

Snow Leopard

**Scientific Name:**

Panthera uncia

Range:

High mountains of Central Asia

Habitat:

Steep rugged terrain found in high elevations, including alpine meadows, alpine steppe scrub, and forests. Generally live above the tree line at altitudes between 9,800 – 18,000 ft above sea level.

Average Size:

Body Length: 30-50 inches

Body-Tail Length: 60-100 inches

Weight: 60-150 pounds

Lifespan:

About 20 years

Diet:

Wild: Carnivore – mainly Blue Sheep and Marmots

Zoo: Carnivore diet, bones with meat, beef heart, chicken.

Reproduction:

Gestation: 90-100 days

Litter size: Usually 2 or 3 cubs

Appearance:

Snow leopards have long thick fur, the base color of which varies from smoky grey to yellowish tan, with whitish under parts. The body, head and tail are covered with dark grey to black open rosettes of various sizes.

Predators:

Humans

Population Status:

Endangered

**About the Animal**

Snow Leopards are well suited for living in the rugged mountain terrain, sporting thick pelts, deep muscular chests and large paws.

In eastern mythology, it is believed that a priest went up into the Himalayan Mountains to meditate, became trapped in a

snowstorm and was transformed into a Snow Leopard. Because of this legend, some eastern people believe the Snow Leopard is holy, and strive to protect it.

Despite the rarity of encounters involving this animal, it is often killed because it is thought to be a threat to livestock. Additionally, it is hunted for its beautiful fur. The use of Snow Leopard parts instead of tiger parts in traditional Chinese medicine has also claimed the lives of many of these beautiful, shy cats.

Snow Leopards serve as a *flagship species*. By protecting the snow leopard and their habitat, we protect all the animals that share their mountain homes.

Mating and Reproduction:

Mating occurs in late winter and cubs are born in cave-like dens. As with all cats, they are born with closed eyes which open within days. Cubs stay with their mothers for anywhere between 18-22 months.

Amazing Information:

Snow Leopards have incredible balance, a necessity if you live high up in the Himalayans. They are capable of jumping up to 50 feet from rock ledge to rock ledge as they patrol their territory or stalk prey.



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