

A Year in the Life of a Snow Leopard

Habitat and Physical Features

I am a snow leopard and I live high in the Himalayan mountains of Asia and my body is specially adapted to life up here. My nose is a little bit like a heater, warming the air before it reaches my lungs, my huge feet and long tail help me to balance, while my fur, although having fine hairs, is really thick and keeps me warm.



Hunter and Hunted

I am a hunter, but I am also hunted by **poachers** who hunt me for my fur and bones. When I am hunting it can take 8-10 days to hunt and take down my **prey**. My main diet is wild mountain goat and the bharal which is a type of sheep with enormous curved horns. Once I have caught and killed my prey it takes me about 3-4 days to eat it all, and all the time I have to protect it from **scavengers** like vultures. If I take my eye off the ball for even a moment, they will take the opportunity to steal my meal! I still hold the title of top **predator** in my **environment**.

Family and Lifestyle

We are a **nomadic** bunch us snow leopards. This means that we are wanderers, with no fixed settlement. We go to where the food is, and when it runs out, we move on. We hunt mostly at night and can sleep for up to 18 hours a day! If I am left alone by poachers, I could reach the ripe old age of 22, however, the mountain life is not without its challenges, lack of food or a nasty fall could end my life earlier. Mating season begins in January and lasts until March, the male will usually leave after a few days and I have to cope on my own. My pregnancies last between 93 and 110 days, (about 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ months) and I will have 2-3 cubs, my current babies are almost ready to leave me and begin their own adult adventures as they are 18 months old. I will miss them, but that is the life of a snow leopard!

