

Snow Leopard Conservation Grants, Snow Leopard Network

FINAL REPORT FOR 2011 PROJECT

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACTION PLAN OF SNOW LEOPARD CONSERVATION IN KAZAKHSTAN

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1. Executive Summary: No more than 750 words. Please describe the original goals and the final results of your project. This may be used in press releases and other publicity material about the Grants Program, so please write it for the general public who may not have scientific background.

This Project main objective was in working out the Snow Leopard Conservation Action Plan in Kazakhstan. In spite of the fact that the snow leopard is one from the most rare animals of Kazakhstan and is officially recognized by a country symbol under the offer of president Nursultan Nazarbayev, here there was no the special document devoted to the snow leopard protecting. Work on Strategy creation has been begun in 2010 at the initiative of the Snow Leopard Fund in cooperation with UNDP-Kazakhstan project - "Conservation and sustainable development of the biological diversity in the Kazakhstan's part of Altai-Sayan ecoregion" which has supported by the Forest and Hunting Committee of Ministry of Agriculture of Republic Kazakhstan (FHC). Thanks to the small grant received from the SLN, and also to organizational and financial participation UNDP-Kazakhstan this work has been successfully executed.

At the initial stage, after reception of the consent and approval of our initiative - working out of National Action Plan of Snow Leopard Conservation in Kazakhstan from the Forest and Hunting Committee, I had been prepared a draught variant of Strategy and the polling questionnaire for gathering of data on meetings of a snow leopard. In the course of working out of the National Action Plan the available information on a snow leopard in Kazakhstan, its distribution and rough number has been generalized and analyzed, and also the basic threats to its existence have been revealed. Then has been generated the working group of 10 persons in which leading experts of Kazakhstan on wildlife management from FHC, zoologists from Institute of zoology of Academy of Education and the Science, from other organizations and experts from UNDP-Kazakhstan and WWF have been invited. The draught variant of the document has been given all members of working group, for acquaintance, entering of the new data and a correcting of the available information. On the basis of the analysis of this information measures on prevention of these threats have been developed and priorities and methods of their realization are defined.

It has been noticed that thanks to accepted governmental measures on protection of rare species in Kazakhstan within last 15 years, namely - to creation within an area of a snow leopard of six national parks, and to toughening of criminal punishment for poaching concerning this species and to increase in the penalty for its killing (about \$22000), have considerably decreased quantity of these crimes. Also now there are not enough cases of an attack of a snow leopard on livestock and conflicts to cattlemen. Thanking the governmental

measures, now the snow leopard in Kazakhstan are protected much better, than at the initial stage of development of the country, after disintegration of the USSR. The area of this species is covered now by protected areas in Kazakhstan not less, than on 30% though earlier this indicator did not exceed 5 %. However, still it is not enough for effective protection of snow leopard and its and its prey animals, because very important habitats, are not protected yet. In the Snow Leopard Conservation Action Plan the priority areas where it is necessary to begin faster whenever possible work on creation new protected areas, ecological corridors, also on expansion of some already existing national parks are defined.

On August, 4th, 2011 in Astana Scientific and technical council session of FHC on which Oleg Loginov had been gave the report according to National Action Plan of Snow Leopard Conservation in Kazakhstan has taken place. This document has been officially approved. By the STC session was approved the decision of budget preparation for financing of prime measures of snow leopard conservation in Kazakhstan and to recommend inclusion them on performance of strategic problems to the government program "Zhasyl-Damu" (Green Development). Then, according to existing rules FHC, the document text has been presented to Institute of Zoology of Academy of Education and the Science of Kazakhstan (Almaty) for carrying out of scientific examination. Strategy has been approved by experts and on October, 18th positive examination has been signed by the general director of Institute of Zoology academician and professor A.M. Meldebekov. The Institute of Zoology has drawn definitive conclusion for FHC: - «Strategy of Snow Leopard Conservation in Kazakhstan» deserves the statement and the prompt realization».

In the first quarter of this year (most likely in March) special session of Scientific and technical council of the Forest and Hunting Committee under the statement of the National Action Plan of the Snow Leopard Conservation in Kazakhstan will take place.

2. Objectives: What was the purpose of the project? How was it expected to the knowledge or conservation of snow leopards, their prey, or habitat?

The purpose of our project was of working out the National Snow Leopard Conservation Action Plan in Kazakhstan. The National Action Plan for the first time in history of Kazakhstan became the strategic document which define not only basic directions of the measures of improvement of a snow leopard protection, but also is the fullest source of the information in country which becomes a basis for replenishment of knowledge of this endangered animal, its prey animals and their habitats as a whole.

3. Methods: Describe the methods you used in detail, so that someone else could repeat the work, or, avoid the problems that you encountered.

The basic methods by working out of the Action Plan were (stage by stage):

- 1- Gathering and generalization of the available isolated information on a snow leopard, its prey and habitats in Kazakhstan. On the basis of this material the conclusion has been drawn on necessity of creation of the Strategic National Action Plan on conservation of this rare species.
- 2- Given information became a basis for the letter-substantiation to the Forest and Hunting Committee - the main government service on protection of fauna and flora of Kazakhstan, control over carrying out of legal

hunting by which are subordinated all wildlife protected areas. The committee has supported this initiative and has approved carrying out of working out of document by Snow Leopard Fund together with UNDP-

Kazakhstan. Also by committee has been approved, the structure of members of working group offered by us.

3- After reception of the grant from SLN Small Grants at a rate of \$3600, work on discussion of the text of the Action Plan and its updatings with the experts invited in structure of working group, physically being in different places of Kazakhstan has begun. Have been made 6 business trips for carrying out of meetings with colleagues in Almaty (Institute of zoology of Academy of Sciences, the United Nations, Almaty reserve, Ile-Alatausky national park), in Astana (FHC, UNDP-Kazakhstan), in Zhabagly (reserve Aksu-Dzhabagly in the South Kazakhstan area), in Tekeli (Dzungarian Alatau), and also in Katon-Karagajsky national park and the West Altay reserve (East Kazakhstan) for the purpose of carrying out of discussions. Some materials and questionnaires have been distributed. With some members of working group there was an active correspondence by e-mail. All it has allowed to collect available information on the status, a condition of protection and number of a snow leopard in Kazakhstan.

4- The following results of all discussions and editing the total variant of Strategy has been prepared, which has been presented to Committee (FHC). The total text of the document has been unanimously approved by the Scientific and technical council, which constant members known experts in the field of fauna protection about environment from FHC, the Ministry of Environment, Institute of Zoology of Academy of Sciences.

5- In October, 2011 in common SLF and UNDP the seminar in Almaty where the Plan of action has been presented for heads of the nature protection organizations of Kazakhstan, reserves and the national parks located within an area of a snow leopard has been organized. The positive estimation has been given the developed document and the offered measures on strengthening of protection of a snow leopard in Kazakhstan.

Any serious obstacles on a way of creation of the Action Plan was not present, also as there was no negative relation of officials of the basic nature protection organizations, criticism and other negative actions from anybody. Thus, attraction of key state nature protection establishments, and also the large international organization UNDP, initially interested in creation of such document became our basic trump in successful advancement of the Action Plan of snow leopard conservation in Kazakhstan. Also the success was promoted by association of knowledge and efforts of leading experts in wildlife management and zoology, and also officials, from participation and which consent decision-making depends.

4. Results: Please describe in detail the results of your project. Please illustrate clearly how your stated goals and objectives could be met. You may wish to include tables or graphs in this section if appropriate. This section will be very important to explain the value of these grants to funders of the Snow Leopard Conservation Grant Program. Please be clear, concise, and thorough.

Working out of the realistic National Action Plan (or Strategy) of the Snow Leopard Conservation in Kazakhstan was a main objective of this project that it has been approved on Scientific council of Forest and Hunting Committee and confirmed as the basic document ordering measures and priorities on protection this rare species from extinction in country. See please “Strategy...” in a pdf. (the definitive variant will be placed on their site only after the statement at the next session of Science-Technical Council in March, 2012)

on web site of Committee : <http://www.oopt.kz/docs/227/4991>.

All actions necessary for maintenance of success in performance of our project, have been executed also the Action Plan has met with official approval of the FHC - main nature protection department of Kazakhstan. Thus, the given main goal has been executed. As it is planned - in a March, 2012 the statement of this document the Chairman of FHC is expected.

Except the prepared and officially approved Plan of action, for passed 2011 we do additional big work under the book edition about a snow leopard in English - "Irbis - the Snow Leopard". The press of this well illustrated book in circulation 250 copies has financed UNDP/GEF.

In September SLF participated as the representative from Kazakhstan in "Festival of the Snow Leopard", organized by WWF-Russia in the nearby region of Russia – the Altai republic. In Gorno-Altai have passed negotiations about cooperation with WWF-Russia and with Snow Leopard Conservancy. With SLC has been signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

In the autumn we have achieved connection to the high-speed Internet - (Megaline-Turbo +). We had been developed site SLF which will be started in the nearest future. While page SLF on Facebook now is accessible: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Snow-Leopard-Fund/286924478016585?sk=info>

In first quarter of this year the UNDP-Kazakhstan promises to finance the edition of Action Plan as brochure for distribution in protected areas both the nature protection organizations and scientific institutes of Kazakhstan.

5. Discussion: Please evaluate your own work. What did you learn that could help others wishing to do similar projects? How do you see the results being applied to conservation? What additional work is now needed based on your findings?

Thanks to the preliminary work spent by us on gathering of the information, formation of public opinion and an explanation of a problem with snow leopard conservation and to establishment of cooperation with nature protection and scientific institutions, and also with UNDP-Kazakhstan and NGO in Kazakhstan, our work became successful. The official approval of the Action Plan developed by us and its statement guarantees that strategic problems will be carried out at the state level.

For carrying out of similar projects we recommend in other countries - without fail to get support of the state nature protection departments and scientific institutes. It is necessary to manage to prove to responsible officials on whom decision-making depends, importance of preservation of a snow leopard as flag species - an important link in an ecological chain of mountain ecosystems. It is necessary to form public consciousness through mass-media and constantly to speak about an important role of a snow leopard as the major symbol of mountains which can help with development of economy of mountain areas and attraction of tourists, etc.

According to the developed Action Plan, in Kazakhstan carrying out of great works in nine basic directions (priorities) is necessary (see a short revue of Action Plan on English, please). Only performance of all complex of directions and goals which will have sufficient state financing, can guarantee conservation of a snow leopard in long-term prospect. In the near future the budget on financing of the actions developed in the Action Plan will be generated together by the Forest and Hunting Committee and Snow Leopard Fund. This budget will be directed for examination to the Ministry of Finance of Kazakhstan for inclusion of financing of actions within the limits of a government program "Zhasyl-Damu" (Green Development). It is supposed that financing under the program Green Development will begin not earlier than 2014. To this term it will be necessary to request means for concrete projects from the international funds.

Our priority directions of work within the next years will be: education of people and monitoring of a snow leopard in Kazakhstan. From this year there is begun work under the joint project with Snow Leopard Conservancy: "Steps to Save Snow Leopards in Kazakhstan: Status Surveys and a Conservation Action Campaign. Phase I - Dzungarian Alatau and East Kazakhstan Area".

We plan to expand the publishing projects connected with the edition of books, calendars, posters and other production. We are almost prepared the illustrate book about a snow leopard in Russian for the edition. Books about this animal on sale in the CIS are not present. Considering development of tourist business in region, it is possible to predict a demand of such production.

6. Photographs: If you have good photographic (preferably digital) images of your project that we could use to advertise the Grants Program, please submit them at this time. Please be sure to include a brief description of the photo and provide the credits for the photographer.

- Photos:

- **photo-01** – Anatoly Kovshar (Professor of zoology), science consultant and Yury Grachev (PhD), a member of Action Plan work group. Kovshar and Grachev - the most authoritative zoologists of Kazakhstan from Institute of Zoology of Academy of Education and Science. They are authors of the Red Book of Kazakhstan and have taken participation in working out of the Action Plan of snow leopard conservation in Kazakhstan. (photo by Oleg Loginov. Almaty, 09.03.2011)

- **photo-02** – Oleg Loginov and Vladimir Cheranov (UNDP “Altai-Sayan...” project Manager) - initiators of working out of Action Plan of the snow leopard conservation in Kazakhstan who have spent the greatest amount of works on successful approval of this document. (photo by E. Yurchenkov, Ust-Kamenogorsk, 09.03.2011)

- **photo-03** – Session of Scientific and technical council of Forest and Hunting Committee (Astana). Councillors from left to right: K.Musabaev - the vice-president of Committee, B.Dujsekeev - the head of department on protection of fauna and representative of CITES in Kazakhstan, S.Skljarenko (Ph. D) - the deputy director of the Association of Biodiversity Conservation of Kazakhstan and the author of the several Action Plans of birds conservation in Kazakhstan. Photo is made during Oleg Loginov's report at a map of Kazakhstan (next photo - **photo-04**). Photos by Dina Almatova – UNDP-Kazakhstan expert, 4 August, 2011.

- **photo-05** – Oleg Loginov does report on the National Action Plan of a snow leopard conservation in Kazakhstan. A building of representation of the United Nations in Kazakhstan, Almaty, October, 18th, 2011
Photo by Sergey Starikov

- **photo-06** – Participants of the Seminar on strengthening of protected areas in biodiversity protection, zoologists (from left to right): Sergey Starikov - research assistant Katon-Karagajsky of national park (Ust

Kamenogorsk), Sajat Tushkenov - the deputy director of Zhongar-Alatausky national park (Sarkand), Yury Grachev (Ph. D), zoologist, the research assistant of Institute of zoology Academy of Science of Kazakhstan (Almaty), Oleg Loginov - Snow Leopard Fund director (Ust Kamenogorsk), Eldos Ismagulov (Ph. D) - the deputy director of Ile-Alatausky national park (Almaty). These experts play an important role in work on conservation of a snow leopard and its studying in Kazakhstan. A building of representation of the United Nations in Kazakhstan, Almaty, October, 18th, 2011 Photo by Vladimir Cheranov (Manager of UNDP project -“Biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in Kazakhstan part of Altai-Sayan ecoregion”)

I ask to put to the report also maps of distribution of groupings of a snow leopard in Kazakhstan, earlier sent by me.

In the appendix to the Final Report there are following documents:

- **"supplement-1-1" - "supplement-1-2"** - a letter copy from Oleg Loginov (SLF) and Vladimir Cheranov (UNDP) in the Forest and Hunting Committee about necessity of working out of National Strategy
- **"supplement-2"** - a copy of letter from the Forest and Hunting Committee supporting the initiative of working out of the Strategy (signed by the vice-president - Igor Koval)
- **"supplement-3"** - Invitation of Oleg Loginov on a session of Scientific and technical council 4 August 2011 (pdf.).
- **"supplement-4"** - the Copy of a fax of the Report of session HTC about the decision to approve the Action Plan.
- **"supplement-5"** – A copy of the Seminar Program and the List of participants (Almaty, on October, 18th, 2011). The line about O. Loginov's participation is allocated by pink colour.
- **"supplement-6"** - O. Loginov's presentation - " Strategy of the Snow Leopard Conservation in Kazakhstan"
- **"supplement-7"** - a fax Copy of "Scientific examination" from Institute of Zoology AOH of Kazakhstan in Committee of the Wood and Hunting Economy (gpeg.)
- **"supplement-8"** - a copy of the letter of Bahytbek Djujskeev - the head of department of protection of fauna of Committee of the Wood and Hunting Economy about necessity of updating of the name of the document for the document statement at the next session HTC, according to Committee requirements, (doc.).
- **"supplement-9"** - the Definitive variant of Strategy (the National Plan of action), (doc.).
- **"supplement-10"** -The letter from Committee about project support on improvement of measures of protection of a snow leopard in Kazakhstan