




Female Arabian leopard *Panthera pardus nimr* cub born at the Wild Mammal Breeding Centre, Muscat, Oman on 15 February 2023. Photo: Royal Court Affairs.

in 2022 by a female from the Breeding Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. On 15 February 2023 she gave birth to the centre's first cub in 26 years. The female cub provides new hope for the survival of this Critically Endangered leopard in Oman and across Arabia, as both the wild and captive populations of this subspecies are very small. In addition, as the sire of the cub is a wild-caught Arabian leopard, she may contain some valuable genetic material that can be used to increase the genetic diversity of the captive Arabian leopard population across the region.

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## 22nd Sharjah International Conservation Forum for Arabia's Biodiversity

The 22nd Annual Sharjah International Conservation Forum for Arabia's Biodiversity was held at Sharjah Safari, United Arab Emirates, during 6–9 February 2023. The Forum brought together over 200 participants regionally from Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Yemen, and internationally from Australia, France, Germany, Greece, New Zealand, Russia, South Africa, the UK and the USA. The Sharjah workshops are hosted by the Environment and Protected Areas Authority, Government of Sharjah, under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah. Following on from the inclusion of the genetic diversity

of wild species in Target 4 of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework at the Conference of the Parties 15 meeting in Montreal in December 2022, the 22nd meeting had a single theme: conservation genetics.

The forum was aimed at conservation practitioners who may need to commission or interpret conservation genetics research in their projects and was led by the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland's WildGenes laboratory. The sessions covered: (1) an introduction to major concepts in conservation genetics, highlighting regional case studies, (2) use of genetic data to support reintroduction, including a practical session on founder selection, (3) genetics and taxonomy, including a gap analysis of outstanding taxonomic questions in the region, and (4) use of genetic data to support monitoring and management of threatened species in the wild, including the use of dietary metabarcoding, conducting a population census, and the management of hybridization. A technical session provided an overview of animal biobanking and the work of the Sharjah National Barcode of Life Programme, with advice for veterinarians taking samples, and a practical session on sample prioritization.

The final day brought together lessons learnt during the first 3 days in a practical session on the evaluation of genetic risk to threatened populations using the Genetic Score Card method, which has been proposed as an indicator for the evaluation of progress against Global Biodiversity Framework Target 4. Workshop participants tested the scorecard process on 18 Arabian species of conservation concern, as a means of exploring the different elements of genetic risk.

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## *Manglietia ventii* blooms for the first time in Kunming Botanical Garden

The evergreen tree *Manglietia ventii* (with the synonyms *Manglietia hebecarpa*, *Magnolia hebecarpa* and *Magnolia ventii*) of the family Magnoliaceae was described in 1980