

Chitral Gol National Park, Pakistan February 1999

Silhouetted in this amazing photograph are three of a group of four snow leopards. Ahmad Khan, ISLT Snow Leopard Conservationist, battled rain, fog, and harsh terrain to capture this image. His camera was donated by the Woodland Park Zoo's 1998 membership in ISLT's Natural Partnerships Program. Seeing even one snow leopard in the wild is an unusual sight; capturing four together is even rarer.

ISLT Receives Turner Foundation Grant

ISLT is pleased to announce that the Turner Foundation website, one of their main objectives, "to defend biodiversity needs of the local people and the environment. The Turner Foundation supports "ecosystem-wide habitat protection with particular emphasis on locally developed strategies for private and public lands: Turner Foundation information can be found on their website: www.turnerfoundation.org/turner

Turner Foundation, Inc., has just awarded ISLT a grant for general support. This grant will help ISLT keep administrative costs low so revenues can continue to flow to field conservation projects. According to the

"I see the whole field of environmentalism and population as nothing more than the survival of the species"

-Ted Turner

by protecting natural habitats,' corresponds to the ISLT mission statement: dedicated to the conservation of the endangered snow leopard and its mountain ecosystem through a balanced approach that considers the needs of the local people and the environment. The Turner Foundation supports "ecosystem-wide habitat protection with particular emphasis on locally developed strategies for private and public lands: Turner Foundation information can be found on their website: www.turnerfoundation.org/turner

ISLT and Zoos Continue Link for Conservation

Success

ISLT educational materials have recently appeared in several Natural Partnership Program (NPP) zoos. Many NPP zoos have redesigned their snow leopard enclosures and incorporated conservation information with the assistance of ISLT. These exhibits, renovated with a mind to better reflect snow leopard habitat, now include kiosks with information detailing the NPP program supported by the zoo. These NPP members include San Antonio Zoo, Mill Mountain Zoo, Sacramento Zoo, Zoo New England (Boston), and Milwaukee County Zoo (see picture).

Now in its second year, ISLT's NPP is comprised of 19 zoos, contributing to a wide range of projects, including the support of in-country Snow Leopard Conservationists, workshops for reserve and park rangers, herder education meetings, and construction of better livestock corrals throughout the high mountains of Central Asia. These projects would not happen without the partnership support provided by NPP zoo members. ISLT welcomes its newest member to the Natural Partnerships Program: Oregon Zoo (formerly Metro Washington Park Zoo) of Portland, Oregon, as a Project Partner for 1999.

News & Notes

1998 Annual Appeal most successful ever

. Thanks to all of our members and supporters for our most successful Annual Appeal ever. With the support of Glenn Close and Peter Matthiessen, our 1998 Annual Appeal raised contributions that will enable ISLT to continue its clear and consistent presence in the 12 snow leopard countries of Central Asia.

. Jeff Demetrescu has left the Trust to be the Executive Director of the Japan-America Society of the State of Washington. The Board of Directors and staff of ISLT extend thanks and gratitude to Jeff for his two and a half years of service as Executive Director, and wish him the best of luck and continued success.

. ISLT welcomes new Founder's Circle Members Bill and Penny Andrews.

Field Notes

Dr. Rodney Jackson is currently in Nepal conducting ISLT's 5th SLIMS workshop. The workshop, funded by the Leonard X. Bosack and Bette M. Kruger Charitable Foundation, is being carried out in cooperation with Nepal's Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and WWF-Nepal. This is ISLT's 5th SLIMS training since 1993, and is taking place in Shey-Phoksundo National Park.

Visit ISLT's website at www.snowleopard.org

FOCUS ON:

JAY SINGH

Jaidev Singh started volunteering with ISLT in July 1997 as a graduate research assistant. His first project was to develop the User's Guide for ISLT's Snow Leopard Information Management Systems (SLIMS), an integrated database and standardized field survey procedure designed to assess snow leopard/prey habitat and species status, distribution, and relative abundance. ISLT is distributing the SLIMS manual to the 12 Central Asian countries that support wild snow leopard populations.

Dr. Rodney Jackson and Jay are co-authoring a paper on the role of transboundary parks in promoting environmental security in Central

Asia, and Jay is providing assistance on a proposal to create a formal transboundary link between Pakistan's Khunjerab National Park and China's Taxkorgan Nature Preserve. Jay is currently a doctoral candidate at the College of Forest Resources, University of Washington. An American citizen born in India, he was raised and educated in both

India and the United States. *Jay Singh and Dr. Yash Veer Bhatnagar in New Delhi*

Earlier this year Jay met Dr. *in March.*

Yash Veer Bhatnagar, ISLT's Snow a Rotary International Ambassadorial Leopard Conservationist in India. In Scholarship to study transboundary August Jay will be heading to Zimba- conservation and management. bwe, Botswana, and South Africa on

Snow Leopard Spot

The endangered snow leopard is an indicator species, a barometer for the health of the fragile high-altitude ecosystem it inhabits. Snow leopards are at the top of the food chain and dine on a variety of animals-animals that, in turn, depend on plants. A main staple of snow leopards are native ungulates (hoofed mammals) like the bharal, or blue sheep, described by renowned biologist George Schaller as "an aberrant goat with sheeplike affinities: Snow leopards also eat game birds and small mammals such as hares, pikas, and marmots. Like other ro

dents, marmots experience population explosions. Shepherds and yak herders believe that marmots plow up the alpine pastures and eat grass needed by other livestock. But a stable marmot population is good because their burrowing aerates the soils and increases grassland fertility. Thus, by supplementing their summer diets with marmots, snow leopards actually do a service for the herders by helping to keep marmot populations steady.

Where all the interdependent elements of the food chain are present in good numbers, a healthy mountain ecosystem exists. In the mountains of Central Asia, the status of snow leop

ards in a region can be used as a benchmark of environmental health.

Adapted from Joseph L. Fox, A Review of the Status and Ecology of the Snow Leopard (1989).