



Snow Leopard Tracks

 Winter 2011

Snow Leopard Trust: celebrating 30 years of protecting the magnificent snow leopard

Around the Steppe in 13 Days

My Mongolian workshop marathon

By Jennifer Snell Rullman,
Conservation Program Director



This summer, I traveled a total of 2,500 kilometers off-road through snow leopard range in a tank-like Russian van in 100-degree weather eating a steady diet of boxed sweet biscuits, apples, tea, and sheep meat (leg when I was lucky, but boiled stomach and blood sausage at other times). My mission was to accomplish something the Trust had never done before: bring a series of unified educational workshops to herders throughout Mongolia.

Why was I happy to brave such a punishing trip (not to mention my aversion to boiled organ meat)? Because participants in our Snow Leopard Enterprises (SLE) program in Mongolia asked us for this, and I'd do it all over again.

For years SLE participants and their families have requested

more information about snow leopard ecology and behavior, and the Snow Leopard Trust's research and conservation projects. For years we did what we could: distributed newsletters, held talks when possible, but it wasn't enough. Then at the beginning of 2011, we received amazing news: the Regina Bauer Frankenberg Foundation agreed to provide us with a 3-year, \$120,000 grant to jumpstart our educational outreach efforts.

My mission was to accomplish something the Trust had never done before.

We hired our first Education Coordinator for Mongolia and, with extra support from Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, I was able to travel to Ulaanbaatar to get things rolling.

Our long-term goal is to build a permanent education program in Mongolia that is integrated with conservation programs like Snow Leopard Enterprises. So as a solid first step, I worked with our Mongolia field staff to design and carry out a series of day-long workshops that brought isolated nomadic

herding families the chance to learn about snow leopard conservation. In just 13 days I was able to reach over 330 people.

During the grueling hot days of May and June, we brought information to 30 different SLE communities through 9-hour-long workshops. Once, we even held two sessions in the same day when the Zarman community had to spend four hours digging their vehicle out of the mud and, quite understandably, couldn't make it to our first session on time!

These workshops provided local herders with the information and tools they need to protect their landscapes and the snow leopards they support. We shared strategies on how to manage snow leopard predation on livestock, and we explained—especially to new communities—why programs like Snow Leopard Enterprises are important for protecting snow leopards in the first place. We also helped herders develop comprehensive land-use maps defining the areas they depend on for their livelihood,

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Jennifer Snell Rullman, Conservation Program Director, leads an education workshop for herders living in snow leopard habitat in Mongolia.



PHOTO: SNOW LEOPARD TRUST



“Supermom” Indeed!

Long-term study shows motherhood agrees with Khashaa

What does it take to be a successful snow leopard mother? Feeding your cubs well is certainly high on the list. In the rough terrain of the South Gobi, this can be challenging. But one of the snow leopards we are tracking in our long-term study has shown once again that she is a pro.

We have been following the movements of a snow leopard named Khashaa with a GPS tracking collar since fall 2010. This year Khashaa has been raising a pair of cubs, who are currently estimated to be 12-18 months old. But hunting for three doesn't seem to be a challenge for her.

When our research team replaced Khashaa's collar they also weighed her: 41.5 kg (91 lbs) without the collar. "That's a world record for any snow leopard female weighed as

part of a research study," says lead field researcher Orjan Johansson.

Perhaps Khashaa is so successful at motherhood because this is not her first litter of cubs. When researchers first viewed her on motion-sensing cameras in 2009, they called her "Supermom" because she had three cubs who appeared in the pictures. We believe her two cubs now are a new litter, and that Khashaa is again showing that she can live up to her original Supermom nickname!

The GPS data recorded by Khashaa's collar has already given us insights into snow leopard motherhood. For example, our research team found that Khashaa's home range shrank to 40 sq km (15 sq miles) early this year. During that time, Khashaa was most likely at a den site



PHOTO: SNOW LEOPARD TRUST/PANTHERA/KULBHUSHANSINGH SURYAWANSHI

Khashaa's cub after receiving his first GPS tracking collar. This young male is a welcome addition to our long-term research study.

with her newborn cubs. Since then her range has returned to over 100 sq km (39 sq miles), now that her cubs are older and can travel more easily.

What more might we learn from Khashaa and her family? Well, in October, a young male

snow leopard was fitted with a collar, and it turns out he is one of Khashaa's cubs. We are excited to learn more in the coming months about how male cubs separate from their mothers and form territories of their own.

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such as grazing pastures, water sources, and significant wildlife regions. These maps will be incorporated into Snow Leopard Enterprises so that herders know which regions they are responsible for protecting (from poaching and other threats) as part of their Snow Leopard Enterprises participation.

Thanks to these workshops, I was able to visit Gobi Altai and Uvurkhangai, two of the most remote provinces in Mongolia, for the first time. I saw a dramatic sandstorm as we traveled over the steppe, spotted six endangered saiga antelope, and caught my first glimpse of a Mongolian wolf. But to be honest, the real highlight of the trip for me wasn't a "first"—it was meeting all of these community members again. By taking the time to meet with herders and discuss conservation, I continued to develop the trust and true understanding that make our programs so successful. And I am confident that as our education programs continue to grow (we even have plans for working with children next year!) these families will become an even more powerful force for protecting snow leopards.

Double Your Giving!

You are an important part of protecting snow leopard families like Khashaa's. Your donations, adoptions, and purchases help us continue the research, education, and conservation program they need to survive.

And when you give today, your donation will go even further! **Thanks to a generous group of long-time donors, donations made before the end of the year will be matched—up to \$60,000!**

- \$25 helps track Khashaa's movements for one month using GPS satellite technology
- \$500 enables us to purchase a special motion-sensing research camera so we can keep track of snow leopards like Khashaa and her cubs.

Please give to save a snow leopard today!

*Match provided by Carol & Bruce Hosford, Barbara Blywise, and Wally Pereyra.

Keeping Up With the Kyrgyz Cats

Another summer field season has ended and our research team in Kyrgyzstan has shared with us the results of their studies. Led by Program Coordinator Kubanychbek Jumabaev (Kuban), the team conducted snow leopard surveys and community interviews in the Central Tien-Shan Mountains, near the Sarychat-Ertash Reserve. At least 18 of the cats inhabit our study area in the reserve, and argali and ibex numbers are also increasing. Meanwhile, interviews with community members revealed that poaching by outside hunters is a growing threat.

We undertook these studies in Kyrgyzstan in part to ensure the effectiveness of our community-based conservation programs in the country. In 2009 we made the difficult decision to put the Kyrgyz Snow Leopard Enterprises (SLE) handicraft program on hold while we reviewed the

conservation threats facing snow leopards and the socioeconomic factors in nearby communities. Based on the new data, we are confident that the overall impact of the program benefits snow leopard conservation, and we are happy to announce that SLE is beginning again in Kyrgyzstan.

We have placed orders for some favorite products (including rugs, ornaments, booties, and bags) from three communities: Ak-Shyrak, Enilchek, and Karakolka. We've also reached out to include two new communities, Uch-Koshkon and Ottuk, which are located near the reserve and may play an important role in wildlife conservation. We look forward to sharing with you the improvements that we will make to our Kyrgyz program in the coming months, as well as the shipment of Kyrgyz products when it arrives in summer 2012!



PHOTO: COURTESY OF SNOW LEOPARD TRUST

Kuban joined the Trust in 2004 and under his leadership snow leopard conservation efforts in Kyrgyzstan have taken an important step forward.

snowleopard.org/shop
Special promotions
and savings up to 50%



PHOTOS TOP TO BOTTOM: KATHRYN BARNARD, SNOW LEOPARD TRUST/PANTHERA, SNOW LEOPARD TRUST

C-A-T Spells “Holiday Giving”

It's that time of year again—time to shop for CATs. Here are a few suggestions for great ways to cross some names off your list. Of course, our most popular holiday gifts such as our felted animal ornaments, cat toy mice, 2012 calendars, and gift sets are still available too. *Please order by December 15th and select Priority or Express Mail to best ensure delivery by the Christmas holiday.*

Camel Wool Yarn

We have handspun yak wool yarn, and yak and baby camel roving available for the first time on our website. As if you needed more incentive, we are now offering free patterns for scarves, hats, and toasty socks by Rachel Hunnicutt. By purchasing our yarn and printing these patterns, you can make one-of-a-kind gifts!

Adopt a Snow Leopard

Our symbolic adoption packages make an ideal gift for that hard-to-shop-for person on your list. Choose from our cub, snow leopard, mother and cub, family, and research camera adoptions. For a limited time, with every adoption order, you will also receive a stunning 5x7 photo featuring 5 wild snow leopards all in the same picture.

Totes and T-shirts

For the kids on your list, we've got you covered. Be the first to order our brand new “Save the Snow Leopard” Youth T-shirt. Kids will love the playful design, and you will be proud knowing that one of your favorite little cubs is helping to protect snow leopards. It's also not too late to order one of our new organic tote bags with a gorgeous snow leopard drawing and “snow leopard” written in six different languages.



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All donations made before December 31st will be matched!

Also inside: New cubs, new t-shirts, and a new education program in Mongolia.

CYRIL GRUNDMANN



World Challenge

Thank you to everyone who voted for us in the World Challenge! We are thrilled to report that snow leopards have won! This incredible success was only made possible by the support of snow leopard fans world wide. To learn more about what this means for conservation, please visit us online.

Setting Records

This fall, our research team placed a GPS radio collar on their 15th snow leopard (one of Khashaa's male cubs—see story on page 2). While that might not sound like much, it's more than all other past tracking studies combined! Snow leopards are one of the least studied of the big cats, but that's changing thanks to you.

Thank You

Thanks to all who attended "Tails of the Silk Road", our annual dinner. The event raised over \$180,000 for snow leopard conservation. Please keep an eye out for our fall fund-raising letter. This is our biggest mailing of the year and the results determine how much we can expand protection of snow leopards in the field during 2012. Thanks again for all your help!

Olympic Mascot

Sources say the snow leopard will be a mascot when Russia hosts the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics. Russia is home to 150-200 snow leopards, and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin named the snow leopard as his mascot of choice.

Upcoming Events

This winter you can find us at:

Jan. 7: St. Distaff's Day Spin-In, Everett, WA

Jan. 28- Feb. 2: NY International Gift Show, NYC, NY

March 23- 25: Better Living Show, Portland, OR

For complete info on upcoming events, see our events calendar at www.snowleopard.org.

If you live near an event and would like to volunteer at our booth, please e-mail volunteer@snowleopard.org or call 206.632.2421. We would love to have your help!

Happy Holidays!
From our family to yours