

# ISLT to Host Snow Leopard Summit

## Trust Receives \$100,000 Anonymous Donation

by Brad Rutherford, Executive Director

For four days beginning November 13, the International Snow Leopard Trust and Woodland Park Zoo will be co-host

ing the first ever Snow Leopard Survival Summit. The Summit will bring together more than 30 snow leopard and environmental professionals from around the world to create a comprehensive strategy for saving the snow leopard.

Leveraging ISLT's 20 years of experience and expertise with that of other snow leopard and environmentally-focused organizations, the Summit will consolidate our knowledge to create a "blue print" for snow leopard survival. This strategy document has several objectives: to gain agreement on the key threats facing snow leopards, determine the most effective conservation actions to address these threats, identify knowledge gaps that are currently stumbling blocks to conservation efforts, and agree on what research methodology can best fill these gaps.

Work toward this end has already begun. ISLT's Conservation Director, Dr. Tom McCarthy, has been gathering information and opinions from other experts for the past several months, and is preparing a strategy outline. Once this outline is completed, it will be disseminated to Summit participants for peer review and editing. At the Summit, the last steps towards a general consensus will

be taken, points of difference noted, and a final, comprehensive strategy for the protection of the snow leopard will emerge.

"The Summit will help shape the future of snow leopard conservation activities, and the strategy document will help guide our efforts," ISLT Executive Director Brad Rutherford explains. "Conservation,

Photo: GerTY Ellis, Inc.

research and education programs identified by the Summit will become priority projects for ISLT, and will be partially funded by a recent anonymous donation." (*Seesidebarstory.*)

The Summit will be held at the Woodland Park Zoo, which has generously donated its facilities in support of this important event. Most sessions will be open to the public - check our website starting in October for more details.

"The Summit is the single most important development in Snow Leopard conservation in recent years," says Rutherford. "ISLT is extremely pleased to be bringing the world experts together for this event here in Seattle, and we are eager to play an active role in developing a survival strategy for the species: 8

Thank you who ever you are! In June the Trust received an anonymous contribution of \$100,000. This is the largest single contribution ever received by the Trust and provides a great boost to our efforts to save the endangered snow leopard and its ecosystem. The donation will be used to support critical projects identified at the Snow Leopard Survival Summit (*see adjacent article*) in the areas of conservation, education and research.

Projects identified at the Summit will need to find matching funds in order to qualify for support. In addition, projects need to be developed with input from local communities. We hope that other interested donors will add to the \$100,000 project fund and help ensure projects critical to the survival of the snow leopard will be implemented. This is an excellent first step towards helping save the snow leopard, but we will need much more support if we are to protect this beautiful cat for future generations.

The Trust would once again like to express our gratitude to the contributor of this generous gift. We share your compassion for the environment and we value your confidence in our mission. With your contribution, and the help of other donors, the Trust will be able to fully implement strategic programs well into the future. Our goal is to preserve this magnificent species for generations to come. Thank you for your help In making this happen.

## Thank You!

ISLT would like to extend our most sincere thanks to our in-country staff. Your efforts are making a real difference for snow leopards, their environment, and the people who share their habitat. Thanks everyone for all of your efforts with this important work!

*Dr. Zou Hongfei*, Snow Leopard Conservationist, China

*Charudutt Mishra*, Snow Leopard Conservationist, India

*Victoria Eremchenko*, Snow Leopard Program Manager, Kyrgyzstan

*B. Munkhtsog*, Snow Leopard Conservationist, Mongolia

*J. Purevjav*, SLIMS Database Manager, Mongolia

*A Bayarjargal*, Irbis Enterprises Coordinator, Mongolia

*T. Doljinsuren*, Irbis Enterprises Program Associate, Mongolia

*Dr. Javed Kahn*, Snow Leopard Conservationist, Pakistan

*Sayeeda Inayad*, Education & Community Conserv. Officer, Pakistan

*Manzoor Quereshi*, Snow Leopard Field Biologist, Pakistan

And a special thanks to all the folks who made Tom and Priscilla's recent trip so successful, including Yash Veer Bhatnagar, Ashiq Ahmad Khan, Rinchen Wangchuck, Vitaly Vyrypaev, Valentina Toropova, Zhenya Koshkarev, Ahmad Khan, and friends at WWF-Pakistan, the Wildlife Institute of India, and Asia IrbisKyrgyzstan.

## Snow Leopard

is published three times per year.

Copyright 2001 by the International Snow Leopard Trust.

Newsletter Content by Owen Rogers, ISLT Program Assistant (except where noted).

Newsletter Layout by Olivia Zapata.

tact ISLT by e-mail: [info@snowleopard.org](mailto:info@snowleopard.org) Phone: 206.632.2421 • Fax: 206.632.3967 Website: [www.snowleopard.org](http://www.snowleopard.org)

## Report from the Field ISLT Staff Visits Country Programs

"If we ever think of going on another trip like that, you must stop us," jokes Dr. Tom McCarthy after returning to the ISLT offices from a trip through Pakistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and India. "Three months and three countries was a bit mind boggling, and we're glad to be back."

McCarthy and Priscilla Allen, ISLTs Programs Officer, spent approximately one month in each of the three countries evaluating current snow leopard conservation efforts, hiring new staff, and researching program expansion possibilities.

The trip got off to a productive start in Gilgit, Pakistan where partner organization WWF-Pakistan had arranged a workshop to create a country-wide snow leopard survival strategy. The finished plan identifies threats to snow leopards and outlines actions to deal with these threats. Monitoring activities were also laid out to ensure that the strategy has impact and is flexible enough to adapt as new information becomes available.

The recent departure of ISLTs Pakistan Snow Leopard Conservationist (SLC), Abdul Haleem Siddiqi, provided an opportunity to revitalize the program by hiring new in-country staff. Newly appointed Dr. Javed Khan will lead the program, Dr. Khan is a highly qualified and experienced professional with a background in animal husbandry and participatory community development. ISLT has also hired a full-time wildlife biologist, Manzoor Qureshi, who will be based in the Northern Areas, an important region for snow leopards. In addition, the role of our Education and Community Conservation Officer, Saeeda Inayat, has been

expanded to include development of a conservation-linked income generation program.

After upgrading the existing program in Pakistan, McCarthy and Allen were off to the Kyrgyz Republic to jump-start ISLT conservation efforts in a country where the outlook for snow leopards has become extremely dire in recent years.

"Local conservationists identify poaching as the main threat to snow leopards in Kyrgyzstan," says McCarthy. While this is not unusual, what is surprising is that an unlikely perpetrator often commits the poaching "Within protected area it's the rangers who are considered to be the most damaging poachers," McCarthy explains.

Poor pay, isolated location and ineffective management do not create incentives to protect wildlife,

"We've designed a multi-pronged program around a model site near Sarychat Ertash Zapovednik (a Protected Area) in the Central Tien Shan mountains," says Allen.

The first of the program elements would address the issue of poaching rangers. ISLT

*-continued on next page*

## WONDERING WHAT TO BUY WITH YOUR TAX REFUND?

\$600 would fund the activities of one of our Snow leopard Conservationists for a month. \$300 will fund a training program for 60 herders in snow leopard habitat in Mongolia to make handicrafts and earn extra income. In exchange they commit to specific wildlife friendly herding practices that benefit snow leopards. Please consider using your tax -refund to help us expand our field conservation programs and save the endangered snow leopard.

plans to provide uniforms, horses, binoculars, and other basic equipment in an effort to raise their standing in the communities; offer training in law enforcement and wildlife surveys techniques; and establish a scholarship program for their children. "Snow leopard sign and prey numbers will be closely monitored by ISLT staff and third party researchers," Allen explains. "If the populations decline, then the program will be suspended."

The second element would involve the creation of a store in the remote village of Ak Shirak near the entry to the Sarychat Ertash Zapovednik protected area. "We surveyed community members to determine their major concerns, and a frequently mentioned problem was a lack of access to markets to buy or sell items," Allen explains. A subsidized store would provide basic foodstuffs and also assist with marketing locally produced handicrafts according to the Mongolian Irbis Enterprises model. Such positive incentives will en

hance appreciation of wildlife and encourage grassroots conservation among local communities and protected area staff.

To get these programs off the ground ISLT has hired Victoria Eremchenko to serve as ISLT's Project Manager in Kyrgyzstan. Funding was also provided to a graduate student to monitor snow leopard and prey species populations in the project areas using SLIMS methodology.

From Kyrgyzstan, McCarthy and Allen flew over the Himalayas to India where they met with ISLT's new India SLC, Charudutt Mishra. Charu joined the Trust's program staff in April of this year. He is completing his Ph.D. at the

University of Wageningen in The Netherlands this autumn, and brings with him extensive experience in community-based conservation. Charu has been working in the village of Kibber for some time, and his existing project will serve as a starting point for a multi-faceted, holistic conservation program to be designed and implemented in the coming months. Charu has helped villagers to organize a grazing reserve, an area where the villagers have agreed not to graze their livestock in exchange for monetary remuneration. The reserve provides a place for wild ungulates to graze undisturbed by domestic animals.

The grazing reserve also benefits the village by providing a draw for tourists who can come to view the blue sheep and other wildlife that take advantage of the reserve. Local people will be trained to serve as guides to help tourists spot the wild sheep and identify birds and plants. The income from this tourism will provide further incentives to the villagers to take good care of their wildlife.

ISLT will also support a villager by the name of Tandup Dorje to coordinate the tourist guiding activities and the planned introduction of the Irbis Enterprises conservation model into this area. "Villagers in Kibber weave beautiful shawls which they use to carry their babies: explains Allen. "With Irbis Enterprises' existing marketing systems, we can help raise the standard of living for hundreds of people in Kibber. Eventually we expect the income from these activities to replace the cash payment now made to the village for the

setting aside the grazing reserve, thus creating a self-sustaining, community managed conservation program."

ISLT will also be involved in the production, testing and dissemination of educational materials highlighting local wildlife issues. "It's important to get the message to adults and children residing in the areas where

snow leopards live that healthy wildlife populations and people can co-exist," says Allen.

As this holistic conservation program involving education and income generation is developed and refined, it may be exported to other villages in the region. "By reducing villagers' dependence on livestock for income, we make it easier for them to tolerate the presence of snow leopards and the occasional case of livestock depredation," explains Allen.

"The trip was extremely productive on a number of fronts," says McCarthy. "We were able to put highly qualified people in place to energize our Pakistan program, initiate efforts in the Kyrgyz Republic by hiring staff and identifying priorities, as well as helping to outline the future path our India program will be taking." A grin appears on his face as he wraps up his recollections of the trip. "A long trip - too long, but adding those folks to our staff and knowing the programs are in such good shape made it well worth it."