



## Snow Leopard and Prey Population Conservation in Bhutan

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Interim Report to the International Snow Leopard Trust  
Submitted by World Wildlife Fund  
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Grant amount: \$8,000 over 1 year  
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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Snow leopard conservation work in Bhutan dates back to 1999 and 2000 when the International Snow Leopard Trust—in collaboration with the Royal Government of Bhutan and World Wildlife Fund—initiated a training workshop. More than 30 government staff were trained in SLIMS survey techniques. As a part of the training exercise, a preliminary survey on snow leopard was also carried out using the SLIMS methods in Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Park. Based on the survey results, we estimated there was a population of 100 snow leopards in the wild and 10,000 km<sup>2</sup> of habitat.

In 2005, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) organized the WWF/South Asia Regional Workshop on Snow leopard Conservation in Bhutan. Both regional (Bhutan, India, China, Nepal and Pakistan) and international experts revisited the snow leopard programs and developed a work plan for the overall conservation of the snow leopard in the region. This led to WWF's Regional Snow leopard Conservation Strategy.

WWF is pleased to submit our final report to the International Snow Leopard Trust on the one-year, \$8,000 grant in support of *Snow Leopard and Prey Population Conservation in Bhutan*. With the support of the Snow Leopard Trust, we have made great strides towards achieving our goal for this project: To determine the current status of snow leopard and ungulate prey populations in prime snow leopard habitats. Major accomplishments and activities completed thanks to the generous support of the International Snow Leopard Trust include:

- Signed of a Terms of Reference between Royal Government, International Snow Leopard Trust - India, World Wildlife Fund and International Snow Leopard Trust –US;
- Developed a joint revised project work plan; and
- Purchased basic field supplies and equipment needed for the surveys planned.

## PROGRESS TO DATE

Over the course of the one-year grant period, WWF worked toward the project goal through two main activities: (1) institutionalization of collaborative partnership between the Royal Government, International Snow Leopard Trust - India, World Wildlife Fund and International Snow Leopard Trust –US to build the NCD and Territorial Division staff capacity on SLIMS survey methods and 2) purchase of basic supplies and equipment for ecological surveys (demographic, distribution, habitats, human-wildlife conflicts) on the snow leopard and its prey.

Staff training for the Royal Government of Bhutan's staff was a crucial step needed in order to reinstate Bhutan's snow leopard program. As earlier, the International Snow Leopard Trust's (ISLT) support was again sought to provide technical expertise as well as funding for the program. However, before these activities could take place, the establishment of a formal institutional collaboration between WWF, Royal Government (NCD), ISLT-India, and ISLT-US was necessary to ensure voluntary partnership of all organizations in advancing the snow leopard conservation works in Bhutan. A Terms of Reference was signed between the Royal Government, ISLT-India, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and ISLT-US in June 2006, establishing a formal institutional collaboration to facilitate all the future snow leopard conservation works in Bhutan including the preparation of the National Snow leopard Action Plan for the kingdom of Bhutan.

After the TOR was in place, WWF worked together with ISLT -India and prepared a detailed training programme for NCD staff. Three types of training that are scheduled for April, 2007 include: 1) Classroom training for officers; 2) classroom training for frontline staff and 3) laboratory training in advanced genetic techniques. To avoid any further delays in the field activities scheduled for April 2007, the grant from the International Snow Leopard trust was used, in part, to finance the purchase of necessary field supplies and equipment. Nature is an elemental force in Bhutan, and snow leopard conservation survey team members will be out in the field for several days, and the field supplies and equipment will provide field staff the necessary protection from the elements resulting in efficient and effective implementation of the survey works in the harsh conditions. A list of all of the equipment purchased is listed in **Attachment 3**.

Additionally, in accordance with the Terms of Reference, WWF, Nature Conservation Foundation and the Royal Government organized a one day workshop in Thimphu in November 2006 and discussed and finalized the detailed plan of work (**Attachment 2**). Representatives from each partner organization attended—including 4 participants from WWF, 8 from NCD, and 3 from ISLT-India—for a total of 15 participants. The group also discussed constraints, strengths, weaknesses and opportunities presented by each participating institution and identified possible areas for future collaboration. Several recommendations for strengthening the project were identified during the workshop. The day's discussions ultimately resulted in an improved project work plan and specific organizational commitments for joint implementation, effective April 2007 through June 2008.

Ecological surveys on snow leopards and snow leopard habitat are planned for the next few months.

## CHALLENGES

In late 2005, WWF submitted a project proposal to the Royal Government detailing our plans to develop a long-term snow leopard conservation strategy. However, shortly after submission, concerns were raised about the feasibility of a conservation strategy given the limited data available, as well as the Government's lack of technical capacity to gather the necessary information. These complications delayed the signing of the snow leopard conservation grant agreement with the Government, initially planned for January 2006, while WWF worked with the Government to address these issues. As a result, our project did not begin until June 2006—approximately six months after the planned start date.

## NEXT STEPS

Over the next few months, WWF will continue its efforts in determining the status of snow leopard and prey populations and monitoring the implementation of the snow leopard project conducted by the NCD. Planned activities include:

1. Conducting training on wildlife monitoring techniques (including SLIMS) and providing classroom training for officers and frontline staff.
2. Conducting laboratory training for selected NCD staff in advanced genetic techniques
3. Continuing implementation of wildlife monitoring surveys in key potential habitats in Bhutan, analysis of SLIMS survey data, and preparation of a snow leopard and prey population status report
4. Identifying areas for camera trapping to be used in future ecological studies.

## PROJECT IMPACT

The TOR for technical partnerships is an important achievement for Bhutan, especially in strengthening the Royal Government's human resources for scientific research on snow leopards.

With the Bhutanese field staff trained in SLIMS techniques and well equipped with the necessary survey supplies and equipment the status of the snow leopard and its prey populations are anticipated to be updated by the end of 2007.

## ATTACHMENTS

- Project financial report
- Revised work plan
- List of equipment purchased

## World Wildlife Fund

### Final Financial Report

Submitted to the International Snow Leopard Trust

February 20, 2007

<b>Total Grant:</b>	\$ 8,000
<b>Project:</b>	Strengthening Partner's Capability for Snow Leopard Conservation in Bhutan
<b>Our Reference:</b>	1628
<b>Date Awarded:</b>	January 12, 2006
<b>Grant Period:</b>	January 1, 2006 - December 31, 2007
<b>Reporting Period:</b>	June, 2006 - December 2007

#### Expenditures

	Original Budget	Actual Expenditures	Balance
Salaries (including benefits)*	\$0	\$0	\$0
Third Party Fees & Expenses	0	0	0
Grant Agreements	0	0	0
Workshop, Meeting and Training Costs	0	0	0
Publication	0	0	0
Field Supplies	5299	5299	0
Equipment	1,510	1,510	0
Construction & Infrastructure	0	0	0
<b>Total Direct Costs</b>	<b>6,809</b>	<b>6,809</b>	<b>0</b>
Indirect Costs @ 17.5%	1,191	1,191	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$8,000</b>	<b>\$8,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>

Additional funders of this project include WWF-UK (\$4,185 for balance of field supplies and equipment)

**Revised Work Plan**

Objective	Activities	Who	When
1. Training on wildlife monitoring techniques including SLIMS	1.1. Classroom training for officers 1.2. (decide where spatial analysis is done)	(Raghu) NCF-ISLT	Early April 2007 (2 days)
	1.3. Classroom training for frontline staff (	Raghu) NCF-ISLT	Early April, 2007
2. Wildlife monitoring surveys	2.1. Survey planning (Level I) Word Wildlife Fund	NCD-WWFB (+NCFISLT)	Early April, 2007
	2.2. Level I survey in most of potential habitat in Bhutan 2.3. (identify areas for camera trapping) 2.4. (prey monitoring encounter rate etc.)	NCD-WWFB (+NCFISLT)	April-May, 2007
	2.5. Analysis and reporting	NCD-WWFB (+NCFISLT)	June-July, 2007

**Table 2. List of survey field supplies and equipment procured**

Items	Quantity	Amount (US \$)
Sleeping bags	19 numbers	2322.22
Walking Boots	18 pairs	2140.00
Rucksack	19 numbers	1055.55
Tent (4 men)	10 numbers	3211.11
Sleeping mat	16 numbers	205.55
Rain Gears	15 numbers	550.00
Binoculars	9 numbers	1510.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>10,994.43</b>