

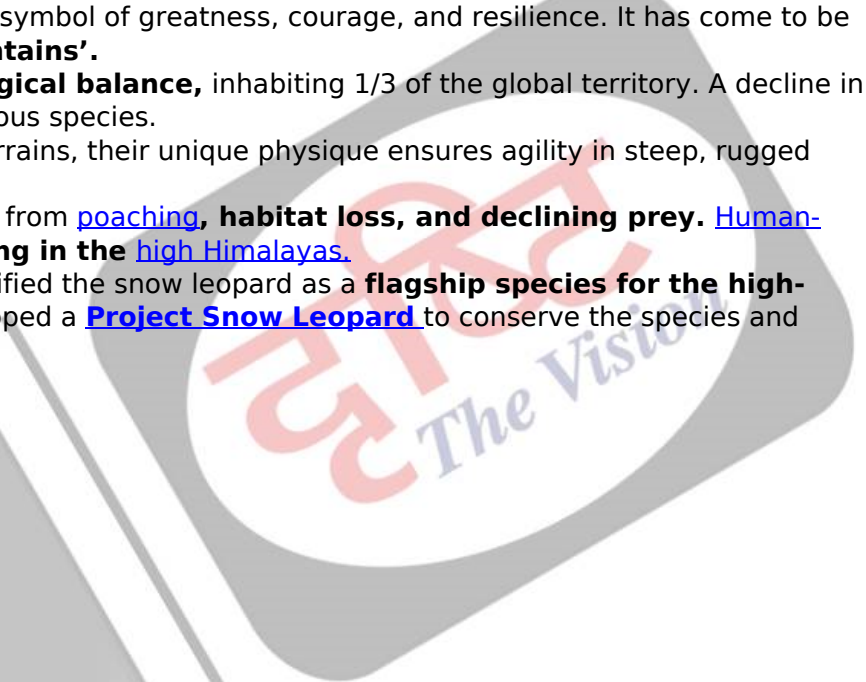


## Snow Leopard

[Kyrgyzstan](#) has officially declared the [Snow Leopard \(\*Panthera uncia\*\)](#) as its national symbol, signifying its commitment to conservation and ecological balance.

- The snow leopard holds historical importance in Kyrgyz culture, featuring in the **story of Manas, a Kyrgyz folk hero**, revered as a symbol of greatness, courage, and resilience. It has come to be known as the **'ghost of the mountains'**.
- Snow leopards are **vital for ecological balance**, inhabiting 1/3 of the global territory. A decline in their population poses risks to various species.
  - Adapted to high-altitude terrains, their unique physique ensures agility in steep, rugged environments.
  - Snow leopards face threats from [poaching](#), **habitat loss**, and **declining prey**. [Human-wildlife conflict](#) and **warming in the high Himalayas**.
- The Government of India has identified the snow leopard as a **flagship species for the high-altitude Himalayas**. It has developed a [Project Snow Leopard](#) to conserve the species and habitats.

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# Snow Leopard

*Panthera Uncia*



Often referred to as the "ghost of the mountains"

## HABITAT

- Mountainous regions of **Central and Southern Asia**
- **12** Range Countries
- In India:
  - **Western Himalayas:** Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh
  - **Eastern Himalayas:** Uttarakhand and Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh

## MAJOR SITES

- Hemis National Park, Ladakh
  - **Snow leopard capital of the world**
- Great Himalayan National Park, Himachal Pradesh
- Gangotri National Park, Uttarakhand
- Khangchendzonga National Park, Sikkim

## PROTECTION STATUS

- **Vulnerable:** IUCN Red List
- **Appendix I:** CITES
- **Schedule I:** Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972

## THREATS

- Human Snow Leopard Conflict
- Climate Change
- Loss of Prey and Habitat
- Poaching

## CONSERVATION EFFORTS

- Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection (GSLEP) Programme
- Himal Sanrakshak- Community Volunteer Programme
- Project Snow Leopard
- Snow Leopard Conservation Breeding Programme- Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park, West Bengal



Read more: [Snow Leopard](#)

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/snow-leopard-6>