

With the births of the cubs in Taif, we are seeing the first paw prints of the success of the Arabian leopard initiative.

Thomas Kaplan
founder of big-cats conservation organization Panthera

Spotlight

ENDANGERED SPECIES DAY

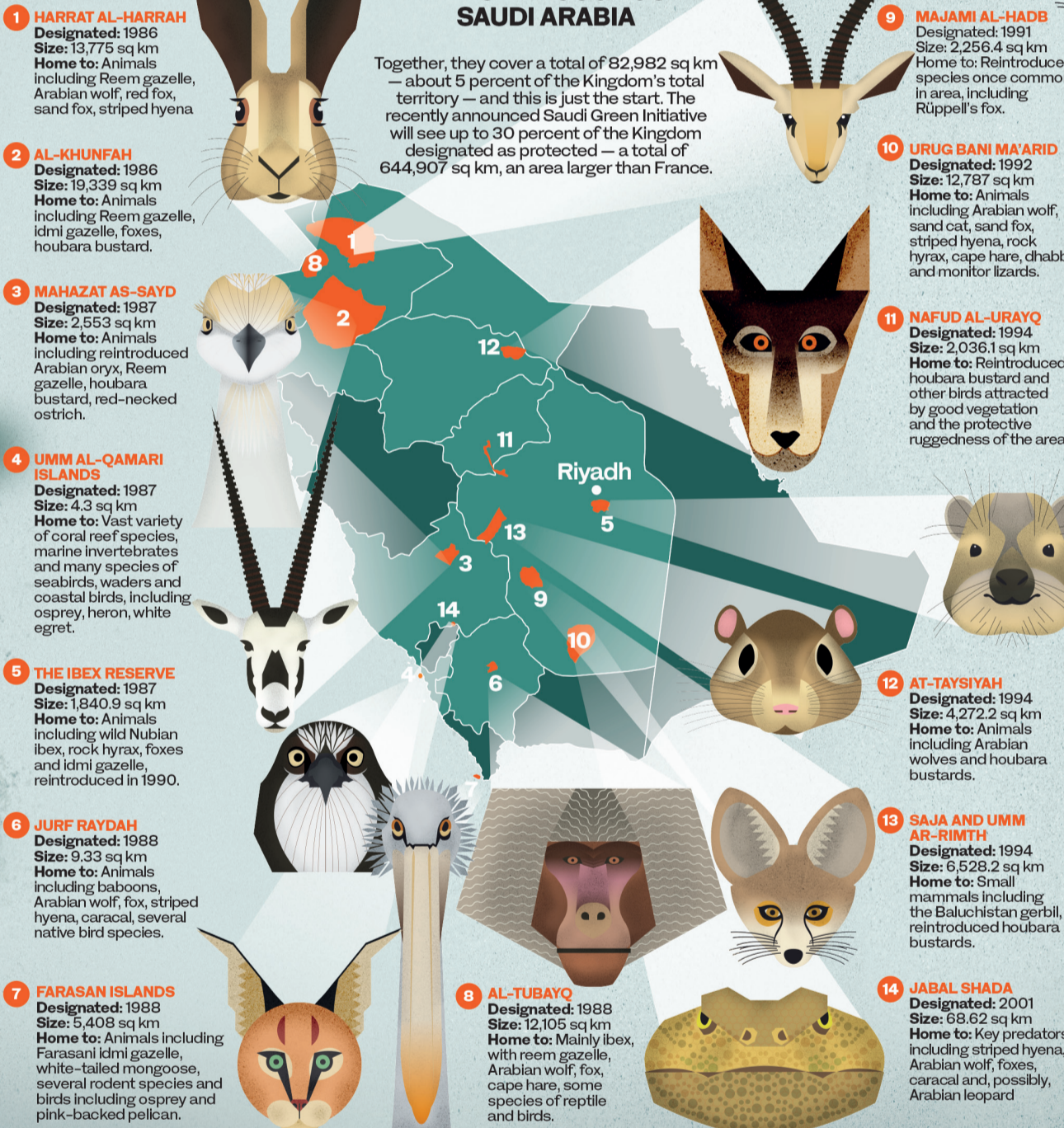
SAUDI'S ANIMAL KINGDOM

To mark Endangered Species Day, a celebration of some of the remarkable mammals of Saudi Arabia. Some are common, some are rare, and others, like the Arabian leopard, are threatened, but Saudi Arabia is working hard to protect them all, and the diverse habitats they depend upon.

INSUFFICIENT DATA LEAST CONCERN NEAR-THREATENED VULNERABLE ENDANGERED CRITICALLY ENDANGERED

THERE ARE 14 PROTECTED AREAS THROUGHOUT SAUDI ARABIA

Together, they cover a total of 82,982 sq km — about 5 percent of the Kingdom's total territory — and this is just the start. The recently announced Saudi Green Initiative will see up to 30 percent of the Kingdom designated as protected — a total of 644,907 sq km, an area larger than France.



1 HARRAT AL-HARRAH
Designated: 1986
Size: 13,775 sq km
Home to: Animals including Reem gazelle, Arabian wolf, red fox, sand fox, striped hyena

2 AL-KHUNFAH
Designated: 1986
Size: 19,339 sq km
Home to: Animals including Reem gazelle, idmi gazelle, foxes, houbara bustard.

3 MAHAZAT AS-SAYD
Designated: 1987
Size: 2,553 sq km
Home to: Animals including reintroduced Arabian oryx, Reem gazelle, houbara bustard, red-necked ostrich.

4 UMM AL-QAMARI ISLANDS
Designated: 1987
Size: 4.3 sq km
Home to: Vast variety of coral reef species, marine invertebrates and many species of seabirds, waders and coastal birds, including osprey, heron, white egret.

5 THE IBEX RESERVE
Designated: 1987
Size: 1,840.9 sq km
Home to: Animals including wild Nubian ibex, rock hyrax, foxes and idmi gazelle, reintroduced in 1990.

6 JURF RAYDAH
Designated: 1988
Size: 9.33 sq km
Home to: Animals including baboons, Arabian wolf, fox, striped hyena, caracal, several native bird species.

7 FARASAN ISLANDS
Designated: 1988
Size: 5,408 sq km
Home to: Animals including Farasani idmi gazelle, white-tailed mongoose, several rodent species and birds including osprey and pink-backed pelican.

8 AL-TUBAYQ
Designated: 1988
Size: 12,105 sq km
Home to: Mainly ibex, with reem gazelle, Arabian wolf, fox, cape hare, some species of reptile and birds.

9 MAJAMI AL-HADB
Designated: 1991
Size: 2,256.4 sq km
Home to: Reintroduced species once common in area, including Rüppell's fox.

10 URUG BANI MA'ARID
Designated: 1992
Size: 12,787 sq km
Home to: Animals including Arabian wolf, sand cat, sand fox, striped hyena, rock hyrax, cape hare, dhabb and monitor lizards.

11 NAFUD AL-URAYQ
Designated: 1994
Size: 2,036.1 sq km
Home to: Reintroduced houbara bustard and other birds attracted by good vegetation and the protective ruggedness of the area.

12 AT-TAYSIIYAH
Designated: 1994
Size: 4,272.2 sq km
Home to: Animals including Arabian wolves and houbara bustards.

13 SAJA AND UMM AR-RIMTH
Designated: 1994
Size: 6,528.2 sq km
Home to: Small mammals including the Baluchistan gerbil, reintroduced houbara bustards.

14 JABAL SHADA
Designated: 2001
Size: 68.62 sq km
Home to: Key predators including striped hyena, Arabian wolf, foxes, caracal and, possibly, Arabian leopard

CARACAL
Status: Approaching near-threatened.
Habitat: Desert wadis, foothills, mountains up to 3,000 meters.

STRIPED HYENA
Status: Endangered.
Habitat: Wide range, avoids extensive areas of loose sand. Dens in rocky areas close to water.

SAND CAT
Status: Near-threatened.
Habitat: Vegetated sandy desert, sand or gravel plains.

GREY WOLF
Status: Endangered.
Habitat: Widespread except in Rub Al-Khali, the "Empty Quarter".

RED FOX
Status: Least concern.
Habitat: Most areas other than interior of extensive dunes.

GOLDEN JACKAL
Status: Endangered.
Habitat: Lakesides, reeds and agricultural areas.

HONEY BADGER
Status: Near-threatened.
Habitat: Most habitats up to 2,000 meters, including wadis, mountains and sandy-gravel desert.

RÜPPELL'S FOX
Status: Least concern.
Habitat: Sandy, stony and rocky deserts with short grass or low shrubs.

INDIAN GREY MONGOOSE
Status: Insufficient data.
Habitat: Around human habitation and agricultural areas, mainly near coast.

COMMON GENET
Status: Least concern.
Habitat: Wooded wadis, rocky areas on both sides of southwestern Arabian mountains.

WHITE-TAILED MONGOOSE
Status: Least concern.
Habitat: Wooded wadis, coastal plains, plantations, gardens, urban areas.

BLANFORD'S FOX
Status: Vulnerable.
Habitat: Rocky, mountainous areas.

WILDCAT
Status: Near-threatened.
Habitat: Rocky areas, scrub deserts, dunes and plains.

FENNEC FOX
Status: Insufficient data.
Habitat: Unknown.

ARABIAN LEOPARD
Status: Critically endangered.
Habitat: Mainly mountainous coastal regions.



See the Arab News Deep Dive: **REWILDING ARABIA**

SOURCE: INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES, RED LIST OF THREATENED SPECIES