**Supplementary material**

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| **Table S1**. List of socio-demographic factors and questions with percentages of participants’ responses from the semi-structured questionnaire used during the personal interviews |
| **Socio-demographic factor** |  |
| Age: |  |
| Gender: |  |
| Education level: |  |
| Occupation: |  |
| **Question** | **Response (%)** |
| **Yes** | **No** | **Other** |
| Have you ever had any personal experiences/ encounters with leopard cats? | 37.6 | 62.4 | 0.0 |
| Have you ever participated with a conservation/ environmental group or organization? | 31.5 | 68.5 | 0.0 |
| Do you know much about leopard cats? | 6.0 | 94.0 | 0.0 |
| *What is suitable habitat for leopard cats?* | 71.3 | 28.7 | 0.0 |
| *How many leopard cats can be found in Miaoli?* | 23.3 | 76.7 | 0.0 |
| *What does a leopard cat diet consist of?* | 69.3 | 30.7 | 0.0 |
| *How much area of land does one leopard cat need?* | 4.7 | 95.3 | 0.0 |
| Do you like leopard cats? | 54.0 | 6.7 | 39.3 |
| Do you think leopard cats are an important species/ animal? | 85.3 | 4.7 | 10.0 |
| Do you think protecting leopard cats is more important than development projects in the region? | 57.3 | 11.3 | 31.3 |
| Would you be willing to help protect leopard cats? | 87.3 | 5.3 | 7.3 |
| If there were leopard cats living in your land would you tolerate/ protect them? | 83.3 | 5.3 | 11.3 |

Notes: Questions italicized are from the ‘Knowledge’ section and the answers to these questions were marked as correct or incorrect based on the participants’ responses. **Other** may refer to uncertainty or neutrality in a response for a question.

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| **Table S2**. Distribution of participants in groups for socio-demographic variables: age, gender, education level and occupation; the attitudinal variable ‘leopard cat protection’; and the ‘knowledge’ variable.  |
| **Socio-demographic variable** | ***n* (%)** | **Leopard cat protection** | **Knowledge** |
| **Supp.** | **Neutr./ Unsupp.** | ***P*** | **Low** | **Medium** | **High** | ***P***  |
| **Age** | **141a (100)** |  |  | 0.064 |  |  |  | 0.801 |
| *18-24* | 15 (10.6) | 11 (7.8) | 4 (2.8) |  | 9 (6.4) | 6 (4.3) | 0 (0.0) |  |
| *25-34* | 24 (17.0) | 15 (10.6) | 9 (6.4) |  | 10 (7.1) | 14 (9.9) | 0 (0.0) |  |
| *35-44* | 19 (13.5) | 12 (8.5) | 7 (5.0) |  | 7 (5.0) | 12 (8.5) | 0 (0.0) |  |
| *45-54* | 28 (19.9) | 14 (9.9) | 14 (9.9) |  | 12 (8.5) | 14 (9.9) | 2 (1.4) |  |
| *55-64* | 33 (23.4) | 13 (9.2) | 20 (14.2) |  | 11 (7.8) | 21 (14.9) | 1 (0.7) |  |
| *65+* | 22 (15.6) | 7 (5.0) | 15 (10.6) |  | 9 (6.4) | 12 (8.5) | 1 (0.7) |  |
| **Gender** | **150 (100)** | **80 (53.3)** | **70 (46.7)** | 0.081 |  |  |  | **0.012*\**** |
| *Male* | 89 (59.3) | 42 (28.0) | 47 (31.3) |  | 28 (18.7) | 59 (39.3) | 2 (1.3) |  |
| *Female* | 61 (40.7) | 38 (25.3) | 23 (15.3) |  | 32 (21.3) | 26 (17.3) | 3 (2.0) |  |
| **Education level** | **149a (100)** |  |  | **0.004\*\*** |  |  |  | 0.799 |
| *Elementary school or lower* | 27 (18.1) | 6 (4.0) | 21 (14.1) |  | 9 (6.0) | 18 (12.1) | 0 (0.0) |  |
| *Junior high school* | 10 (6.7) | 4 (2.7) | 6 (4.0) |  | 5 (3.4) | 5 (3.4) | 0 (0.0) |  |
| *Senior high school* | 34 (22.8) | 19 (12.8) | 15 (10.0) |  | 15 (10.1) | 17 (11.4) | 2 (1.3) |  |
| *University/ college* | 59 (39.6) | 37 (24.8) | 22 (14.8) |  | 25 (16.8) | 31 (20.8) | 3 (2.0) |  |
| *Graduate studies* | 19 (12.8) | 13 (8.7) | 6 (4.1) |  | 6 (4.1) | 13 (8.7) | 0 (0.0) |  |
| **Occupation** | **150 (100)** |  |  | **0.002*\**\*** |  |  |  | 0.494 |
| *Student* | 11 (7.3) | 9 (6.0) | 2 (1.3) |  | 6 (4.0) | 4 (2.7) | 1 (0.7) |  |
| *Self-employed* | 13 (8.7) | 11 (7.3) | 2 (1.3) |  | 6 (4.0) | 7 (4.7) | 0 (0.0) |  |
| *Service industry worker* | 13 (8.7) | 8 (5.3) | 5 (3.3) |  | 6 (4.0) | 7 (4.7) | 0 (0.0) |  |
| *Agricultural worker/ farmer* | 24 (16.0) | 8 (5.3) | 16 (10.7) |  | 5 (3.3) | 17 (11.3) | 2 (1.3) |  |
| *Government worker* | 19 (12.7) | 7 (4.7) | 12 (8.0) |  | 6 (4.0) | 12 (8.0) | 1 (0.7) |  |
| *Academic worker* | 21 (14.0) | 16 (10.7) | 5 (3.3) |  | 10 (6.7) | 11 (7.3) | 0 (0.0) |  |
| *Unemployed/ retired* | 17 (11.3) | 6 (4.0) | 11 (7.3) |  | 10 (6.7) | 7 (4.7) | 0 (0.0) |  |
| *Laborer* | 9 (6.0) | 6 (4.0) | 3 (2.0) |  | 4 (2.7) | 5 (3.3) | 0 (0.0) |  |
| *Other* | 23 (15.3) | 9 (6.0) | 14 (9.3) |  | 7 (4.7) | 15 (10.0) | 1 (0.7) |  |

Notes: a Lower total n values due to missing data; participants did not disclose this information in the interviews. Supp. refers to the ‘Supportive’ group; Neutr./Unsupp. refers to the ‘Neutral/ Unsupportive’ group. Numbers within the table represent frequency, the numbers in brackets represent the associated percentages. *P-*values were calculated from chi-square tests. \**P* < 0.05, \*\**P* < 0.01.