

# Snow leopard diet determined by DNA analysis of fecal samples

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Knowledge about animal diet can inform conservation strategy, but this information can be difficult to gather. A new DNA-based method, which analyzes genetic material from feces, could be a useful tool, and researchers have shown its utility to characterize the diet of snow leopards in Mongolia.

The full results are reported Feb. 29 in the open access journal [PLoS ONE](#).

Analysis of DNA from 81 [fecal samples](#) showed that the leopards ate mostly Siberian ibex, followed by domestic goats and wild sheep. Most of the animals eaten were wild (79 %), with a relatively low proportion of domestic livestock (19.7 %).

The authors, led by Pierre Taberlet of Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in France, write that the results help further the understanding of [snow leopard](#) feeding, which can help address related conservation and management issues.

**More information:** Shehzad W, McCarthy TM, Pompanon F, Purevjav L, Coissac E, et al. (2012) Prey Preference of Snow Leopard (*Panthera uncia*) in South Gobi, Mongolia. PLoS ONE 7(2): e32104. [doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0032104](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0032104)

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