



2021 Annual Report

About us

The Snow Leopard Network (SLN) is a global 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 2021 Highlights

- **Growing membership.** In 2021 the number of individual members increased to 534 and organizational members to 24. This represents a 17% increase from the previous year in members actively supporting and participating in SLN's activities.
- **Increased sharing capacity.** We hosted 11 webinars and 10 training sessions for members, which have engaged over 700 participants to stimulate the exchange of knowledge/skills and identify issues of shared concern.
- **Enhanced knowledge exchange.** Snow Leopard News was launched in June 2021 to collate and showcase the latest research and conservation practice from across the range.
- **New outreach initiative.** SLN hosted its first Twitter Conference in collaboration with GSLEP, WWF, SLT and Panthera, reaching 1.6 million views.
- **Expanded scientific library.** The Snow Leopard Bibliography grew by 51 publications, a 40% increase in annual new publications from 2020.

A message from the SLN Steering Committee Chair

Dear SLN members,

When I look back at the activities which occurred in 2021, I wish to congratulate our Executive Director and all members of the Steering Committee on their initiatives and contributions, as well as with the members of Working Groups and all others who participated in SLN activities, which have been pretty lively: please, see below for yourself.

We made the best of a bad situation: due to the Covid travel restrictions, meetings in person have turned into video conferencing. Thus, quite a few stimulating and informative webinars, especially training modules, were

organised and attended, in spite of obvious difficulties because of the different world time zones. In this context, the help of our Program Coordinator was just invaluable and we have to thank her for that. Most fortunately, thanks to the action of Som B. Ale and Brad Clement, the Pangje Foundation has promised funds to resume the SLN grant system, which will be dedicated to the organisation of conservation meetings only, for the time being. Also - last, but not least - we have been setting up our newsletter Snow Leopard News, which will appear with issue n.1 in the course of 2022.

All in all, rather proudly, I think I can say we did good... and we will try to do even better in 2022, with the cooperation of all of you!

Sandro Lovari, SLN Steering Committee Chair

1. SLN Steering Committee:

Our current 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

Steering Committee members have been very active in the first year of their tenure. We wish to thank them for their inputs into shaping the year for SLN and their active participation in many of our events and initiatives. A special thanks to the individual Steering Committee members who are leading specific SLN programs.

2. Working Groups

In 2021, two Working Groups were active in supporting the Network: a group on Membership (led by Dan Prain) and another on Communication (Sherry Young – editing and YouTube communications and Franchini-Silveira – Twitter and Public promotions/announcements). These Working Groups have helped support our emphasis on membership registration and reaching out to the wider conservation community. They are run by volunteers, including students and early career professions. This has given a fresh impetus to our communication efforts.

The Communication working group continued to focus its wider communication on two platforms: Twitter and YouTube. Franchini joined us in 2021 and there has been a jump in [SLN's Twitter](#) presence and outreach. SLN now has 1,955 followers on Twitter (@SnowLeopardNet (an increase of 50% over the last year). The [SLN YouTube Account](#) now consists of 169 videos with 216 subscribers (an increase of 74% over the last year) and 8900 'views'.

On Snow Leopard Day- Oct 23rd- SLN's Communications team welcomed members to send in any short, yet newsworthy stories about snow leopard conservation and the people engaged in those efforts. These were shared on Twitter under the hashtag [#snowleopardstories](#) on Snow Leopard Day. At least 10 members took part.

Please note that all members are welcome to join a Working Group close to their interest and skills to further contribute to the Network's activities.

3. Membership + Website

In 2021, our membership grew to [534 SLN individual members](#) (451 individual full members and 83 affiliates) and to [24 organizational members](#). This represents an increase of 17% in total membership from the previous year. In addition 9 organizations from the wider conservation community have now joined the network as [partners](#). For information, organizational memberships include organizations, institutions and agencies that promote conservation or sustainable development of mountain environments in snow leopard range. Our formally listed partners are those organizations or networks that work on wider conservation issues and which have supported our trainings, webinars and activities in 2021 (Appendix 1). If by chance you know of any relevant organization that is not currently a member please encourage them to [sign up](#).

This year we have added a [Membership page](#) to the website which lists all current individual and organizational members. Furthermore we have updated the [Partners page](#) on our website and have included there the logos/websites of all our organizational members and partners. Within this same [Partners](#) page, members can submit ideas for our blog post, potential trainings and webinars. This is a great way for members to share their latest information and ideas for the network.

In 2021, the website had 30,228 page views (15% increase) and 6727 unique viewer visits. The most popular page was the "Homepage" followed by the "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. As mentioned in the last annual report we aim to make this a "go to place", for updates on snow leopard research and conservation. We also hope it is a place where members can find information about each other's work and connect.

A special thanks to Jeff Brown, SLT's Senior Technology Architect, for his unwavering and continuous support to SLN's website and activities.

4. SLN Training Initiative

Our flagship SLN training initiative continued successfully this year as an online training forum for snow leopard conservation. They brought together over 270 snow leopard practitioners from across the world.

In 2021, SLN conducted 10 new training modules: Active listening in community conservation; Environmentally and socially responsible tourism in snow leopard landscapes; SMART conservation and research approaches; SMART in Russian; Conservation communication introduction; PARTNERS monitoring and evaluation; Fundamental statistical tools; Introduction to R language in Mandarin; Conservation education module; and Grant and report writing (Appendix 1). These have been marked by the breadth of the topics covered and our effort to include languages from the snow leopard range. Two sessions were held in Russian and Mandarin.

A special thanks to the partner organizations and many facilitators, who volunteered their time and effort, to bring these sessions to participating SLN members (Appendix 1).

The 2021 training statistics are:

- 10 new snow leopard research and conservation modules.
- 44 resource persons sharing good practices (with women as 60% of resource persons).
- Over 60 hours of online discussions and learning.
- Approximately 230 participants took part in the training events, with an average attendance of 23 participants per module.
- SLN awarded a total of 122 certificates to participants for successfully completing each module (Our criteria for issuing a certificate was quite demanding, requiring attendance to all live classes of each module).

As in the previous year, the training modules remain available online for practitioners to come back to, as and when they need. For members who may have missed them and are interested in the modules, do visit [our Training page](#). The recordings can also be watched via our [YouTube playlist channels](#). Feedback on the training modules continues to be very positive with the wider conservation community using these resources.

5. Webinars

SLN continued our series of [virtual Webinars](#) in 2021. The Steering Committee encouraged these to take on broader themes including other species such as the Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*), brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) and bird life. We also made a special effort to capture current thinking on critical snow leopard conservation issues including climate change, women's engagement in conservation and snow leopard individual identification concerns. These often took the form of panel discussions with panelists and resource persons from different teams and countries sharing their work. 'Country updates' on teams working across the range continued and have become a rich source of knowledge for all members. In 2021 these covered teams from Nepal, China and Afghanistan.

The following statistics relate to the 2021 webinars:

- 11 webinars (Appendix 1)
- 32 guest speakers and discussants working across Afghanistan, Australia, Canada, China, France, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, and USA (with women as 47% of speakers)

- 479 participants across all 2021 webinars

6. Snow Leopard News

A highlight of the year is the launch of SLN's annual 'open-access' newsletter entitled '[Snow Leopard NEWS](#)'. Through a series of short notes and research contributions, this publication aims to encourage further exchange amongst snow leopard practitioners and researchers (one of the 2021-2023 Steering Committee's priorities). The newsletter will collate and make available the latest information on snow leopard ecology and conservation. Its focus includes not only the snow leopard, but also its prey and the carnivores that share the landscape with this majestic cat. Snow Leopard NEWS is also committed to featuring innovative conservation practices and policies that address threats to snow leopard habitats. The Editorial Team is made up of SLN Steering Committee members and invited SLN members. It is in the process of being registered as a fully fledged journal with the Swedish National Library.

The call for submissions to Snow Leopard NEWS was open during the second half of 2021. The first issue is expected to be out in 2022. We hope this will allow for greater collaboration, communication and sharing of knowledge, feeding into stronger and more effective conservation efforts in the field. We encourage teams to share their latest snow leopard research and conservation developments.

7. Twitter Conference

Twitter provides a unique platform for sharing across and learning from members. In December 2021 SLN decided to innovate and explore the potential of hosting an online conference- the 2021 Snow Leopard Twitter Conference. This was organized in close collaboration with [Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Program](#) (GSLEP), [Panthera](#), [WWF](#) and the [Snow Leopard Trust](#). The Twitter Conference topic focused on Unusual Snow Leopard Encounters- an opportunity for members to draw attention to emerging threats to snow leopards and unusual events that do not get reported through normal channels or in the literature. The conference also builds on the GSLEP Policy recommendation in 2020 that focuses on how to manage unusual encounters. The Twitter Conference Proceeding is available through this [link](#).

As this was our first time hosting a Twitter Conference and we were not sure what the response would be from members and the wider public. We were delighted to have members take part from across the snow leopard range and world (including government and NGO field staff, organizations, academics). A total of 30 presentations over the two days kicked off discussions. The format helped participants articulate their messages very simply and visually reaching 1.6 million twitter 'views'. Posts related to the hashtag #EncounterUncia can be [viewed here](#) and the awards are listed in Appendix 2. This conference highlighted how the snow leopard community can mobilize a much larger audience and public involvement than SLN had previously reached. We look forward to working with partners again next year to keep innovating and bringing attention to new themes.

8. Bibliography

The SLN Bibliography continues to be one of the assets of the Network. As can be viewed on the search engine the bibliography includes papers or reports dating back to early 1900s. The SLN Bibliography currently contains over 1529 articles or reports (51 peer reviewed articles added in 2021), with members actively contributing to the database. This is an upward trend (40% increase in annual new publications in 2021) that we hope will continue! These documents are accessible to all members and may serve for the preparation of scientific reviews or endeavours.

9. SLN partnership with GSLEP

[Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Program](#) (GSLEP) continues as one of SLN's key partners. The GSLEP alliance of governments, international and national organizations, conservationists and researchers has been particularly active in 2021 considering policy, illegal wildlife trade and population assessments. These are all of close relevance to SLN.

SLN partnered with GSLEP on a number of initiatives during the year:

- SLN conducted a pre-event to the annual GSLEP Steering Committee meeting in October 2021. The SLN Steering Committee took the opportunity to launch [Snow Leopard NEWS](#), a new platform committed to showcasing work undertaken by conservation practitioners at different levels across snow leopard landscapes. View the launch of Snow Leopard NEWS [here](#).
- A session on “Stories from the field” contributed to the PAWS Update event in November 2021. Partner teams from China, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan shared recent snow leopard survey experiences. This Story session gave attendees an opportunity to discuss field challenges and opportunities in researching snow leopards. The event can be accessed through the following [link](#).
- The Twitter Conference as noted above helped bring attention to the GSLEP policy document on Unusual encounters.
- GSLEP led two of the SLN Training modules of special interest to them, bringing awareness to key policy recommendations on [Tourism](#) and [Education](#).
- SLN assisted the PAWS Threat working group. A PhD student from St. Andrews circulated a survey invitation and link to the network to help with her research, in collaboration with the PAWS Threat Working Group, looking at methods to assess threats to snow leopards.

Our collaboration with GSLEP is proving a valuable means to give access by members on what is happening at the policy level and the chance to inform it.

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

Appendix 1: Partners in the Training Initiative and webinars

We would especially like to thank the following organizations and individuals for their support:

Table 1: SLN Module partners and resource persons affiliations

Training Modules	Module Partners & Resource persons affiliations
Module 1: Camera trap surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Program
Module 2: Ungulate surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nature Conservation Foundation ● Snow Leopard Conservation Foundation Mongolia ● Snow Leopard Foundation Pakistan ● ShanShui Conservation Center
Module 3: Community Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nature Conservation Foundation ● Snow Leopard Trust ● University of Bourgogne Franche-Comte
Module 4: Social Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nature Conservation Foundation ● Snow Leopard Trust ● Centre for Technology Alternatives in Rural Areas-IIT Mumbai
Module 5: Genetics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Panthera ● Duquesne University ● University of Delaware
Module 6: Distribution Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Global Snow Leopard & Ecosystem Protection Program ● Snow Leopard Trust ● University of St. Andrews ● Centre for Statistics in Ecology, Environment and Conservation, University of Capetown
Module 7: Active listening in community conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● University of Bourgogne Franche-Comte ● Nature Conservation Foundation ● Snow Leopard Trust
Module 8: Environmentally and Socially responsible Tourism in Snow Leopard Landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Voygr Expeditions and High Asia Habitat Fund ● Baavan Bagh Aap Aur Van ● ShanShui Conservation Center ● Birding Beijing ● Ismail Shariff - Independent nature and wildlife photographer ● University of Oxford ● Snow Leopard Foundation-Pakistan ● Nature Conservation Foundation ● Snow Leopard Trust

Module 9: SMART conservation and research approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
Module 10: Conservation Communication Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) ● Global Snow Leopard & Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP) ● Voygr Expeditions and the High Asia Habitat Fund ● Conservation Optimism and INKLINE ● American University-Bishkek ● Snow Leopard Trust
Module 11: PARTNERS Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nature Conservation Foundation ● INRAE (France's National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment) ● Snow Leopard Trust
Module 12: Fundamental Statistical Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES), Indian Institute of Science (IISC) ● Museum für Naturkunde-Berlin
Module 13: Conservation Education Module	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Global Snow Leopard & Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP) ● University of Vermont ● Land of Snow Leopard Network (LOSL) ● NCF - Nature Classrooms
Module 14: Unusual Snow Leopard Encounters (<i>Deferred to 2022</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Snow Leopard Conservancy ● Snow Leopard Trust ● Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Program
Module 15: Grant and Report Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Pallas's cat International Conservation Alliance (PICA) ● Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS) ● Nordens Ark - Sweden ● Snow Leopard Trust

Table 2: SLN Webinar resource person & facilitator affiliations

SLN Webinars 2021	Resource persons & facilitators
1. International partnerships for conservation efforts in snow leopard habitat	Charlotte Hacker, Yunchuan Dai and Ranjini Murali - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Duquesne University ● Snow Leopard Conservancy ● Institute for Ecology and Environmental Resources, Chongqing Academy of Social Sciences ● Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Program
2. Snow leopards in Nepal: Satellite Telemetry Update	Sheren Shreshta, Samundra Subba and Orjan Johansson - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WWF Nepal
3. Snow Leopard Conservation in Wakhan, Afghanistan	Sorosh Poya Faryabi, Eve Bohnett and Justine Shanti Alexander - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WCS Afghanistan
4. Snow Leopard Individual Identification: Increasing precision in camera-trap abundance estimates?	Orjan Johansson, Abinand Reddy, David Borchers, Justine Shanti Alexander, Koustubh Sharma, Manvi Sharma, Paul van Dam-Bates - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● University of St. Andrew ● Global Snow Leopard & Ecosystem Protection Program ● Nature Conservation Foundation ● Snow Leopard Trust
5. Over 100 years of Snow Leopard research	Rishi Kumar Sharma, Rashmi Singh and Raghu Chundawat - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WWF India ● Ambedkar University ● Baavan Bagh Aap Aur Van
6. Snow Leopard Conservation in Kyrgyz Republic	Zairbek Kubanychbekov, Rahim Kulenbekov, Kenje Sultanbaeva, Tanya Rosen and Sorosh Poya Faryabi - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ibirs Foundation ● WCS Afghanistan
7. Birds in Snow Leopard Habitats	John MacKinnon, Terry Townshend, Yuhuan Li - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ShanShui Conservation Centre ● Birding Beijing
8. Climate change & Snow Leopards	Rinjan Shrestha, XiangYing Shi, Tserennadmid Nadia Mijiddorj, Sibylle Noras - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WWF-Canada ● ShanShui Conservation Centre ● Snow Leopard Conservation Foundation (SLCF) - Mongolia

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sibylle Noras - Media, Internet and Knowledge Management
9. Women & Science - Part 2	<p>Bermet Tursunkulova, Imogene Cancellare, Manvi Sharma, Justine Shanti Alexander</p> <p>-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● American University of Central Asia ● University of Delaware ● Nature Conservation Foundation ● Snow Leopard Trust
10. Snow leopards in the land of mountain deities	<p>Awang and LingYun Xiao</p> <p>-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plateau Nature Conservancy
11. 50 years Eurasian lynx in Switzerland – Experience with the reintroduction of a large carnivore	<p>Christine Breitenmoser-Würsten, Urs Breitenmoser and Sandro Lovari</p> <p>-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group

Appendix 2: Twitter Conference Awards

The [#EncounterUncia](#) GRAND WINNER PRIZE [@lobzangncf](#) & [@Dorjayncf](#) for the presentation “[Innovative predator-proof corral designs](#)”

SECOND PRIZE (tied):

- o [@snowleopard_ncf](#): “[Traditional Mitigation Strategies - tales from GYU](#)”
- o [@sma_kachel](#): “[The translocation of a snow leopard](#)”

OUTSTANDING MENTION:

- o [@Choidogjamts2](#): “[Snow Leopard Encounter in the Steppe capacity building efforts](#)”
- o [@snowleopardkg](#): “[Outreach efforts on handling unusual #encounters](#)”
- o [@wwfRU](#): “[Removing the border fences for #wildlife](#)”
- o [@chacker414](#): “[Foxlights as a mitigation strategy](#)”
- o [@snowleopard_ncf](#): “[A snow leopard in the trees](#)”
- o [@biologistimo](#): “[Two sightings, one day: lactating snow leopards in The Valley of the Cats, China](#)”