



Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Half Year Report (due 31st October 2020)

Project reference	IWT037
Project title	Conservation and community resilience: IWT alternatives in snow leopard range
Country(ies)	Kyrgyz Republic & Tajikistan
Lead organisation	Panthera
Partners(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 and Byron Weckworth
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	31 st October 2020, (HYR4)
Project website/blog/social media	Panthera Homepage ; Panthera Twitter ; Program Twitter ; Ilbirs (formerly Panthera KG) Facebook ; TJK Conservancies Facebook ; H&CAT (Partner Website)

Please note that the text of this report may be posted/shared with the exception of the sections highlighted in **red font**.

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).

COVID-19 brought our work almost to a halt in 2020. We were not able to travel within Tajikistan, so the predator proofing of barns (Activity 3.3), finishing all corrals (3.1), and creating the instructional film to reduce the ability of snow leopards to enter barns (3.4) are all delayed until spring 2021.

Activity 1.10 Bee boxes were delivered to the Chon Kemin Conservancy in May instead of March due to pandemic travel restrictions within Kyrgyz Republic. This delay means that the volume of honey for the first season will be lower than hoped for this sustainable alternative income generation project of beekeeping for honey production.

Activity 3.1 One 40m x 40m corral was completed in the summer pastures of Darmorakh Village. Some walls were constructed by the villagers in summer 2019, we delivered all the construction materials in summer 2020, and the corral was finished in September. The villagers are delighted with the communal corral that can accommodate up to 2,000 sheep and goats as well as the small hut for herders to sleep and store personal gear. At least 328 households from three sub-villages of Darmorakh now use the corral, with each household having an average of 5-6 family members.

Activities 4.1 & 4.2 & 4.3 The dog trainers continue to check in monthly via reports, photos and videos, and we can forward any questions they have to Working Dogs for Conservation for off-site support if needed.

The wildlife detection dog/handler teams were not deployed between the end of March and 10 August because all duty stations were closed (airport, border posts, etc.) during states of emergency in Kyrgyz Republic. They were, however, still able to actively train on their own.

The Kyrgyz Customs Service currently has eight wildlife detection dogs. To date, seven are fully trained to detect wildlife scents, including snow leopard, ibex, argali, saiga, and saker falcon. The remaining dog has been designated for breeding, with a veterinarian assigned as its handler. The breeding dog gave birth to a litter of seven puppies in July which will be trained in scent detection starting they are eight months old in the first quarter of 2021.

Activity 4.9 Retrofitting of the Customs Service Gazel vehicle for safe transport of dogs and handlers was delayed due to the pandemic, but is halfway completed and will be finished by the end of October.

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.

Due to COVID-19 international travel restrictions, we submitted a change request (approved on 25 September), to replace the tasks requiring international travel with in-country projects. We will no longer attempt to conduct the final exchange meeting between Tajik and Kyrgyz conservancies (Activity 1.5) nor the final Tajik Women in Conservation mountain guide training (Activity 2.8; trainer would have been coming from Europe). Instead, per the approved change request, we will predator proof an additional ~200 barns (Activity 3.3), and retrofit a second vehicle to safely transport wildlife detection dogs in Kyrgyz Republic (Activity 4.10).

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** (discussed in July, submitted 2 September)

Received confirmation of change acceptance **Yes/No** (on 25 September)

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

Yes X Estimated underspend: £ shifted to 1 October 2020 through 30 June 2021. Already approved by IWT on 25 September as detailed in our 2 September change request.

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. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.

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. Attached.

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.**