

Final Report

Snow Leopard Conservation Grants Programme 2009

Submitted by

Project Snow Leopard (PSL)

**For Predator Proof Corrals in Baltistan Region of
Gilgit/Baltistan Pakistan**

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1. Introduction:

The Baltistan Wildlife Conservation & Development Organization (BWCDO), formerly recognized as Project Snow Leopard, is a non-profit organization, registered under company's act 1984, intends to conserve and protect the wildlife, particularly snow leopard, population in Baltistan, region of newly named Gilgit/Baltistan region in northern Pakistan.

The BWCDO works in collaboration with Snow Leopard Conservancy, USA, government Forest Department, IUCN-The World Conservation Union, Aga Khan Rural Support Program (AKRSP) and local communities, for the conservation and protection of wildlife. Its main strategies are to create awareness among masses about the importance of wildlife, particularly snow leopard; create enabling economic incentive structure for snow leopard conservation including setting up of compensation schemes for farmers against the livestock losses caused by the snow leopard predation. The BWCDO is currently working in ten different valleys in the Baltistan region, such as Kanday and Hushey in Khaplu districts and Basha, Shigar, and Krabathang in Skardu district.

2. Executive Summary:

In December, 2008 Baltistan Wildlife Conservation and Development Organization received a grant from the Snow Leopard Network for the construction of predator-proof corrals in five settlements of Baltistan. The projects have been successfully completed. The report encompasses the progress of reporting year 2009. The report is structured in a way that it covers not only the activities carried out during the year, but also discusses results of those activities on the communities in their efforts towards conservation of the snow leopards.

The report describes some of the approaches and methods, such as introduction of livestock compensation scheme, wildlife surveys and camera trapping used in implementing this project. The conservation and protection work remains always a challenging task for all the development practitioners, therefore, the report clearly highlighted these challenges and risks so that the readers can understand these challenges along with some of the approaches highlighted to tackle these challenges.

3. Objective:

To achieve the goal, the main focus of the program is to;

- Reduce wildlife depredation of livestock, especially by snow leopard;
- Protect farmers sources of local livelihoods;
- Protect snow leopards, their prey and habitat along with other wildlife;
- Assist the relevant management authority to improve pastures and natural resource management by working with local communities.

4. Methods:

Presently, Project Snow Leopard is performing activities such as awareness raising, capacity building, livestock compensation, construction of predator proof corral and other small community based infrastructure projects either from its own resources or with the support of Snow Leopard Conservancy, USA or SLN.

Under the Snow Leopard Conservation Grants Program 2009, “Construction of Predator Proof Corral”, Project Snow Leopard completed the following activities together with previous initiatives.

- Consultation and partnership building with previously formed Snow Leopard Conservation Committees (SLCC) for the implementation of intended project;
- Construction of 05 Predator Proof Corrals in those deprived communities which are most suffered from snow leopard and wolves attack; and,
- Monitoring and managing of constructed predator proof corrals.

5. Results:

The construction of livestock predator proof corral has contributed towards further securing the productive assets of these rather marginalized and poor communities. The observations of the project staff backed by the communities’ feedback revealed that the population of ibex and snow leopard has increased since the inception of PSL in the area. The construction of the predator proof corral under the grant from SLN has further given the communities a reason to protect the wildlife as they see conservation NGOs genuinely concerned about their plight of economic hardship from snow leopard depredation. The villagers claim and it has been observed by the staff of PSL that ibex have started moving near human settlement depicting the fact now the population feels more secure and comfortable than in the past near human populated areas.

The obligation imposed under the agreement between project and the communities to not kill the ibex and other wildlife has increased population of ibex. The After completion of project predator proof corral the work load of the community herders to look after the animals has decreased.

6. Discussion:

Baltistan is rich habitat of snow leopard; occasionally snow leopard attack on domestic livestock at night time, often jumping into an open roof corral, or when farmers leave their small animals open on high pastures. It is observed that number of livestock killed in a corral versus on open range is significant. The indigenous corral are seldom predator proof because of lack of material and resources. The activities carried out under the SLN grant address this problem head on.

During the reporting year, the already operational Snow Leopard Conservation Committees (SLCC) in each of the participant villages held meetings to discuss the issues and practices related to wildlife conservation in their respective villages. The SLCC remained involved in managing and monitoring the ongoing project of predator proof corrals construction. We frequently visit to the communities to check the progress of work. We used all materials locally. We delivered money in three installments, first

installment before starting the project, 2nd installment in middle of project and final after completion of project. This gives sense that without check and balance the community doesn't complete the work. The community chooses a project committee and who was responsible to complete the project. The Snow Leopard Conservation Committee was responsible to check the work done by project committee.

It is hoped that the design of the corral will become popular in other villages and those farmers who can afford to adopt the design will do so.

The predator proof corrals also complement the core activity of PSL which is the insurance scheme. Reduced incidences of livestock losses because of predator proof corrals will also put less strain on the financial resources of the project. This would allow PSL to channel more money towards community infrastructure projects and research activities.



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