

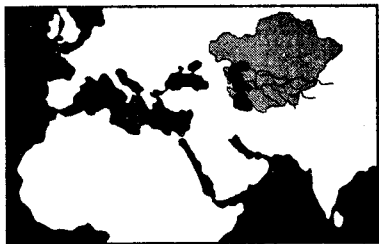
# IUCN

The World Conservation Union

# СРЕДНЯЯ АЗИЯ Central Asia

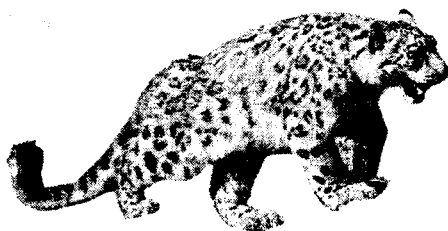
Newsletter

2000, No. 4



The current 4th edition of the Newsletter prepared in the time of The World Conservation Congress (4-11 October 2000, Amman, Jordan) contains the information about some important problems of Central Asian biodiversity conservation. Special anxiety causes the rapid reduction of the number and distribution of the Saker Falcon and Saiga. Placed materials show that the problems in the field of nature conservation are more that successful results of their implementation. This fact remembers the necessity strengthening of IUCN activity in Central Asian region.

Anatoly Kovshar,  
The editor of the Newsletter



Snow Leopard  
endangered species



## SNOW LEOPARD CONSERVATION IN KYRGHYZSTAN

In the beginning of 20th century snow leopard was not big nor small in its population number. Yearly bag only in Middle Asia was about 250 leopards. Soon this number decreased, because leopard's population began to reduce rapidly on the whole distribution area, and in Pribaikalye, Sayany an Tarbagatai this animal disappeared completely. Taking in consideration that leopard hunting was allowed until 50, and only then in some countries partially limited, is becomes obvious why this beautiful animal that lives in extreme conditions, happen to be on the point of disappearing. Never the less in USSR set by the time nature protection system and no international market controlled leopard decreasing rates. Situation worsened rapidly with Union collapse. Smuggling appeared as a result of low life level, sometimes even impoverishment of the locals in the countries of former USSR, black market appearing, transparent borders with China. Leopards began to be hunted for everywhere, even in nature reserves.

Even before international scientific and nature-conserving society was not satisfied with snow leopard situation and began to unite efforts to conserve this species. International trust on snow leopard was established as a result; conferences and seminars were held. "Snow Line" journal was rising such questions as monitoring, protection, restoration of the population numbers in different countries. In some countries programs of saving this species were performed. So, by the specialists opinion, a hope to save snow leopards in India, Bhutan and Nepal appeared. In most danger nowadays are populations of snow leopard in China and former Soviet Union countries. China, almost destroyed amur tiger on its territory, now uses inside organs of snow leopard in folk medicine. They don't only kill their own leopards, but have them put on a market for the neighbors - from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. Specialists suppose that in the last 10 years in those countries snow leopard population number decreased in 4-5 time, and in some regions - even in 10 times, which can't leave specialists and community not concerned about this situation.

In Kyrgyzstan from 1999 "Snow leopard" project works in collaboration with NABU (German Union of Nature Protection) and Ministry of Nature Protection of Kyrgyzstan Republic. On the first step of the project a very good technically supplied group of operative fighting with smuggling, market channels and black market was created (in 2000 the second group was created). For the first year of work group members did dozens of spot-checks of snow leopard distribution places, and found more than 150 situations of breaking Nature Protection Laws of Kyrgyzstan. Reports were made on all of the cases and given to Nature-conserving Office of

Public Prosecutor of the Republic. There are criminal case began on some of them. At the same time taken and destroyed are more than 200 weapons of leopard's catching, traps, hooks, etc. About 90 not registered guns were taken from poachers, mostly rifled. Some illegal market channels of skins were found, and the skins taken from them. Criminal cases of those affairs were also giver to the Office of Public Prosecutor.

This action's success is not only in those specific cases of finding and preventing poaching, but also in the thought that was formed and effective system of protection of not only snow leopard, but also other rare species of the animals. Also helps work with local citizens that is done on the second step of the project from 2000: in local press several popular articles about snow leopard protection in Kyrgyzstan were published, talks and seminars with students were held. In this work is used a film about snow leopard, made by German television with help of NABU. On Kyrgyzstan television more than 10 times a film about "Snow leopard" group was shown.

In May of 1999 with participation and funding of international organization Sacred Earth Network in Aksu-Djabagly nature reserve a regional seminar dedicated to snow leopard protection problems in Middle Asia was held. On this conference specialists from 5 countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Russia and USA set main problems and key moments for leopard protection through regional projects. An international community organization "Asia - Irbis" was created, its main task is snow leopard protection on Central Asian territory in former USSR borders. Sooner Tajikistan joined this organization. Seminar's participants accepted an Appeal to the Governments of their countries with a request to unite the efforts on leopard saving. In 2000 with SEN funds 3 short-time projects on work with the local people in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were held. Future will show us how soon positive results will appear. It is hard to believe that those measures are enough. It is important to widen the field of those and new projects and programs in order to recruit all local people to conservation of this unique and wonderful inhabitant of the high mountains. Snow leopard should live in its native places!

Torsten HARDER  
"Snow leopard" project coordinator,  
Councilor of Ministry  
of Environment Protection of Republic of  
Kyrgyzstan,

Dr. Valentina TOROPOVA  
NGO "Asia - Irbis"