

Snow Leopard Trust
2023 IMPACT REPORT

See Your Support in Action



CONSERVING SNOW LEOPARDS ETHICALLY

Snow Leopard Trust aims to better understand and protect the endangered snow leopard in partnership with the Indigenous people and local communities who share its habitat.





SNOW LEOPARD MAGIC CAN BRING THE WORLD TOGETHER

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

The snow leopard's body was hidden behind a boulder. Its tail was visible, so close that with three more steps, I could have touched it. The cat wasn't moving. But it wasn't still either. It was breathing heavily.

From reading the pug marks on the snow that Tanzin Thinley and I had been tracking minutes earlier, the snow leopard seemed to have walked leisurely up to a point. There, the saunter had turned into a sprint towards the boulders. Even though a nearby herd of ibex had been moving and calling nervously, I hadn't realized how close the snow leopard was until the long tail gave it away.

Suddenly, the cat leaped away, turning in mid-air to face me, with Thinley standing right behind. For a brief moment, our gazes met. It was magic.

It's the awe-inspiring magic of snow leopards that draws you - our amazing supporters - to our cause. Your generosity enables more than 150 Indigenous and local communities, such as Thinley's, to partner with us to protect snow leopards and their high mountain ecosystems. Your support fuels our groundbreaking research, informing global conservation efforts and strategies to ensure the future of this incredible species.

Snow leopards unite 12 nations in an unprecedented Intergovernmental alliance, fostering cooperation among countries that don't always have the best of relations. Despite their conflicts, these governments collaborate for snow leopard conservation. That is powerful magic.

In 2023, the allure of snow leopards enticed a sitting President away from his desk to join our team in the field. That same magic drew participants from 60 different countries outdoors to join Strides for Snow Leopards, our annual 'get active' for conservation awareness event.

The snow leopard is an ambassador for ethical nature conservation, embodying peace, hope and resilience. With your support, the newly launched Ethical Conservation Alliance is bringing together conservation leaders from around the world to transform conservation practices. This initiative promotes inclusivity, effectiveness and Indigenous leadership in protecting nature.

Thank you for making such significant progress possible. You are a critical part of this journey to protect snow leopards and the extraordinary diversity of life on Earth.

With heartfelt thanks,

Charu

Dr. Charudutt Mishra, Executive Director

Ultimately, the snow leopard turned and walked a short distance along the cliff. It sat and began grooming itself, keeping a lazy eye on us. When it continued along the rocky crags, this near-mythical creature paused momentarily and turned in our direction, its gaze a blend of awareness and acceptance. Then it melted into the mountain. Pure magic!

WHAT YOU MADE POSSIBLE

2023 Snapshot



151

local and Indigenous
communities partnering with
us to protect snow leopards



3

new snow leopards collared and
their movements tracked in our
Long-Term Ecological Study



4

conservation reserves
co-managed with
governments in two countries

14,000

of you joined us in petitioning
governments to prioritize climate
adaptation programs in snow
leopard habitats



32

scientific articles in peer-
reviewed journals and books
published by our researchers



HIGH ALTITUDE DIPLOMACY: SNOW LEOPARDS UNITE PEOPLE



Your Impact in Snow Leopard Habitat

In 2023, nearly 14,000 concerned supporters like you signed our petition to national leaders, asking them to strengthen efforts to protect snow leopards and name this iconic mountain species the international symbol of climate resilience. We hand-delivered these signatures to environment ministers at the next meeting of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP).

In December, our teams organized a visit to a remote snow leopard research site for the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Sadyr Zhaparov, where he set up a camera trap and recorded a statement for the upcoming gathering of world leaders at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP28). **The President then declared the snow leopard the National Symbol of Kyrgyzstan.** This high-profile symbolism is a powerful tool that can generate greater conservation awareness and support for snow leopards and their habitat. **You helped make that happen.**



FORGING CROSS-BORDER COLLABORATIONS

"Encouraging world leaders to make conservation a national priority and part of the political agenda is critically important for the future of nature, biodiversity, and indeed, humanity" - Dr. Charu Mishra

The Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP) is a pioneering intergovernmental alliance of snow leopard range country environment ministers, scientists and conservationists. Spearheaded by the Snow Leopard Trust, this innovative model for collaborative conservation efforts is setting the bar for how to strengthen international cooperation to protect threatened wildlife.

Our team, including GSLEP representatives, engaged with governments in multiple countries in 2023, including at the UNFCCC COP28 where **officials from snow leopard range countries called on international financial organizations to commit significant investment for safeguarding Asia's biodiversity, mountain ecosystems and the iconic snow leopard.**

PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE



Long-term Research (since 1998)

Our renowned scientists study snow leopard ecology, prey dynamics and interactions with local communities to improve our understanding of snow leopard behavior, Indigenous cultures and socio-economic factors. This research helps us develop effective conservation strategies that benefit snow leopards and people.



Nature Connections for Adults & Children

Our educational programs foster a deeper understanding and appreciation for the natural world. They engage and inspire people across generations to take action to advance snow leopard conservation and protect their mountain ecosystems.



Conservation Training

We support conservationists, rangers and local community champions working on the frontlines by providing resources and training in conservation management, wildlife monitoring, law enforcement and ethical community engagement.



Partnerships that Lead to Coexistence

Communities living in snow leopard landscapes play a crucial role in safeguarding this threatened species. By fostering enduring, respectful partnerships with these vital allies, we are developing community-based solutions that enable human-wildlife coexistence.



Intergovernmental Cooperation

Snow Leopard Trust collaborates with governments of snow leopard range countries, co-designing strategies to protect snow leopards and their mountain ecosystems. Our work plays a crucial role in shaping global policy and conservation actions.





Ethical
Conservation
Alliance



Engaging with local and
indigenous communities to
promote ethical nature
conservation



LIVING WITH
SNOW
LEOPARDS



FUELING A GLOBAL MOVEMENT

Championing Ethical Conservation Across the Planet

In 2023, our grassroots partnership with global conservationists was officially relaunched as the [Ethical Conservation Alliance](#) at the Whitley Fund for Nature's #PeopleforPlanet Summit. This trailblazing alliance is committed to making biodiversity conservation more ethical and effective across the Earth's lands and oceans. They are transforming conservation by promoting a shift from traditional, top-down approaches to programs that prioritize fair and just solutions that involve the leadership of Indigenous and local communities.

By offering training, resources and mentorships, the Alliance is giving conservationists the knowledge and tools to become teachers of ethical conservation practices within their own organizations and broader networks. This approach not only enhances the effectiveness of conservation efforts but also ensures they are culturally sensitive and sustainable in the long term.

25 countries • 32 organizations • 42 nationalities • 10 workshops • 162 participants



Annual #Strides4SnowLeopards Event Breaks Previous Record

On June 4, 2023, more than 1,100 of you from 60 countries joined our worldwide 'get active' event to raise awareness of the importance of snow leopard conservation and climate action. Thank you!

Hundreds of supporters like you joined our LIVE online global premiere of *Living with Snow Leopards*

During our October Snow Leopard Day celebrations, we screened the [critically acclaimed short film series](#) by Gayle Podrabsky, Vice-President of our Board of Directors. This powerful outreach event immersed supporters in the realities of "living with snow leopards," highlighted our conservation solutions and inspired them to take action to support these vital community-led conservation programs.

CONSERVATION STRATEGIES IN THE THIRD POLE

ADAPTING TO A WARMING WORLD

The high mountains of Asia known as Earth's Third Pole, are among the planet's most vulnerable regions to climate change, with the rate of warming expected to be twice that of the average rate for the Northern Hemisphere. Melting glaciers, extreme weather events and livelihood disruptions will increase human-wildlife interaction and negative encounters, damage habitats and potentially reduce the acceptance and survival of snow leopards. **Climate adaptation strategies are crucial to foster continued coexistence between humans and snow leopards.**

Your Impact: Snow Leopard Trust's climate adaptation programs help local and Indigenous communities diversify income sources, reduce dependence on climate-vulnerable activities, enhance disease and healthcare management for livestock and wildlife and promote coexistence with snow leopards and other native species.



20% of profits from snow leopard-friendly beekeeping in Kyrgyzstan invested in conservation projects by our community partners



13 communities in India produced sustainable cashmere and protected wildlife on their lands



Snow leopard-friendly dairy producers in Mongolia protected 2,376 km² of snow leopard habitat



14,219 households from 42 communities in Pakistan participated in our snow leopard-friendly livestock vaccination and healthcare program

LOCALLY-LED INITIATIVES ARE KEY TO COEXISTENCE

Snow Leopard Trust works in partnership with Indigenous peoples and local communities to jointly develop programs that promote sustainable livelihoods, support conflict management and foster coexistence with wildlife.

These community partners are actively involved in multifaceted initiatives that build resilience, protect their rights as local environmental custodians and ensure conservation efforts benefit both people and snow leopards. **Local stewardship consistently leads to more successful conservation outcomes.**



60,995

Square kilometers of snow leopard habitat protected by our community partners

151 COMMUNITIES

engaged in snow leopard-friendly conservation programs

- Sustainable Forestry
- Dairy Enterprise
- Snow Leopard Enterprises
- Honey Production
- Crop Guards
- Community Rangers
- Grazing Free Reserves
- Sustainable Cashmere
- Livestock Insurance
- Corral Reinforcement
- Livestock Vaccination

ZERO

Number of snow leopards or wild prey reported killed in areas protected by our community partners



WOMEN REACHING NEW HEIGHTS IN SNOW LEOPARD CONSERVATION

In 2023, our team trained **the first group of local women to set up camera traps to monitor and estimate snow leopard populations** in the Kibber region of India. This program proved so successful that women from a neighboring village have requested to be the area's next team of camera trappers.

Women have always played a crucial role in our conservation efforts. For over 25 years, our women-led Snow Leopard Enterprises (SLE) program has been enhancing and diversifying livelihoods while safeguarding snow leopards and their prey. Participating SLE artisans and communities create and sell handcrafted products and contribute to local conservation decision-making within Community-Responsible Areas (CRAs).

Your Support Creates Opportunities for Women

26

Local communities with women heading conservation programs

107

Women engaged in dairy goods production to diversify livelihoods

354

Women participated in Snow Leopard Enterprises conservation programs

INVESTING IN NATURE'S GUARDIANS

High in Asia's mountains, dedicated rangers and wildlife guardians play a vital role in protecting biodiversity. These courageous community members put their lives on the line to safeguard one of nature's most iconic species - the majestic snow leopard.

In 2013, Snow Leopard Trust and our partner organization, Snow Leopard Foundation in Kyrgyzstan, joined forces with the Kyrgyz Government to develop an initiative aimed at empowering local conservation efforts. The Citizen-Ranger Wildlife Protection Program (CRWPP) trains, celebrates and awards individuals who prevent poaching and illegal wildlife trade.

Today, this program has been so successful that we are expanding it to other countries. We achieved a major milestone in 2023 with the official establishment of a CRWPP committee in Mongolia.

Your Impact

This is a significant step forward in our ongoing efforts to support community rangers working across snow leopard habitats.

20 rangers, specialists and citizens in Kyrgyzstan recognized for their dedication to wildlife conservation

11,302 km² of snow leopard habitat patrolled by 96 trained rangers in Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan

92 rangers and citizen rangers in Kyrgyzstan have been awarded for their work fighting illegal hunting since the award program's inception.

PIONEERING SCIENCE

In 2023, we expanded our long-running research in Tost, Mongolia, incorporating several exciting new studies. In addition to prey surveys and disease research, we initiated the following projects:

Snow leopard resting and hunting sites:

This study investigates why these cats are restricted to mountainous areas, providing critical insights as climate change impacts their habitat and other potentially competitive species move up into their range. The findings may inform what type of terrain should be protected and influence conservation policies.

Climate change impacts on snow leopards and mountain ecosystems:

We installed a weather station at Tost Base Camp to study the potential impacts of climate change on snow leopards and their ecosystems. The station records temperature, wind speed, wind direction, precipitation, relative humidity, air pressure, solar radiation, and lightning activity. By correlating these weather data with snow leopard and ibex behavior, we aim to understand how these animals respond to different climatic conditions, particularly extreme weather events. This research is crucial for developing effective conservation strategies that account for the challenges posed by a changing climate.

Mitigations to reduce snow leopard and wolf depredation of horses:

Horses are integral to the livelihood and culture of herding communities who coexist with snow leopards. Snow leopard and wolf predation pose a threat to these prized animals. To address this challenge, we're piloting innovative strategies to protect horses from predators. We hope to foster greater community acceptance and tolerance of snow leopards and wolves by minimizing losses.

Your Impact

This research is building a more comprehensive understanding of snow leopard ecology and behavior, informing global efforts to protect this iconic species.

One of our research papers, published in 2023, shows that nature education programs are an effective method for increasing people's awareness of the biology and conservation needs of threatened species. In addition, educational materials resulted in more positive attitudes towards the target species (in this case, the Pallas's cat) and towards wildlife in general.



We are collaborating with herders in the Tost Mountains to test different methods of safeguarding horses from predators. Here, our team is fitting a protective collar prototype on a young foal.

TRACKING SNOW LEOPARDS IN TOST MOUNTAINS OF SOUTHERN MONGOLIA

25 *

adult snow
leopards on
camera in 2023

5

female snow
leopards gave
birth

10

first-year
cubs on
camera

3

snow leopards
collared in
2023

37

snow leopards
collared through
2023



*Preliminary results pending final review

RESEARCH IN ACTION

We know that when snow leopards kill livestock, it creates emotional and financial hardships for people. But what does it mean for snow leopards themselves? While it may appear convenient to have easy-to-kill prey around, our research suggests otherwise.

One of our recent papers revealed that snow leopards spend less time feeding on livestock kills than wild prey, implying they aren't able to consume adequate nutrition from livestock. To compensate for this deficit, the cat would have to hunt more frequently, increasing their risk of retribution killing.

Your Impact

This publication underscores the importance of maintaining abundant wild prey, improving livestock protection, avoiding grazing in snow leopard hunting habitats and implementing livestock insurance and livelihood programs to enable coexistence.

In 2023, we published six new scientific papers based on findings from or related to our research in Tost, Mongolia. This brings our total to 40 publications since the study's inception in 2008.

SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENTS YOU MADE POSSIBLE

Our team published a total of 32 research papers in international peer-reviewed journals in 2023. These important publications cover snow leopard conservation, biodiversity studies in High Asia and the challenges and advancements in conservation practices. They encompass a wide array of topics including:

Snow Leopards and their Ecosystem:

- An update on the conservation status of Tibetan Argali in India
- Predation patterns and hunting behaviour of snow leopards: insight from an ibex hunt
- Delivery of educational material increased awareness of the elusive Pallas's cat in southern Mongolia
- Factors shaping the tolerance of local Tibetan herders toward snow leopards
- Large carnivore encounters through the lens of mobile videos on social media

Conservation Practices and Policies:

- Pastoralism in the high Himalayas: Understanding changing practices and their implications for parasite transmission between livestock and wildlife
- Psychological distress and workplace risk inequalities among conservation professionals
- Recognizing reflexivity among conservation practitioners
- Supporting conservationists' mental health through better working conditions
- A global conservation basic income to safeguard biodiversity
- Trophy hunting is not one big thing
- Co-designing conservation interventions through participatory action research in the Indian Trans-Himalaya
- Governance and conservation effectiveness in protected areas and Indigenous and locally managed areas
- New global alliance to help improve the practice of biodiversity conservation
- Applying a gender lens to biodiversity conservation in High Asia
- High variability in ungulate density estimates suggests standardization of survey methodologies in Central Asia

Biodiversity and Ecology:

- The prevalence of rodent-borne zoonotic pathogens in the South Gobi Desert region of Mongolia
- Tularemia above the treeline: climate and rodent abundance influence exposure of a sentinel species, the arctic fox to *Francisella tularensis*
- Wild versus domestic prey: Variation in the kill-site behavior of two large felids
- Widespread exposure to mosquito-borne California serogroup viruses in caribou, arctic fox, red fox, and polar bears, Canada
- PAWS: Population Assessment of the World's Snow Leopards
- Variation in plant composition along a gradient of increasing distance from wells in a mountain steppe in southern Mongolia
- Climate casualties or human disturbance? Shrinking distribution of the three large carnivores in the Greater Himalayas
- A review of the ecological and socioeconomic characteristics of trophy hunting across Asia
- Diverse values of nature for sustainability
- Behavioral responses of terrestrial mammals to COVID-19 lockdowns
- Niche suitability and spatial distribution patterns of anurans in a unique Ecoregion mosaic of Northern Pakistan (focuses on amphibians in the region)
- New distribution records of small Kashmir flying squirrel and its diel activity in the Musk Deer National Park
- Assessing habitat and resource use between ibex and livestock in the Khyber Valley of Pakistan

Other:

- An inclusive typology of values for navigating transformations towards a just and sustainable future
- The role of power in leveraging the diverse values of nature for transformative change
- Gut microbiota of the critically endangered Saiga antelope across two wild populations in a year without mass mortality

SHARED HABITATS SHARED SUCCESS

Local communities are at the heart of our conservation programs. We collaborate to create and implement holistic solutions that protect wildlife while securing their livelihoods. **Every conservation project is a brick in the framework of human-wildlife coexistence.**

Predator-proof corrals, community-managed livestock insurance and livestock vaccination programs are just a few of our successful initiatives that continue to protect snow leopards and provide economic security for herders.

Your Impact in Fostering Coexistence

85	389	5,144	55,568
new or improved predator-proof livestock corrals in 2023	predator-proof livestock corrals to date	household livelihoods protected by corrals	number of community livestock protected by corrals

Reducing Feral Dog Populations in India

In many snow leopard habitats, feral dog packs threaten these big cats, their prey, livestock and humans. Last year, our community partners in India's Spiti Valley piloted a dog sterilization and vaccination program. This successful initiative, a collaboration between veterinarians, our India team, local government and communities, aims to sterilize 80-100% of adult feral dogs, protecting both snow leopards and public health.

278,000 Head of Livestock Vaccinated

Our community-led livestock vaccination program in Pakistan empowers communities, improves animal health, provides additional income and nutrition for livestock owners and prevents disease outbreaks.

3 Villages Dismantling Wolf Traps

Communities in India are integrating the principles of compassion to all living things by turning traditional predator traps into religious structures.



Vaccination and healthcare management of livestock prevents disease outbreaks among snow leopard wild prey species.



SPARKING CURIOSITY FOR CONSERVATION

Your Impact: The conservation education programs you support inspire stewardship of the natural world through activities such as children's eco-camps, annual Snow Leopard Day celebrations, newsletters for local communities and other materials for schools, including lectures, videos and environmental WhatsApp groups for teachers and students.

950+

Children reached through education programs including eco-camps where they spotted ungulates, identified local plants and birds and learned how climate change is affecting their landscapes.

50

Communities across snow leopard habitat benefited from multiple in-person and virtual eco-camp and conservation education programs you made possible.

28

Nature Clubs hosted through local schools offered students opportunities to meet others interested in conservation and share their love of snow leopards and the environment.

1,500

People from 25 herder communities in Mongolia participated in Snow Leopard Day celebrations including field trips, art competitions and discussions about threats to snow leopards.

27

Skilled teachers participated in conservation education programs and trainings, promoting a deeper understanding and love for nature and biodiversity.

1,300

Newsletters were distributed in Mongolia and India with information about local conservation issues, agriculture and resource management and unusual snow leopard encounters.

HOW YOU'RE ENABLING COEXISTENCE

Livelihood enhancement programs boost quality of life, mitigate economic impacts from snow leopard depredation, strengthen community resilience and foster coexistence



711

Households participating in community-managed livestock insurance programs



100%

Success rate in mitigating livestock depredation across 147 communities



1 TON

Honey harvested by four partner communities in Kyrgyzstan, supporting snow leopard conservation efforts

6,500

Seedlings planted in sustainable forestry livelihood enhancement program



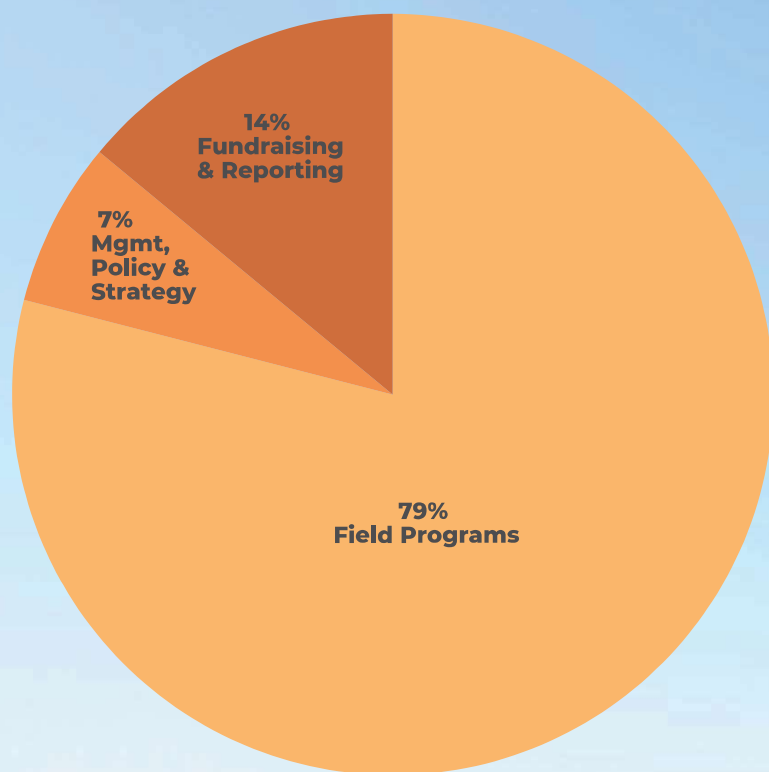
20,432

Households benefitted from livelihood enhancement programs (nearly double from 2022)

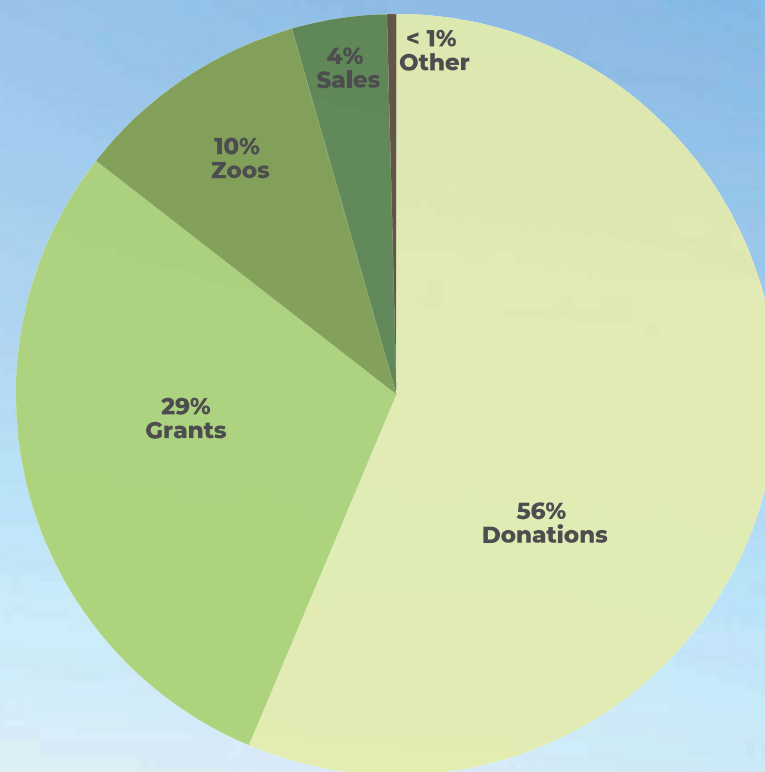


FINANCIALS

These numbers are based on unaudited financial statements and are subject to change.
The 2023 Audit Report/Form 990 will be published on snowleopard.org when completed.



Expenses \$2,889,207.63



Revenue \$3,253,781.11

PROTECTING THE WANDERERS OF THE CLOUDS

To our dedicated snow leopard champions all over the world, we are incredibly grateful for your passion and support. Each action you take, big or small, yields real results for snow leopards and their environment. Thank you for standing with us and believing in a future where snow leopards and people can thrive together. *We are honored to have you by our side.*

THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 CONTRIBUTORS

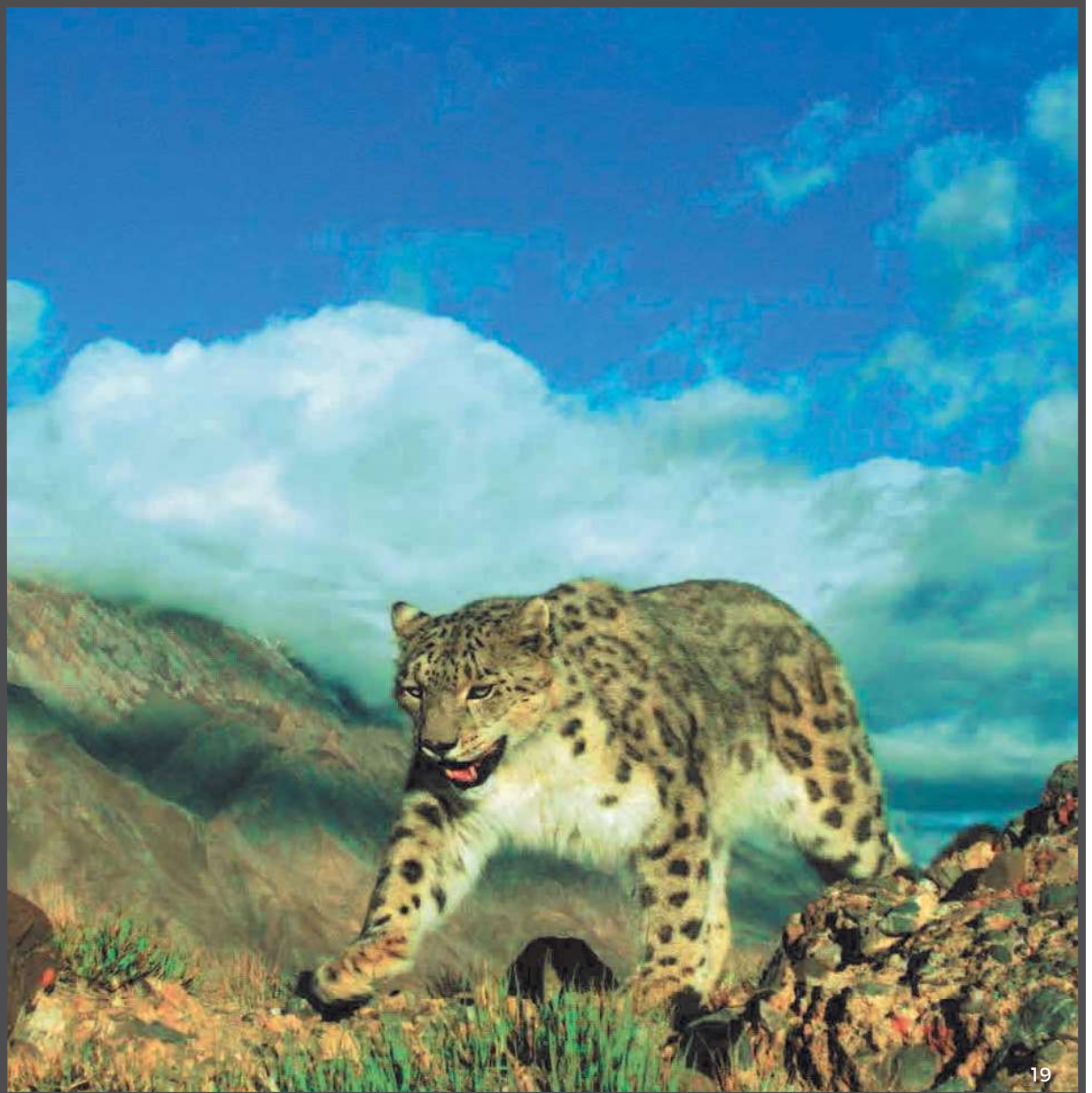
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We have more than 3,350 generous supporters including over 700 anonymous donors. If your name is not listed in the links above, your donation may have been made anonymously. If you would like your name to be included next year, please email donate@snowleopard.org.

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

- Nature Conservation Foundation (India)
- Snow Leopard Foundation (Kyrgyzstan)
- Snow Leopard Conservation Foundation (Mongolia)
- Snow Leopard Foundation (Pakistan)
- Ethical Conservation Alliance (Worldwide)
- Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (governments of 12 Asian countries with snow leopards)
- Snow Leopard Network (Worldwide)

Photos courtesy of: Our partner organizations, Sascha Fonseca, Prasenjeet Yadav, Behzad Larry, Zita Quentin and our #Strides4SnowLeopards family.





YOU ARE THE BEATING OF OUR CONSERVATION COMMUNITY

Whether you're a long-time supporter or you've just started your conservation journey with us, we're thankful you're part of our snow leopard community.

There are many ways to show your love for snow leopards and to help ensure their future. If you're so inspired, please consider the options below.



Make a contribution to help fund our research and conservation programs



Join Team Snow Leopard as a monthly supporter to make an even bigger impact



Honor loved ones with a donation to snow leopard conservation in their name



Leave a lasting legacy through your will, trust, or other estate plan



Take part in our #Strides4SnowLeopards event to raise awareness for snow leopard conservation and climate action



Sign up for our monthly E-News and share it with friends to increase our reach.

snowleopard.org/take-action



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THANK YOU!