



S.P.E.C.I.E.S.



CARNIVORE CONNECTION

March
2018

In this special edition of *Carnivore Connection*, we celebrate this year's World Wildlife Day theme, "Big Cats - Predators Under Threat".

While S.P.E.C.I.E.S. supports all members of the order Carnivora, this newsletter highlights four of our "big cat" projects on:

The Jaguar
Panthera onca



The Clouded Leopard
Neofelis nebulosa



Photo by Tambako the Jaguar/Flickr CC

The Snow Leopard
Panthera uncia



Photo by Eric Kilby, Flickr CC

The Sri Lankan Leopard
Panthera pardus kotiya



Photo by Gaurika Wijeratne

Celebrate **World Wildlife Day!** March



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Paraguay

The Jaguar:

The Chaco Jaguar Conservation Project

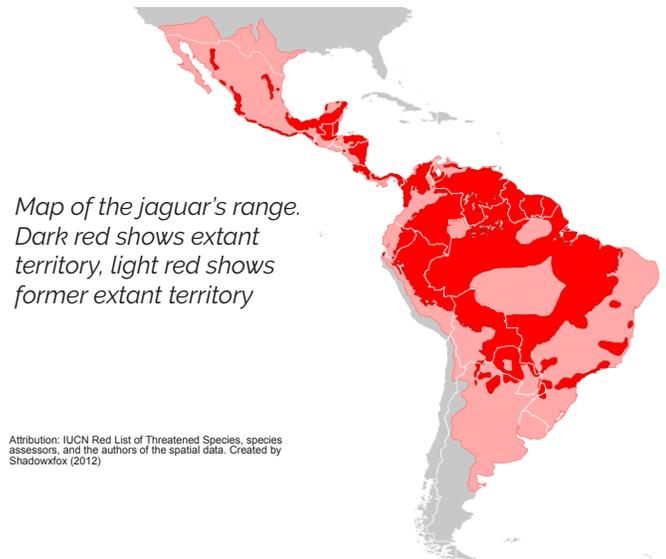
Panthera onca

The largest cat in the Americas, the jaguar is a formidable predator with its ability to leap and bound to snatch prey and the most powerful bite force of the big cats. Its coat is a golden brown with dark rosettes throughout. They are crepuscular, hunting mainly in the hours of dawn and dusk for a wide variety of prey items. Jaguars are solitary and maintain large, shifting territories.



The Challenge

Across the Americas, the jaguar is disappearing. More than half of their range - from the United States to Argentina - has disappeared in the last century. As the jaguar's habitat disappears, they are squeezed into smaller places with humans. This leads to the disappearance of their natural prey and forces jaguars to kill livestock to survive, for which they are usually shot or poisoned. While jaguar losses are occurring across their range, they are disappearing fastest in a vast but little-known region called the Gran Chaco. The Gran Chaco contains some of the most physically diverse ecosystems on earth. Furthermore, some of the largest and most important "Jaguar Conservation Units" (JCU) outside of the Amazon Basin are in the Gran Chaco. However, due to unsustainable cattle-ranching and deforestation, it is also the fastest disappearing region, with more than 1200 square miles lost each year.



Our Goals

- To **protect, restore, and connect habitat** in the Gran Chaco from Argentina to Bolivia
- To **eliminate or significantly reduce human-jaguar conflict** and jaguar mortality across the Gran Chaco
- To **raise awareness** regarding the jaguar, the Gran Chaco, and the relationships between the two, from Argentina to Bolivia
- To **develop, implement, and promote opportunities, incentives, tools, and other ideas** for protecting jaguars and conserving the Gran Chaco

Southeast Asia

The Clouded Leopard:

Project Neofelis

Neofelis nebulosa

Named for the cloud-like patterns on their grey-brown coats, the clouded leopard is the smallest and shyest of the big cats. They prefer to live in dense, untouched forests where they use their excellent climbing abilities to hunt a wide variety of prey. Clouded leopards are so elusive that little is known about their tendencies in the wild. Much of what is known about the species comes from captive individuals.

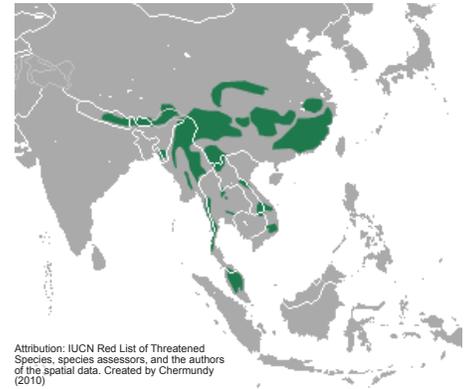


Photo by Soren Wolf/FlickrCC

The Challenge

Clouded leopards have fallen through the cracks of mainstream conservation efforts, yet are in need of immediate conservation attention. **4/10 countries with the world's highest deforestation rates are clouded leopard range countries.** Rapid deforestation continues to be one of the biggest threats to the long-term viability & connectivity of clouded leopard populations. **3/10 countries producing the most palm oil are clouded leopard range countries.** Most areas in these countries now covered by palm oil was formerly habitat for clouded leopards. In addition, **many countries experiencing the heaviest illegal poaching & wildlife trafficking are clouded leopard range countries.** Hunting of clouded leopard prey species is widespread in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Clouded leopards are also the victims of international trade in their parts, as well as traditional use of pelts.

Map of the clouded leopard's range.



Attribution: IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, species assessors, and the authors of the spatial data. Created by Chermundy (2010)

Our Goals

- To use camera-trap "bycatch" data to inform research and conservation
- To establish collaborative outreach projects and population surveys in every country throughout its range.
- To use our focus on clouded leopards as an example to emphasize the need for awareness and protection of smaller, more endangered, feline species.
- To promote the use of palm oil-free products, and work to eliminate palm oil from the supply chain.
- To connect the public with clouded leopards through social media and education.
- To develop a professional network facilitating collaboration among stakeholders.



Camera-trap photo of a clouded leopard on the island of Borneo. Photo by C4C/S.P.E.C.I.E.S.

Learn more about
Project Neofelis

Nepal

The Snow Leopard:

Snow Leopards in Api Nampa

Panthera uncia

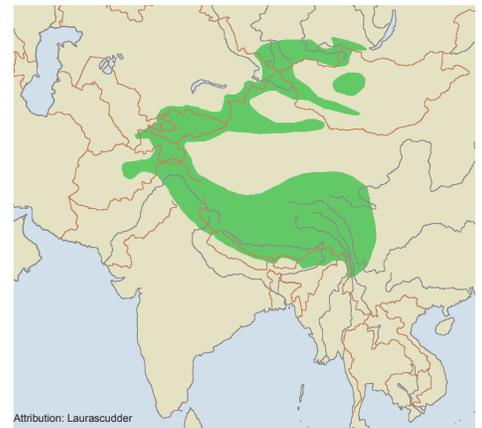
Snow leopards are well-suited for the cold, mountainous climate they inhabit, with thick fur, a large nasal cavity that warms inhaled air, and a long tail for balance and insulation in the snow. Their body is optimized for leaping and jumping, with long, powerful hind legs and short forelimbs that enable them to be agile and quick in rugged landscapes. Snow leopards depend on infrequent, large meals and can take down prey up to three times their own weight. However, a shrinking prey population often drives the leopards to target domestic animals, leading to conflict with humans.



Photo by Mark Dumont

The Challenge

The mountains of Nepal are hotspots for snow leopards globally. Api Nampa Conservation Area (ANCA), for instance, is critical habitat for snow leopard conservation both regionally and globally. ANCA represents one of the least disturbed optimal habitats for snow leopards in Nepal and has higher densities of their primary prey species. Furthermore, the ANCA could potentially serve as the Trans-Himalayan habitat corridor for snow leopard populations in adjacent habitats of both India and Tibet, thus facilitating gene flow, dispersal, and regional connectivity. By working in these new areas that have either been overlooked, or for which there is a critical conservation need, we aim to provide valuable data that will inform larger conservation efforts. Given the increasing regional and range-wide threats snow leopards are facing today, conservation of snow leopard population in Nepal is, now more than ever, important to ensure conservation of snow leopards globally.



Map of the snow leopard's range.

Attribution: Laurascudder



Our Goals

- To **produce a robust estimate** of snow leopard population and their spatial distribution,
- To **model the impact of global climate change** on distribution and habitats of snow leopards in the ANCA
- To **identify and assess threats** to snow leopards including the prevalence and magnitude of human-snow leopard-conflicts.
- To **build and strengthen capacity** of local leaders in snow leopard monitoring techniques
- To **establish a scat library** for snow leopards which can be used for diet-analysis, creating DNA bar coding library for snow leopards, etc., in the future.

Sri Lanka

The Sri Lankan Leopard:

The Sri Lankan Carnivore Project

Panthera pardus kotiya

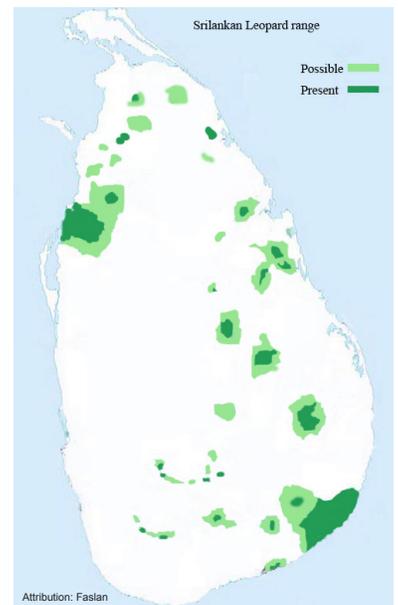
The Sri Lankan leopard is one of 8 subspecies of leopards. Though their coloring is similar, Sri Lankan leopards tend to be larger than their relatives. Their larger size may be due to the fact that Sri Lankan leopards are the apex predator in Sri Lanka, and lack competition from other large cats. With little need to protect their prey, these leopards also rarely bring their kills into trees. However, Sri Lankan leopards do live alongside other carnivore species, including the sloth bear and rusty-spotted cat.



The Challenge

With urban and agricultural development pressure advancing more rapidly in Sri Lanka, the need to investigate the threats faced by the island's carnivore populations is more urgent than ever. Furthermore, despite its listing as an IUCN "Endangered" species, the Sri Lankan leopard has been the subject of few rigorous surveys or field investigations in comparison to other leopard subspecies throughout Asia and Africa. The more we learn about the ecological requirements of the Sri Lankan leopard, the better equipped conservation teams will be to effectively develop conservation strategies to create and connect protected areas. S.P.E.C.I.E.S. has partnered with the Sri Lanka Wildlife Conservation Society (SLWCS) to delve deeper into the world of Sri Lanka's medium to large-size mammals. In addition to the Sri Lankan leopard, we will be surveying and evaluating the status of the sloth bear, rusty-spotted cat, fishing cat, jungle cat, golden palm civet and the Sri Lankan jackal.

Map of the Sri Lankan leopard's range.



Our Goals

- To use **population surveys and field studies** to update the population and conservation status of the Sri Lankan leopard
- To **conduct the first camera trap survey** within the Knuckles Mountain Range
- To **assess the abundance and diversity** of the leopard, sloth bear, and overall mammal community

Learn more about
the Sri Lankan Carnivore Project

Carnivore Corner

News Curated from the Carnivore World

'Rewilding' missing carnivores may help restore some landscapes

Mar. 16 2018
Joanna Klein
The New York Times

Rewilding of carnivore species, such as the jaguar and the sun bear, to habitats can provide a boon to the ecosystem. However, successful rewilding faces numerous challenges, and over half of carnivore reintroductions fail. One of the biggest obstacles is finding humans willing to live alongside them.



Image: Yellowstone National Park



Image: Daniel Garcia Neto, Flickr CC

No cell-phone reception? That's good news for jaguars

Mar. 8 2018
John R. Platt
The Revelator

In a new study, researchers found that threatened mammals such as jaguars and other big cats do best in areas with little human disturbance, as evidenced by lack of cell-phone coverage. In areas with higher cell-phone reception, animal occurrence markedly declined. This data may be used to update the Human Footprint Index project.

Leopards could reduce rabies by controlling stray dog numbers in India, study finds

Mar. 21 2018
Mongabay

There are about 40 leopards living in Mumbai's Sanjay Gandhi National Park, and nearly 40% of their diet is made up of stray dogs. As these dogs are a leading cause of rabies deaths in India each year, leopards may be reducing the number of rabies cases each year and providing a benefit to humans.



Image: A. Davey, Flickr CC

Keeping up with S.P.E.C.I.E.S.



Our Activities

**UCLA Institute of the Environment
and Sustainability
February 21, 2018**

Dr. Anthony Giordano spoke at the UCLA
Institute of the Environment and Sustainability
. He is a Senior Research Fellow of the Center
for Tropical Research.



Safari West Presents! March 3, 2018

On March 3, SPECIES founder and director
Anthony Giordano joined Safari West for their
Conservation Dinner Series. His talk, "Clouded
in Mystery: Introducing the enigmatic clouded
leopard", presented our work with clouded
leopards.

World Wildlife Day at the UN March 3, 2018

S.P.E.C.I.E.S. staff joined the CITES Secretariat at the
United Nations in New York City to discuss the theme
"Big cats: predators under threat". Discussions ranged
from snow leopard conservation, regional jaguar project
collaboration, and tiger success stories, as well as the
expansion of community based conservation.



Upcoming Events

Bay Area Tropical Forest Network April 5, 2018

On April 5 from 6 - 8:30 , SPECIES founder and director
Anthony Giordano will present "Jaguars of the Chaco"
at a BATFN event held at the Carnegie Institution's
Department of Global Ecology at Stanford University.



RSVP Here!

CONNECT WITH US!



S.P.E.C.I.E.S.

"To ensure the viability, diversity, and integrity of the world's threatened, endangered, and declining native carnivore populations and communities, mitigate threats to their future survival, and restore their part to the healthy functioning of the planet's ecosystems"