SNOW LEOPARD

Panthera uncia

PHYSICAL FEATURES

They are the smallest of the big cats with tails that can be nearly as long as their bodies. They have thick, smoky-gray fur patterned with dark gray open rosettes and spots. In the mountains they blend perfectly with the rocky slopes, making them practically invisible.



Snow leopards cannot roar because their larynx lacks the folds needed to produce that type of sound.

POPULATION

3,500-7,000

estimated number of snow leopards left in the wild

Snow leopards are elusive and live in harsh and remote habitats. They are rarely seen which makes them extremely difficult to count.

Status: VULNERABLE to extinction

estimated number of snow leopards in zoos around the world





ADAPTATIONS



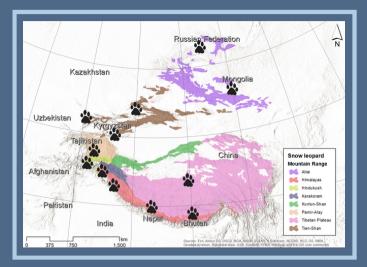
- well-muscled, stocky build for leaping and hunting
- enlarged nasal cavity
- long thick fur with wooly undergrowth for warmth
- Very long flexible tail for balance
- low center of gravity
- large paws for good grip on slopes and snowy fields

BEHAVIOR

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Snow leopards are mostly **solitary**, except when mating or when females are raising cubs. Mating occurs between Jan. and March. 1-3 cubs are generally born 90-105 days later. Cubs stay with their mother until they reach independence at about 20-22 months.

Snow leopards are crepuscular, meaning most active at dawn and dusk. They have large home ranges averaging 230 km2 for males and 130 km2 for females.



SNOW LEOPARD RANGE

Snow leopard range covers about two million km2, approximately the size of Greenland or Mexico, but is spread across twelve countries. While their population is improving in some sites, snow leopards have already disappeared from other areas where they formerly lived.

Together with our partners, Snow Leopard Trust works in all 12 snow leopard range countries to protect snow leopards and their habitat through research, community-based conservation, education programs and policy-level interventions.





Capra siberica



Snow Leopards are predators, which means they eat other animals. Their diet varies across snow leopard range. In the Himalayas, they eat mostly **blue sheep**. In other areas their main prey is **ibex** and **argali**.



Snow leopards also hunt small prey, such as marmots, hares and birds like snow cock and chukar. They are opportunistic hunters and sometimes kill livestock such as goats, sheep, horses and camels that people rely upon for their livelihoods.

EXTINCTION IS FOREVER BUT YOU CAN HELP

You can make a difference by raising awareness about the plight of snow leopards. Follow Snow Leopard Trust and share information about our conservation programs with your friends and on social media. Subscribe to our monthly E-NEWS to get updates about our work to ensure a future for this threatened cat at <u>snowleopard.org</u>.



CLIMATE CHANGE

Rising temperatures impact the entire ecosystem threatening to make up to a third of the snow leopard's habitat unlivable and amplifying existing threats.

LOSS OF PREY

Illegal hunting and unsustainable overgrazing by livestock have caused a decline in wild prey populations.

LOSS OF HABITAT

Mining and poorly planned infrastructure development are fragmenting habitats and increasing illegal hunting.

LIVESTOCK DEPREDATION

Some snow leopards kill livestock and are often killed in retribution.

ILLEGAL HUNTING

Snow leopard skin and body parts are illegally traded for use as status symbols, in fashion and traditional Asian medicine.



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