

Snow Leopard

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Panthera uncia

Snow Leopard

The snow leopard is one of the most endangered big cats with only 3,500 to 7,500 left in the wild. The snow leopard weighs between 71 and 121 pounds. This cat lives in the highest altitudes of Central Asia in countries such as Mongolia, China, India, Nepal and Afghanistan. This secretive cat's large long, furry tail, in which it wraps itself, is 75 percent as long as the rest of the cat. Its white spotted fur helps to camouflage the cat in the rocky snow-covered areas where it lives and its large paws help it walk in the snow.

Snow leopards also have large nostrils that allow them to breathe more air in the high altitudes where there is less oxygen. Each snow leopard's markings are different, which allows researchers to identify specific cats. Snow leopards are the least aggressive of the big cats toward humans. The snow leopard's major threats in the wild are hunting and prey loss.

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