



This quarter has been quite exciting for SLC-IT from the homestay evaluation meet in Tarutse to various Snow Leopard Sightings. SLC-IT was awarded with an award by Outlook Traveller for the Homestays. Participating in the Kalaghoda festival in Mumbai was a great achievement for the organisation and was highly benefitting



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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MISSION

Since its inception in 2000, the Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust (SLC-IT) has been dedicated to promoting community based stewardship of the endangered snow leopard, its prey and habitat to the benefit of local people and the environment in the Trans-Himalayan regions of Ladakh and Zaskar.

HOMESTAY EVALUATION MEET



The SLC-IT team Jigmat Dadul, Rigzen Chorol, KC Namgyal conducted an annual home stay evaluation meeting at Sham on the 2nd to the 5th of January 2013. They held this meeting in four different villages; Tarutse, Yangthang, Hemishukpachan and Ang.

In Tarutse, they held a meeting with all the homestay operators and collected feedback from them. They collected 10% of the annual income from the home stay programme for conservation funds. They collectively earned Rs. 22,500 and the money deposited for the conservation fund was Rs. 2250. They said this year there weren't many tourists because there was a conflict between the guest house and hotel in Liker village. They said they need a signboard on the main route so that tourists can easily locate the home stay.

There are three homestays in Yangthang village of which two of them are performing well. They earned Rs. 55,000 this year and Rs. 5500 was set aside for their conservation fund.

In Ulley village there are four home stays of which two performed well. The other two desire to do something to get a good number of tourists in the coming season. They were following the rotation system earlier but later switched to the voucher system, which didn't provide them with positive results. They now wish to resume the rotation system, for which they nominated Mrs. Nilza Angmo for a year who will inform tourists about the rotation system in Ulley. In Hemishukpachan there are four homestays. The homestay providers have voiced the need to put up a sign board at the main hiking route where each homestay site would be indicated and tourists can easily locate them. They have requested the SLC-IT to send tourists through the voucher system. Three out of four homestays did not earn adequate income.

In Ang village there are eight homestays. All the homestay operators are very active and cooperative. But they are facing problems similar to other villages as there is conflict between the guest houses and homestays. SLC-IT decided to renovate all the homestay signboards and try to recommend it to tourists as well.

EDUCATION PROGRAM WITH RANGDUM STUDENTS

The SLC-IT team: KC, Chospel, Dolker, and Gyalson, held an education workshop on the 27th of Jan, 2013. The participants were from 8th to the 10th standard. The participants were from different places in Rangdum. They were staying together in the hostel at Skara, Leh for winter tuition. The students were from different schools; Govt. Girls Higher Secondary School Leh, Central Institute Buddhist School Leh and Govt. Middle School Rangdum.

There were around 12 students and Mr. Tashi was the manager of Rangdum Hostel.



OUTPUT: We got excellent response from the students. They were keen to know about the flora and fauna of Ladakh. The students requested the team to do these kind of workshops more often. We hope students understood well and the students request us to show this kind of film in next workshop.

HOMESTAY AWARD FROM OUTLOOK TRAVELLER OUTLOOK TRAVELLER AWARD



The Outlook Traveller awarded SLC-IT with the title of favourite responsible tourism initiative, on 24th January, 2013 in Suryaa ,New Friends Colony New Delhi. Outlook Traveller, the country's leading travel magazine is in its 12th year. The Outlook Traveller voted SLC –IT for the Homestay program as the Favourite Responsible Tourism Outfit.



COMMUNITY CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

NUBRA VISIT



The SLC-IT Tea: Jigmat and Angmo conducted a workshop on the homestay program. It was a training workshop cum festival. The training was on traditional dance, making different types of buckets with twigs, cooking different types of food, wood carving, making stupas with clay, singing traditional songs, and how to play the drums .All the trainers got certificates from Himalayan Heritage foundation. The training was organised by Kyagyar Thundel

Tsogspa and Himalayan Heritage. At the end of the program all the trainers were honoured with a certificate by-Gyurmed (Honble Executive Councillor for Tourism, LAHDC,Leh) Tsering Morup (KAS), Chief Executive Officer, Leh Dev. Authority) ,DR.

Sonam Wangchuk(Founder/Security HCHF) ,Sonam Stobdan(President Nubra Kyagyar Thundel Tsogspa.)





Why snow leopard awareness is needed in big cities?

I am a regular 15 year old student, living in the city of Mumbai. My hobbies include reading books, and that's how I got to know about snow leopards about 7 years ago. Over time, my interest in the field of Biology increased, and then recently, I read about the snow leopard conservation program, and wanted to take part in it. When I told my mother about the snow leopard conservation program, she said, "Snow leopards, oh, don't they live in the arctic?" I was surprised to hear this, and my father and I had a good laugh over it. However, this incident left me determined to find out how many people in Mumbai are actually aware about the status of snow leopards. I asked 10 people I meet every day if they were aware about snow leopards, and here are their responses.

My cousin sister- "Who are you trying to fool? I am not dumb! I know snow leopards don't exist!"

My cousin brother- "Snow leopards? Err, aren't they the creatures that live in the Antarctic?" (After giving him the right answer he insisted that he got confused with leopard seals)"

My keyboard sir- "Snow leopards? What are they?"

My best friend was the first one to give the right answer, saying that snow leopards live in the Himalayas, and are an endangered species. In short, out of 10, only three people knew about the snow leopards and their status.

Now, why must we care about the snow leopards? Apart from the fact that they are endangered, and if we want to be proud calling ourselves sentinel beings, we must help them, there is also the fact that they contribute a lot to the environment. Snow leopards are one of the main carnivorous animals that live in the Himalayas, and keep a balance in the food chain by eating herbivorous animals (when the Yeti is discovered, it can share the top position with the snow leopards). So, if snow leopards are made extinct, the herbivores will eat all the grass, and there will be fewer creatures to keep the balance (along with the Yeti, of course), and who knows, they too may become endangered? History repeats itself after all, doesn't it?

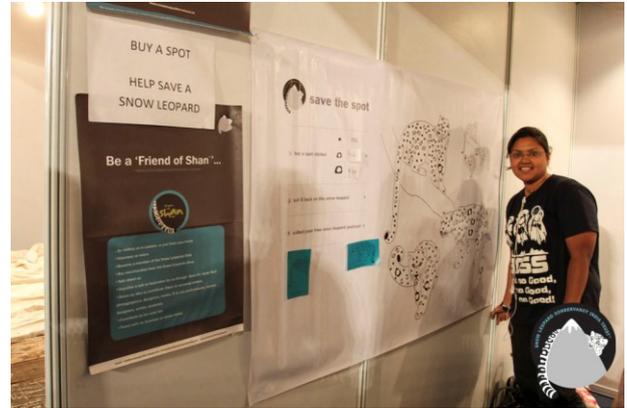
Also, it's the snow leopards themselves. There are very few creatures as magnificent as the snow leopard. If they become extinct, won't that be a huge loss to the world? They will be alive only in history books, and the books will read "the snow leopards were creatures that lived in the Himalayas, until they were killed due to the selfishness of humans." Why regret later, when we can prevent them from dying now? We should not be known as the people who caused the extinction of many species. Well, I certainly will not be proud saying that I was alive when the snow leopards became extinct. Their downfall has started by default, but with the finance and technology available today, the tables can be turned.

So, what do big cities have to do with this? Well, everything. If we become more aware about the plight of the snow leopards, what stops us from helping it? To save a creature, we must first understand it, and how it behaves in its natural habitat. The government alone cannot raise enough funds to help understand it, we, the citizens too, must do our bit and contribute. With these funds the government can launch various programs to help conserve them, like setting up camera traps and radio collars in the snow leopards, to track their movements. Also, the brightest minds in the field of biology can volunteer to go and spend some time in the Himalayas to understand these creatures better. But of course, all this will not happen overnight. It will take time, but if we all start learning about the snow leopards now, we can make this change happen ASAP. We can start by learning more about them, and to start off, why not find out if snow leopards are more closely related to leopards or cheetahs?(Clue, snow leopards do not roar, just like cheetahs.) Well, this article was from a teenager's point of view. What must the snow leopards be thinking?



KALAGODA FESTIVAL 2013

SLC-IT participated in this year's Kalaghoda festival in Mumbai. Kalaghoda has been an essential arts and cultural festival of Mumbai. From the 2nd to the 10th of February it's a celebration of different forms of art and various organisations put out their stalls. This year SLC-IT was one of them. It was a great for the team to be a part of this festival, where lot of people enquired about the organisatio.



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Read experiences of SLC-IT's volunteers and interns of recent years. Their stories in their words. Visit us on - <http://snowleopardindia.blogspot.com/>  **Blogger**

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