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March 1, 2010

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**\*\*PHOTOS AVAILABLE\*\***

## **Panthera and Snow Leopard Trust Collar Eighth Snow Leopard for Study in Mongolia**

*Capture breaks record for number of snow leopards collared in one site*

**SOUTH GOBI, MONGOLIA** - A team of big cat researchers were recently successful in capturing their eighth snow leopard for study and tracking in the high altitudes of Mongolia. Made up of researchers from the leading big cat conservation groups Panthera and the Snow Leopard Trust, the team is striving to learn all they can about these endangered and almost mythically secretive cats. High-tech digital camera-traps are used to identify the animals from their unique spot patterns, providing an indication of how many snow leopards remain in the wild. But saving these 'ghosts of the mountains' requires a much greater understanding than can be gained through photos alone, and so researchers are humanely and safely capturing the cats to fit them with a collar containing a GPS device that collects critical data on their movements and behavior. The data is then relayed back to the researchers via satellite telephone several times a day.

“This most recent snow leopard capture and collaring is a thrilling kick-off to our team’s 2010 trapping season,” said **Dr. Tom McCarthy, Panthera’s Snow Leopard Director**. “It’s cold, it’s hard, but days like this make it all worthwhile. We’ll continue to track these magnificent animals and their offspring for many years or even decades to better understand their needs as well as the threats they face. Our research will ultimately help shape conservation actions that will ensure the survival of these rare and endangered cats.”

Prior to the initiation of this study in summer of 2008, only 14 snow leopards had ever been monitored using radio-collars, and never have more than six been successfully collared at any one site. This is the first study to employ GPS-satellite technology. The data collected through the collars are used to inform conservation policy decisions that will help to maintain the species.

Very little is known about snow leopards because of their elusiveness, extremely remote habitat, and the high altitudes and inhospitable weather conditions in which they thrive. Panthera partnered with the Snow Leopard Trust in 2008 to launch the first ever long-term ecological study of snow leopards in Mongolia. The Mongolian research project is the most comprehensive effort to study the animals to date.

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**Images of the snow leopard captured last week were not immediately available due to the team’s remote location. Other images from Panthera’s snow leopard research in Mongolia are available for reprint [here](#). The password for download is “panthera.” Credit photos as indicated.**

For more information, please visit <http://panthera.org>