







Conservation of Snow Leopards in the Kargil Himalayas, Ladakh, India

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19 April 2013 - 1

Snow leopard

Panthera uncia

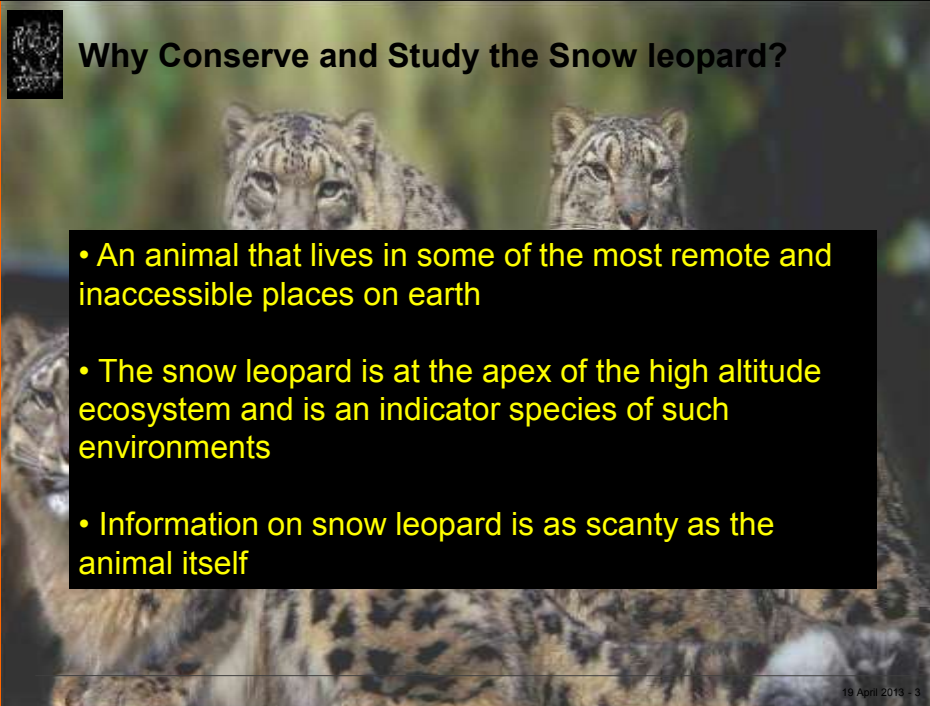
Height
about 60 cm

Length:
90 - 130 cm (head to base of the tail)
Tail length – 80 – 100 cm!

Weight:
35-40 kg, Male: 45 - 55 kg

IUCN Status:
Endangered

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Why Conserve and Study the Snow leopard?

- An animal that lives in some of the most remote and inaccessible places on earth
- The snow leopard is at the apex of the high altitude ecosystem and is an indicator species of such environments
- Information on snow leopard is as scanty as the animal itself

19 April 2013 - 3
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Challenges in studying snow leopards

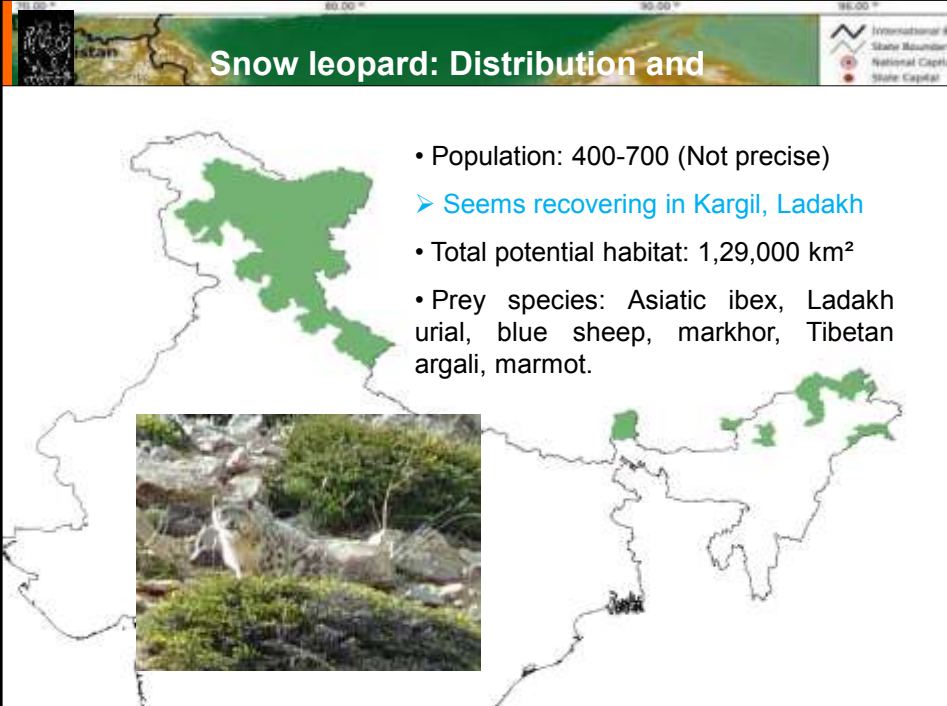
Extremely remote and rugged habitat

Sparse distribution:
< 7,000 cats across 2 million km²



<http://www.redlist.org> Map credit: WCS/IUCN


Snow leopard: Distribution and



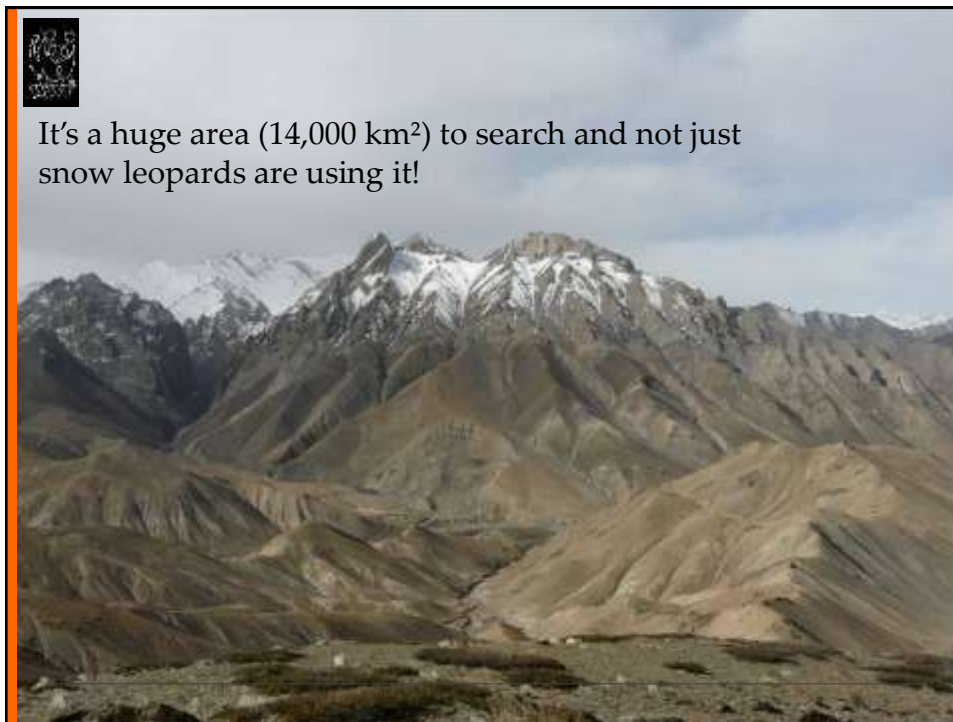
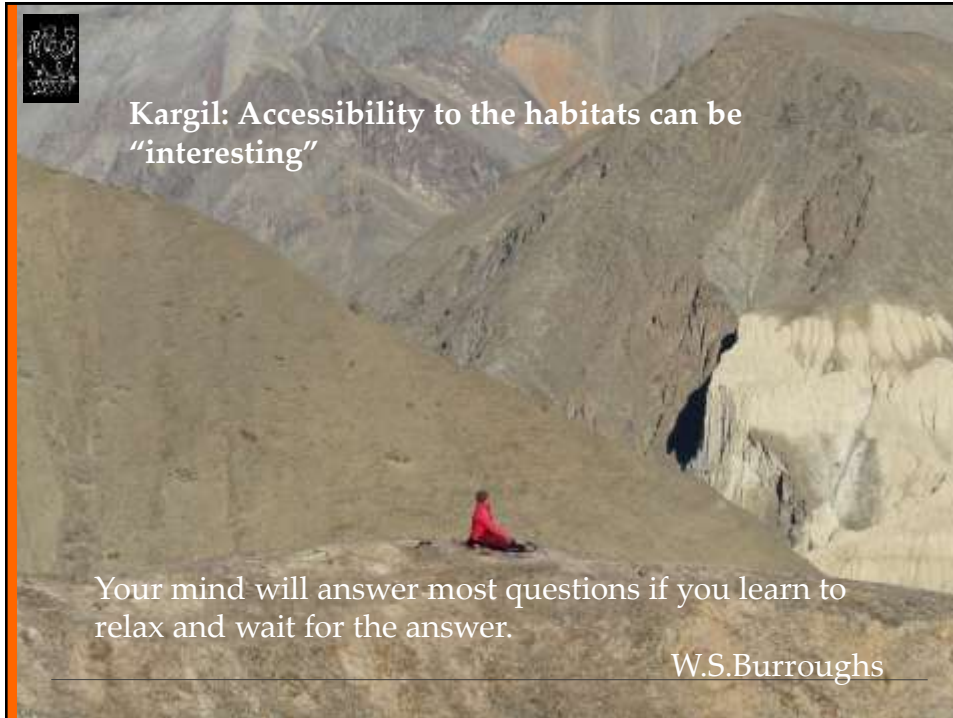
- Population: 400-700 (Not precise)
- Seems recovering in Kargil, Ladakh
- Total potential habitat: 1,29,000 km²
- Prey species: Asiatic ibex, Ladakh urial, blue sheep, markhor, Tibetan argali, marmot.

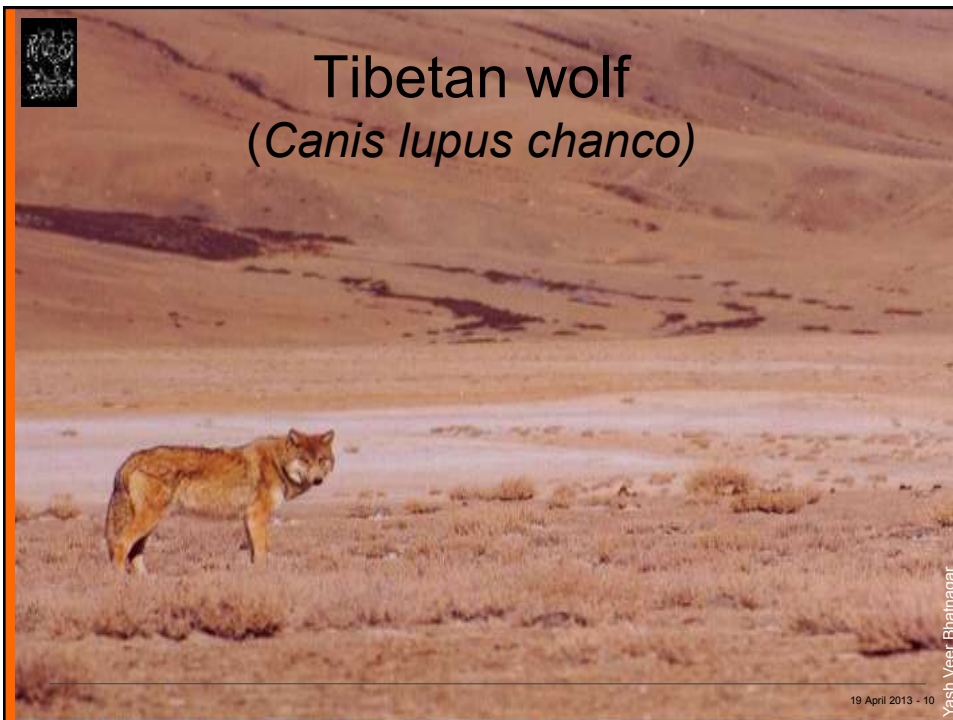
Why Kargil?

- War during late 1990s and later the demands of land for Army settlements, establishing firing range and hunting of wildlife by local communities have resulted in detrimental effects on wildlife due to direct losses, habitat destruction and degradation.
- Due to the sensitive nature of the area, hardly any scientific studies on wildlife were undertaken in Kargil.



19 April 2013 - 6











Objectives of this Study

- I. To determine the status and distribution of snow leopard and associated species – **Snow leopard population monitoring**
- II. To estimate abundance of prey species – **Vantage sampling**
- III. To assess food habits of snow leopard – **Scat analysis**
- IV. To assess the snow leopard-human conflict – **Interviews**
- V. To enhance awareness among stakeholders about snow leopard conservation in Kargil – **Meetings and workshops**

19 April 2013 - 16



Sign Surveys to assess the distribution and abundance of snow leopard

The block contains four photographs arranged in a 2x2 grid. The top-left photo shows a paw print in the dirt with a blue pen for scale. The top-right photo shows a scratch on a rock face. The bottom-left photo shows a scat with a blue pen for scale. The bottom-right photo shows a snow leopard walking.

© Reinhard ARCO / WWF-Canton



Summary of direct and indirect evidence of large carnivores in Kargil (2009-2011)

Large Carnivores	Sighting	Scat	Pugmark/ Track	Scrap/ Claw mark	Kill
Snow leopard	2	23	11	10	4
Tibetan wolf	10	52	36	-	13
Himalayan brown bear	4	12	6	-	2
Unidentified carnivores	-	26	14	-	13

19 April 2013 - 19



Camera Trapping









Estimating abundance of prey species

Vantage Sampling

Prey availability:
 Asiatic ibex (0.09/km²)
 Ladakh urial (0.06/km²)

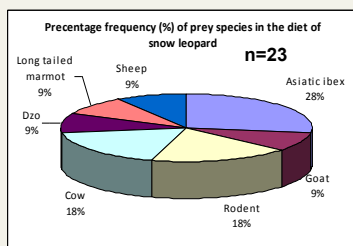


Snow leopard - Human Conflict

- Preliminary interviews
 - Livestock depredation
- Predator proof livestock Corral



Interface with Human



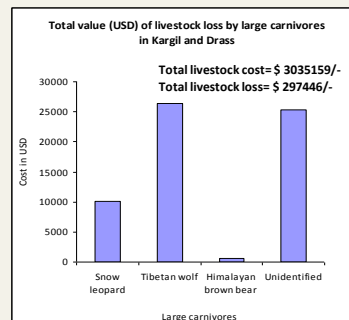
Diet of Snow leopard

Wild prey: 55 %

Domestic Livestock: 45 %

Large carnivore-human conflicts

Total livestock 13356 and loss 1323 by
 Snow leopard: 18%
 Tibetan wolf: 41%
 Unidentified: 37%





Existing Enclosure to Maintain Livestock in Kargil

19 April 2013 - 27



Improvement in Enclosure to Maintain Livestock in Kargil

19 April 2013 - 28



Snow leopard Conservation Awareness Meetings



Workshop with the Administrators and District Officials: to deliberate on wildlife conservation issues

Meetings with the locals, teachers, students and villagers: to generate awareness



19 April 2013 - 29



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19 April 2013 - 30



Thank you

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