

Snow leopard under threat from climate change

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via Eric Kilby on flickr.com

The conservation charity World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has warned that climate change is threatening the existence of the snow leopard in the Himalayas. Its Snow Leopard Programme says rising temperatures are shrinking the natural

habitat of the big cat to the point that snow leopards could become extinct. In a new report, the charity says that up to a third of the mountainous areas where the leopards live could become uninhabitable. Much of the flora and fauna the animals need to survive could disappear in warmer temperatures. The WWF said: "The Himalayas region will face a major crisis if we choose to ignore climate change...We risk losing majestic species such as the snow leopard."

It isn't just climate change that is posing a serious threat to the future of the snow leopard. A variety of activities from humans are also adding to the dangers the animals face. Snow leopards are highly sought after for their fur and body parts. More and more poachers are joining this lucrative, illegal trade and are killing the animals. The leopards are also being killed by farmers who are trying to protect their livestock. As the natural prey of the snow leopards is decreasing, the animals are venturing into areas inhabited by humans and killing farm animals. The result is the farmers shoot the leopards. The WWF released its report on Friday, which was the first International Snow Leopard Day.

Sources: BBC / The Guardian / CBS News

Writing

The best way to stop animals going extinct is breeding programmes in zoos. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

conservation / charity / climate change / temperatures / extinct / mountainous / risk / serious threat / dangers / poachers / lucrative / farmers / natural prey / livestock

True / False

- Snow leopards in the Himalayas are under threat. T / F
- The WWF says the snow leopard could become extinct. T / F
- Over half of the snow leopards' habitat is now uninhabitable. T / F
- All of the animals the leopards need to survive have relocated. T / F
- The article says it is just climate change that is posing a danger. T / F
- Poachers hunt the leopards for fur and body parts. T / F
- Farmers in the Himalayas are also killing the snow leopards. T / F
- International Snow Leopard Day started over a decade ago. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1. warned | a. as much as |
| 2. rising | b. moving |
| 3. shrinking | c. consequence |
| 4. up to | d. increasing |
| 5. ignore | e. occupied |
| 6. posing | f. disregard |
| 7. lucrative | g. cautioned |
| 8. venturing | h. profitable |
| 9. inhabited | i. presenting |
| 10. result | j. reducing |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you think about what you read?
- What is causing climate change?
- What can we do to reverse the effects of climate change?
- What do you know about snow leopards?
- How sad would it be if the snow leopard became extinct?
- What can conservationists do to help the snow leopard?
- How successful do you think the Snow Leopard Programme will be?
- What do you do to reduce your carbon footprint?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. The conservation charity | a. become extinct |
| 2. threatening the existence | b. after for their fur |
| 3. rising | c. serious threat |
| 4. snow leopards could | d. of the snow leopard |
| 5. Much of the flora and | e. livestock |
| 6. posing a | f. fauna the animals need |
| 7. A variety | g. World Wildlife Fund |
| 8. Snow leopards are highly sought | h. inhabited by humans |
| 9. trying to protect their | i. temperatures |
| 10. venturing into areas | j. of activities |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of coats made from snow leopard fur?
- What should happen to poachers of snow leopards?
- What do you think of creating breeding programmes for the snow leopard?
- Should poachers be paid to protect the snow leopards?
- Are farmers right to kill the snow leopards?
- Should snow leopards be moved to different countries?
- What should happen on International Snow Leopard Day?
- What questions would you like to ask the head of the WWF?

Spelling

- The eriaootcsvnn charity World Wildlife Fund
- the ecesitxn of the snow leopard
- rising eatrstupmree
- natural atbitah
- nnsiuoomtua areas
- We risk losing majestic cesispe
- A eytvair of activities from humans
- highly tohusg after
- More and more hrpceoas
- this iuarvcetl, illegal trade
- protect their lockvetsi
- areas hndtaiibe by humans

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. j	4. a	5. f
6. i	7. h	8. b	9. e	10. c

Role Play

Role A – Climate change

You think climate change is the biggest threat to snow leopards. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't such a threat. Also, tell the others which is the least threatening of these (and why): other predators, the fur trade or a lack of food.

Role B – Predators

You think other predators are the biggest threat to snow leopards. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't such a threat. Also, tell the others which is the least threatening of these (and why): climate change, the fur trade or a lack of food.

Role C – The fur trade

You think the fur trade is the biggest threat to snow leopards. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't such a threat. Also, tell the others which is the least threatening of these (and why): other predators, climate change or a lack of food.

Role D – A lack of food

You think a lack of food is the biggest threat to snow leopards. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't such a threat. Also, tell the others which is the least threatening of these (and why): other predators, the fur trade or climate change.

Speaking – Threats

Rank these with your partner. Put the biggest threats to snow leopards at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| • farmers | • the fur trade |
| • other predators | • logging |
| • climate change | • disease |
| • poachers | • a lack of food |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	T	c	F	d	F	e	F	f	T	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.