dansereau, the Canadian producer, also produced “Saint-Jérôme” in 1963 about a town with the same name in Québec, Canada. The citizens of Saint-Jérôme criticized what had been told about them in this documentary. As a result, the production of the film continued with the involvement of the habitants of Saint-Jérôme. Similarly, in the production of “Mam, the Baluchi Black Bear” an attempt was made to focus on the local people’s involvement, seeking to familiarize them with the behavior, needs, and habitats of the Baluchi black bear and the role of people in the conservation of

this species. This film also tries to stimulate local communities to re-think their cultural traditions while interacting with nature and wildlife, and to inculcate them with the necessity of sustainably protecting this critically endangered species. Five target groups were selected to participate in the film-making event: (1) provincial and local managers and planners, (2) clerics and Friday-prayer imams, (3) individuals from local communities, (4) teachers and other educators, (5) school children.

Throughout the project, we tried to listen to these people and get their points of view on the bear, as well as expressing ideas and sharing information with them that could lay the basis for a change of attitude on wildlife and conservation.

Throughout filming procedures, we tried to inform the local people, especially villagers, of the reasons for launching this film project and the entire process. The results were interesting: many of them first became curious and later joined the film production. They tried to contact the filmmakers who in their quest for bears had dared to camp in the mountains or spend many days alone, in orchards or ruins, feeding only on dates and curd. Gradually, we came to realize from talks and murmurs that circulated among the locals that the bear had gained importance due to the attention it got from special individuals. The people gradually got interested in our story of finding the bear. During our trips to town for shopping, people would inquire after the film and often sympathized with us. Later, we were surprised to notice how our work had made some local people feel proud about “their animal”.

In the course of the two years that we spent

filming in the area, we gradually got more familiar with the culture, the needs and the demands of the local people, and our working principles took a new turn. We think that due respect that we showed to the culture and beliefs of the local people while familiarizing them with the importance of the black bear played an important role in the success of this project. Thanks to these efforts, many people got to see the black bear in its natural habitat for the first time. The experience of seeing the black bear, always considered a vicious and dangerous predator, had much impact on changing the people’s attitudes toward this animal. This documentary has indeed served as a means of conveying a message from a group of people to another, and, as such, it can be considered an effective and modern platform.

In the course of the filming project, a short narrative film for children and adolescents, titled “Little Bear”; and two documentaries on the black bear, titled “Mam, Baluchistan’s Black Bear” and “Mam, the Baluchi Black Bear” have been produced in Southeast of Iran. We are currently attempting to prepare the third part of this documentary, relying on our past experiences.

1. In local dialect, the black bear is called “Mam”

Art and media aiding wildlife conservation

► Delaram Ashayeri

Papers published in scientific journals dealing with environmental sciences often address scientists and experts providing them with professional information. As such, they have little or no impact on the general public, policy-makers and sponsors of environmental causes. Conservation of nature is not a prerogative of a specific group. As its benefits accrue to the society as a whole, the public in turn needs to be involved in it. And public awareness becomes a requisite for public participation. Most of the environmentally relevant information available to public focuses on global warming, pollution, deforestation and depletion of water resources mainly because they are envisioned as directly impacting human lives. From a global point of view, abundance of information can become boring and cause indifference towards a subject. Still, some important aspects of our planet's environmental problems do not receive much media attention and, hence, people remain relatively unaware of the potential impact conservation of nature and wildlife may have for biomes and accordingly for humans. Therefore, worrying about habitat destruction and emphasizing wildlife conservation are often perceived to be too emotional and luxurious, especially in developing countries, and as such are not accorded much priority.

In the last few decades, we have witnessed a considerable increase in the use of photography, news reports, educational programs and environmental and conservation oriented documentaries as means of raising public awareness through art and media. Creation of interdisciplinary fields of study that bring together art, social sciences and advertising testifies to the need that exists to utilize knowledge and capacities of communication for environmental education of the public. Environmental groups and activists too find themselves increasingly dependent on public communication tools to convey their environmental messages to the public.

Recognizing the importance of media and cultural activities in raising public awareness, the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation (PWHF) is making use of cultural activities and communication tools in its overall conservation strategy. Among others, we have supported the production of the films "The land of Sun and Water" by Mani Mirsadegh and "Mam, the Baluchi Black Bear" by Mehdi Chalani, publication of the children's book "Cry of the Cheetah" by Ali Golshan and the handbook of "Bird watching in Iran" by Shahab Cheraghi and Nooshin Satei. We have also

provided financial support for the play "Cheetah's troubles" that was performed by the Iranian Cheetah Society in three villages bordering cheetah habitats in Semnan Province, and for the publication of a calendar for year 1392¹ which encompassed drawings of endangered species by the children. We have also welcomed media coverage of our activities and have tried to use media outlets to get our environmental messages across to the public. Activities of the Foundation often find coverage in newspapers. The lengthy

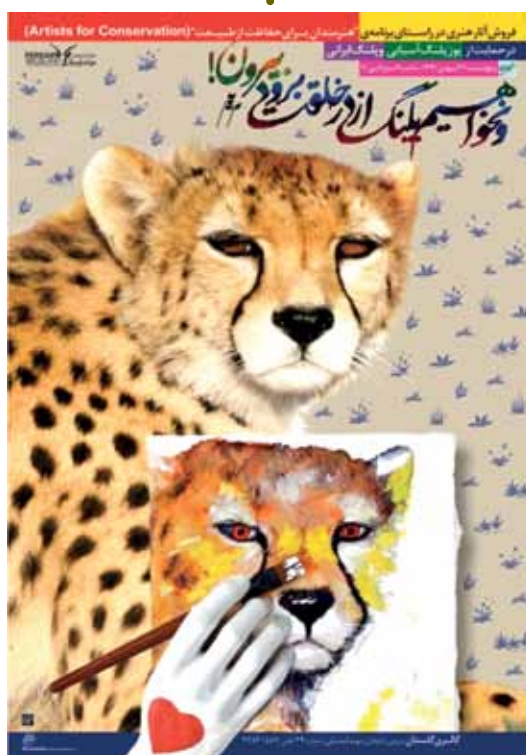
coverage given by the Etemad Daily to our Persian Leopard Conservation Project in Golestan National Park (Etemad Newspaper, 5th of Dey 1391²) is one such example. The Foundation's quarterly newsletter and public conferences are other means to reach special audiences such as our current financial supporters and other environmental groups in and out of the country. Certain events have also been organized for children and their parents in the last two years.

We in the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation believe that art is one of the most powerful tools for social communication and that each artist, with her or his own unique identity, plays an important role in impacting public attitudes. The PWHF has had the honor of cooperating with some Iranian celebrities in the art world to promote the cause of conservation in Iran. The sale of 11 pieces of artwork in our November 2011 auction allowed the Foundation to raise enough funds to get its conservation projects going. In this year too, on February 14th, Golestan Gallery held an exhibition of 46 artworks by

prominent Iranian artists to raise funds for our cheetah and leopard conservation projects. This event also led to the formation of "Artists for Conservation of Nature," a program that brings some of the well-known artists of Iran together in defense of environmental conservation and intends to raise public environmental awareness and to mobilize support for the attempts at conservation of nature that are being carried out in the field. The PWHF has also attempted and taken preparatory steps to attract the attention and support of artists in the area of performing arts. We are hoping for a positive cooperation with this group of artists and their active involvement in promoting the cause of nature conservation.

1. Persian calendar (2012-2013)

2. December 25th 2012



Poster designed and donated by Ghobad Shiva for "Artists for Conservation" Event held in Golestan Gallery, Tehran, in support of Persian leopard and Asiatic cheetah projects, February 2013

Nature conservation and biodiversity are the primary concerns of the experts in these fields and specialized conservation groups. This concern is also shared by nature lovers in general who, believing in the positive impact of nature conservation on our daily lives, support groups active in conservation. In some countries such support is considered a social responsibility of individuals and organizations. In Iran, only industries that directly impact the environment may feel responsible for the damages they cause, while other industries or companies whose activities may harm the environment indirectly fail to assess their adverse effects on the environment fully and generally find no reason to feel responsible toward nature.

"1% for the Planet" is a rapidly growing movement around the globe with more than 1000 corporate members donating 1% of their sales to 3000 environmental NGOs that are also members. This program introduces the NGOs to environmentally responsible corporations. The corporations in turn choose the NGO(s) to which they commit donation of 1% of their annual sale.

Following membership of "Khoshkmana Co" as the first Iranian investor in this program, Mr. Ali Akrami, the CEO of "Khoshkmana", introduced the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation to "1% for the Planet". We are now honored to have become the first Iranian NGO member of this program. We hope that taking this step will encourage other business organizations and corporations to join these kinds of programs and to become enlisted as partners to the groups active in the field of nature conservation.

The Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation joins 1% for the Planet



The Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation collaborates with Eram-e Sabz Zoo



The arrival of two Asian elephants from Sri Lanka, a 5 year old female called Mehari and an 8 year old male by the name of Mehasen, has motivated those in charge of the zoo to plan considerable changes in the way the zoo is currently organized. These changes will include upgrading the animals' cages and enclosures and designing new signs for a better introduction of the species.

Zoos are effective platforms for introducing conservation activities to the public. Keeping animals in optimum artificial conditions and conveying simple but useful information to the general public create a pleasant educational atmosphere in which visitors can get familiarized with different animals and their survival conditions and even become motivated to contribute to conservation activities. On the contrary, when visitors are confronted with dismal conditions in zoos and receive no proper educational messages, chances that they will become interested in the plight of wildlife becomes nil.

Considering this essential matter, Dr. Iman Memarian, chief veterinarian of the Eram-e Sabz Zoo, solicited the PWHF to make new signs that provide easily comprehensible and scientific information on each species kept in the zoo. The first stage of the work was completed by the Foundation and proper introductory signs were prepared for 11 species: Asian elephant, boar, Persian wild ass (onager), common fox, wolf, striped hyena, Caspian horse, Bactrian camel, jungle cat, Red deer, and Persian fallow deer. The information provided on each sign includes specifications of each species, its distribution map, its survival conditions and conservation activities that are currently being done to increase the chances for its survival. The foundation plans to design further signs for all other animals in the zoo in near future.

We hope the small contribution that we have made to this zoo and future improvements in its overall conditions will bring it up to international standards. While visiting the zoo and its new guests, the two elephants Mehari and Mehasen, we invite you to pay closer attention to the newly installed signs and share with us any suggestions you may have to improve them.

Elephants' enclosure and their new sign. Photo by Behruz Naji