



2020 Annual Report

About us

The Snow Leopard Network (SLN) is a worldwide organization dedicated to facilitating the exchange of information between individuals around the world for the purpose of snow leopard conservation. Our membership includes experts, practitioners and researchers in the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

www.snowleopardnetwork.org

Key 2020 Highlights

- A new Steering Committee elected at the end of 2020, for the next 3 years. A new SLN Executive Director took up her new role to support the Steering Committee and the network.
- The SLN Training initiative launched, with over 100 snow leopard practitioners participating
- Over 400 participants mobilized through interactive Webinars, with country updates and sharing of the latest science and conservation
- SLN website refreshed, which allows active sharing and forms the platform for new initiatives. Our Bibliography continues with 30 new publications being added in 2020
- GSLEP Program supported through a capacity building platform on snow leopard research and conservation approaches

1. SLN Steering Committee:

The SLN Steering Committee Elections were held this year. Members were invited to nominate their candidates in October, 2020 and voting was conducted in November-December 2020.

Our 2018-2020 outgoing SLN Steering Committee included:

Lu Zhi, Ph.D. (People's Republic of China) - Chair
Belinda Wright (India) - Member
Jaffar Ud Din (Pakistan) - Member
Kubanychbek Jumabay Uulu (Kyrgyzstan) - Member
Li Juan, Ph.D. (People's Republic of China) - Member
Sandro Lovari, Ph.D. (Italy) - Member
Som B Ale, Ph.D. (Nepal) - Member

We wish to thank them for all their time, participation and inputs to the network, during their tenure. They have been instrumental in the 2020 effort to make the best use of the SLN platform during the global pandemic.

Our new Steering Committee for 2021-2023 was elected in December 2020 and consists of:

Sandro Lovari (Italy) – Chairperson
Belinda Wright (India) - Member
Madhu Chetri (Nepal) - Member
Orjan Johansson (Sweden) - Member
Purevjav Lkhagvajav (Mongolia) – Member
Wali Modaqiq (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan) - Member
Xiao Lingyun, (China) – Member

We wish them a very warm welcome. On a historical note: this is the first time that committee members from Mongolia and Islamic Republic of Afghanistan are joining the Steering Committee.

2. Our Executive Director

Dr. Justine Shanti Alexander, took over as Executive Director of SLN, from Dr. Charudutt Mishra, beginning 1st January, 2020, for an initial period of 5 years. After completing her Ph.D. on snow leopards in China, Justine has continued to dedicate her work to snow leopard conservation. In 2016 she began working as Regional Ecologist with the Snow Leopard Trust. Her work focusses on supporting conservation efforts in China, Pakistan, India, Kyrgyzstan, and Mongolia. She also engaged in providing technical support to GSLEP and PAWS efforts, and has published a number of scientific papers.

This year, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Justine, guided the Network into a new and virtual interactive space, where we introduced a variety of online training initiatives, Webinars and paper discussions. We found that this was particularly important during the COVID-19 pandemic, encouraging interaction between members, the network, and as well as practitioners from around the globe.

3. Working Groups

In 2020, two working groups have been active in supporting the Network. This includes a working group on Membership (led by Dan Prain) and Communication (led by Sherry Young). These working groups have helped support our emphasis on supporting members and reaching out to the snow leopard and wider conservation community. Please note that all members are welcome to join a working group close to their interest and skills, subject to the Steering Committee approval.

4. Membership + Website

In 2020, SLN moved our website to a new WordPress platform and moved our listserv to a new Google Group mailing list. During this move, we migrated the whole membership after requesting members to confirm their continuing

interest in being part of SLN. The current listed membership of [461 SLN members](#), are therefore all 'active' members. If by chance you know of an individual who had been a member and has not yet confirmed their interest please encourage him/her to [sign up](#).

In 2020, the website had 25,600 page views and 6550 unique viewer visits. The most popular page was, "Applications for Trainings". The website continues to take shape and incorporates online trainings, conservation and research tools, the Bibliography, information on the grants program and an active blog. We aim it to make this a "go to place", for updates on snow leopard research and conservation. Members should feel free to submit blog articles or conservation/research tools that others might find useful. Please contact the [Program Coordinator](#) with ideas.

5. Bibliography

The SLN Bibliography is one of our recognized assets as a Network that has been active since the early 2000s. This is both of a historical as well as current scientific interest. It includes papers or reports dating back to early 1900s. The SLN Bibliography currently contains over 1500 articles or reports (30 added in 2020), with members very actively contributing to the database. These documents are available for all members and maybe of interest for scientific reviews or endeavours.

6. SLN Training Initiatives

Training initiatives have come into focus this year. SLN, in collaboration with the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP), Snow Leopard Trust (SLT), Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF), Snow Leopard Conservation Foundation-Mongolia (SLCF), Snow Leopard Foundation-Pakistan (SLF), Shan Shui Conservation Centre (Shan Shui), University of Bourgogne Franche-Comte, Centre for Technology Alternatives in Rural Areas-IIT-Mumbai, Panthera, Duquesne University, University of Delaware, University of St. Andrews and University of Capetown (SEEC), brought together over 100 snow leopard practitioners from across the world in a new interactive training forum for snow leopard conservation. A huge thank you to all the facilitators and participants for contributing to this effort.

A significant number of members had their ability to carry out plans for fieldwork and research limited across the range. Recognizing this constraint and responding to requests from members, SLN sought to turn this period of uncertainty into an opportunity. Since early summer, SLN has expanded its online platform in an effort to provide a new forum for exchange and learning. Six training modules were hosted, covering a range of key snow leopard conservation themes and drawing on the latest knowledge from experts and an open dialogue with practitioners. Each module consisted of multiple sessions held over the course of a month, with participants learning about camera trap surveys, community conservation, social research, ungulate surveying, genetics,

and population distribution surveying. Special thanks to the partner organizations, many facilitators and SLN members who joined us.

The training in numbers was:

- 6 snow leopard research and conservation modules conducted over 6 months
- Over 60 hours of online discussions and learning
- 100 snow leopard practitioners from across the world participated in the training events, with an average attendance of 24 participants per module
- SLN awarded a total of 86 certificates to participants for successfully completing each module (Our criteria for issuing a certificate was quite demanding, requiring attendance of all live classes of each module).
- 19 resource people sharing good practices (60% women facilitators)

Do note that the 2020 training platform is available online for practitioners to come back to, as and when they need. Anyone interested in the modules should visit [Snow Leopard Network's website](#) to learn more. At the beginning of 2021, Modules [one](#), [two](#), [four](#), [five](#), and [six](#) are available as online seminars. The recordings can also be watched via our [YouTube playlist channels](#). The training initiative will be carried forward in 2021.

7. Webinars

SLN launched a series of virtual Webinars and paper discussions over the year. The Webinar series was initiated with our Steering Committee Chair, Dr. Lu Zhi, reflecting on China's conservation experience. Our subsequent Webinars consisted of a range of country updates, as well as some other topics, including Population Assessment of the World's Snow Leopards (PAWS), genetics and snow leopard conservation, from experts in the field.

We also held a series of scientific publication discussions entitled "Snow Leopard Conversations", bringing into focus the latest snow leopard research findings. This was facilitated by our Steering Committee member, Dr. Sandro Lovari. It included a range of topics such as eco-system services, prey interaction and snow leopard reproduction. These virtual events were attended by members of SLN, as well non-members.

The webinars in numbers:

- 8 Webinars over 6 months
- 16 guest speakers and discussants from China, UK, Mongolia, India, Italy, Sweden, Nepal, Russia (50% women speakers)
- 412 participants across all webinars

We thank all the individuals and organizations that contributed to this effort. This includes Shan Shui Conservation Centre/Peking University, WWF-Mongolia, University of St Andrews, GSLEP, Raghu Chundawat and Joe Fox, Shey Phoksundo National Park office- Dolpa, University of Illinois – Chicago, WWF-Russia, National Centre for Biological Sciences-Bangalore (NCBS), Panthera, Snow Leopard Conservation Foundation-Mongolia (SLCF) and Snow Leopard Trust (SLT).

8. SLN Communications

During 2020, SLN continued to actively share news and information from members and others via the Google mailing group, our website, SLN Twitter and YouTube account.

- SLN now has 1,300 followers on Twitter @SnowLeopardNet (an increase of 40% in the last 1 year).
- An [SLN YouTube Account](#) was created in July 2020. By the end of 2020 we had 57 subscribers and 1,636 'views'.

9. SLN partnership with the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP).

The GSLEP Program continues as a critical alliance of governments, international and national organizations, conservationists and researchers working together for snow leopard conservation. SLN partnered with GSLEP on a number of projects in 2020 with a focus on supporting the Population Assessment of the World's Snow Leopard Program (PAWS) and the GSLEP Steering Committee Meeting.

1. GSLEP Steering Committee Meeting

The GSLEP Steering Committee (SC) Meeting took place on snow leopard day – October 23rd, 2020. The Snow Leopard Network hosted a virtual pre-event to the GSLEP SC meeting, on Thursday October 22. The meeting brought Snow Leopard Network members together with the GSLEP SC participants to discuss snow leopard conservation from a global perspective. The SLN Steering Committee member – Dr. Juan Li – gave a brief overview presentation on the global status of snow leopard threats and opportunities for conservation. Dr. Juan Li has been a leading figure in carrying out global assessments of snow leopard responses to climate change, predicting global distributions and identifying key geographic areas for conservation priority. After the presentation, a panel discussion highlighted the need for continued global collaborations in snow leopard conservation. Dr. Koustubh Sharma from the GSLEP Program highlighted the SLN-GSLEP partnership. The presentation can be viewed [here](#). A total of 35 participants took part.

2. PAWS Summit

Population Assessment of the World's Snow leopards (PAWS) is a collective initiative led by the 12 snow leopard range countries' governments with support of several partner organizations. It is coordinated by the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP). 2020 marks the mid-point of the implementation of PAWS. A virtual PAWS Summit was organized, on the sidelines of the GSLEP Steering Committee Meeting, to accelerate the rigorous assessment of snow leopard populations at the global level.

SLN supported the PAWS Summit with the 'Solve my Problem' Sessions which built on the GSLEP/SLN PAWS Training modules. In this first session of the PAWS Summit, a set of challenges were identified by PAWS partners to organize

an interactive Problem Solving session. Individuals that signed up to the PAWS Summit were asked if they face particular challenges in the planning or implementation of PAWS. The challenges that emerged in this preliminary exchange formed the basis of the 'Solve my Problem' Sessions. We invited 10 technical experts as facilitators in breakout rooms for a set of 6 challenges. Topics that were covered included:

- [PAWS Study Design](#)
- [PAWS Data Processing](#)
- PAWS abundance data Analysis (includes low density sites)
- [Genetics sampling for PAWS surveys](#)
- [Complimentary surveys including prey and threats](#)
- [Funding opportunities](#)

Following the breakout sessions, topic facilitators summarized what each challenge represented and how they could be addressed in practice ([Link to discussions](#)). Overlaps amongst the different topics were identified and solutions discussed. The session engaged **79 participants** from across the world. The 10 facilitators also provided valuable suggestions on how PAWS could evolve to take on wider conservation and research agendas.

3. PAWS Capacity Building Initiative

SLN partnered with GSLEP in offering 3 modules as part of the training initiative that focused on PAWS. In accordance to the thematic priorities of the Bishkek Declaration 2017, the GSLEP program has developed several training toolkits including those for occupancy based distribution surveys, camera trapping and genetic surveys of snow leopards for spatial capture recapture analysis of density. This year SLN supported bring these training toolkits into action through the SLN training initiative and PAWS Summit.

10. Miscellaneous Support

SLN assisted a Wildlife Conservation Masters student, from Marwell Zoo and University of Southampton, in distributing her Masters project survey. She was able to reach participants in all snow leopard range countries and used the results of this survey to explore the individual traits and socio-political contexts which can lead towards potential transboundary collaboration. We also supported WWF-India in collating a list of the SLN Bibliography for a review of global snow leopard conservation and research. SLN aims to act as a bridge for snow leopard research and conservationists, if we can support in anyway please contact our [Program Coordinator](#) with ideas.

Thanking all members, SLN Steering Committee and the Program Coordinator for all your support.