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17 July 2025

To: Dr. Urs Breitenmoser and Dr. Christine Breitenmoser-Würsten
Co-Chairs
IUCN Cat Specialist Group

From: Dr. Igor Khorozyan and Dr. Mohammad Farhadinia, Co-Chairs

TECHNICAL REPORT OF THE PERSIAN LEOPARD WORKING GROUP (PeLeWG)

JULY 2024 to JUNE 2025

The budget of the group was spent for implementing the following **Activities**:

1. I. Khorozyan was hired as the admin officer to manage and coordinate the Group's activities described in the workplan which was developed during online meetings.
2. I. Khorozyan participated in the online Conservation Social Science Conference (November 20-23, 2024). It was a very interesting, mind-provoking and thoughtful collection of presentations about human-wildlife coexistence, which was particularly relevant to building trust and capacities for minimizing conflicts between local people and Persian leopards throughout their range, and fostering an intricate balance between Persian leopard conservation and local livelihoods.
3. I. Khorozyan purchased a kindle book "Biomeasurement: A Student's Guide to Biological Statistics" for its use in the course "Statistics for field biologists" in February 2025 at the Scientific Center of Zoology and Hydroecology, Armenia. This course has been regularly taught to postgraduate, PhD and postdoctoral students, and to young scientists to prepare skilled specialists for wildlife, including Persian leopard and its prey, ecological research and monitoring.
4. The PeLeWG covered the cost of an air ticket for Hana Raza, a Steering Committee member and the chairperson of Leopards Beyond Borders NGO from Iraqi Kurdistan, to travel to Mongolia to participate in the course "Training of Trainers on Community-Driven Conservation" during 3-7 February 2025. This course was organized by Snow Leopard Trust, Ethical Conservation Alliance and Snow Leopard Conservation Foundation. It aimed to effectively engage local communities in biodiversity conservation by applying the PARTNERS principles: Presence, Aptness, Respect, Transparency, Negotiation, Empathy, Responsiveness, and Strategic support. These elements are essential for creating a long-term and meaningful conservation impact. The gathering provided

a platform for conservationists to share experiences, address challenges, and exchange innovative solutions. Through open discussions, participants gained practical tools to enhance their efforts and refined strategies for effective community-driven conservation. The training also expects participants to facilitate similar workshops in their home countries, further expanding the impact of ethical conservation principles.

5. The PeLeWG bought an air ticket for its member Kaveh Hobeali from Future4Leopards Foundation (Iran) to participate in the workshop “Engaging with Indigenous People and Local Communities for Biodiversity Conservation” in Kathmandu, Nepal during 5-8 March 2025. It was organized by Snow Leopard Trust, Ethical Conservation Alliance and Red Panda Network. Like the previous course, it was based on the PARTNERS principles. As human conflicts with Persian leopards and snow leopards are among the major threats to survival of these big cats, learning and sharing information about effective solutions with essential local engagement is an irreplaceable lesson from this course.
6. In March-April 2025, the PeLeWG paid a one-year service fee for hosting and domain of its website <https://pelewg.net>, and for the improvement of its structure to make it more user-friendly. Within these changes, the front page picture of the leopard was replaced, the new Persian Leopard/Useful Leopard Links page was added, and the Library/Papers and Reports page was arranged as a pulldown menu to keep it compact. The list of PeLeWG members was updated, and the date of update was added to all pages as an automatic function.
7. I. Khorozyan paid for travel to Tashkent, Uzbekistan to participate in the Third Range State Meeting of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI) during 24-26 June 2025. However, this travel was cancelled because of the closure of Iran’s airspace during the recent military conflict with Israel, and I. Khorozyan participated online, but without a right for discussions. The following PeLeWG members participated in this meeting in person: M. Farhadinia, M. Gritsina, S. Karryeva, M. Pestov, A. Potayeva, T. Rosen and V. Terentiev. All these people actively participated in discussions related to the current (2021-2026) and future (2026-2032) CMS/CAMI Programme of Work, species status in spatial units particularly where Persian leopards exist, and other topics of the agenda. A number of presentations were made by T. Rosen on meeting topics and their current status, and by M. Farhadinia on the PeLeWG’s activities and progress. This meeting has laid a firm ground to further build up the group’s capacities and develop visionary workplans and funding schemes to realize the Range-wide Strategy for the Conservation of the Persian Leopard, which was originally developed by CMS/CAMI.

The following **Activities** were also implemented **without additional costs**:

Networking

- On 13 June 2025, the PeLeWG has opened a LinkedIn account <https://www.linkedin.com/company/pelewg>. As of 14 July 2025, it has 8 followers. Other accounts of our group have many more followers: Instagram (@pelewg) – 401, X/Twitter (@PersLeopWG) – 303 and Facebook (@PeLeWG) – 287.

International cooperation

- The PeLeWG gave support to WWF Germany for raising funds through Lisbon Zoo to buy new camera-traps for its Persian leopard monitoring project in the South Caucasus. All of these devices are Solaris, a very affordable solar model producing high-quality pictures and videos, which was tested before in all three Caucasus countries and was highly acclaimed by the users.
- On 1 May 2025, M. Farhadinia and I. Khorozyan had a zoom meeting with IBCA's Lead Specialist K Banerjee and Program Director S. Dasgupta on exploring possibilities for signing a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and professional training of PeLeWG members based on India's exceptional experience in leopard research and conservation. It was jointly agreed that before preparing an MoU, the PeLeWG would send to IBCA an official letter with a brief description of priority topics and the group's needs in support. This letter was prepared, discussed with and supported by U. Breitenmoser and S. Roy from KORA, and submitted to IBCA. Now it is under consideration.
- During 5-9 May 2025, I. Khorozyan participated in the Technical Workshop for the Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI) on the Vilm Island, Germany. The main purpose of this meeting was to finalize the draft Programme of Work (2026-2031) for the follow-up Third Range State Meeting of CMS/CAMI in Tashkent in June 2025 (see above). This activity was fully funded by CMS Secretariat.

Presentations

- The PeLeWG celebrated International Leopard Day of 3 May 2025 by joining the IBCA webinar. I. Khorozyan has made a presentation "The Persian leopard (*Panthera pardus tulliana*): building bridges through range-wide cooperation". The other presentations included: "Corridors for conservation: establishment of protected corridors using a collaborative multi-partner landscape approach. Central Highlands of Sri Lanka" (A. Kittle), "Repaint the spot: a collaborative action to conserve the Javan leopard" (E. Wilianto), "Leopards in India" (B. Habib), and "The Arabian leopard: darkness before the dawn?" (G. Mann).
- The team of M. Kabir, a Steering Committee member of the PeLeWG from the University of Haripur, has organized an event "Empowering guardians: involvement of women in leopard conservation in Pakistan" in Ayubia National Park to celebrate International Leopard Day of 3 May. This was done within his grant from Global Leopard Conference's Bursary Programme for Leopard Conservation, which was backed by the PeLeWG. Students, educators, conservationists, park visitors, rangers and local women, with a total of 60-70 participants, have come together to share a mission to promote human-wildlife coexistence. The goal of this event was to break traditional barriers and acknowledge that women are powerful agents of change through their deep connection to nature and an integral role they play in local communities.

Training and capacity building

- Group members participated in the webinar "Community participation in the conservation of migratory species. Launch of 10 key guiding principles and real-world application in Central Asia" (30 January 2025), which was organized by CMS.
- On 13 March 2025, the PeLeWG had a joint zoom call with Society for Conservation Biology (SCB), Snow Leopard Network (SLN) and Manul Working

Group to establish cooperation on training and capacity building in shared range countries of the Persian leopard, snow leopard and Pallas's cat. Due to this meeting, the PeLeWG has got access to SLN webinars and distributed this information among all its members to inform and invite potential speakers. Since then, group members had a chance to join the three webinars: "First large-scale assessment of snow leopard population in China: case in Sanjiangyuan Region" (22 May 2025), "Two leopards, one landscape: patterns of coexistence in the Trans-Himalayan region, Annapurna Conservation Area, Nepal" (30 June 2025) and "Forty-eight years among the snow leopards of Central and South Asia: from the first telemetry study to mobilizing communities and fostering multisectoral partnerships" (12 July 2025).

Fundraising

- We sent an inquiry to Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN) on a possibility for the PeLeWG to become part of their Partner Network. However, their response was discouraging because they do not invite new members and do not prioritize IUCN specialist groups and their associated partners in a short term.
- A zoom call was organized between M. Farhadinia, I. Khorozyan and A. Heidelberg to discuss opportunities for speeding up the signing of an MoU between the PeLeWG and WWF Germany. With this MoU, WWF Germany can become not only a key partner for our group, but also a hub and an administrative backstopper facilitating the arrangement of financial and other issues. Also, it was decided to plan and prepare materials about the PeLeWG for the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which will be held in Yerevan, Armenia in 2026.

Publications

- The report "Review of the status of the Persian leopard (*Panthera pardus tulliana*) in the Lesser Caucasus" prepared by I. Khorozyan, M. Farhadinia and other members of the group has undergone the first round of revision and is now at the stage of reviewing. Once finally approved, it will be published as a Special Issue of the Cat News.
- I. Khorozyan and M. Farhadinia have revised the chapter "Persian leopard (*Panthera pardus tulliana*)" for the book "Leopards of the World" which is planned to be published in the near future by International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA).
- The Green Status of Species (GSS) assessment of the Persian leopard prepared by I. Khorozyan and A. Ghoddousi successfully went through the complete round of reviews and revisions. This work was done in close cooperation with E. Carlton, U. Breitenmoser and T. Lanz from the IUCN/SSC Cat Specialist Group. On 16 June 2025, a zoom meeting was organized to introduce the GSS assessment process and our progress in this work. Its participants included E. Carlton, T. Lanz, P. Weinberg, S. Ahmed, I. Memarian, I. Khorozyan, A. Pkhitikov, K. Ahmadova, V. Ananyan and E. Askerov. E. Carlton's introductory presentation and I. Khorozyan's presentation about the Persian leopard GSS were followed by thoughtful comments by P. Weinberg, S. Ahmed and E. Askerov, which were then added to the assessment. Additional comments were later made by S. Karryeva and also added. After this, the amended assessment was sent to the reviewers M. Farhadinia, T. Rosen and A. Heidelberg, who sent back their reviews on time. All their comments were addressed, and the final version of the assessment was submitted for online publication on the Red List website in October 2025. A full

video of this zoom meeting is available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1goLyoTNDc4T6dDVz9Z4ig3yQPUSrgTfK/view?usp=sharing>

- The article “Protecting the Persian leopard” prepared by the PeLeWG was published in May-June 2025 issue of Big Cats Magazine produced by IBCA. Manuscript writing and submitting was led and coordinated by T. Rosen, but the paper was published under the name of the PeLeWG.

APPENDIX



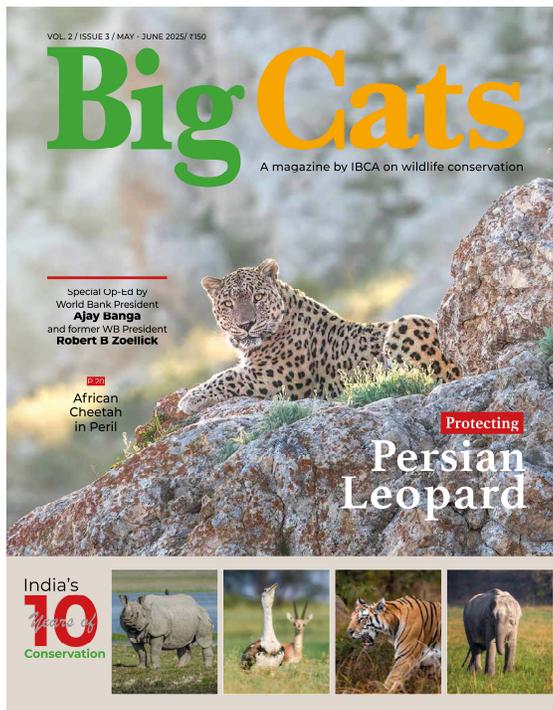
Hana Raza (second from the right) in the course “Training of Trainers on Community-Driven Conservation”, Mongolia, February 2025.



Kaveh Hobeali (in the center) in the workshop “Engaging with Indigenous People and Local Communities for Biodiversity Conservation”, Nepal, March 2025.



The PeLeWG team at the CMS/CAMI conference (top) and M. Farhadinia presenting there (bottom).



Cover of the May-June 2025 issue of Big Cats Magazine where our article “Protecting the Persian leopard” was published.