



Israel Nature and Parks Authority

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Science Division, Department of Ecology



Scientific Authority for Israel
for the CITES Convention

Response of Israel to Notification No. 2011/014 on the Conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-I Asian big cat species

Israel is currently a range state for two Appendix-I species of Asian big cats:

- Asian leopard, *Panthera pardus*
- Caracal, *Caracal caracal*

Both species are fully protected by Israeli law, and may not be harmed in any way. No capture, hunting or trade in these species (or their derivatives), is permitted.

There is currently no breeding or release or augmentation of either species.

Leopards:

This species is classified as Critically Endangered in Israel (Dolev & Perevolotsky, 2004). A molecular scatological study in 2006 showed an estimated population size of 3 females and 5 males of the subspecies *Panthera pardus nimr* in the Negev and Judean desert regions of Israel (Perez et al., 2006). The desert leopards live in protected areas and their preservation is based on conservation of their habitat and a hands-off management approach.

Occasional sightings of some other leopards in northern Israel confirm that at least a few more leopards occur in Israel. Mendelssohn & Yom-Tov (1999) determined that these larger individuals in the north are of the subspecies *Panthera pardus tulliana*.

There are no records of leopard attacks on humans in Israel (Mendelssohn and Yom-Tov, 1999).

Caracals:

This species is classified as Vulnerable in Israel (Dolev & Perevolotsky, 2004). There are no current population estimates for this species in Israel. The last population estimate (Ilani, 1979) was of 120-165 individuals. The population seems stable since then (Dolev & Perevolotsky, 2004) and there are occasional sightings throughout the uninhabited areas of the country, both in the desert and Mediterranean regions.

The two species of wildlife that are considered the major diet of the caracal (Shalmon et al., 1993) are chukar partridges (*Alectoris chukar*) and brown hare (*Lepus capensis*). Both these species were legally hunted in Israel as game species until 2006, when their legal protection status was raised to make them both protected species. This move has increased the occurrence of both these species in the wild, and is assumed to now provide more food for the wild caracal population.

References

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