



For Immediate Release

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## **First-Ever Global Leopard Conference to shine conservation spotlight on persecuted species**

### **Five-day virtual gathering to unite the international conservation community to better protect the world's vulnerable leopards**

*Start*

This March, seven conservation organisations will unite to host the inaugural [Global Leopard Conference](#), a virtual gathering of the world's foremost leopard scientists and enthusiasts seeking to better protect one of the world's most important persecuted and threatened big cat species.

The conference, conceived to create opportunities to enhance leopard conservation through international collaboration and learning exchanges, will take place online from 13 to 17 March 2023 and will be hosted by an international partnership comprising the [Cape Leopard Trust](#), [Panthera](#), the [Wildlife Conservation Research Unit \(WildCRU\)](#) – Oxford University, the [Endangered Wildlife Trust](#), the [WildCats Conservation Alliance](#), the [Royal Commission for AlUla](#), and the [Arabian Leopard Fund](#).

The inclusive five-day virtual conference will bring together organisations and individuals researching, observing, appreciating, and conserving the nine subspecies of leopards across the globe, providing a platform to share leopard conservation lessons and promote collaborative solutions to ensure the long-term survival of this ecologically important umbrella species. The conference aims to engage with students, academics, scientists, conservation organisations, media representatives, artists, and leopard aficionados. Furthermore, topics will be relevant to researchers working across the broader carnivore community.

Renowned [keynote speakers](#) include Prof David Macdonald of Oxford University's WildCRU; Dr Vidya Athreya of the Wildlife Conservation Society; Dr Guy Balme of Panthera; Dr Sanjay Gubbi of Holématti Nature Foundation; Taisiia Marchenkova of Land of the Leopard National Park; Dr Hadi al Hikmani of The Royal Commission for AlUla; and Margot Raggett of Remembering Wildlife.

All interested parties are invited to join the conference for fascinating leopard conservation conversations, interesting research, and networking opportunities. For the full conference programme and registration details, visit [leopardconference.org/](http://leopardconference.org/)

In addition to the full 5-day conference, there will be two free-to-attend evening events open to everyone:

- Tuesday 12 March 18h00 SAST: a film screening of the *To Skin a Cat* documentary and Q&A with the filmmakers Greg Lomas and Colwyn Thomas, joined by Panthera's [Furs For Life](#) Project Coordinator, Tristan Dickerson.
- Thursday 14 March 18h00 SAST: a virtual safari with [Painteddog.TV](#) and Brent Leo Smith, featuring a live game drive in search of leopards on the edge of South Africa's Kruger Park.

Links to attend will be advertised on the Global Leopard Conference social media channels and website. Leopards, known for their beautiful, patterned coats and extreme adaptability, are one of the most persecuted large cats in the world. Extinct in 13 countries/regions and possibly extinct in seven more, leopards have vanished from at least two-thirds of their historic range in Africa and 84 percent in Eurasia. Leopards are listed as Vulnerable by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), with some subspecies classified as Critically Endangered.

*End*

## **Contact**

Event-related queries:

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Facebook and Instagram @globalleopardconference

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## **About the Cape Leopard Trust**

The Cape Leopard Trust (CLT, Est 2004) is an environmental NGO and non-profit based in the Western Cape, South Africa. They facilitate and promote the conservation of biological diversity, with a focus on the leopard as a flagship species. The leopard is the last large predator and last member of the Big 5 to still roam free in the Cape provinces. The species faces multiple threats, including limited and fragmented habitat, reduction in prey numbers and high levels of conflict with people. The CLT's purpose and vision is to ensure the continued survival of leopards for the benefit of nature and society. They work to support the protection of leopard habitat and prey species, promote peaceful coexistence between leopards and people, and foster community custodianship of the Cape's unique biodiversity. To achieve this, they employ a three-pillar approach of research, conservation, and education. These three pillars operate in synergy within the CLT and in collaboration with communities, private landowners and partner organisations. [capeleopard.org.za](http://capeleopard.org.za)

## **About the Endangered Wildlife Trust**

Founded in 1973, the Endangered Wildlife Trust is dedicated to conserving threatened species and ecosystems in southern and East Africa to the benefit of all. We are driven by a team of passionate and dedicated conservationists working through 13 specialised programmes across southern and East Africa, each falling under one of our three key strategic pillars: Saving species, conserving habitats, and benefitting people. Our critical work includes conducting applied research, supporting community-led conservation, training and building capacity, addressing human-wildlife conflict, monitoring threatened species, and establishing safe spaces for wildlife range expansion. The EWT works with key partners, including communities, businesses, landowners, academic institutions, and governments, to create a sustainable future for wildlife and people. [ewt.org.za](http://ewt.org.za)

## **About Panthera**

Panthera, founded in 2006, is devoted exclusively to preserving wild cats and their critical role in the world's ecosystems. Panthera's team of leading biologists, law enforcement experts and wild cat advocates develop

innovative strategies based on the best available science to protect cheetahs, jaguars, leopards, lions, pumas, snow leopards, tigers and the 33 small cat species and their vast landscapes. In 39 countries around the world, Panthera works with a wide variety of stakeholders to reduce or eliminate the most pressing threats to wild cats — securing their future, and ours. [panthera.org](http://panthera.org)

### **About Wildcats Conservation Alliance**

WildCats Conservation Alliance is a conservation initiative of the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and Dreamworld Wildlife Foundation (DWF). Their mission is to save wild tigers and Amur leopards for future generations by raising awareness of their status and funding carefully chosen conservation projects. To date, WildCats has mobilised over £4m in support of 103 monitoring, protection, conflict resolution, firefighting and awareness-raising projects. It works with implementing partners whose projects are regularly and independently reviewed, providing supporters with the confidence that their money is being used effectively. [conserwildcats.org/](http://conserwildcats.org/)

### **About the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit**

Founded in 1986, WildCRU was the first university-based conservation research unit in Europe. It is part of the University of Oxford, within the Department of Zoology. WildCRU was founded and developed by David Macdonald, Oxford's first Professor of Wildlife Conservation. His concept was to tackle the emerging biodiversity crisis and wider environmental issues by bridging the gap between academic theory and practical problem solving. This scholarly approach provides the foundation for all of WildCRU's work. Since 1986, WildCRU, now with over 50 researchers, has grown to be one of the largest and most productive conservation research institutes in the world. Their longstanding specialisation in wild carnivores has also led to a partnership with Panthera, and they strive to become the world's foremost university centre for felid conservation research. [wildcru.org](http://wildcru.org)

### **About the Royal Commission for AlUla**

The Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU) was established to protect and safeguard AlUla, a region of outstanding natural and cultural significance in North-West Saudi Arabia. Work is now underway to transform AlUla into one of the world's premier destinations for nature, culture and heritage. Protecting the Arabian Leopard is one of RCU's major aims. Classified as 'Critically Endangered' by the IUCN, it is estimated that fewer than 200 Arabian Leopards are left in the wild. RCU's work has inspired the creation of the Arabian Leopard Programme and the Arabian Leopard Fund in collaboration with Panthera – important initiatives that are helping RCU prepare for the reintroduction of the species to AlUla. [rcu.gov.sa/en/](http://rcu.gov.sa/en/)

### **About the Arabian Leopard Fund**

The Arabian Leopard Fund (ALF) was established by the Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU) as part of Saudi Arabia's wider Vision 2030 strategy, which aims to ensure environmental sustainability and support growth of non-profit sectors in Saudi Arabia. The aim of the ALF is to safeguard the Arabian Leopard – and by doing so, inspire communities, decision-makers, and the world to change the fate of one of our planet's most delicate ecosystems. There is little information on where and how many leopards survive in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. By partnering with Panthera, the Royal Commission of AlUla is using the latest technology to deliver a comprehensive assessment of the Arabian Leopard population in the Kingdom.

[arabianleopardfund.org/](http://arabianleopardfund.org/)