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Felid Status in the Sultanate of Oman

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1. Leopard (*Panthera pardus nimr*)
2. Caracal (*Felis caracal*)
3. Wild Cat (*Felis sylvestrus*)
4. Sand Cat (*Felis margarita*)
5. Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*)

1. The Arabian Leopard is found in the mountainous regions in the South (Dhofar Province). Numbers are unknown but possible habitat area is larger than in the North. There are more potential prey species available (Nubian ibex, Arabian Gazelle, Rock Hyrax, Porcupine, Arabian Hare).

The mountains of the central east coastal area are biologically unexplored although numerous sightings of ibex to the west of the region indicate available prey species. The existence of leopard in the region is unknown.

There are no recent reports or sightings of leopard in Jebel Akadar Massif (Central Northern Mountains).

In the northern province of Musandam, during August-September 1983, 5 leopards were active in separate areas (more animals could be there). Prey species available are Arabian Tahr, Arabian Gazelle.

The Arabian Leopard comes into conflict, throughout its known range in the sultanate with pastoralists. It is shot because it predated goats and sheep. (Leopard scats collected in the Musandam Province are to be analysed for prey species). Status: Endangered.

2. The Caracal appears to be widely distributed in small numbers and rarely seen. One specimen (adult male) caught in 1981 in an area to the south of Wadi Yalooni, due to capture method and transport by Bedu, the animal died after 7 days. A dead specimen was seen west of Wadi Yalooni in 1982. One dead specimen was found in Wadi to the North of Jebel Harim in the Musandam Province in 1983 (March) Another was shot to the west of the latter specimen in September 1983. I tracked a caracal in November 1981 in an area to the west of Jebel Harim. It had been feeding on an old goat carcass. The Caracal is shot or killed whenever it is found by pastoralists in the Sultanate. It is vulnerable if not endangered in Oman.

3. Wild Cat (*Felis sylvestrus*): The status of the wild cat is unknown, but it could be sparsely distributed throughout the northern mountainous area of the Sultanate. Indeterminate.
4. Sand Cat (*Felis margarita*): It is only known by one live specimen caught in the Rub Al Khali (the Empty Quarter). The Bedu recognize it, when shown pictures and say it is rarely seen. Status: Indeterminate.
5. The Cheetah is only known by one animal shot in Dhofar Province in 1977, to the west of Jebel Qara. No reports of any other sightings. Status: Possibly extinct. (Note: Skin of specimen is at Harrison Museum, Seven Oaks, England).