

Second snow leopard successfully collared with satellite-GPS technology in Nepal

June 8 2015



Snow leopard (*Uncia uncia*) in winter. Credit: Klein & Hubert / WWF

Little over one month after a devastating earthquake rocked the

Himalayan nation, conservationists in Nepal announced that they had successfully collared a snow leopard in the shadow of Kangchenjunga, the world's second highest mountain. This announcement delivers a powerful positive message as the nation's rebuilding efforts continue, and takes on even greater significance on World Environment Day.

The snow leopard, an adult male approximately five years of age weighing 41 kg was captured near the village of Yangma in Kangchenjunga Conservation Area, fitted with a GPS-satellite collar and released back into the wild in recent weeks. Data received from the satellite collar will enable conservationists to identify critical habitats for the elusive species, including transboundary links across India and China.

"Nepal is proud to be at the forefront of global scientific efforts to get a better understanding of one of nature's most elusive species," stated Tika Ram Adhikari, Director General of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation. "Our ability to repeat the success we had with the first collaring in 2013 during this most difficult period for the country is a testament to the commitment towards conservation of the government as well as the people of Nepal."

The collaring expedition was led by the Government of Nepal in partnership with WWF, National Trust for Nature Conservation, Kangchenjunga Conservation Area Project, Kangchenjunga Conservation Area Management Council and citizen scientists from the local Snow Leopard Conservation Committee. The latter were especially vital in helping identify snow leopard hotspots and managing local logistics.

"As a science-based conservation organization, WWF was delighted to partner with the government of Nepal on applying new technologies to help us gain a better understanding of snow leopards," said Anil

Manandhar, Country Representative of WWF-Nepal. "We continue to be inspired by our grassroots partners in Kangchenjunga—one of the poorest and least accessible places in Nepal—to save snow leopards and other magnificent species that could easily be lost without their stewardship. This project is a powerful example of what we can make possible together."

The existing snow leopard [conservation](#) projects in Kangchenjunga Conservation Area include snow leopard monitoring using camera traps and prey-base monitoring with the partnership of local [citizen scientists](#) and Snow Leopard Conservation Committees, a population genetic study using fecal DNA, and a livestock insurance scheme built at reducing human-snow leopard conflict.

There are an estimated 350-590 [snow leopards](#) in Nepal according to 2009 population data on the species.



There are an estimated 350-590 snow leopards in Nepal according to 2009 population data on the species. Credit: Steve Winter/National Geographic

Provided by WWF

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