

## **Project Update: May 2011**

### **Introduction**

On the basis of previous study two main objectives were identified for future conservation efforts on snow leopard and associated species in Kargil, Ladakh for 2010-2011.

1. To study relative abundance of snow leopard through camera trapping
2. To undertake measures for mitigating snow leopard-human conflicts:  
construction of predator proof corral pen

### **Strategy 2010**

Eastern Kargil was identified as the most promising area during previous surveys for camera trapping and construction of a predator proof corral pen. Initially, it was planned with the support of locals of these areas and proper training and hiring of one person for camera trapping was to be carried out. Unfortunately, due to some unappreciated common interest between local and Government this work was hampered in Eastern Kargil. It was an important issue to be resolved. Because this project was from non-government, local communities did not want any kind of benefit to anyone coming to their village. Therefore, to ease the situation, during 2010-11, there were five meetings organised with local communities.

### **Achievements during 2010-11**

Since the situation remained unresolved in Eastern Kargil, we surveyed Southern Kargil to continue the work and identify other promising areas in Kargil. Thus, extensive surveys were conducted in Southern Kargil. Unfortunately, these surveys were also hampered due to the severe cloud burst in Ladakh during August, 2010. It did not only have an effect on our field work but had severe impact on entire life of Ladakh. Tremendous and continuous efforts by several agencies supported Ladakh to recover from this trauma. Four camera traps were secured and camera photo trapping started during October 2010 in Southern Kargil due to the fact that these areas will not be accessible during winters (December to May) due to the blockage of roads.

During surveys, information (direct and indirect evidence) was gathered on Asiatic ibex, Himalayan brown bear, Tibetan wolf and snow leopard.

### **Constraints faced during 2010-11**

1. Two major objectives planned for 2010-11 were camera trapping and corral pens. Eastern Kargil could not be reached due to the lack of cordial relationships between locals and government.
2. The optional strategy-2010 i.e. to identify other gaps and continue surveys in other areas of Kargil hampered due to cloud burst during August 2010.
3. Proper camera trapping that was hampered due to the lack of manpower in Southern Kargil during winters.

4. Four camera traps are not sufficient to cover such a vast landscape.

### **Current Status and the Way Ahead**

To date the project has not achieved the intended objectives yet the progress was made in terms of surveying additional areas, there were just one time surveys, to use the available resources efficiently. Recently, meetings with local communities of Eastern Kargil have shown some hope of their support to this project and other conservation efforts. It resulted a bit delayed in delivering the outcomes of this project but provided a good opportunity to work with local communities closely to understand their issues and projected our continuous efforts towards conservation more meaningful. Eventually, the proposed objectives will be implemented as they were initially planned.

