



Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Half Year Report

(due 31st October 2019)

Project reference:	IWT037
Project title:	Conservation and community resilience: IWT alternatives in snow leopard range
Country(ies):	Kyrgyz Republic & Tajikistan
Lead organisation:	Panthera
Collaborator(s):	Panthera Foundation Kyrgyzstan (now Ilbirs Foundation), Kyrgyz Customs State Service, State Agency on Environmental Protection and Forestry under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, Hunting & Conservation Association of Tajikistan (formerly H&CAT, now ANCOT), Pamir-Eco Cultural Tourism Association (PECTA), Committee on Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, Working Dogs For Conservation (WD4C), CITES Secretariat, EcoEnforce
Project leader:	Thomas McCarthy
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1):	31 st October 2019, (HYR3)
Project website/blog/social media:	Panthera Homepage ; Panthera Twitter ; Program Twitter ; Ilbirs (formerly Panthera KG) Facebook ; TJK Conservancies Facebook ; H&CAT (Partner Website)

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to the end September).

Our project is facing roadblocks in both program countries for reasons out of our control. As described in the two change requests submitted in 2019, our branch was closed in Tajikistan, and Kyrgyz Republic we are now working with a sparsely staffed, low capacity local NGO (MOU signed in March 2019) and the hunting moratorium has delayed implementation of our primary economic intervention. Although most activities have been or are in the process of being completed, our project end date was kindly extended six months by the IWT Fund and we have adjusted our work plans accordingly.

Due to these setbacks, we will be unable to complete some activities remaining in our grant to the full extent we had planned. However, we are proud to say that even with significant and challenging setbacks for our organization, our Outcome will largely be successful, and we hope to continue supporting this important work in the future. Our Outcome (revised in February 2019 as part of 7 January 2019 change request) is to:

Recover snow leopard and prey populations, and improve livelihoods of subsistence pastoralists through: 1) sustainable, community-managed mountain ungulate trophy hunting and elimination of livestock depredation (Tajikistan), 2) enacting alternative sustainable natural

resource-based income generation options (Kyrgyz Republic), 3) reducing snow leopard and prey poaching and IWT (Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic).

Update on our Outcome: 1) We have successfully enacted this goal and it is ongoing via support of the conservancy association we started, H&CAT (now known as the Association of Nature Conservation Organizations of Tajikistan or ANCOT), and we have eliminated livestock depredation in the communities where we constructed predator-proof corrals.

Activity 3.1: Over the past 6 months, we investigated the status of the 8 corrals which were incomplete at the end of Year 2 in Tajikistan. None of these corrals were completed due to missing materials. In most cases, we were incorrectly informed that only the roofs remained to be completed. We are currently investigating what it will take to provide the missing materials so the remaining 8 corrals can indeed be completed this year.

In an ideal situation, in Tajikistan we would be currently advising conservancies to assist them organization and execution of wildlife surveys and tracking their finances to ensure success and transparency, and ensuring activities are professionally structured with business plans and tracking mechanisms in place. The conservancies continue to conduct ungulate surveys on their own and with support from their association ANCOT, though not as frequently.

Activities 1.6 & 1.9: In Year 4, we will send 3-4 trainees from Tajik Women in Conservation (TWC) to accounting classes to improve financial tracking know-how in the communities. We will rely on ANCOT to provide continued financial tracking support in communities. While we would rather be the lead organization ensuring conservancies establish formal business plans with proper community consultations and due diligence, ANCOT will instead provide this technical support. To support and follow this process, we will share lessons learned in Kyrgyz Republic regarding the process of writing and adopting management plans, and share drafts of those management plans with conservancies in Tajikistan. Draft management plans were completed in June 2019 for all 5 conservancies in Kyrgyz Republic. The final versions will be then adopted via meetings in November 2019 and available in Russian and English.

Activity 1.5: Exchange meetings between conservancies in Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic have focused on sharing ideas for non-consumptive nature tourism, including yak and horse riding. The second meeting was held over 5 days in May in the Chon Kemin conservancy, Kyrgyz Republic. Seven participants came from 3 conservancies in Tajikistan to join 12 from 4 conservancies at the Chon Kemin conservancy in Kyrgyz Republic. We emphasized exchanging experiences, tourism skills, and teaching leadership, management and gender awareness. The final two exchange meetings will be held in Year 4.

Activity 1.4: The final camera trapping effort for this grant was set up in September when Panthera Conservation Scientist Shannon Kachel, an expert in snow leopard population ecology, joined by Ilbirs Foundation partners and CBC rangers, deployed 17 camera traps in the ~750km² Talas Conservancy and 10 in the ~180 km² Chon Kemin Conservancy. The cameras, which will be collected in November 2019, will provide a comparison to a 2017 baseline survey in Talas, which documented the presence of a single snow leopard, while in Chon Kemin they will comprise the first systematic assessment of snow leopard presence and distribution. Shannon trained 5 rangers in Talas and 2 in Chon Kemin in camera trap deployment and its use for population monitoring.

2) This is ongoing in Kyrgyz Republic, and we also have been supporting this in Tajikistan through the TWC program to train young women to be mountain guides for tourists.

Activity 2.8: We have one remaining training program scheduled for Tajik Women in Conservation trainees in summer 2020.

Activity 1.10: Ilbirs is investigating additional options for alternative income generation, specifically beekeeping for honey production with expert advice from the Beekeepers Association of the Kyrgyz Republic. If details can be worked out, we should be able to launch a pilot program in one conservancy, Chon Kemin, in December 2019 with anticipated first honey

harvest in spring 2020. This enterprise would economically benefit 10 households as well as contribute towards the conservancy projects such as anti-poaching patrols and providing salt for wild ungulates in winter.

3) This has been successful in that the conservancies have the capacity to prevent poaching on their lands, thereby reducing availability of parts for the IWT. This is true for conservancies in both Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic.

Activities 4.1 & 4.2: Ongoing training conducted throughout the past 6 months for both new dogs and maintenance of experienced dog teams with wildlife and other scents. One new dog team completed 3-month narcotics training course and another is close to completion. After training, one team will work in the southern region on the border with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Two teams are currently stationed at Manas Airport, and one in Osh.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

The problems we have encountered were explained in detail in our two change requests mentioned above in question #1 and below in #2b. No new problems have developed.

2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with LTS: Yes/No

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No

Two submitted, 1 January & 6 June 2019

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

Two approved, 28 March & 19 August

3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project, please submit a rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget, so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary.

4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to IWT Challenge Fund management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

N/A

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document. N/A

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also** be raised with LTS International through a Change Request. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email.**

Please send your **completed report by email** to IWT-Fund@ltsi.co.uk. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: IWT001 Half Year Report.**