



SAVE THE ENDANGERED SNOW LEOPARD (*PANTHERA UNCIA*)



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The Endangered Snow Leopard

The Endangered Snow Leopard (*Panthera uncia*)

Common Name: Snow Leopard

Scientific Name: *Panthera uncia*

Physical Description:

Snow leopards are highly adapted to their home in the cold high mountains. Their thick fur patterned with dark rosettes and spots (a pattern that is unique to each individual snow leopard) is the perfect camouflage for their rocky habitat, allowing them to stalk their prey.

Their beautiful coats are also made up of long hairs with a dense, woolly under fur to protect them against the cold.

Snow leopards have longer tails than other big cats. They can be up to 1 m in length and help the leopards to balance on steep, rocky slopes. They also provide additional protection against the cold since the leopards can be wrap them around themselves while they are resting.

Populations:

Estimated 3920 to 6390 individuals with 96 individuals confirmed in Bhutan.

Why they matter?

From Bhutan to China, this remarkable species plays a key role as both top predator and an indicator of the health of its high-altitude habitat. If snow leopards thrive so will countless other species, as well as the millions of people whose livelihoods depend on the rivers flowing down from Central Asia's mountains.

Snow leopards are solitary and elusive creatures that usually hunt at dawn and dusk. They're stealthy predators, able to kill prey up to three times their own weight.

Snow leopards' favored prey are herbivores, such as blue sheep, Argali sheep and ibex. But in many areas, snow leopards also prey on livestock, bringing them into conflict with herders.

Indeed, snow leopard habitat provides important resources for local communities – from food and medicine to grazing for livestock, and wood for shelter, heat and fuel. As well as water sources for millions of people downstream.

Conservation status:

IUCN: Endangered C1, CITES: Appendix I and included in scheduled I in Bhutan in Forest and Nature Conservation Act, 1995.

Threats:

Habitat loss, poaching, shrinking home and increasing conflict with communities have seen over a fifth of the world's snow leopards disappear in the last 16 years. And climate change is now putting the future of their mountain home at even greater risk.

-Adapted from WWF

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