

Quest for the Snow Leopard

Ladakh, Winter '09

KarmaQuest and the Snow Leopard Conservancy present a special opportunity for **hardy trekkers**, intent on seeing a snow leopard in the wild: a mid-winter visit to the heart of India's snow leopard country.

We know that at least 20-30 snow leopards roam Ladakh's Hemis National Park, site of the Conservancy's first camera-trapping census of the cats.

Quest participants have seen snow leopard on the past three winter trips.

For the chance to see a wild snow leopard, trip participants must be willing and prepared to accept some **serious challenges**:



The magnificent snow leopard was lying quietly above his kill, draped like a fur carpet over the rock. He was so full of meat he could hardly move. As we watched, he dozed off, opening his eyes now and again to check us out. He eventually got up, moving half a meter and flopping down again like a sack of heavy potatoes. He blended in immediately — his camouflage was simply perfect.



- Brian Keating, Head of Outreach, Calgary Zoo, March 16, 2007

- adjusting to the altitude gain from sea level to 11,500 feet in an hour's flight from Delhi;
- trekking to the study site (between 12-13,000 feet) over frozen trails and streams;
- enduring temperatures that can drop to -0 F at night;
- bathing in a wash-bowl;
- having a flexible attitude accepting of unusual experiences and unexpected occurrences.

There will be opportunities for cultural touring during the acclimatization in Leh, but the focus of

this trip is the chance of seeing a snow leopard in the wild.

The group will be driven to the trail head, 1-2 hrs on a gravel road. The trek in to Rumbak takes about six leisurely hours. You will spend ten days searching for snow leopards. You will sleep in tent-camps and traditional Ladakhi homes. During the trek days you will be accompanied by snow leopard expert Rodney Jackson and a member of the SLC-India team, as well as by local nature guides.

You will visit some of the camera trapping sites, learn the array of ways that the cats

That was THE trip of a lifetime!

-Caroline Gabel, Shared Earth Foundation

Fabulous! Spotting that leopard at the end of our trek was priceless! To be able to spend an hour in the presence of such a magnificent creature (on HIS terms) is something we will never forget."

-Barry and Erin Sharaf

The exceptional people who organized the trip, took care of us, and guided us, were a real highlight of the trip.

-John and Jilian Lawson

communicate through the signs they leave in the environment, and you will learn about the Conservancy's community-based conservation program. If you are very lucky, you will see a snow leopard in the wild.

This trip will run for 16 days in early February. Because this is a strenuous, challenging adventure, and for the protection of guests as well as KarmaQuest and the Snow Leopard Conservancy, we will ask each participant to agree to the following terms:

- Doctor's health clearance and Rx for *Diamox* (which helps with altitude adjustment);
- Self-coverage medical and medivac insurance;
- One month physical training (minimum exercise - 1 hr per day walking);
- Signed release of liability for KarmaQuest and the SLC.

If you would like more information, or to sign up for this trip, please contact KarmaQuest at 650-560-0101 karmaquest@earthlink.net www.KarmaQuests.com

