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News: Snow Leopards

- The National Board for Wildlife meeting in New Delhi witnessed the release of the report on the Status of Snow Leopards in India by the Union Minister of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

Snow Leopard

- Snow Leopard (often referred to as the “ghost of the mountains”) inhabits at the higher Himalayan & trans-Himalayan landscape in 4 states of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh and UT’s of Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir.
- This area contributes to 5% of global snow leopard range.
- Snow leopard acts as an indicator species to the health of the mountain ecosystem in which they live, due to their position as the top predator in the food web. It is also declared as a flagship species by the Government of India for the high-altitude Himalayas.
- IUCN Status: Vulnerable.
- Wildlife protection Act: Schedule I.
- CITES Status: Appendix I.

- CMS Status: Appendix I.
- Recently, the 1st Snow Leopard Survey of nation was developed by scientific experts. The use of technology such as camera traps & scientific surveys will help to estimate the numbers on International Snow Leopard Day.
- Recently, **Kyrgyzstan has officially declared the Snow Leopard as its national symbol**, signifying its commitment to conservation and ecological balance.
- The occasion also marked the inaugural session of 4th steering meeting of **Global Snow Leopard & Ecosystem Protection**.
- **Bishkek declaration** of 2013 reiterates the fundamental principles, objectives & actions pertaining to participatory conservation of snow leopards & their ecosystems of Asia.
- The **first Snow Leopard Conservation Centre** is decided to be established in **Uttarakhand** with the **funding of Global Environment Facility (GEF)**.
- **Securing Livelihoods, Conservation, Sustainable Use and Restoration of High Range Himalayan Ecosystems project** (SECURE Himalaya), a project developed as a response to the growing crisis of illegal trafficking in wildlife, will also contribute towards attainment of the aim of Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP).
- Snow Leopard is also the state animal of **Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh**.

- Recently, camera traps revealed the first sighting of Snow leopard in Baltal – Zojila area in Jammu and Kashmir.