



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.

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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

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

