

**FURTHER STUDY ON THE GEOGRAPHICAL
DISTRIBUTION AND CONSERVATION OF SNOW
LEOPARD IN QINGHAI, P. R. CHINA**

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SUMMARY

Surveys were conducted to ascertain the past and present status of snow leopard (*Phaenocarpa uncia*, Ounce) in Qinghai Province. Snow leopard distribute in the high plateau of Central and Middle Asian. No irrefutable evidence of current snow leopard existence was found, although circumstantial evidence of snow leopard in several areas was obtained. Being destroying of habitant and human activites (kill and poach), Snow leopard is being to be endagered. It is very urgency to set up conservation areas and enhance the human sense of wildlife conservation for snow leopard at present.

Distributional addendum (Only our investigation):

1. Yushu Tibet Autonomous Prefecture:

Snow leopard is widely distribute in many counties of Yushu Prefecture: Yushu, Nangqien (Juella, Baiza and Niangla), Zado (Nangsai).

2. Golog Tibet Autonomous Prefecture:

Mado (Mt. A'nyemaqen, Huashixia Country, Hehai Country).

3. Haixi Monggol and Kazak Autonomous Prefecture:

Haixi is the chife distributional area of snow leopard. Mt. Kunlun and Mt. Altun are lead through this prefecture. Snow leopard are often found and captured in Dulan country (Gouli), near to Golog Prefecture.

Mangnai Administrative Area is located at southwest side of Mt. Altun, During Nov. 1990 to Feb. 1991, 14 snow leopards were poached by five culprits in this area.

4. Haibei Tibet Autonomous Prefecture:

Very large part of Mt. Qilian are locate at this Prefecture, the captive snow leopards were often captured from Qilian county (Yeniu Guo).

INTRODUCTION

This program was designed to assess the past and present status and distribution of snow leopard in Qinghai Province, People's Republic of China. Information about the requirement of this species was sought, and threats to their continued existence were to be identified.

Snow leopard reaches it's living area which limits in the high mountains of Central and Middle Asia, including: Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepeal, China, Bhutan, Jammu and Kashmir, Sikkin, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Russian (RSFSR), Tadzhikstan, Uzbekistan etc., it's considered that the number has greatly decreased in recent decades. In order to protect it from extinct, the International Snow Leopard Trust (I. S. L. T.) had hold six times scientific conference.

Detailed accounts of the study in Qinghai Province, including collecte for feeding in the zoo, are given by Liao Yanfa(1985), Liao Yanfa and Tan Bangjie (1986) and will not be repeat here, A summary of the addendum on the geographical distribution and some suggestions of preserve the rare animal are as follow.

SYUDY AREA AND METHODS

As snow leopard is difficult to observate in the field, so sign surveys, interviewing and indirect message collect are valuable methods of obtaining information.

Information on the whole of Qinghai was collected from local and official informats and the literatures, Field surveys was conducted from Mar. to Dec. 1991 at Yushu county, Nangqien county (Juella country, Baiza Forestry), Mado county (Huashixia Country, Hehai Country), Golmud city, and Mangnai Administrative Area (Shaniuhe, Mt. Altun). The study area is wholly plateau and alpine steppe and meadow in it's charateres, the average altitude above 4,000m.

Data of poaching snow leopards were gathered, and interviewing hunters, local persons and poaching culprits, informats and villagers more than 50 persons.

RESULTS

1. Addendum of distribution:

In China, many captive snow leopards have gathered from Qinghai Province, in past 30 years, near about 150 individuals have collected from the field of southern,

western and northern of Qinghai, and according to the official reports, they have captured many culprits poaching snow leopard.

Based on data of field surveys (Mar. to Dec., 1991), and Liao Yanfa (1985), Liao Yanfa et al. (1986) and other literatures. We conducted a geographical distribution map of snow leopard in Qinghai. (Fig. 1.)

Fig. 1. the distributional map of snow leopard in

Qinghai Province

● From literature: Liao Yanfa(1985), G. B. Schaller et al.(1987, 1988) etc.

★ Mark of our investigation.

The notes of the occurrence of snow leopard in following four places probably show their recent distribution:

(1). Hehai country of Huashixia area (Mado county).

In April 4, 1991, when we were driving our car to the study area, a snow leopard (adult) was sitting at the side near to the top of a hill. (altitude about 4300m), while we approach him, he found us and went towards to the opposite side of the hill.

In April 5, 1991, we work at a beside the Donggezuola Lake, in the morning (ca 10:00 am), a young ounce, body length (head and tail) about 100cm, were walking up to a hill very slow, while found us, he run very fast and hide himself into a wast hole of fox, and he went out with very jittery appearance, and run away immediately at 18:30 pm.

A villager of the counrtry told us that there are serval sheep were killed by the snow leopard in recent years. Sometimes the snow leopard raise his head and front legs up to the wall (high about 100-120cm), and jumped into the sheepfold.

In Nov. 1991, a woman who collected her sheep, at about 18:00pm in the evening, she found two snow leopards were closing to her pastoral, she and her family use fire drive away the ounces. The next morning, she found that three of her sheep (1 adult and 2 babies) are absent.

(2). Juela country (Nangqien county).

Juola is a remote country of Nangqien county, before 1990, there were only a narrow path with transportation by horses, no road can be used for drive car, the

obstruction to the wild animal are less than other place. In Buwei country, a villager who named Wongza told me following stories: a fellow villager picked a dead snow leopard at the foot of Gelongsai Mountains, and in the same year, two sheep were sneaking attacked by snow leopard.

(3). Baiza Forestry (Nangqien county).

We investigated at the top of Jiagedongcasangsong Mountains (a hige mountain oppsite to the Garer Lamasery), I found a footprint line on the surface of snowfield at about 17:30pm on April 22, 1991. (the snow layer thick about 20-50cm).

(4). Haixi Monggol and Kazak Autonomous Prefecture:

Kunlun mountains are crose through this Prefecture, here is the most sutiabale habitant of snow leopard. According to the work reports of Xining Renming Park, they collected 73 snow leopards from 1968 to 1984, 25 individuals of them are collected from Haixi.

Aral distinct of Mangnai Administrative Area, is the best habitant for snow leopard that we found, reported by Geermu Public Security Bureau, from Nov. 1990 to Feb. 1991, five peasants of Huangzhong County, they drive a tractor to Shaniuhe (a small river of alaer) and poached 14 snow leopards, according the culprits' confess, they only set up their tent in one place, the capture tool are 45 foottrapes.

2. Conservation:

A. The status of snow leopard:

The snow leopard is listed as a endangered species in the *Red Data Book* of IUCN/SSC, and is recongnized as such in China. In China, much of the snow leopards, reach it's range in Qinghai. Only Liao Yanfa (1985) have done a statistics on collection for zoo, and studied the geographical distribution; Dr. G. B. Schaller (1988) and the Chinese scientist did a joint-investigation untill now.

On reading account of the literatures (G. B. Schaller et al. 1987, 1988a, 1988b; R. Jackson 1979; G. U. Kuznetsoy et al. 1980; Liao Yanfa 1985; Liao Yanfa et al. 1986) and interviewing the local persons, it is evident that snow leopard was once abundant in many parts of Qinghai, especially in Haixi, Yushu, Golog and Haibei prefectures.

B. About poaching of snow leopard:

Because widely distribute and the human sense of conservation apathetic, the poaching event often occured.

A report published by *GUANGMING DAILY* on May 5 of 1984, A person named Chen who killed 13 snow leopards and sold them for 2,300 *yuan RMB*. Chen and other 11 miners killed 28 snow leopards from 1972 to 1984.

From Feb. to May 1983, eight peasants killed 19 snow leopards in Dulan county.

From Nov. 1990 to Feb. 1991, five persons of Huangzhong county, they drove a tractor from Huangzhong to Golmud, they stayed in Shaniuhe (a river of Mangnai Administrative Area) about 60 days and killed snow leopards 14 individuals with foottrap.

C. Preserve Suggestion:

As the status fact of snow leopard above, combined with the distribution surveys, we put up some conservation suggestion as follow:

(1). To enhance the awareness of nature conservation and reinforcement of the construction of legal instructions.

(2). To study further on the distribute areas and population status of snow leopard.

(3). To set up Snow Leopard Conservation Areas at the distribution centre areas (eg. Guoli, Aral and Qilian Mountains etc).

(4). To encourage international cooperation on comprehensive study.

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THE DISTRIBUTION STATUS MAP OF SNOW LEOPARD IN QINGHAI

