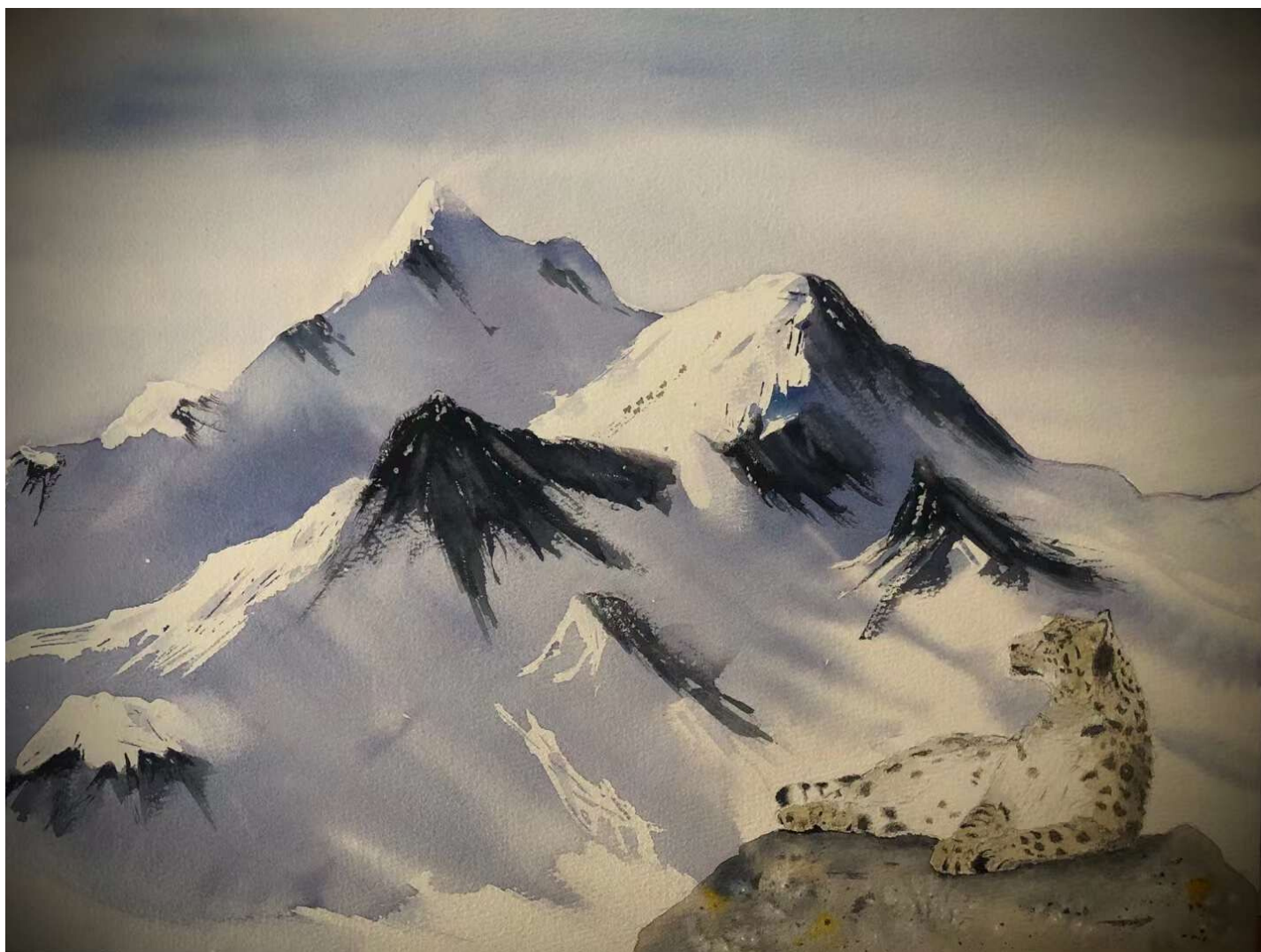


SNOW LEOPARD NETWORK

ANNUAL REPORT

JAN-DEC 2022

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF THE SNOW LEOPARD NETWORK



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

www.snowleopardnetwork.org

KEY HIGHLIGHTS 2022

SNOW LEOPARD NETWORK | 02

A SNOW LEOPARD JOURNAL

The launch of the snow leopard community's very own registered peer reviewed journal 'Snow Leopard Reports' along with its first 3 scientific articles.

SUPPORT TO GRASSROOT CONSERVATION

The re-launch of SLN's Grant Program- in partnership with the Pangje Foundation – with two capacity building projects funded in India and Kyrgyzstan.

20 YEARS OF SNOW LEOPARD CONSERVATION

Celebration of SLN's 20th anniversary taking the form of previous Steering Committee members reflecting on snow leopard conservation achievements and challenges across time.

DIALOGUE ON GSLEP PRIORITIES FOR 2023

SLN members emphasize 'Integrated Conservation' as a key priority for snow leopard conservation in 2023.

CONTINUED CAPACITY EXCHANGE

SLN hosted 10 webinars and 10 training sessions for members, which have engaged over 500 participants to stimulate the exchange of knowledge/skills and identify issues of shared concern.



A MESSAGE FROM THE SLN STEERING COMMITTEE CHAIR

It is with mixed feelings that I undertake the task of writing this introductory address. Time has flown away so “darn” quickly in the last three years...

If I recall in my mind’s eye all that has been done meanwhile, I see some fifteen modules with hundreds of on-line participants, a few seminars, a number of discussion groups, the award of several grants and – last but not least – the birth and development from scratch of our new journal *Snow Leopard Reports*. I would say that, in spite of all limitations coming from Covid and anti-Covid restrictions, we could hardly have done more!

All this has been made possible because of the cooperation and support of all our partners and grant-giving donors, especially the Pangje Foundation, which have to be thanked.

I feel that the main “engines” behind all these activities have been our enthusiastic Executive Director, Justine Shanti Alexander, with the unfailing help of our Programme Coordinator, Rakhee Karumbaya, not to mention the cooperation of all members of the Steering Committee: Lingyun Xiao, Orjan Johansson, Belinda Wright, Wali Modaqiq, Purevjav Lkhagvajav and Madhu Chetri.

2023 will offer the opportunity to reinforce cooperation with teams working across the snow leopard range, to lead additional training modules and improve conservation information on this fascinating species.

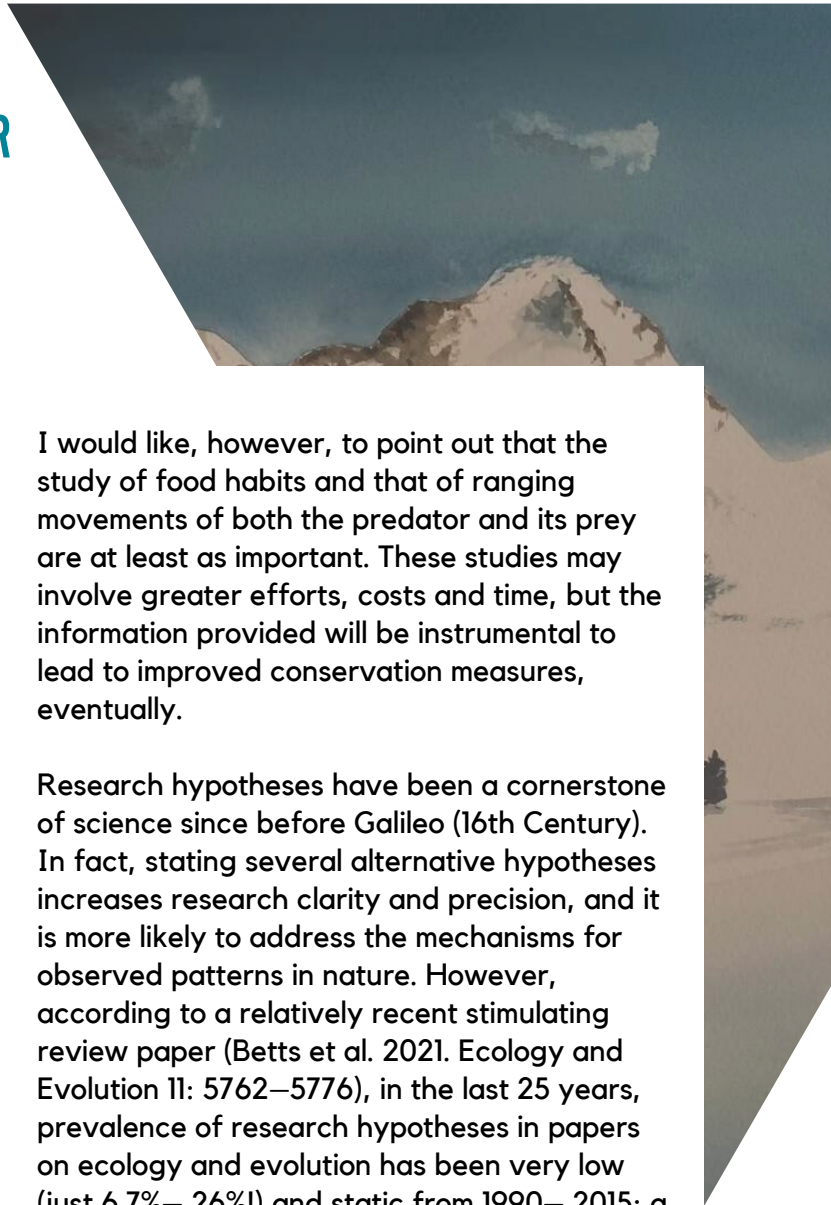
Lately, there has been an increase of studies on the snow leopard, which is good news. A comparatively great number of these studies has been based on camera/video traps, which is fine as camera traps allow the collection of basic important information.

I would like, however, to point out that the study of food habits and that of ranging movements of both the predator and its prey are at least as important. These studies may involve greater efforts, costs and time, but the information provided will be instrumental to lead to improved conservation measures, eventually.

Research hypotheses have been a cornerstone of science since before Galileo (16th Century). In fact, stating several alternative hypotheses increases research clarity and precision, and it is more likely to address the mechanisms for observed patterns in nature. However, according to a relatively recent stimulating review paper (Betts et al. 2021. *Ecology and Evolution* 11: 5762–5776), in the last 25 years, prevalence of research hypotheses in papers on ecology and evolution has been very low (just 6.7%– 26%!) and static from 1990– 2015: a pattern mirrored in an extensive literature search (N = 302,558 articles).

I would like to conclude these initial lines by encouraging snow leopard researchers, especially – but not only – PhD students, to sharpen their minds with research questions and hypotheses before they undertake a study, rather than just collecting data with no actual focus in mind. The quality of their work will be greatly increased.

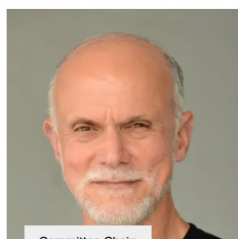
Sandro Lovari
SLN Steering Committee Chair



1. SLN STEERING COMMITTEE

SNOW LEOPARD NETWORK | 04

Our current Steering Committee (2021-2023) are midway through their SC mandate:



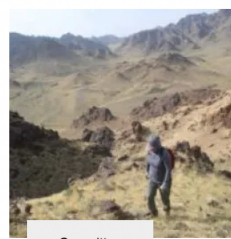
Committee Chair:
Sandro Lovari (Italy)



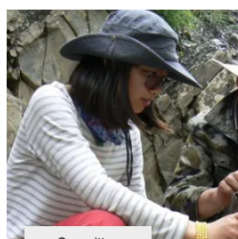
Committee member: Belinda Wright (India)



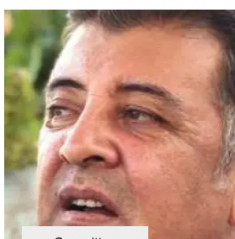
Committee member: Madhu Chetri (Nepal)



Committee member: Purejav Lkhagvajav (Mongolia)



Committee member: Xiao Lingyun (China)



Committee member: Wali Modaqiq (Islamic Republic of Afghanistan)



Committee member: Orjan Johansson (Sweden)



Executive Director: Justine Shanti Alexander (UK/France)

As always we rely on the SC members to guide SLN's overall strategy and accountability. In 2022 they took a lead and facilitated the establishment of 'Snow Leopard Reports' and were actively with us during many of our events and initiatives. Many thanks for their support.

2. MEMBERSHIP

591
MEMBERS

474 individual members
89 affiliate members
28 organizational members
9 Partners

Please do visit the [Membership page](#) or [Partner page](#) on our website, which lists all our current individual and organizational members.

If as a member you know of any Organizations which are not currently SLN organizational members, please do encourage them [to sign up here](#).

We thank the Membership Working Group (led by Dan Prain) for verifying all membership requests.

3. SNOW LEOPARD REPORTS

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The first issue of 'Snow Leopard REPORTS' is underway. The three articles published in the inaugural issue include:

- Risky business: red foxes killed when scavenging from snow leopard kills; Gustaf Samelius, Lingyun Xiao, Purevjav Lkhagvajav, Örjan Johansson
- Body measurements of free-ranging snow leopards across their range; Örjan Johansson, Bayarjargal Agvaantseren, Rodney Jackson, Shannon Kachel, Zairbek Kubanychbekov, Tom McCarthy, Charudutt Mishra, Stephane Ostrowski, Rahim Kulenbekov, Ali Madad Rajabi, Samundra Subba
- Snow leopard - human conflict as a conservation challenge - a review; Zalmay Moheb, Todd K. Fuller, Peter I. Zahler

'Snow Leopard Reports' now has an ISSN number (2004-5255) hosted by the Swedish National Library. Articles will receive DOIs, be indexed in databases and appear in search engines. You can find out more here: <https://publicera.kb.se/slr>

We thank the Journal Editors that are made up of SLN's Steering Committee. We also thank the Journal Editorial Board, which is made up of a number of SLN members, and helpful Reviewers. Next year's issue is already under consideration so please do submit your articles in a timely way.

4. SLN GRANT PROGRAM

It was a special pleasure to re-launch SLN's Grant Program in 2022. SLN's Grant Program have supported 72 projects since 2003. This year 13 proposals were received from 6 snow leopard range countries (Afghanistan, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal and Tajikistan), covering a range of training topics. **Two projects in India and Kyrgyzstan were supported through the Pangje Foundation, an SLN Organizational member.**

'VOLUNTEERS FOR NATURE: DEVELOPING AND TRAINING LOCAL VOLUNTEERS FOR NATURE EDUCATION'

led by Deepshikha Sharma and team from the Nature Conservation Foundation.

'ENHANCING CONSERVATION AWARENESS AMONG YOUTH THROUGH SCHOOL VISITS BY LOCAL RANGERS IN OSH OBLAST, KYRGYZSTAN'

led by Fatima Mannapbekova and colleagues from Panthera.

Thank you to **Pangje Foundation** for this valuable support. We hope that the contribution will catalyze funding from other Organizational members in the future. Thank you also to a dedicated set of reviewers for their support in this process.

SLN was also thrilled to see Shan Shui Conservation Center's special 2022 'With Snow Leopards' Grant Program get underway. The Grant Program is currently funding 3 research and conservation projects in Pakistan, Mongolia and Nepal.

The Training Grant Program is scheduled to continue into 2023 with the Pangje Foundation.

5. SLN/GSLEP INTERACTION

This year's GSLEP SC meeting had as one of its agenda items setting its priorities for 2023 as a Resolution for all range countries. SLN SC took the initiative to ask SLN members what they considered to be priorities that GSLEP could consider for 2023. This was done with the idea of sharing back with the GSLEP SC as part of their dialogue on such priorities. **It was particularly interesting that SLN members indicated that of the 4 priorities suggested 'Integrated Conservation Approach' emerged as members top priority (50%, n=21), followed by 20% (n=8) who suggested 'Climate Change' and 20% (n=8) who indicated 'PAWS', followed by 10% who voted for 'Unusual Encounters'.** This was the highest turnout for any SLN survey in last the 3 years (with 41 responses).

The Resolution draft discussion in GSLEP did indeed include the need to address these three themes in 2023 (See GSLEP meeting 2022 Bishkek Resolution adopted by the 10 range country governments). We cannot say whether or what extent our SLN member feedback contributed to this outcome but we are extremely pleased to see the recommendations reflected. This kind of dialogue between GSLEP and the community is a very promising development and one we hope to continue. A big thanks to SLN members who took part in the GSLEP poll or actively at the GSLEP meeting. Congratulations to the GSLEP Secretariat for organizing this first in-person meeting after three years.



SLN'S first gathering in Seattle 2002

6. SLN'S 20TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY

The network celebrated its 20th anniversary in September 2022 with an anniversary special Webinar. **This brought together many voices of previous Steering Committee members** - reflecting on both the past and future of the Network. This was a particularly rich and memorable event - with a call for more in-person exchange and interactions by SLN members in the coming year(s). Tom McCarthy, Yash Veer Bhatnagar, Muhammad Ali Nawaz, Sibylle Noras, Koustubh Sharma and Lingyun Xiao each presented on a different period of the snow leopard network timeline.



SLN's original logo

These contributions provoked a lot of discussion and interaction with members looking back on how everything started. The presenters tracked how the snow leopard community has continued to expand and evolve, reaching out to governments, international and national organizations and civil society. **They also underline how the snow leopard community demonstrates a remarkable ability to support fellow members and work across the range.** The next 20 years bring new challenges. We hope that the SLN community remains vibrant and supportive of collective action throughout these years!

7. SLN TRAINING INITIATIVES FOCUSSING ON 'EXCHANGE'

This year's SLN Training Initiative transformed into a Summer (June-July) and Winter (November-December) Program. **The Program was deliberately renamed 'Exchange' instead of 'Training' to reflect that they now aim to promote Capacity Exchange horizontally amongst members.** The two programs in 2022 brought together over 250 snow leopard practitioners across the globe in this unique online forum.

The topics covered in the Summer Program included - Mountain Ungulates, Climate Change, Participatory methods/right-based approaches to research and conservation, Community Conservation, Carnivore Sign Identifications, and Camera traps in the field. All recordings are available [here](#).

The Winter Exchange, again a series of mini modules, had our resource persons sharing updates from different High Asia settings: with contributions from teams working in Tajikistan, Nepal, China and Kyrgyzstan. **All sessions were offered with simultaneous translation in English and Russian.** All recordings are available [here](#). We would like to thank the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP) Secretariat for support in facilitating the Sessions.

"By analysing the many facets of conservation, these modules help researchers employ interdisciplinary solutions to address the complexities of studying snow leopards and engaging communities in conservation projects."
-2022 participant



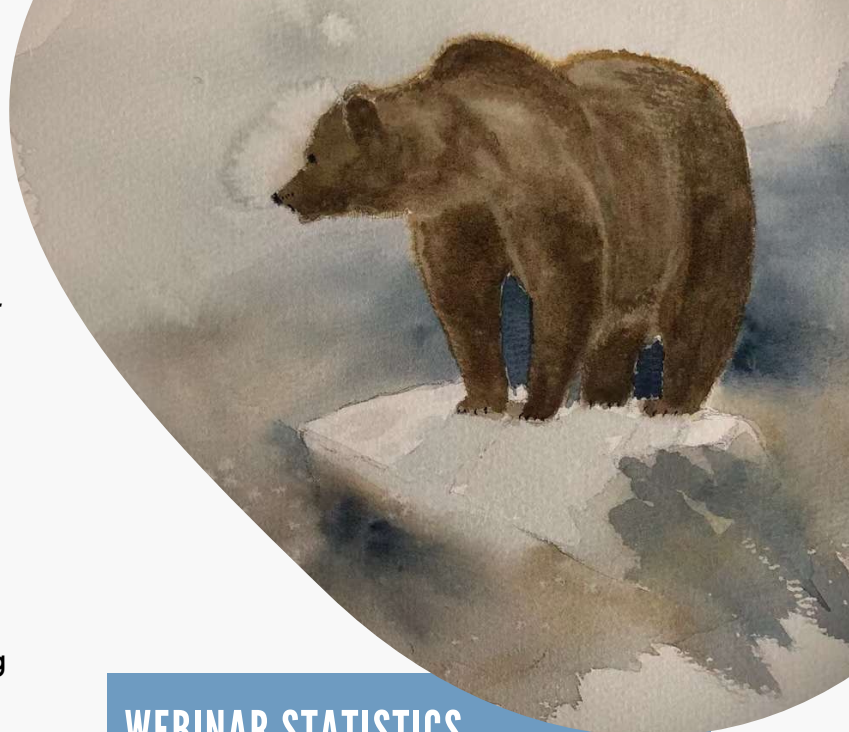
EXCHANGE PROGRAM STATISTICS:

- 10 snow leopard research and conservation modules
- 14 resource persons — (43% women resource persons)
- Approx. 18 hours of online discussions and learning
- 283 participants took part, with an average attendance of 28 participants/module.

8. WEBINARS

Our Webinar series continues to be one of our SLN flagship activities. **This year we focused on topics from outside the immediate snow leopard world**, but with large implications for it. This included the following topics: women & community conservation; revisiting climate change; snow leopard illegal wildlife trade; genetics of the Chinese mountain cat; understanding parasite transmissions in ungulates; climate risks for communities and conflict surrounding the Eurasian lynx (See Appendix 2).

There is now a collation of 29 past webinars available on our website. These add up to an extraordinary journey and each one is worth revisiting!



WEBINAR STATISTICS

- 10 Webinars
- 23 guest speakers & discussants working in India, Mongolia, China, Italy, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, USA, Australia, Belgium, Germany & Sweden – (63% women)
- 305 participants

9. SLN COMMUNICATION

Our website continues to play an important role across all SLN activities. It continues to feature our webinars, training modules, and hosting the Bibliography. Our continuing aim is to make this the "go to" place for updates on snow leopard research and conservation.

In 2022, the SLN website had 25,009 page views (17% decrease) and 6,224 unique view visits. The most popular page was the Members Profile page and the Training Grant Page.

A special thanks to Jeff Brown, Snow Leopard Trust's Senior Technology Architect, for troubleshooting the website.

SLN continues to focus its wider communication on two platforms: Twitter and YouTube. SLN now has 2,329 followers on Twitter @SnowLeopardNet (an increase of 19% from 2021).

The SLN YouTube Account now consists of 170 videos with 368 subscribers (an increase of 25% over the last year) and 8,674 'views' in 2022.

We thank Flavia Franchini-Silveira for her creativity and dedication in supporting SLN's communication effort.

FAVOURITE VIDEO THIS YEAR

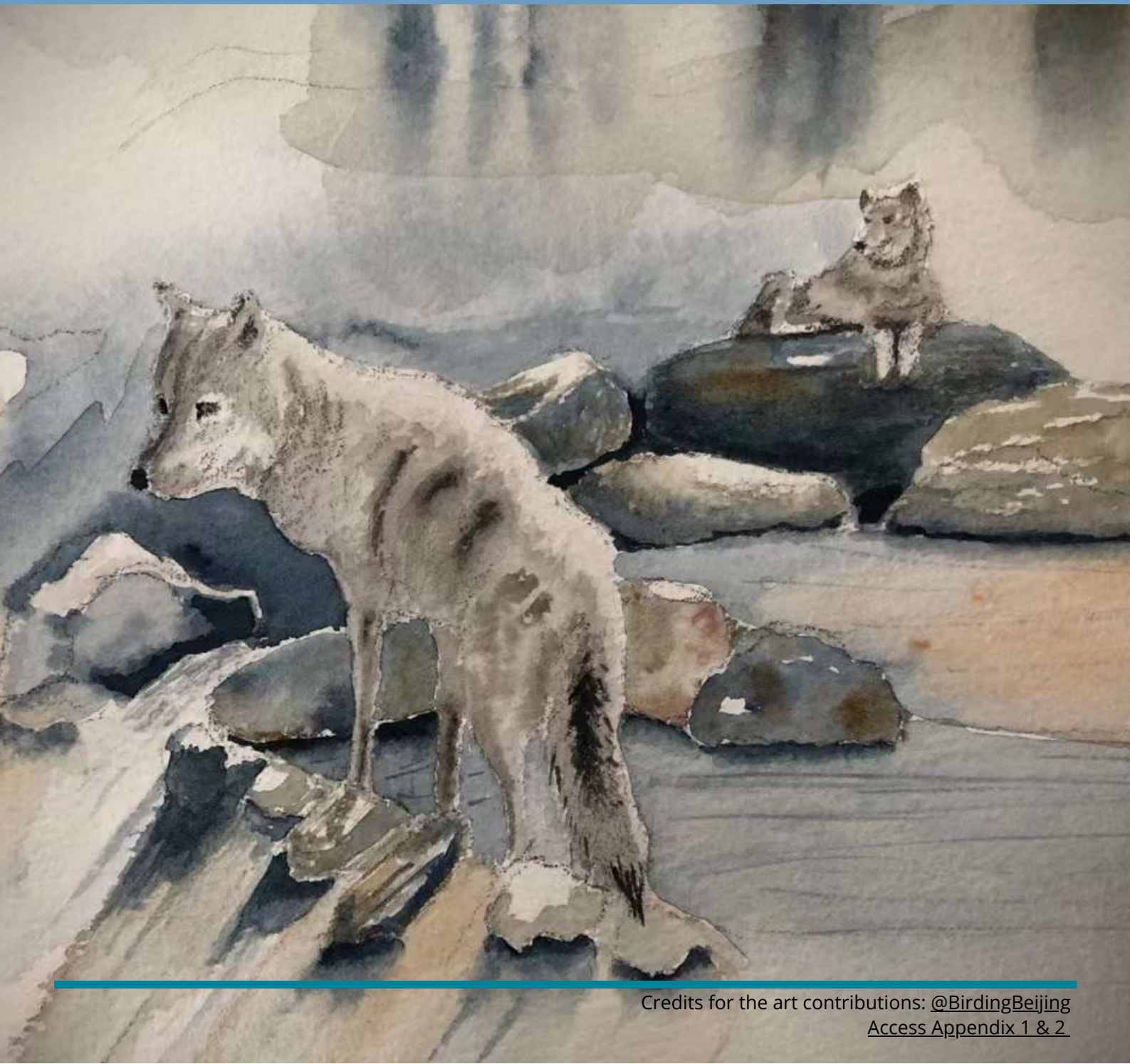
Module 6: Occupancy
Module 3: PAWS SCR analysis

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

1550 articles & reports

The [SLN Bibliography](#) currently contains **1550 articles or reports (42 peer reviewed articles added in 2022)**. This continues to represent the largest freely accessible snow leopard literature repository in the world.

Thank you to members for continuing to update and share their latest research.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Member Organizations & Partners



Special appreciation to our donors: Snow Leopard Trust, Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Program, Milkywire & the Pangje Foundation.

Thank you for your continued support in our efforts to contribute to snow leopard conservation.

Contact

Snow Leopard Network
www.snowleopardnetwork.org
<https://snowleopardnetwork.org/contact-us/>
 @SnowleopardNet