

The Snow Leopard

Deadly 60 Report

Snow leopards are beautiful big cats, their fur is white with brown and black spots. They are very shy creatures and also rare, earning them the nickname: the ghost of the mountains. They live high up in the Himalayan mountain range at altitudes of over 6,000 metres, the highest altitude of any of the big cats. Snow leopards are perfectly adapted for such climates with their wide nasal passages and large chest cavities allowing them to take huge breaths in, they have smaller but more numerous red blood cells than the other big cats meaning they can absorb oxygen more effectively.

The giant paws of the snow leopard act like snow shoes spreading the weight of these magnificent creatures so that they do not sink into the deep snow. They have the thickest and longest tail of all of the big cats which when they are resting they wrap it around themselves like a blanket. It provides them with perfect balance as they climb steep slopes hunting for their unsuspecting prey. The powerful front legs of the snow leopard are shorter than their hind legs which are great for quick starts and rapid speeds, while their broad muscular chests are like shock absorbers, dampening the impact of almost vertical drops.

These beautiful creatures are at risk though, farming means that their access to wild prey is limited. As a result, snow leopards attack and kill domesticated livestock for food, meaning that farmers shoot them to prevent this.

