

---

## A school student photographed rare snow leopard in the Nyinba Valley of Humla district, Nepal

Rinzin Phunjok, Lama, ([rinzinplama@gmail.com](mailto:rinzinplama@gmail.com)), Project UKALI, Third Pole Conservancy, Simikot, Nepal  
Lhundup Dorje, Lama, ([lhundupdorjelama7@gmail.com](mailto:lhundupdorjelama7@gmail.com))  
Project UKALI, Third Pole Conservancy, Simikot, Nepal

---

On January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 17:00, students from Manasarovar High School in the Humla district of Nepal had a peculiar encounter with an unknown animal that was chasing a horse. They had no idea what kind of animal it was until the first author recognized it as a snow leopard. The students, Nurbu Gyaljan Lama and three other friends from Burunse village, were searching for their livestock in the Laparsing pasture area at an elevation of around 3650m (Fig. 1), when they spotted a large cat's tail chasing a horse. Nurbu Lama, who is a grade 10 student, mentioned that they were frightened by the animal and shouted loudly to scare it away. He quickly managed to take a photograph of it with his mobile phone (Image 1) and shared it with us for identification. This was the first time a snow leopard had been photographed in the Nyinba valley of Humla. Snow leopards are distributed throughout northern part of Humla, bordering the Tibet Autonomous Region of China. They are locally threatened due to conflicts with herders and the decline of their prey base from subsistence hunting (Lama et al. 2018). Snow leopards are classified as Endangered in the National Red List of Nepal and are listed as a protected species under the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1973 of the Government of Nepal.



Image 1: Snow leopard photographed in Nyinba valley, Humla Photo credit: Nurbu Gyaljan Lama

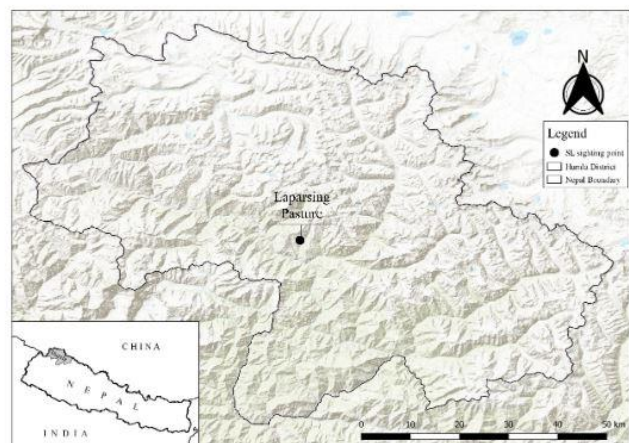


Figure 1: Snow leopard sighting area in Nyinba valley, Humla

---

### References

Lama R.P., Ghale T.R., Suwal M.K, Ranabhat R. and Regmi G.R. 2018. First camera trap evidence of snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*) outside the current network of protected areas in Nepal. *Journal of Threatened Taxa*. <https://doi.org/10.11609/jott.3031.10.8.12086-12090>

---

### Acknowledgements

Rinzin Phunjok Lama was supported by Rolex Awards for Enterprise 2021.