



State Animal of Ladakh

Snow Leopard (*Panthera uncia*)



Shan

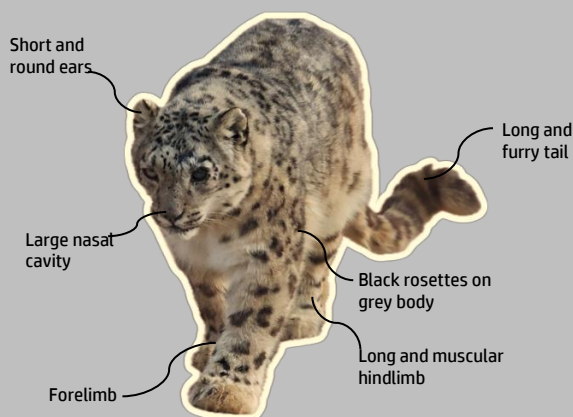
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Snow Leopard – Guardian of the mountains:

Welcome to the abode of Snow Leopard, a mysterious and enchanting cat which lives in the high-altitude mountain ranges of Central and South Asia. In the Indian Himalayan Range snow leopard is found in 4 states and 2 union territories. The animal has distinctive grey fur with black unique rosette patterns which perfectly camouflaged with the habitat.

Despite its iconic beauty, these magnificent feline faces numerous threats to its survival, including habitat degradation, fragmentation, biotic pressure and the impacts of climate change. Conservation efforts are crucial to safeguard the future of the snow leopard and its habitat to balance the ecosystem.

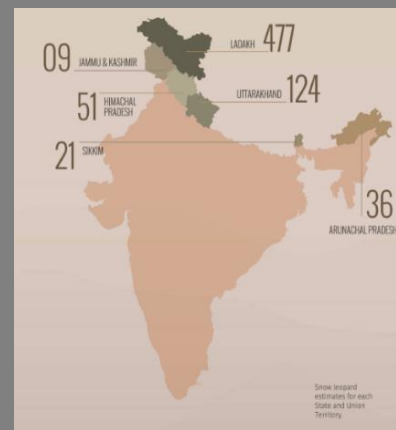


Snow Leopard global distribution



Snow Leopard status in India

Ladakh has the highest Snow Leopard population in India (SPAI- Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India, 2024, MoEFCC- GOI).



In Ladakh, Snow Leopard is found in Hemis NP, Karakoram (Nubra-Shyok) WLS, Changthang Cold Desert WLS and outside Protected Areas in Leh and Kargil.

Key facts:

- Height: about 60 cm
- Weight: Female: 35-40 kg, Male: 45 - 55 kg
- India population: 718
- Ladakh population: 477

Protect the State Animal of Ladakh

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Snow Leopard survival is the key to a healthy ecosystem.



- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I (Part A, Sr. No 48)**
- **IUCN Status: Vulnerable**
- **CITES: Appendix 1**

Reference(s): www.iucnredlist.org

For more information contact:
Wildlife Protection Department, Ladakh
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Bombay Natural History Society, Mumbai
(bnhs.org)

Ears for Efficiency, Nostrils for Necessity, Tail for Equipoise

With shorter ears for less heat loss and wide nostrils to warm thin cold air, snow leopards are perfectly adapted to their highland mountains. The shaggy long tail is used for balance while navigating steep and rugged terrain.

Amazing communicators

Did you know, Snow Leopards claim their territory with a style. Snow Leopards communicate and delineate its territory through scrapes and spray scent on rocks. Now that's smart!

The Stewards of the High Hills

Hunting wild prey of all type!

Snow leopards are the ultimate regulators of prey, thus, balancing the ecology of the landscape. They hunt on Ibex, Bharal, Urial, other ungulates and sometimes even livestock.



Fun Facts:

Ever wondered which big cat the Snow Leopards are most related to?

Surprise! It's not other leopards, but the majestic Tigers!

"Roar" nope they "Growl"

These cool cats talk through growl and snarl sounds because of imperfectly ossified hyoid bone. It's their way of saying hello!

Rosettes for a Reason

The Snow Leopard rosette is unique to each individual and this is useful for population estimation. The forehead is also used to uniquely identify individuals.

Small but valiant!

Do not let their size fool you! Snow leopards might be smaller than other big cats, but can kill a prey of about 130 Kg. Shan is the apex predator in the food chain of the trans- Himalayas.

The Family Bond

Snow leopard mate in the month of January and March and give birth to cubs (1-3) in June – July. Cubs become independent after 18-22 months.