



Snow Leopards Spotted in Gangotri National Park

Why in News?

Recently, a [Snow Leopard](#) was spotted in [Gangotri National Park](#) in **Uttarkashi district** of Uttarakhand.

Key Points

- In the latest [snow leopard census of India](#), released earlier in 2024, there are **718 snow leopards in India**. Out of which, **124 are in Uttarakhand**.
 - The hill state has the second highest snow leopard population in India, after **Ladakh (477)**. The **Gangotri National Park** boasts a population of **38-40 snow leopards**.
 - Listed as **vulnerable on the [IUCN Red List](#)**, it is estimated that the global population of snow leopards is less than 10,000.
- In Uttarakhand, snow leopards are found in **Uttarkashi, Tehri, Rudraprayag, Chamoli, Pithoragarh, and Bageshwar districts**.

Gangotri National Park

- It was established in **1989** and is situated in **Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand** in the **upper catchment of Bhagirathi River**.
- Gaumukh at Gangotri glacier, the **origin of river Ganga**, is located inside the park.
- The park area forms a **viable continuity between Govind National Park and Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary**.
- **Flora:** The park is enveloped by dense coniferous forests that are mostly temperate. Chirpine, deodar, fir, spruce, oak and rhododendron are the common vegetation.
- **Fauna:** Various rare and endangered species like bharal or blue sheep, black bear, brown bear, himalayan monal, himalayan snowcock, himalayan tahr, musk deer and snow leopard are found in the park.

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

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



THREATS

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

