

SNOW LEOPARD

updated March 2017



Range	Western Mongolia to northeast Pakistan and Bhutan
Habitat	High mountain slopes near tree lines
Diet (wild)	Wild sheep, goats, hares, marmots and other small mammals and birds
Diet (captive)	Carnivore diet, fasted one day a week
Description	Length: 48–54 inches; tail: additional 36–48 inches; weight: 60–120 pounds. Medium-sized cats with tails that can be as long as their bodies. They have thick, smoky-gray fur patterned with dark gray open rosettes. In the mountains, they blend perfectly with the rocky slopes, making them practically invisible.
Lifespan	Wild: 10 years. Captivity: 15–20 years
Reproduction	Gestation is 98–103 days and 1–4 young are born. The young open their eyes 7–9 days later, are quite active by two months, and remain with their mother through the first winter. The males will sometimes help with the care of the young. In zoos, sexual maturity is at approximately two years but is thought to be later in the wild. Males and females mate in late winter. The female creates a den in the rocks.
Behavior	Snow leopards are secretive cats that are solitary except when female have young. They use ridges and cliffs as a vantage point from which to spot and ambush prey. Snow leopards follow migrating prey along annual routes of up to 38 square miles (98 square kilometers). During the summer, they hunt as high as 18,000 feet (5,400 meters) and go as low as 6,000 feet (1,800 meters) in the winter. Their paws are covered by a cushion of hair that increases surface area, allowing for better traction in soft snow and over ice. Unlike other big cats, snow leopards do not roar and they eat from a crouched position. Snow leopards have overlapping ranges and use scrapes, urine and feces to mark their territories in order to avoid contact with other snow leopards in the range.
Our animals	1 female (Serena). Born: 1998 at PPZ
Cool stuff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSP at PPZ. The global population of snow leopards is estimated to be anywhere between 4,000–6,500 individuals. There are 600 snow leopards in zoos around the world. Hunting is prohibited except in Mongolia, which still has regulated hunting. • The illegal fur trade is still very active. Retribution killings are common among herders who have lost livestock to snow leopard predation. • Snow leopards can jump distances of 20–50 feet (6–15 meters). Their long tail helps maintain accuracy and balance. • The leopard's long tail is thickly furred and can be curled around the body and the end draped across the nose to protect the nose from severe cold. • Unlike other large felids, snow leopards do not roar. • Due to their shy and elusive behavior, snow leopards generally avoid humans and are not known to have ever attacked a human in the wild. • Cats' jaws have a large space behind each canine (a diastema). This space, combined with the curvature of the upper jaw, ensures that the canines stab as deeply as possible into their prey, although big cats often kill larger prey by suffocation.

Phylum
ChordataClass
MammaliaOrder
CarnivoraFamily
FelidaeGenus
Pantheraspecies
P. unica