

Press Releases: Cool Cats: Celebrating Snow Leopard Conservation

Media Note
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
October 19, 2017

Acting Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs Judith Garber will showcase U.S. government efforts to conserve snow leopards at an event at the U.S. Department of State on October 19. The event will celebrate the successful completion of a U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and World Wildlife Fund project on Conservation and Adaptation in Asia's High Mountain Landscapes and Communities, and will highlight the international cooperation and conservation efforts of 12 snow leopard range countries.

Sometimes referred to as the "Ghosts of the Mountains," snow leopards are found in the mountains of Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, India, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. This iconic big cat is the top predator in its habitat and heavily impacts the ecosystem in which it lives. Snow leopard populations are being threatened by habitat loss, human-wildlife conflict and wildlife trafficking. According to current estimates, there are only between 4,000 and 8,000 left in the wild. In September 2017, IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, down-listed snow leopards from "endangered" to "vulnerable to extinction," but their success in the wild remains tenuous. International Snow Leopard Day is October 23.

Representatives from the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, USAID, the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Embassy of Mongolia, the Snow Leopard Trust, and the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystems Protection Program will also speak at the celebration, joined by representatives of all twelve range countries.

The United States is committed to working with international governments to protect snow leopards. USAID and the World Wildlife Fund's Conservation and Adaptation in Asia's High Mountain Landscapes and Communities project has successfully promoted conservation of snow leopards and their habitat; improved water security; and fostered sustainable natural resource management and development in snow leopard range areas.

For more information, contact Tory Peabody (PeabodyVW@state.gov) and follow the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs on Twitter @StateDeptOES and #snowleopards.

The Office of Website Management, Bureau of Public Affairs, manages this site as a portal for information from the U.S. State Department. External links to other Internet sites should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained therein.