

Winter Quest for the Snow Leopard

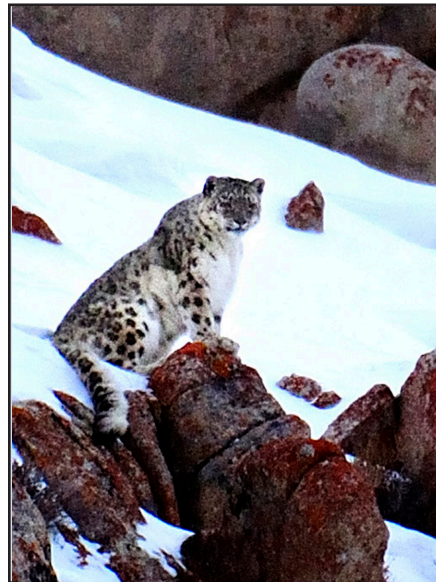
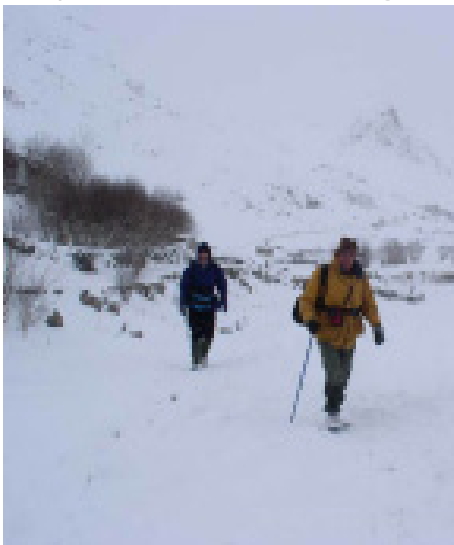
Ladakh, India 2013

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 leopards on the past four winter trips. In 2012 there were four sightings!

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



I have traveled a lot in my life, I travel for a living. Though, the trekking in Hemis National Park was one of my all-time favourites. Having seen a snow leopard at close range and observed for nearly 8 hours has been a tremendous experience that I will never forget.

Thomas Bauer, Travel writer, Germany

- 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

"The cat was resting on a rocky sunny area...we watched her through a spotting scope and she looked so close we were able to see her eyes and whiskers... everyone was blown away...I personally had a little cry."

Sibylle Noras, Founder and Publisher
www.snowleopardblog.com, Australia

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 an expert snow leopard tracker and SLC-India staff member, and a full trek support team.

You will visit some of the camera trapping sites, learn the array of ways that the cats 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
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karmaquest@earthlink.net
www.KarmaQuests.com

