

Misc - news
Hunting

Cats of the world - a philatelic view

No. 1 - GREAT BRITAIN

Although Great Britain was not the first country to depict cats on stamps, it is one country guilty of failing to illustrate its own indigenous species - *Felis silvestris grampia*, the Scottish Wild Cat. However, the royal insignia includes a Lion, and as a result 9 design values of British stamps include the Lion in their design.



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1. SG2074 207a-1887 Queen Victoria 5d.
2. SG 242-4, 293-4 1902, 1911 King Edward VII 5d
3. SG 327-333, 336-337 1911, 1912 King George V 1d
4. SG 341-343, 345, 349-350 1912 King George V 1d
5. SG 430 & 432 1924-25 British Empire Exhibition 1d
6. SG 431 & 433 " " " " 1 1/2d
7. SG 476 1939-48 King George VI 2s6d
8. SG 477 1939-48 " " " " 5s
9. SG 512 1951 " " " " £1

Future countries in this series also cover wild cats not indigenous to their domain, but also cover those that are; perhaps the postal authorities will feature the Wild Cat on a future issue?

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Wild Cat 2 (2)21-23, 1981

Snow Leopard news

BIG GAME HUNTS BAG ENDANGERED ANIMALS!

Ulan Bator, Mongolia: - So you're a big game hunter looking for the ultimate trophy? How about the elusive Snow Leopard?

There are reputedly only 300 of them left here, but for \$50,000 in US currency, Mongolia's Communist government will guarantee that you bag one.

It is a rare and endangered species, but if that doesn't bother you, it apparently doesn't bother the Mongolian government, which isn't a signatory to the international conventions in the wildlife conservation field.

If you don't have \$50,000, for a little less you can hunt other rare and endangered species, courtesy of the Mongolian government.

For only \$16,000, you can take a shot at the argali, the fabled bighorn sheep of the high Altai Mountains, whose great curled horns can be almost two feet in circumference at the base and some five feet long.

Or, for only \$10,000, you can take a shot at a smaller argali, and for the bargain price of \$6000 you can try your luck on an ibex of the Gobi Desert, a mountain goat with long, recurved horns.

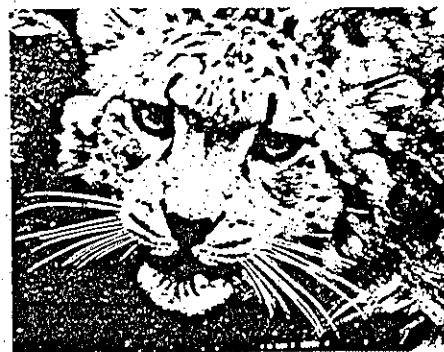
For lesser sums, you could level your sights on reindeer, marmot or antelope, which aren't endangered, though they are rare in much of the world.

And if your aim is poor, don't worry. Your Mongol hunter-guide will if necessary shoot it for you. After all, you paid for it.

Excursions to hunt these rare animals are being arranged by two outfitters in the United States and another in West Germany, and although Westerners are rarely welcomed in this Communist country, big game hunting Westerners are welcomed with a red carpet.

From 'Exotics Unlimited' newsletter, January 1981.

AFGHAN SLAUGHTER



Freedom and Afghan natives have not been the only casualties of the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. The invaders and their supporters slaughtered numerous rare and endangered wildlife species and carted them off to market, according to the National Wildlife Federation, the largest environmental group in the non-Communist world.

A herd of 70 feral yaks, the product of years of conservation work, was reduced to 26. Snow Leopards, flamingoes, Siberian cranes, Bactrian deer, sand foxes and goitered gazelles were among other species that were slain. "One of the most promising conservation programs in the Third World has been wiped out," the Federation said.

In addition, two of the six conservationists assigned by the United Nations to Afghanistan were killed. Three others either were fired or fled. Only one remains. One who fled, Jeffrey Sayer, said that "Russian soldiers gunned down priceless waterfowl and ordered Afghan guards to retrieve them from the lake." He saw a dozen skins of the very rare Snow Leopard on sale in a Kabul market shortly after. Marco Polo sheep and ibex apparently were also killed, he said, along with what was probably the only wild population of Bactrian deer outside of the Soviet Union.

Ironically, the world's largest environmental group is in Russia. Called the Nature Protection Society, it is sponsored by the government, and all Soviet citizens are automatic members.

Officials at the Soviet embassy in Washington could not be reached for comment.

From 'Omni' magazine, Issue No 3/6; reporter Stuart Diamond.

REDRESSING THE BALANCE

RODNEY JACKSON WINNER OF A ROLEX AWARD FOR ENTERPRISE 1981

Rodney Jackson is a biologist in a San Francisco consulting firm, responsible for the supervision of studies of animal species in danger of extinction. Quite naturally he keeps inventories of them. Acutely aware of such problems, this British scientist intends to seek out the few specimens of the snow leopard still surviving in the Nepal Himalaya.

It was for this that he was selected as one of the five international winners of The Rolex Awards for Enterprise 1981 and received a prize of 50,000 Swiss Francs and a gold Rolex chronometer.

Nearly killed off by man, the snow leopard is now to be saved by man

An expedition into the Himalayas in 1976-1977 gave Rodney Jackson a general idea of the problems to be overcome and confirmed the urgent need to take some action to save a species, whose skins are in much demand by smart women going to skiing resorts and which is therefore the prey of every hunter. Furthermore, the local hoofed fauna, its favourite food, is dying out and the spread of pasture land in the higher altitudes for cattle is contributing to its extinction.

Although national parks are being established and the fur trade severely restricted, the snow leopard can today only be found in a few isolated valleys at the foot of the Himalayas.

Very little is known about the snow leopard because of its habits, its almost inaccessible home grounds and its reduced numbers. Rodney Jackson believes that the only way to find out more about the snow leopard is to fit a few with radio transmitter collars, enabling their whereabouts to be followed over a period of months and their habitat, their movements and their feeding habits to be ascertained. Studies would likewise be made of the relationship between predator and prey, the leopard's social life and preferred terrain.

The data he aimed would provide information as to the ecological conditions necessary for its survival and help draw up plans for its preservation with the aid of biologists and the Nepalese authorities. In designating Rodney Jackson for a Rolex Award for Enterprise, the Selection Committee was impressed by the broad scope of the project and the technical ingenuity it required.

Rodney Jackson has carefully delimited the area which he considers most appropriate for his work: the Kanjiroba Himal, in Western Nepal, where he intends to go from December 1981 to December 1982. A further 6-12 months would be needed to complete the task.

He intends to start his study of the snow leopard's life and habitat by baiting and capturing a few and injecting them with a harmless tranquilizer under the effect of which they could then be weighed, measured and photographed. After attaching their radio-transmitter collars, they would then be set free and followed by means of twin receivers and by tracking.

All the snow leopard has known about man so far has been his killer gun. If the survivors of this beautiful, noble feline some day come to owe their protection to man, it will be only fair that it will be thanks to another of man's discoveries: radio. But they will also owe it to the spirit of enterprise displayed by Rodney Jackson.

From Rolex Press Release.

We are very pleased that this important cat conservation project has been given this recognition, and we wish Rodney Jackson every success.



This young Serval clearly shows discrimination in his selection of reading matter!

Photo sent in from the USA by Jean Townes.