



This spring SLC-IT has been making efforts to strengthen its outreach program activities. From interpretation centre to film festivals and reaching out to the community during special events, SLC-IT hopes to take the message of the Snow Leopard Conservation far and wide.



SLC-IT at the Nomadic School in Changthang in April

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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MISSION

Since its inception in 2000, the Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust (SLC-IT) has been dedicated to promoting community based stewardship of the endangered snow leopard, its prey and habitat to the benefit of local people and the environment in the trans-Himalayan regions of Ladakh and Zaskar.

CAMERA TRAPPING IN WESTERN LADAKH



As a part of the 2011 population estimation program on Snow Leopards in Western Ladakh, SLC-IT along with its partners mainly Panthera and Department of Wildlife Protection is continuing with camera trapping covering a larger area this year. This study will help estimate the snow leopard population from a relatively smaller region of Western Ladakh known as the Sham Valley. The study has been designed with the support of Dr. Koustubh Sharma and Dr. Raghu Chundawat. Studies have already



started revealing interesting facts on snow leopard d movement in the region. The camera trapping study will c months, after which the results will be analyzed. Also conducting a socio-economic and depredation survey in all the



Initial studies have shown interesting patterns of the movement of snow leopards in the area. For the first time from the region, we have been able to capture a mother and cub in the camera trap. Also, we have observed snow leopard mating calls and breeding in the area, which indicates positive signs from the area. SLC-IT is presently

finalizing the report for of the study. We are hopeful to give an indication of the number from Sham valley this year.



The Socio-Economic Survey was also undertaken as the part of the study to get insights into the depredation challenges in Sham Valley and also to undertaken the livestock holdings in the villages. This also included undertaking Human-Attitude Surveys to get a perspectives of the region.



COMMUNITY CONSERVATION INITIATIVES



CONTINUING HANDICRAFTS TRAINING

Continuing the support of developing handicraft micro-enterprise, SLC-IT gave an advance training program in Tukla, Ulley and Leh in April 2012. This training program this time emphasized on using the dry-felting techniques using the locally available raw materials. This time, the participants were also taught about the making horses, yaks using traditional knitting techniques with some modifications. There are more than 50 participants' at all three venues.



SLC-IT has made efforts of buying handicrafts from the villages and presently available at the Snow Leopard Corner Shop in Leh. Efforts are being made to make the products of superior quality and with better finishing. Emphasizes is also made in terms of using only natural colours and locally available wool from the village.



SLC-IT's Rigzin Chorol and Tsering Lazes are presently training with design professionals that would enable them to undertaken bigger projects and provide design inputs to the village participants.





LIVESTOCK IMMUNIZATION IN WESTERN LADAKH

In June, SLC-IT undertook the livestock immunization at the Sham Valley villages of Ullay, Yangthang and Tarutse village in collaboration with the Animal Husbandry Department (J&K) under the project supported by Snow Leopard Conservancy (USA). The veterinary doctors from the Animal Husbandry department along with Jigmet Dadul and Gaurang Satija (Volunteer) visited the villages for the program. The objective was to immunize all the insured livestock with the SLC-IT Community based Livestock Insurance Program (CLIP) and other vulnerable livestock within



the village from diseases. In Ulley village, 43 livestock were immunized, in Tarutse 41 livestock were immunized and 102 in Yangthang. These included mostly large bodied animals mainly Yaks, Cow and other cattle breeds.

The second phase of this program will be undertaken in October with training of Paravet from the three villages. Two participants will be chosen from villages and will be trained by the doctors from Animal Husbandry Department.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust (SLC-IT) along with WWF-India celebrated Earth Day 2012 with the nomadic kids of Changthang, Eastern Ladakh on 29th April, 2012 at the Nomadic Residential School, Puga (Alt. 4400 meters.). This was a part of Sanctuary Magazine's and Earth Day Network's 'Mobilize the Earth' campaign.



Nomadic Residential School at Puga is home to 125 nomadic children from the surrounding Changpa Tribes who roam the area. The school was started in 2004 and has been able to thrive, imparting education to the nomadic children while at the same time supporting and encouraging their nomadic way of lives. A balance that would be difficult to keep, but for the unselfish efforts of the teaching and non-teaching staff of about 24 lead by the Principal, Mr. Phuntsok Angchuk.

After a 6 hour drive to Puga, the team of SLC-IT and WWF-India started Earth Day 2012 with great gung ho, highlighting the importance of Earth Day internationally, and appreciating the already sustainable nomadic lifestyle of the Changpas (nomads). The day was scheduled for ice-breakers, games, a movie show and a poster competition.



The movie 'Living with Change' was showcased at the school. The movie, made in Ladakh, highlights the effects of climate changes on locals and the changes in their lifestyles. The film also highlights the different issues of glacial melt and change in agricultural patterns in Ladakh. Post the show, we discussed in detail the impact these issues could eventually have on their migratory patterns in Changthang.



We divided the students into groups of 5, and asked them to explore their imagination on paper and create a poster with the theme 'Life in Changthang'. The students came up with diverse ideas, and posters that clearly represented their humble lifestyles in the plains of Changthang. Gifts were given to the two best posters. The posters represented their lives with nature, surrounded by the mountains, wetlands, birds and mammals.



The program ended with a send-off gift to Team SLC-IT and WWF by the students, showcasing their dancing talents with local songs and culture.

WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

To celebrate World Migratory Bird Day, on 15th May, 2012, WWF- India in collaboration with Department of Wildlife Protection, Leh and Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust (SLC-IT).



Marking the importance of global event, this was the 4th time year of the event in Ladakh. 5 students from 10 schools were taken for bird watching near Gupuk and Shey marshes. Equipped with scopes, binoculars and GPS to see the birds, their locations and behaviour. Students were enthusiastic about the event. Question and answer session was also introduced. Students noted down the information given by the experts. Teachers of the school also show interested in knowing the Ladakh migratory bird and asked several question. After spending 1 ½ hr at Gupuks and near forest area, students are taken to the 'Ibis bill' habitat at Choglamsar near Indus river. From there students are taken for nature trail till Shey marshes where they have sighted few migratory birds on their route.



Ms. Tsering Angmo (Program Manager, Education & Outreach – SLC-IT) spoke about the migratory birds that visit Ladakh every year, their locations and importance to the ecosystem. Ms. Nisa Khatoon (Sr. Project Officer, WWF-India) spoke about the wetlands and importance of it as habitats for migratory birds. Ms. Tsering Angchuk (Wildlife Ranger, Department of Wildlife, J&K) spoke about the protected areas network in Ladakh, where Mr. Jigmet Dadul (Program Manager – Conservation & Livelihoods spoke about the importance of protection and conservation in Ladakh).

After the field visit, the students were to Choglamsar – where games and related activities were lined up for the students. Later, students were asked to make a bird checklist within a minute. Stanzin Dolkar wrote the maximum number of birds and was given a prize - Ri-Gyancha (Biodiversity Education Kit of Ladakh) by SLC-IT.



WORLD ENVIRONMENTAL DAY

Women Alliance – Leh, supported by WWF-India, LEDeG, Snow Leopard Conservancy – India Trust (SLC-IT) and Ladakh Environmental Action Forum (LEAF) today celebrated world environmental day. The event showcased the coming of NGO's to fully supporting the 'Cause of Earth' in Ladakh.

The day started with participants from all NGO's campaign for a clean-up drive from Khardungla – down to Leh. Banners spreading key environmental messages targeted to tourists and many alike have been placed at strategic points along the road to Khardung top. The representatives along met with Army officials and concerned stakeholders at South Pullu to build toilets and not letting the sewage along the water ways of Leh. Also, they were requested to ensure proper garbage management, since all of it was directly linked with the water system in Leh.



Immediately, after the drive, all the participants met with other stakeholders at the Women Alliance – Leh office. Students from Lamdon Model School, Moravian Mission School and Girls Higher Secondary School were also present for the event. The event was graced by Mr. Tsering Angchuk (Deputy Commissioner/ CEO), LAHDC), as the Chief Guest. The young participants from the schools spoke about the various environmental issues concerning Ladakh and

its fragile ecological future. The Director of Ladakh, Mr. Gyalsen also spoke about the concerns and importance of people's participation for environmental issues. Mr. Angchuk too spoke about the importance of integrating various eco-initiatives that would eventually benefit Ladakh. He also mentioned about the recent initiatives of banning plastic mineral water bottles and levying of environment fee on tourists visiting Ladakh.

After the gathering, Mr. Angchuk flagged off the rally that marked a short walk from Women Alliance office to Mane Tsering through the Leh market. Representatives and volunteers from the NGO's and all student participants walked through shouting and chanting slogans on 'Saving Earth' and carrying banners with key messages for on-lookers to take account of! It all ended at Mane Tsering, where all the participants were thanked for their relentless support and energy in making the celebrations a success.

CONTINUING RI-GYANCHA WORKSHOPS IN SHAM VALLEY

From 23rd to 25th of May SLC-IT team of Tsering Angmo and Sarah Fernandes (volunteer) conducted the Environmental Education program at Saspoche and Skindyang for two days in each school supported by Panthera. It was a second workshop that mainly focused on the mammals of Ladakh. There were around 22 students and 5 teachers at Skindyang middle School, 14 student and 6 teachers at Saspoche. The response from the students and teachers has been excellent. They are keen on undertaking the field trip to know more about the issues and wildlife they have been learning during workshops.





The program will be continued in the schools with third and fourth workshops emphasizing on birds and plants of Ladakh. Later, this would be culminated into school conservation project that will be implemented in the respective villages.



SNOW LEOPARDS AT LADAKH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL



The SLC-IT Corner



The merchandise corner



T-shirt painting corner



Save the Spots



Tail-less Shan



The buzz at the stall



Mr. David Sonam giving away the Snow Leopard Trophy



The Snow Leopard Team



With her very own Snow Leopard Cub





The first edition of the Ladakh International Film Festival was inaugurated on Friday by Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Shyam Benegal, in Leh. Three day festival was organized by the Delhi based private event management and entertainment house, Monasse films, in collaboration with Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Government of Jammu and Kashmir.



The Venue - Sindhu Sanskriti, Leh

LIFF also partnered with Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust (SLC-IT) as the mascot was the Snow Leopard – Shan. The aim was to raise awareness amongst people from all over the world on protecting the rare and endangered Snow Leopard. The festival was witnessed by foreign delegates from Italy, France, Germany, Australia, America and Korea and India. In the festival, 76 films in different categories viz, Competition section, Indian/international-non-competition, milestone of Indian cinema and Ladakh section were screened. The films which were shown during the three day film festival were Feature films, documentaries and short films.

SLC-IT has its corner has a varied number of activities for the visitors. From Paint your own T-shirt, to Save the Spots Wall, tail less Shan and the SLC-IT merchandise corner. We got a very good response from visitors and it was good platform to spread awareness about the snow leopards.



With Stok Khangri as the backdrop

This festival would not have been possible thanks to tireless efforts from friends at Love and Faith and the volunteers who help us put a great show. We'd also take this opportunity to thank the team at LIFF and associated partners and friends.

SNOW LEOPARD SIGHTING

On the 21st of April, 2012 the SLC-IT team of Radhika Kothari, Jigmet Dadul, Tsering Lazes and a Journalist from Mumbai Supriya Katak and Ute Meuser drove to Ulley village for the handicrafts training. Though, we were hoping a catch a glimpse of the snow leopard. After reaching Ulley, we scanned the mountains for wildlife but snow clad day turned out to be a disappointing time for viewing anything on the mountains. The following day, after the first session of the training program, we got back to scanning the mountains. The same afternoon, we were informed by a villager – Mr. Angchok that he had heard the snow leopard call from the south-eastern direction. Jigmet and Radhika immediately headed to the direction he pointed out to. We heard the calls but were unable to find the cat, thanks to its superb camouflage. For over an hour we scanned the entire mountain and finally struck gold with the snow leopard sitting there and staring directly back at us. We went back to call the rest of the team, and enjoyed the sighting for over 3 hours as the evening came in.





Not many travellers coming to Ladakh know of the 'Shan' or the ecological sensitivity of the area. Many trekkers are known of leaving more than their footprints behind in the fragile Himalayan environments. SLC-IT as a part of their efforts to inform tourists, travellers, students, wildlife enthusiasts, eco-tourists, and local communities alike on the vibrant biodiversity of Ladakh, and the importance of the conserving fragile Himalayan ecosystems is developing an Interpretation Centre in Leh – Ladakh called – 'the Snow Leopard Corner'



Through this centre we have aimed to develop and display important information wildlife issues of Ladakh, their distribution, presence and habitats. We also want to inform tourists about the precautions they could take while travelling through their critical habitats or while generally travelling in Ladakh. The centre will also have a herbarium to showcase the important plants of Ladakh, with information on their medicinal values.



This centre provides in-depth information to students and researchers. SLC-IT is presently building a library that would be a resource centre for interested people. With books, videos, films, photographs etc. we hope of making it an important centre for future ecological research work in Ladakh.

Through this centre we are also providing a platform for engaging children, young adults and tourists from different backgrounds. With different activities like movie screenings, workshops, writing comics, exhibitions, resources, storytelling imbibing folk tales, nature craft, nature walks, games, ecological Buddhism practices, performances, book reading, theatre, music, art, talks, discussions and seminars etc. Also, since the Ladakhi's believe in a culture and lifestyle that is harmonious to nature, we making it a holistic centre involving deep thinking of various aspects, emotions and issues leading to conservation.

This corner is open to individual travellers, travel groups, students, researchers and anyone interested in knowing more about environmental issues of Ladakh.

WORK WITH SHAN

Summer with Shan is a volunteer and intern program started in SLC-IT this year. This is a platform to engage students and professionals to contribute to the work of SLC-IT in Ladakh. This year SLC-IT had over 10 volunteers who worked with through early spring and summer in Ladakh. Among them were college students and professionals.

Some of the major outcomes were the making of the website for Ri-Gyancha – biodiversity environmental kit. This kit has been digitalized to make it more reachable. Also, an experts section has been added a medium to ask questions related to wildlife and biodiversity issues in Ladakh. This has been made by the interns from Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work – Seihasu Khansu (Soso K.J.P), Sarah Fernandes, Daniel Mung & Fabian Franco. The interns were also responsible for developing a photo documentary 'why intern with SLC-IT' and were involved in collating stories of Snow Leopard encounters in Zaskar. You can visit the Ri-Gyancha online - www.rigyancha.org



Another volunteer, Gaurang Satija from Symbiosis Institute Pune, developed a short documentary for SLC-IT for the Snow Leopards Corner. He is presently working on the documentary film for SLC-IT. And, Tamsin Rigold from New Zealand was involved in the Camera Trapping Study in Western Ladakh. She trekked along the high ridges of the Himalayas along with the team to set cameras and conduct the surveys.



Pankhuri Singh supported the team in developing the Interpretation Center along with Tsering Angmo. The centre is now open to visitors, students and travellers interested in environmental, wildlife and biodiversity issues of Ladakh. And Deeya Ahuja, Disket Palmo and Shitanshu Tyagi who helped during the film festival. The **Winter with Shan** program will be underway in Ladakh from November to April. This winter we invite volunteers and interns to experience the Ladakhi winter and work with SLC-IT.

THE PRINCE SAVES THE KING OF THE MOUNTAINS

What would be the most normal reaction to a predator that attacks the livestock of a particular village practically every day? Kill it?!! Yet, Skalzang Chostak Namgial, also known as K.C, thought differently - it was snow leopard. K.C has been working with Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust (SLC-IT) hard enough to let something like this happen to it. He also happens to be the Prince hailing from the Royal Family of Zangla.

In spring, the villagers of Zangla in Zaskar, kept their livestock in the enclosure below the house itself and during summer, they take it to the pastures where SLC-IT has provided a predator proof enclosure to keep the livestock safe. On the 14th of April 2012, the snow leopard attacked the house enclosure and killed four livestock without the knowledge of the family living above. In the morning when a young child came to take the livestock out for grazing, the child spotted the animal in a fight with the livestock and reported to his parents that a 'Lion' had attacked the livestock. The parents refused to believe the child. But, when the mother saw for herself she realized that it was the Shan – snow leopard. Seeing human presence, the snow leopard fled away towards the mountains. The family kept this information to themselves. However, in every village news travels fast and it wasn't long before K.C heard about the attack. He went to see the place where the snow leopard attacked, then followed the tracks armed with binoculars and a camera, however, met with no luck.

16th April began with K.C hearing of another attack on the same household. This time the same woman came to inform him. And this time, the neighbours' were armed with sticks, axes and stones to kill the cat. It was difficult for K.C to convince villagers not kill the snow leopard as he was a resident of that village. He had to be diplomatic enough to handle the situation. When the women who informed K.C got to know of his association with SLC-IT, she became very wary of it. She was afraid of losing more livestock by snow leopard therefore was convinced to kill the cat. K.C was left with no option but to threaten to click pictures of her harming the animal. The snow leopard being a protected animal, she feared the legal consequences.

By this time, the snow leopard had hid himself behind a stack of wood in the corner. With the help of a few others K.C managed to get the snow leopard out of the window and released him. It seemed that the cat would be safe now, but it walked towards the plain area instead of the mountains. K.C realized that there were chances of him being killed. Consequently, he followed the Snow leopard and blocked its path to direct him towards the mountains.



The snow leopard was only a cub, barely a year old. He should have been under the care and protection of his mother. It was bound to come back to the village, as his age it would not be able to kill either an Ibex or a Blue Sheep to feed himself.



Indeed, K.C's fear came true, the King of the Mountains - Snow leopard did visit again, in fact he came down to the village three more times. The first was on the 18th of April, however, to a different household and



before it could harm the livestock, the family was alerted. They along with the help of neighbours caught the snow leopard in a net and set him free an hour later. The second time, he showed up, he had managed to kill a livestock and was eating it at the entrance of the owner's house. The owner managed to drive the snow leopard off. The third time, as it was coming down some young boys, who were going to the Lakhang (prayer room) to light the lamps, saw it. The snow

leopard went to an empty corral and sat there. The villagers caught it again with a yak wool blanket and took it to the village community hall. The village headman was aware of

K.C's association with SLC-IT. He approached him and voiced his concerns regarding the livestock losses and he even stated that the children could be in danger, with a snow leopard lingering around. K.C felt helpless and immediately called Jigmet Dadul to inform him about the problem in Zangla. Jigmet helped him with the numbers of the officials at the Department of Wildlife Protection (J&K). Along the Wildlife and Forest Department contacted Police and Sub – Divisional Magistrate was contacted. Time was running out, a decision had to be taken immediately, since communication couldn't have been possible after 9. p.m since the electricity would go off.



By now, the young Snow leopard was weak and so K.C fed it a kilo of meat. Awaiting the decision from the officials, it was finally decided that the snow leopard would be left into the mountains. Fortunately, the villagers were now convinced of the King of the mountains and along the Prince of Zangla there ensured its safe release.

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