



Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Final Report

To be completed with reference to the “Writing a Darwin/IWT Report” Information Note: (<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/resources/reporting-forms-change-request-forms-and-terms-and-conditions/>). It is expected that this report will be a **maximum** of 20 pages in length, excluding annexes.

IWT Challenge Fund Project Information

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Project reference | IWT037 |
| Project title | Conservation and Community Resilience: IWT Alternatives in Snow Leopard Range |
| Countries | Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan |
| Lead organisation | Panthera |
| Partner institution(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 Association of Tajikistan (HAT), Hunting and Conservation Alliance of Tajikistan (H&CAT – now Association of Nature Conservation Organizations of Tajikistan or 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 |
| IWT grant value | £ 310,000 |
| Start/end dates of project | 1 May 2017 - 30 September 2020, extended to 31 December 2021 |
| Project Leader’s name | Byron Weckworth (originally Thomas McCarthy) |
| Project website/blog/social media | |
| Report author(s) and date | Thomas McCarthy, Rana Bayraccismith, Qobiljon Shokirov, Zairbek Kubanychbekov, Atai Oskonbaev, Kenje Sultanbaeva, Byron Weckworth, Shannon Kachel, Working Dogs for Conservation 31 March 2022 |

Dear IWT Fund: Please note that the text of this report may be posted/shared with the exception of the sections highlighted in red font. Also, please do not share the supporting evidence documents and photos before confirming with us, as many documents should be internal to this project. Thank you for this consideration.

1. Project summary

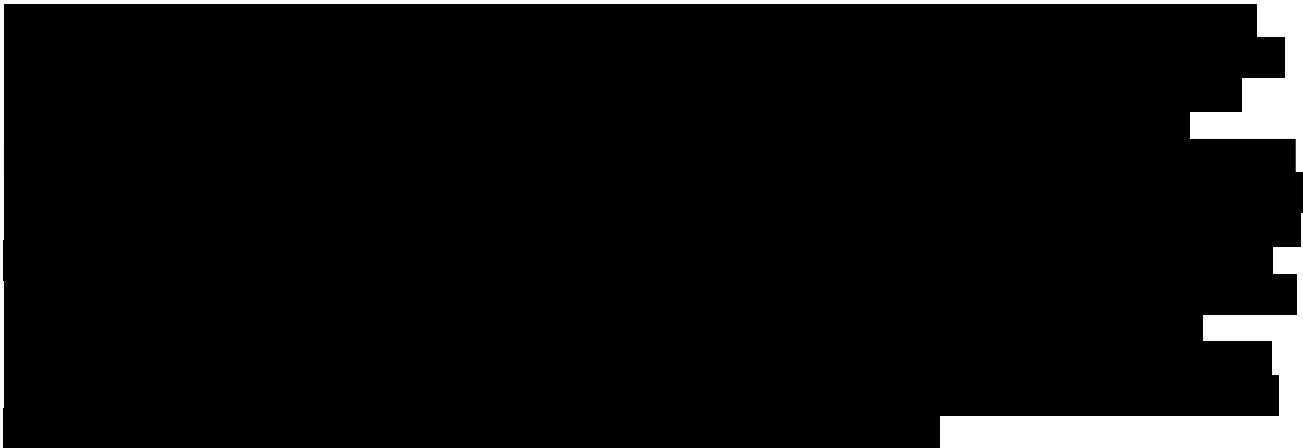
In Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic, pastoralists kill snow leopards in retaliation for attacks on livestock and poach ungulate prey species for subsistence; both contribute to IWT. Lack of livelihood alternatives,

weak land management and enforcement at trafficking points, and human-carnivore conflict exacerbate the decline of snow leopards and prey species. IWT deteriorates local and national institutions that manage ecosystems by undercutting nature-based livelihoods from tourism and legal hunting—communities’ most significant opportunity for income generation outside of animal husbandry.

Panthera’s conservancy model uses sustainably-managed ungulate hunting to generate local employment and revenues, incentivizing local engagement to combat IWT. Low-volume, high-value ungulate hunting and nature tourism provides significant revenue opportunities for remote communities in snow leopard range. Concurrent work includes eliminating predator-livestock conflict and improving law enforcement capacity to fight IWT. Proceeds from hunts are invested to develop and maintain microfinance programs, healthcare facilities, schools, water infrastructure, and conservation activities. Additionally, predator-proofing of corrals eliminates household food insecurity and economic vulnerability from carnivore attacks on livestock—loss of a single sheep equates to [REDACTED], or five months of cash income. Interventions to predator-proof corrals simultaneously eliminate the incentive for retaliatory killings and reduce snow leopard availability for IWT. Please see [maps](#) here.

2. Project Partnerships

1. Panthera Foundation Kyrgyzstan (now Ilbirs Foundation): Ilbirs liaised with all local government and community partners, including the State Agency on Environmental Protection and Forestry (SAEPF), Kyrgyz Customs Service, and our 5 community-based conservancies in the Kyrgyz Republic. In October 2018, our local organization opted to become an independent NGO and we signed an MOU with the new organization in March 2019. Although this slowed progress and necessitated a [change request](#) and extension of our grant deadline from 31 March 2020 to 30 September 2020, this arrangement worked smoothly. Ilbirs staff were involved in all project planning and decision-making and they carried out the majority of on-the-ground work with occasional in-person support by Panthera staff as needed. Ilbirs staff were involved in preparing all reports. We are continuing our partnership after project end, including ongoing work to combat the illegal wildlife trade via a United States Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) grant to “Combat Trafficking in High Value Wildlife Products from Big Cats”.
2. Kyrgyz Customs State Service: The Customs Service remains committed to the mission, actively working with existing dogs and handlers, and has added new dogs and handlers. They are continuing the work we initiated under their regular duties since dogs are now all trained in detecting wildlife scents. They are also now being looked to as a resource within the Kyrgyz government: the State Agency of Environment and Forestry (SAEPF) is adding a wildlife detection dog and handler to their toolkit. The customs service trained this dog and handler with our cadre, and then the team was stationed at an “Eco Post” in the south eastern region of the country where agents check for the illegal transportation of wildlife derivatives within the country. This work is being funded by Panthera’s INL grant program (as noted above).
3. Kyrgyz State Agency of Environment and Forestry (SAEPF): SAEPF continues to support community-based conservancy development. We partner with them through Ilbirs and will continue to do so.
4. H&CAT (now Association of Nature Conservation Organizations of Tajikistan, ANCOT): H&CAT is the local alliance of Tajik conservancies that we helped establish. [REDACTED]
5. Pamir-Eco Cultural Tourism Association (PECTA): As previously explained, collaboration with PECTA and the [Kyrgyz Community Based Tourism Association \(KCBTA\)](#) were not as effective as anticipated.
6. Hunting Association of Tajikistan (HAT): HAT includes all of the private Tajik hunting concessions and is the body that distributes ungulate hunting permits. [REDACTED]



7. Committee on Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan (CEPRT): CEPRT is the regulatory body and key partner in the implementation of our activities in Tajikistan. Until we no longer had a legal entity in the country as of January 2019 and were no longer able to do so, we supported CEPRT in the implementation of CITES, the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP), the Snow Leopard National Action Plan, and activities related to combating IWT. We cannot liaise directly with them without an in-country entity, but will restart this relationship once we are re-established.
8. WD4C: We liaised with WD4C via sharing monthly updates from Customs. Our partnership expanded to include work under the auspices of the INL grant to continue training wildlife detection dog teams in both Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan. Our relationship will continue past this grant, and WD4C assisted in preparation of report materials.
9. CITES Secretariat: CITES develops the regulatory mechanisms that are the backbone of Panthera's work with the community-based conservancies and tools for addressing IWT. We are not directly working with CITES Secretariat staff at this time in either country but will certainly do so in the future.
10. EcoEnforce: EcoEnforce developed and conducted our [Tajikistan conservancy ranger training](#) in October and November 2017 and [Kyrgyz conservancy ranger training](#) in September 2018. We will give serious consideration on using their talents to conduct future training programs.
11. Other partners: Our local partners are all of the community-based conservancies we support. We will continue to work with Kyrgyz conservancies after the completion of this project as funding allows, although we will be unable to work directly with the Tajik conservancies in the foreseeable future. Conservancy members were directly involved in decision-making regarding all projects undertaken in their territories and contributed data to all reports via Ibirs, with the exception of Tajik conservancies after year 2.

At the international level, the IUCN Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group (SULi) and Cat Specialist Group provided scientific counsel to improve the community-based governance model. The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) was another key partner through the Central Asian Mammals Initiative—snow leopards and argali sheep are recognized as key species of concern. Finally, the [GSLEP Secretariat](#) relies on our work to meet goals. We will continue to work closely with all these groups as projects allow, including closely liaising with GSLEP on their efforts such as PAWS (Population Assessment of the World's Snow Leopards) and contributing data to that effort when appropriate.

3. Project Achievements

3.1 Outputs

Output 1: Per the approved change request submitted in [October 2017](#), this Output was revised to “Five Kyrgyz Republic wildlife community-based conservancies operating with governance structures in place, managing ibex and argali and launching nature tourism; 1 new community-based conservancy developed in Tajikistan; and 4 existing wildlife community-based conservancies in Tajikistan strengthened.”

This was completed in Tajikistan for the 4 existing conservancies, where formalization of ANCOT (formerly H&CAT) strengthened conservancies and created a support network. ANCOT's 2020 annual meeting notice was posted on [Instagram](#), reporting involvement of 10 conservancies discussing the



future of community-based conservancies and sustainable use of natural resources. ANCOT announced a [new conservancy](#) launched in the Mastchohi Kuhi Region of Northern Tajikistan (all others are in eastern Tajikistan). The Alichur conservancy adopted a management plan similar to those in use in Kyrgyz Republic (see paragraph below) which were shared by our partner Ibirs Foundation, but we do not know if the other conservancies have adopted formal management plans.

Meanwhile, progress was slower than anticipated in Kyrgyz Republic due to the government-mandated hunting moratorium being extended to 2022/2023 (depending on the species) across conservancy lands. Governance structures are in place and each conservancy developed and adopted [management plans](#). We also began to develop alternative sustainable, income generating options, primarily [nature tourism](#) and a [beekeeping/honey production pilot project](#) in one conservancy, Chon Kemin. Hunting and nature tourism ideas and experiences were shared between Tajik and Kyrgyz conservancies during exchange meetings we hosted in Kyrgyzstan in [2018](#) and [2019](#). With the support of SAEPF, we are very pleased to report that on 7 September 2020, Community Based Conservancy (CBC) [Bek Tosot was awarded hunting rights](#) over an 180,800 hectare area. Conservancy Min Teke joined Bek Tosot as one conservancy under the Bek Tosot name. On 27 November 2020, CBC [Janaidar](#) was also awarded hunting rights. They received a permit to organize hunting on a 157,000 hectare area (60,000 hectares more than expected) until September 2035. The agreement states that the State Agency will assist the CBCs' hunting activities by providing methodological and consulting support, CBCs are required to conduct: 1) annual prey surveys, 2) hunting activities according to Kyrgyz Republic legislation, and 3) anti-poaching activities, as well as 4) provide quarterly reports to the regional branch of the State Agency. For two other conservancies, the moratorium on hunting ibex is in effect until 2023 but in 2022 they can start organizing hunting for marmots and rabbits. For the final conservancy, Shumkar-Tor in Chon-Kemin, the moratorium was completely lifted. However, due to the reorganization in the relevant ministries, the competition has not yet taken place for Shumkar-Tor to earn their hunting contract.

Indicator 1.1 Completed in [year 1](#). Please see the following [spreadsheet](#) listing the breakdown of the 3289 km² that are protected from poachers. In year 3, [management plans](#) were drafted, revised and adopted for all 5 conservancies in Kyrgyz Republic.

1.2 Completed in years 1 ([annual report year 1](#)) and 2 ([annual report year 2](#)), with exception of the defunct Guldara Conservancy in Tajikistan.

1.3 There was no evidence of poaching of ibex, argali or snow leopard in the Kyrgyz conservancies or the conservancies in Tajikistan with the exception of one snow leopard found shot in January 2020. The Kyrgyz rangers of [Chegetei Too Conservancy](#) rescued the cat. Kyrgyz conservancy rangers provided [monthly reports](#) of their anti-poaching patrols from April 2019 through March 2020. There were 3 incidences of poachers stopped from targeting partridges in 2 of the 5 Kyrgyz conservancies. Survey and patrol data are documented in [all annual reports](#) (Questions 3.1, Activities 1.4 and 2.1).

Output 2: In Tajikistan, progress was on track with hunts and [community projects](#), and the launch of the first snow leopard viewing [tours in 2019](#). We do not have updates for these activities although 2 snow leopard tours were offered in early [2020](#).

Progress was delayed in Kyrgyz Republic due to the hunting moratorium. However, we encouraged development of [nature tourism](#) opportunities in 3 of the now 4 Kyrgyz conservancies, and launched a pilot [beekeeping/honey production project](#) in Shumkar-Tor Conservancy.

Indicator 2.1 Business plans are included in the Kyrgyz Republic conservancy [management plans](#) adopted in 2019, although distribution of hunting proceeds will not be decided until closer to 2022/2023 due to the moratorium. Conservancy management plans define management planning and structure, and describe conservancy location and environment including wildlife and local communities, infrastructure, tourism and hunting opportunities, conservation threats, goals (including protection, research, capacity building, public awareness, income-generating activities, and sustainable hunting), monitoring plans and budget.

Although the conservancies in Tajikistan have agreed-upon protocols for funding projects from wildlife revenues, plans are not formalized in writing in most conservancies although we believe the Alichur conservancy has adopted a management plan similar to the Kyrgyz conservancies thanks to Ibirs Foundation sharing the Kyrgyz plans.

2.2 & 2.3 Completed in [Tajikistan](#) but not possible in Kyrgyz Republic for duration of the grant because the income generated to undertake community development projects is insufficient without hunting revenues. However, current efforts by conservancy members include poaching patrols (see [here](#) and [here](#)) and providing supplemental salt for ungulates in the winter. They pay for these supplements themselves and cover patrol expenses, although we did support some patrolling expenses in 2019 thanks to IWT funds.

2.4 At the outset, we aimed to train the same cadre of women for the duration of the 3-year pilot project. Due to family commitments, only a few women were able to attend more than once. As a result, we repeated the wildlife and backcountry guide skills in each training session. However, all Tajik Women in Conservation (TWC) trainees had enough training to be able to act as guides. Two women have gone on to work for [Zanon](#), a woman-run guide company in Tajikistan, and one of them is working on a master's degree in the US and now hopes to work for Panthera one day.

Output 3: Fifteen corrals were completed in 2017 (see [here](#) and [here](#)), 4 in [2018/2019](#) and 1 in [2020](#), for a total of 20 completed corrals. The new corrals are functioning well with no losses at night and no reported retaliatory killing in project communities. More predator-proofed corrals and barns or other mitigation measures are urgently needed in other communities in the Pamirs to prevent snow leopards from killing livestock.

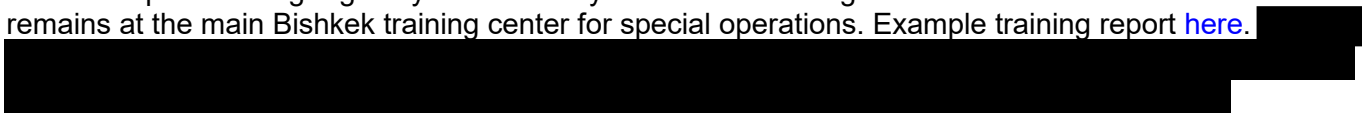
Indicator 3.1 (Output 3, above)

3.2



3.3 & 3.4 These are new Outputs that were approved in our [30 January 2020 change request](#) that we were unable to complete due to lack of legal entity from which to operate in Tajikistan.

Output 4: Seven dog/handler units were trained and are regularly deployed. Two units (2 dogs and 2 handlers) are operational at Bordobo/Osh region, 2 units are still scheduled to be deployed at Torugart, and the airport is being regularly monitored by 2 units as is a cargo terminal near Bishkek while one remains at the main Bishkek training center for special operations. Example training report [here](#).



Indicator 4.1 In the Kyrgyz conservancies, over 240 people are aware of anti-poaching efforts. In winter 2019 in Tajikistan, we conducted 270 human-wildlife conflict (HWC) and carnivore occupancy surveys with local people across the western Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region. We learned about the current severity of HWC and how cats may be entering the illegal wildlife trade, and mapped HWC hotspots. Survey results will help us to design and implement projects to stop this disturbing trend.

4.2 We trained 7 operational units in wildlife scents. All dog units are trained to detect the following [targets](#): argali (skin and horns), ibex (skin and horns), saiga skin, snow leopard skin, and saker falcon (feathers and live birds).

4.3 Teams are deployed at Tajik border but not yet regularly at the Chinese border. Other priorities were

instead determined by the Kyrgyz Customs Service during the life of the project, such as the airport and a cargo terminal near Bishkek.

4.4 Trainings completed in [year 1](#).

4.5 New Output approved in our [30 January 2020 change request](#) we were proud to complete ([here](#) and [here](#), also see Question 13).

3.2 Outcome

Due to issues raised in our change request form submitted [7 January 2019](#) and subsequent [questions](#) from IWT sent on 25 February 2019, we updated our Outcome statement to the following: “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).”

Despite substantial setbacks for our organization in Tajikistan, we made quantifiable strides towards achieving our desired Outcome.

1) We achieved this goal and activities are ongoing via support of the conservancy association we started, H&CAT (now ANCOT). We eliminated livestock depredation in the communities where we constructed 20 predator-proof corrals. The conservancies continue to conduct ungulate surveys on their own and with support from their association, though not as frequently. We sent 3 trainees from conservancy villages to accounting classes to improve financial tracking capabilities 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, Ilbirs Foundation shared lessons learned in Kyrgyz Republic regarding the process of writing and adopting management plans, and shared final plans with conservancies in Tajikistan – one of which we believe has adopted their own version.

2) In Kyrgyz Republic, 3 of the now 4 Kyrgyz Republic conservancies offer [nature tourism](#) opportunities including wildlife viewing, horseback riding, hiking, photography, cultural (showcasing national games), and “research tourism” (foreign tourists help set camera traps; this was done for 3 tourists in Min Teke in 2019 where they photographed a [snow leopard](#)). The Shumkar Tor Conservancy in Chon Kemin received a [GEF grant](#) (1 June 2021-30 August 2022) to cover half the cost of implementing the project “Introducing ecological tourism by engaging local community into biodiversity conservation on the territory of Shumkar-Tor CBC” to improve nature tourism in the area. They have built a wildlife observing platform and are working on designing beekeeping information and wildlife observation tours by training local people and conservancy rangers as tour guides. This will involve local people in conservancy activities and raise their awareness about wildlife of the area. The Shumkar-Tor conservancy will be well equipped to run nature tourism starting from spring 2022. The remaining 2 conservancies, Janaidar in Alai Valley and Chegetei Too in Talas, are more remote to access, making tourism opportunities more difficult, but they were working to promote with assistance from Ilbirs Foundation for 2020 when Covid hit.

In 2021, the Shumkar Tor conservancy in Chon Kemin hosted ~720 national and international tourists and in 2020, they hosted ~500 national tourists and zero international tourists due to Covid-19. In 2019, Chon Kemin, the Shumkar Tor Conservancy had ~400 tourists including both Kyrgyz Republic (the capital of Bishkek is just a ~1.5-2 hour drive away) and foreign nationals from Canada, China, France, and Australia. In 2018, they hosted ~250 tourists. The Bek Tosot Conservancy hosted 2 groups of 10 tourists in 2018, and 20 again in 2019 – in 2019, tourists came from Switzerland, France, and Germany. Min Teke Conservancy hosted 10 tourists in 2018 and 15 in summer 2019.

To attract tourists, Ilbirs Foundation is advertising via its [website](#), social media, including using clips from a [video](#) shared by the NGO Plateau Perspectives. Shumkar-Tor Conservancy is also advertising via social media, Facebook and Instagram. World traveler Carlo Muies visited Shumkar-Tor and wrote a [blog post](#) about their activities and the rangers’ effort under the anti-poaching conservation efforts topic.

The blogger also took professional [photos](#) for 2 conservancy guest houses. Conservancy chairmen track tourist numbers and report to Ilbirs. Income generated is spread amongst conservancy members via distribution of services – one family will provide horses while another prepares meals, another hosts, etc. Horse rentals are GBP [REDACTED] and overnight room and board is GBP [REDACTED]. Hiking tours have been developed for Chon-Kemin and Bek-Tosot conservancy areas with the volunteer assistance of 2 experienced travellers from Belgium.

Additionally, with Ilbirs Foundation we launched a pilot alternative income generation project in December 2019 in the Chon Kemin Conservancy: [beekeeping](#) for honey production with expert training provided by the Beekeepers Association of the Kyrgyz Republic. This enterprise will economically benefit 10 of the 14 conservancy households as well as contribute towards the conservancy projects such as anti-poaching patrols and providing salt for wild ungulates in winter. Training continued in [January 2020](#) although there were then setbacks due to delays from Covid and an act of [vandalism](#) destroying the first set of hives so the first harvest was delayed. Prior to the launch, we conducted participant [income surveys](#). In 2021, 50 beehives were purchased and the first harvest was collected in autumn and is being sold. First year harvest was ~ 750 kilo of honey worth ~ [REDACTED] som (~GBP [REDACTED]).

Additionally, exchange meetings between conservancies in Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic focused on sharing ideas for non-consumptive nature tourism, including yak and horse riding and how to host foreign tourists.

3) This was 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.

Income from trophy hunting in Tajikistan exceeded expectations. With the recognition of the High Pamirs and Central Asia as a renowned hunting and nature tourism destination, income from nature tourism can play an important role, demonstrated by the first snow leopard viewing [tour](#) in Tajikistan in 2019 and two more in [2020](#). Predator-proof corrals eliminated conflict in affected areas thereby preventing parts from entering the IWT. The detection dogs appear to have halted illegal transport of ungulate trophies between Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic, but we cannot measure non-detection. Achieving gender equity through the TWC Initiative remained a challenge to secure positive impacts for young women in these conservative rural communities.

Indicator 0.1 Household incomes in the 4 established conservancies in Tajikistan increased substantially through sustainable ungulate hunting and nature tourism. We cannot quantify specific income changes due to our inability to work directly with the conservancies. We conducted [baseline income surveys](#) in Kyrgyz Republic in 2019 and exploring income generation options with the conservancies in lieu of hunting, including the launch of the beekeeping pilot project.

0.2 The [presence of snow leopards](#) was documented in 3 of 5 conservancies thanks to ongoing anti-poaching patrols. In Ming Teke, snow leopards were photographed once in [2018](#) and once in [2019](#). Rangers observed a mother with 2 cubs in 2019. We photographed a snow leopard in Chegetei-Too in [2018](#) and rangers photographed tracks in February [2019](#), and paw prints were observed in Bek-Tosot in [2019](#). In [2020](#), camera trap photos captured 2 snow leopards in 2 locations in Shumkar-Tor.

0.3 We are on track for the conservancies in the Kyrgyz Republic (see [summary spreadsheet](#)). Over the 3 years of the IWT grant, ibex counts increased 169% in Bek-Tosot, 175% in Min Teke, and 111% in Janaidar. Chegetei Too Conservancy was only surveyed twice, showing an increase of 16% between 2018-2019. For argali, which are only found in the Chegetei Too conservancy, counts increased by 180% over the grant period. Roe deer, red deer and wild boar are only found in Shumkar-Tor; counts increased 29%, 24%, and 369% respectively over the 3 years. The only decrease noted was recorded in ibex - 89% - in Shumkar-Tor, from 35 to 4 individuals. However, in 2019 observers were not able to reach most of the limited amount of ibex habitat in the conservancy during the surveys due to heavy snow, so they are not confident in their total count of individuals.

These raw counts suggest that wild ungulate numbers are increasing in the conservancies. However, the monitoring methods sacrificed short-term sensitivity in favor of logistical ease, meaning, the methods are

simple to implement, but sensitive only to long-term population trends (over a period >5 years). While monitoring results are very encouraging, these raw counts may be affected by multiple factors not related to the size of ungulate populations, including weather and year-to-year differences of survey effort. In particular, the total surveyed area of different habitat types varied between years. For example, by accounting for greater survey area in Bek-Tosot the percentage increase in ibex counts there was not 169% but rather 59%, and in Shumkar-Tor greater total area and shifting habitat-types surveyed in later years may explain nearly all of the observed increases in red deer and roe deer. On the other hand, counts of ibex and argali in Min-Teke, Janaidar, and Chegetei-Too, and wild boar in Shumkar-Tor, show dramatic increases even when differences in surveyed areas are accounted for. Available evidence supports the conclusion that conservation efforts are helping to recover wild ungulate populations.

As noted, it is not possible to document populations in the now defunct Tajik Gul dara Conservancy although we did conduct initial surveys across part of their territory.

0.4 We faced difficulties with this Measurable Indicator given the 4 conservancies' social conservatism. In these Sunni areas, women are not very visible outside of their households. We trained at least 82 women in various basic tourism skills including hosting, backcountry and hunting guiding, and essential English language skills (48 in Kyrgyz Republic and 29 in Tajikistan, 18 in year 1, 11 in year 2 and 5 in accounting in year 4).

3.3 Monitoring of assumptions

Throughout the course of the project, we have tried to annually evaluate, monitor and learn if the achieved outcomes and outputs of the projects were reflective of assumptions set by this project and more importantly by our partners. This allowed us to learn continuously while we implemented the project and more importantly allowed us to make necessary changes.

For instance, we built community corrals in 2017 and 2018 and communities used these corrals for a year. After a full year, we returned to these communities to check on the state of corrals, use and utilization. This included checking if corrals have been used and maintained properly. We also asked for community feedback - what they liked and disliked about the corrals and from their experience what could be improved. After year-long use, many community members indicated that instead of covering the roof of the corral with wire mesh, we should cover it with rainproof roofing. Some animals were getting wet in the corrals overnight and becoming sick. By making it rainproof, we could provide a safer space for animals and we will do this in the future. In fact, when we purchased the additional materials for 6 more corrals and delivered these to 6 villages, we included materials to protect animals from the rain. These are corrals beyond the 20 completed corrals that we cannot confirm are finished since we have not been able to visit these villages and assist with the completion due to not being able to work in Tajikistan.

Outcome assumption: *The conservancies work constructively and in good faith towards the goal of establishing a hunting program.* This was the case in Tajikistan (see [here](#) and [here](#)) and appears to still be the case even though we are no longer involved. Ungulate hunting was delayed in Kyrgyz Republic until 2023 (see Question 3.1 Output 1 for details).

Output 1 assumption: *The relevant state authorities assign hunting quotas to the conservancies as agreed and the marketing of hunts is not hampered by factors outside the influence of the conservancies and the project.* There is a supportive environment of government policy for sustainable hunting in conservancies in Tajikistan demonstrated by award of hunting permits, and finally in KGZ as the ungulate hunting moratorium lifts in 2023.

Output 2 assumptions: *Civil war and natural disasters (earthquakes, mudslides, floods) do not prevent access to the conservancies.* This held true during the project although Covid-19 delays slowed launch of the [bee keeping pilot project](#) in Chon Kemin conservancy in 2020.

The conservancies comply with their management plans and invest their profits into community projects. This happened in [Tajikistan](#) (and summary [here](#)). Management plans were adopted. However, there were no hunting profits in Kyrgyz Republic since ungulate hunting won't begin until 2023. Alternative

ecotourism and sustainable income generating opportunities were not yet lucrative enough for anticipated scale of community projects.

Community projects are implemented by the communities themselves in partnership with local private businesses. This happened in [Tajikistan](#). For example, [community projects](#) were implemented by the communities in cooperation with local businesses (such as those selling coal, school and hospital supplies, and flour) for the benefit of local families, schools, and hospitals.

International and national tour operators continue to work in good faith with conservancies. This happened in Kyrgyz Republic in [2019](#) but not 2020 due to Covid. This was happening in [Tajikistan](#) (also [here](#)) during project timeline.

Output 3 assumptions: *Local communities want to protect their livestock and thereby reduce conflicts with snow leopards.* True, especially as evidenced by the additional communities who wished to work with us to predator-proof household barns (see Question 9).

Communities properly utilize and maintain the corrals during and after the project. True, see details above.

Herders view film on television, learn how to better protect their livestock, and are inspired to at least temporarily block snow leopard access to barns through roof holes. We were unable to complete this film due to lack of legal entity in Tajikistan.

Output 4 assumptions: *Villagers are incentivized to report poaching activities due to the development of community-based conservancies, workshop education, and peer pressure.* This was successful in Tajikistan and [Kyrgyz Republic](#).

Kyrgyz Customs Service is committed to development, deployment, and maintenance of the dog/handler units. The Customs Service has been incredibly supportive of this project. They allowed one dog (Natasha) and her handler to compete in an [international competition](#), and they won two [categories](#): searching cars and obedience.

Safety of informants ensured by creating separate source register, password protected with access restricted to the informant handler per TRAFFIC protocols. Establishment of a register was not feasible.

3.4 Impact: achievement of positive impact on illegal wildlife trade and poverty alleviation

Our Impact goal was: To improve resilience of pastoralist livelihoods through managed ungulate hunting, natural resource-based sustainable income projects, and reduce trafficking of snow leopards and prey species in Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic.

In our application, we planned to eliminate predator-livestock conflict and improve law enforcement capacity to fight IWT; use sustainably-managed ungulate hunting to generate local employment and revenues, thereby incentivizing local engagement to combat IWT. Predator-proofing of corrals eliminates household food insecurity and economic vulnerability from carnivore attacks on livestock – loss of a single sheep equates to £████, or five months of cash income. Interventions to predator-proof corrals simultaneously eliminate the incentive for retaliatory killings and reduce snow leopard availability for IWT. This was successful for the communities where we built the 20 corrals – no retaliatory killing was reported in these villages during the project. We hoped to [predator-proof ~300 existing barns](#) (also see [here](#)) but were unable to complete this portion of the project due to no longer having a legal entity in Tajikistan from which to work.

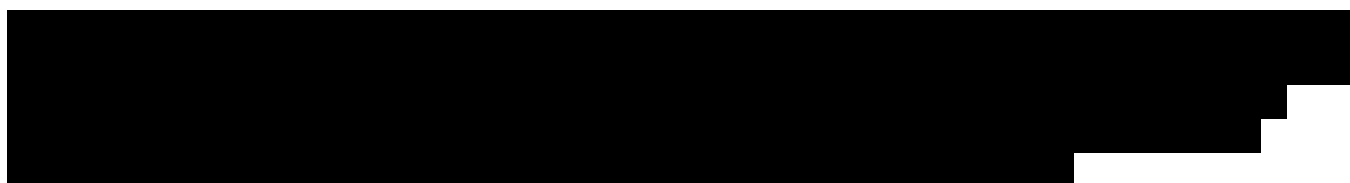
Throughout the project, we learned that the most devastating situation for rural communities is when a snow leopard kills a large number of livestock in a household barn overnight. For example, in November 2021, one snow leopard killed more than 40 sheep overnight that belonged to one family. There is no reimbursement available for such a loss, and the livestock was all their income generated over the years – this is like a city person losing their savings account. From our [human-wildlife conflict surveys](#) in winter 2019 (not funded by IWT Fund), we learned that such catastrophic situations send a family into debt and

bankruptcy, and this poverty that can last for generations. In some cases, a few family members may migrate to Russia in search of work to recover financially.

From this project and our 2019 [surveys](#), we expanded our understanding of how a snow leopard attack truly impacts families, when people retaliate and how snow leopards could potentially end up in the IWT. These lessons were learned through talking to people who have been part of the entire cycle starting from snow leopard attack to retaliation and selling a snow leopard skin in the illegal wildlife trade - thereby potentially establishing ways for others to follow suit. These are paths that we had anticipated but were not sure if they were true. We now understand how snow leopards are most commonly accessing livestock, how families are getting hurt, and why people retaliate by injuring or killing wildlife. To recover from the financial devastation from livestock losses, some families hold on to the cat skin in the hopes of selling it so that their family does not fall into poverty. We now have concrete plans to address these issues in the coming years in this region. For example, we plan to fix household barns across the western Pamirs. Such work will involve a lot of resources, coordination and cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders. We already planned to do such work with the remaining IWT funds, but unfortunately without an office we are not yet able to conduct this effort.

When it comes to poverty and food insecurity, many of the communities in Tajikistan are agro-pastoralist and they heavily rely on what they grow and graze. By protecting the livestock of 20 communities with the 20 corrals, this project is ensuring that livestock are safe overnight. As a result, families are not retaliating and killing the snow leopards nor are these families falling into generational poverty. Finally, those snow leopards are not removed from their habitat, killed, or sold illegally. However, as indicated in the question itself, this outcome is very small compared to the large number of communities that this project did not reach – people we hope to help in the future.

In Kyrgyz Republic, we established the strong foundation of a wildlife detection dog program via Ilbirs Foundation with the Kyrgyz Customs Service and exceptional on and off-site support from Working Dogs for Conservation. This respected program has expanded to seven dog/handler units trained and regularly deployed. Two units (2 dogs and 2 handlers) operational at Bordobo/Osh region, 2 units are still scheduled to be deployed at Torugart, and the airport is being regularly monitored by 2 units as is a cargo terminal near Bishkek. Additional departments have adopted the use of wildlife detection dogs, so the impact is already larger than this project (see Question 13 for more details). Supplying the teams with two vehicles to safely transport dog/handler teams further supports the effectiveness of the program.



In Kyrgyz Republic, due to the ungulate hunting moratorium through 2023 we have not yet seen any income benefit. This did not stop the conservancies from patrolling their lands and even using their own funds to care for wildlife, such as purchasing salt for the ungulates over the winter. Small numbers of non-consumptive nature tours were being offered in some conservancies prior to the beginning of the pandemic, and we hope these will be re-established as the pandemic subsides. We also hope that income from the pilot bee keeping project in one conservancy will benefit the families involved, but that will not be known for another six months or so as the project was delayed due to COVID and then set back another several months by an act of [vandalism](#).

4. Project support to the IWT Challenge Fund Objectives and commitments under the London Declarations and Kasane Statement

Our project supported three objectives of the IWT Challenge Fund:

1. Developing sustainable livelihoods for community economic development, to benefit people directly affected by IWT:
 - a. Hunts are being conducted by the conservancies in Tajikistan, but we do not have details regarding their proceeds after years 1 and 2. During years 1 and 2, hunts conducted were

sustainable because the number of government-issued permits was based on credible ungulate surveys conducted with our support.

- b. Launched a pilot bee keeping/honey production project in Kyrgyz Republic to benefit 10 of 14 families in one conservancy.
- c. Encouraged further development of nature tourism via an exchange meeting between Tajik and Kyrgyz conservancies.

2. Strengthening law enforcement:

- a. We conducted a conservancy [ranger enforcement training workshop](#) in Kyrgyz Republic in September 2018.
- b. The detection dog program strengthened the Kyrgyz Customs Service and deters IWT. Seven dog/handler teams are trained and operating.

3. Reducing demand for IWT products and supporting sustainable livelihoods:

- a. Building 20 communal corrals over 20 villages is protecting more than 10,000 sheep and goats (valued at £640,000) and benefiting approximately 1200 households (100% of the households in 20 villages) across the Pamirs (our [surveys in 2019](#) showed that most households own an average of 8-10 livestock). Each of these villages were strategically chosen after livestock were attacked by predators in their summer pastures. These 20 corrals keep the livestock safe and reduce potential for future attacks and resultant retaliatory killings of snow leopards. Since those corrals were built, we have not documented snow leopard attacks on livestock in the summer pastures with corrals and snow leopards have not been captured, injured, relocated nor been killed in these pastures. This indicates that corrals prevented snow leopards and their parts ending up in the IWT. However, we have heard about retaliatory killing of snow leopards, and later in those same villages perhaps related inquiries from people interested selling skins.

Our project also contributes towards the commitments listed in the London Declaration on the Illegal Wildlife Trade, specifically:

- Item #12: This statement sums up the goals and anticipated outcome of our project.
- Item XVIII: We supported community-based conservancies and the development of sustainable, nature-based tourism, and fighting poverty through predator-proof corrals (Activities 1.9-1.10, 2.2, 2.8, 3.1).
- Item XIX: We supported this by helping conservancies secure rights to protect wildlife on their lands and achieve official recognition by the government, teaching rangers how to monitor and protect their lands, encouraging anti-poaching patrols, and our TWC program (Question 3.1, Activities 1.4, 2.1 in [annual report year 2](#)).
- Item XX: We helped conservancy rangers conduct anti-poaching patrols, maintain an informal informant network, and involved locals in the counter-IWT training for government staff (Question 3.1, Activities 1.5, 2.1, 4.4, 4.5 in [annual report year 2](#) and [annual report year 3](#)).

5. Impact on species in focus

The project reduced poaching pressure on snow leopard, argali, and ibex. Population changes for species such as snow leopards are not reliably detectable across the short timeline of this project. Conversely, ungulate species such as argali reproduce quickly with conservation measures in place. After one year of ranger monitoring, our surveys found nearly 1.5 times the number of ungulates in the previously established Tajik conservancies. Once prey populations rebound, snow leopards are more likely to return to previously prey-depleted areas. We documented an increase from 6 to 10 snow leopards after 3 years in 1 conservancy in the Tajikistan conservancy in Alichur (baseline data collected prior to IWT grant in 2016). Wild ungulate surveys consistently found higher numbers of prey in most conservancies following conservation interventions ([annual report Y3](#), Question 3, Activity 1.4).

Human-wildlife conflict is the primary reason for snow leopard killings. Beginning in year 1, Panthera continues to document a 100% reduction of livestock-snow leopard conflict and retaliatory killing in participating communities after predator-proofing livestock corrals. In year 1, we constructed 15 [corrals](#) with no retaliatory killing of snow leopards or other predators reported in the project sites. In [year 2](#), we

constructed 4 corrals, and [year 3](#) we constructed one corral. We constructed the 20 corrals committed to for the IWT project. No retaliatory killing has been reported in the 20 project villages, nor have snow leopards or other predators attacked livestock since construction. There were more requests from other villages to build community corrals and retrofitting existing household barns with wire mesh to make them predator-proof. This resulted in our approved change request dated [January 2020](#) to: 1) secure 280 additional Pamiri-style existing barn roof holes with wire mesh in 2 villages with high risk of live-stock depredation by snow leopards, in order to stop the flow of snow leopards in the region; and 2) produce short (~5 minute) film on livestock depredation in Western Pamirs to show on regional Tajik television to raise awareness of the problem and pro-mote at least a short term solution to prevent depredation until we are able to reach every community with the more permanent solution of wire mesh. Very unfortunately, we were unable to complete these new activities due to lack of a legal entity.

6. Project support to poverty alleviation

In the UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) for 2020, Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic rank [125](#) and [120](#) out of 189 countries, respectively. The communities in the project area are geographically isolated and are limited largely to economic opportunities based on agriculture and livestock production, tourism, and handicrafts. In the Kyrgyz Republic, we hoped to directly benefit 8,000 individuals (including 3,500 women and 1,400 children; equivalent to 800 households) in 6 communities in the Alai Valley, Chon Kemin Region, and Aksu Village. The scale of livelihood benefits is unobtainable within the timeline of this grant due to the hunting moratorium (Question 3.1, Activity 2.1). As of [year 2](#), we knew that we benefitted 3,000 individuals (including 1,000 women and 400 children; 300 households) in 18 communities in the Pamirs in Tajikistan via income, infrastructure, and education.

In Tajikistan, community-based organizations now protect wildlife across 3,000 km². In the Pamirs, 21 foreign hunters legally harvested 20 ibex in 4 conservancies during the hunting seasons of 2012/13-2016/17, earning ██████████. In 2017/18 alone, foreign hunters legally harvested 15 ibex and one argali sheep, earning ██████████. Forty jobs were created, and former poachers have become rangers. It is interesting to note that this is the exact opposite to what happened in the 1990s when the Soviet Union collapsed and due to lack of work many/most rangers became poachers which led to the steep decline in snow leopards in the area. In 2018/19, 23 ibex were taken by foreign hunters bringing in a gross income of ██████████ ([annual report year 2](#)). We have no data for year 3 (Question 3.1, Activity 1.4). The hunting moratorium in the Kyrgyz Republic slowed progress until 2022/23 and did not allow us to meet goals there during this IWT grant cycle. Thanks to this project, local communities are protecting 3,289 km² across the now 4 conservancies in Kyrgyz Republic.

In Tajikistan, we are reducing the economic loss and killing of snow leopards due to livestock depredation by predator-proofing corrals. We are developing information-gathering mechanisms for snow leopard contraband entering the IWT, although we are limited in implementation until we reopen our office. We constructed 20 corrals protecting an estimated 10,000 livestock (primarily sheep, valued at ██████████) and benefiting approximately 1200 households (our [2019 surveys](#) showed that most household using corrals own 8-10 livestock). *Looking directly at Measurable Indicators from our logframe:*

2.1 Community livelihood projects were approved year 1 in [Tajikistan](#) (and summary [here](#)).

2.4 Training of Tajik women as guides – please see Question 7 below.

3.1 We completed the 20 planned predator-proof corrals in 5 communities in Tajikistan as originally planned.

7. Consideration of gender equality issues

We anticipate direct gender equality impacts from our project. Two Logframe Measurable Indicators (MI) apply directly to women. MI 2.4 increases the number of sustainable use and nature tourism dependent jobs to train and include women. Through the Tajik Women in Conservation (TWC) Initiative in year 1, 18 women from Bartang Valley and Alichur Village completed guide and ranger training [workshops](#). Some learned wilderness skills and others learned hunting guide skills, while a few were able to participate in both workshops. In year 2, 11 women benefited from a similar mix of [training](#) ([annual report year 2](#)). We anticipated training the same cohort of women over a period of 3 years. Unfortunately, household obligations frequently prevent young women from regularly attending trainings and, while we are glad to be able to reach more individuals, we adapted our 2018 trainings to emphasize basic skills.

In [year 1](#), we completed Activities 2.5 and 2.6, conducting an information campaign for women about the opportunity to participate in the 3-day initiation trek for 9 women from the Alichur conservancy and 9 from Bartang. This opportunity allowed local women to get into the mountains and learn about tourism opportunities. A trekking guide training session was conducted in year 2 and included both [wilderness](#) and [hunting](#) skills (Activity 2.7). The final training, Activity 2.8, was cancelled due to Covid-19. We are pleased to report that one of our first year participants in the TWC program went to the US and completed a master degree in environmental studies – and now wants to work with Panthera.

[MI 3.1](#) predator-proofs corrals maintained by women: Twenty corrals were constructed throughout the project’s lifespan and are primarily maintained by women. As women are responsible for milking and feeding the livestock, they are the primary people utilizing the corrals. Sometimes men are also responsible for corral maintenance.

[Activity 1.9](#) Tourism management and accounting training for women was conducted in 5 established conservancies in Tajikistan in [year 1 \(annual report year 1\)](#), and for 25 women and 23 men in some of the Kyrgyz Republic [conservancies \(annual report year 2\)](#). In Tajikistan in 2020, we provided more intensive accounting training to 3 women from 2 conservancy villages. Since we could not include additional women from conservancy villages, we opened up the training to 2 women from our partner, women-run organization [Zanon](#) who works closely with our French organization partner, [Women Rockin’ the Pamirs](#). These two women were also participants in the first year of TWC guide/tourism training. For the past few years, Zanon has trained local female mountain guides in the Pamir region and completed at least one tour to group of French tourists solely guided by female guides. Zanon needed to develop accounting skills to better manage their organization.

8. Sustainability and legacy

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

9. Lessons learnt

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

9.1 Monitoring and evaluation

Major changes in project design:

1. Requested 1 October 2017: amended Output 1 to state: Five Kyrgyz Republic wildlife community-based conservancies operating with governance structures in place, managing ibex and argali and launching nature tourism; 1 new community-based conservancy developed in Tajikistan; and 4 existing wildlife community-based conservancies in Tajikistan strengthened. We requested supporting development of a new conservancy in Tajikistan instead of a new conservancy in the Kyrgyz Republic.
2. Requested 6 February 2018: replaced the purchase of 1 project vehicle for our partner Panthera Kyrgyzstan (Ilbirs) with a vehicle for 1 conservancy in the Kyrgyz Republic, a vehicle for partner H&CAT (ANCOT) in Tajikistan, covering the international travel expenses for the trainers to IWT workshop and TWC trainer fees and equipment in Tajikistan, both of which cost more than budgeted, and field costs that we did not budget for.
3. Requested 7 January 2019: 6-month extension, pushing project end date from 31 March 2020 to 30 September 2020 due to substantial delays in both countries. Additionally, due to hunting moratorium: this portion of our Outcome will not be achieved in Kyrgyz Republic: Community-managed trophy hunting of mountain ungulates and nature tourism; Output #1 will not be accomplished in Kyrgyz Republic: 5 Kyrgyz Republic wildlife community-based conservancies operating with governance structures in place, managing ibex and argali and launching nature tourism; and Output #2 will not be accomplished in Kyrgyz Republic (but should be in Tajikistan): Income from hunts and nature tourism enhances local peoples' livelihoods through investments in community-selected health and education projects, impacting 30% of men, women, and children in engaged communities in Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan.
4. Requested 3 June 2019: Due to the forced closure of our office in Tajikistan, we are unable to complete everything to the extent of which we had hoped. Therefore, we updated our Impact: To improve resilience of pastoralist livelihoods through managed ungulate hunting, and nature natural resource-based tourism, sustainable income projects, and reduce trafficking of snow leopards and prey species in Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic. And updated our Outcome: 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).
5. Requested 30 January 2020: We added 3 Measurable Indicators: First, 3.3 In year 4, in 2 villages with high risk of livestock depredation by snow leopards, secure 280 additional Pamiri-style existing barn roof holes with wire mesh to stop flow of snow leopards in the region. Second, 3.4 In year 4, produce short (~5 minute) film on livestock depredation in Eastern Pamirs and show on Tajik television in the region to raise awareness of the problem and pro-mote at least short term solution to prevent depredation until we are able to reach every community with the more permanent solution of wire mesh. Third, 4.5 Retrofit Kyrgyz Customs Service vehicle to safely transport 4 wildlife detection dogs and 5 dog handlers as recommended by expert from Working Dogs for Conservation.
6. Requested 20 April 2021: Extension of project end date to 31 December 2021 due to Covid-19 delays and being unable to open a legal entity in Tajikistan.
7. Requested 10 December 2021: End of project without completion due to being unable to operate legally within Tajikistan.

M&E system review:

1. We were overly optimistic regarding obtaining income surveys from all conservancy members, so this metric wasn't as helpful or direct as anticipated. While a baseline was finally attainable in year 3 in Kyrgyz Republic, we were never able to track individual household incomes in Tajikistan, and due to the hunting moratorium in Kyrgyz Republic we do not yet have final income numbers to compare against. However, we are pleased to now have data on baseline income before ibex hunts begin in 2023 in Kyrgyz Republic so we will be able to evaluate individual family income responses to a new source of sustainable income. This will provide very useful information for the conservancies to evaluate the success of their sustainable income development process.
2. Due to the longer reproduction interval of snow leopards than ungulates, our project time period was too short to document a response in snow leopard population numbers with wild ungulate protection starting at the same time. Although we did see sustained numbers of snow leopards in several conservancies, this was determined through observations while on patrols instead of during camera trapping surveys which can give a more complete picture of the local population. We hope that repeat camera trap surveys in the next 2 or 3 years will indicate snow leopard population stability or increases.
3. Ungulate population numbers were a good indicator of protection because of their rapid rates of reproduction. We were able to see positive changes even between years 1 and 2 in the conservancies, and definitely between years 1 and 3. This provided a strong, tangible incentive for the conservancy members to continue voluntary patrolling to protect their lands against poachers.
4. Due to the difficult nature of measuring illicit acts such as poaching and wildlife trafficking, this is a tough metric to use for evaluation because non-detection does not necessarily mean that it is not happening. However, the 20 corrals we built eliminated predator attacks which ensured that from these villages and their summer pastures, predators were not killed in retaliation and then ending up in the IWT as we have previously documented.
5. During the project period, no external evaluation was conducted. We currently lack a formal internal evaluation process which we are addressing by implementing [Open Standards](#) across our organization in the near future.

9.2 Actions taken in response to annual report reviews

We have responded to all previous issues raised in reviews of our annual reports and discussed them as needed with our project team.

There were 2 questions to answer from the reviewers of our most recent [annual report](#):

1. Is there any clarity when the hunting moratorium will be lifted in Kyrgyz Republic or is the moratorium in place indefinitely? The report states the moratorium is extended until at least 2022 or 2023; AR2 stated the moratorium would last until at least 2021.

So far, the moratorium was fully lifted only for one conservancy: Shumkar-Tor in Chon-Kemin, however, due to the reorganization in the relevant ministries, the competition has not yet taken place for Shumkar-Tor to earn their hunting contract yet. For the other three conservancies (two conservancies have joined together into one), the moratorium is in effect until 2023, but only for ungulates (ibex). These conservancies were already awarded with hunting contracts, so in 2022 they can start organizing hunting for marmots and rabbits and ibex in 2023.

2. What specific measures are being taken to reopen the office in Tajikistan and, based on these measures, when do you anticipate making progress?

[REDACTED]


[REDACTED]



10. IWT Challenge Fund Identity

In early project years, we regularly recognized the UK government as funder of this project—please see [presentation](#), [poster](#), and [blog](#) from year 2. We later kept a low profile considering our situation in Tajikistan and developing relationship with Ilbirs Foundation. It was most important for Ilbirs to be the face of the work in Kyrgyz Republic. Ilbirs posted information on one of the Kyrgyz Customs Service vehicle retrofits on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), both recognizing IWT Challenge Fund’s support of the work. The Facebook text recognizes this as a distinct project funded by the UK.

11. Impact of COVID-19 on project delivery

 We tried to speed up the decision process by meeting regularly with government officials and reaching out to them by phone and email, but the fastest responses were still very slow. Also, in most of 2020 and early 2021, even if we had been able to open a legal entity, we would not been able to run our project as planned due to the virus, not enough testing available and slow vaccine roll out especially in the remote mountain communities where we work.

Even though we were never permitted to work during the pandemic due to not having a legal entity, we believed that we would soon reopen and so adjusted our work plan to operate within a pandemic. The majority of our interventions were designed to have more collaborative approach. Had we been permitted to work, we were planning to do set of community workshops that would have allowed us to come up with a design/intervention to predator proof existing household barns. Previously we were planning to do this in way 4-5 communities come together and do it in a large-scale event – which could have been a super spreader event during a pandemic. As an adjustment to COVID-19 we planned to do this workshop in each village separately and during warm weather so people could be outdoors and sit at an appropriate distance from one other. We planned to provide hand sanitizer and masks for participants. If this was not possible, our backup plan was to conduct household surveys with a single family member, outside, wearing masks and keeping 2-3 m distance. Our approach here would not necessarily been collaborative as community would not be able to come and decide together, but we would have gathered all the best option for the intervention.

Our staff in Tajikistan has been vaccinated and we would have ensured anyone we would hire had the opportunity to get vaccinated. Vaccines were a bit problematic at the beginning of the pandemic, but are now widely available in Tajikistan. We followed CDC policies and kept our staff regularly updated. We established policies for driving long distance with multiple passengers and how to conduct ourselves when interacting with others.

COVID-19 demonstrated that we could carry out certain aspects of our work online. It definitely encouraged us to think in the direction of less frequent travel and ways of collecting data online whenever possible. For instance, we are planning to build a Human Wildlife Conflict App for phones and train community members to collect data which can be received via cell phone internet service. This lowers the demand for travel and builds local capacity for data collection. This also ensured that the data is collected at all times throughout the year, even when certain locations may not be accessible to our team members due to extreme weather conditions but remain accessible for community members. Such



approaches may have a higher up-front cost to develop the App and purchase phones/tablets for community data recorders, but once the project is functioning it will cost us less overall.

Due to COVID-19 international travel restrictions, we submitted a [change request](#) (approved on 25 September), to replace the activities requiring international travel with in-country projects. We cancelled the final exchange meeting between Tajik and Kyrgyz conservancies (Activity 1.5) and the final Tajik Women in Conservation mountain guide training (Activity 2.8; trainer would have come from Europe). Instead, per the approved change request, we planned to predator-proof ~300 barns (originally ~480 but inflation related to COVID reduced the target number; Activity 3.3), and retrofitted a second vehicle to safely transport wildlife detection dogs in Kyrgyz Republic (Activity 4.10).

In Kyrgyz Republic, COVID-19 lockdowns limited Kyrgyz Customs Service dog deployments and training during the lockdown and delayed vehicle retrofits. Handlers worked independently with their respective dogs during the lockdown to keep skills sharp and were ready to be deployed as soon as the lockdown was lifted. Vehicle retrofits were completed once restrictions were lifted and workers were healthy and able to do the work. The beekeeping project launch was also delayed due to travel restrictions not allowing delivery of equipment along original timeline.

COVID-related delays necessitated our submission of a [change request in April 2021](#) to extend our deadline from 30 June 2021 to 31 December 2021.

12. Finance and administration

12.1 Project expenditure

| Current Year's Costs | 2021/22 Grant (£) | 2021/22 Total actual Darwin Costs (£) | Variance % | Comments (please explain any variance) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|------------|--|
| Staff costs (from Section 5) | ██████ | ██████ | ██████ | Unable to complete these activities |
| Consultancy Costs | ██████ | ██████ | ██████ | Unable to complete these activities |
| Overhead Costs | ██████ | ██████ | ██████ | Unable to complete these activities |
| Travel and subsistence | ██████ | ██████ | ██████ | Unable to complete these activities |
| Operating Costs | ██████ | ██████ | ██████ | Unable to complete these activities |
| Capital items (from Section 6) | ██████ | ██████ | ██████ | N/A |
| Others (from Section 7) | ██████ | ██████ | ██████ | Unable to complete these activities |
| Audit costs | ██████ | ██████ | ██████ | N/A |
| TOTAL | ██████ | ██████ | ██████ | |

| Staff employed (Name and position) | Cost (£) |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| N/A | |
| TOTAL | N/A |

| Capital items – description | Capital items – cost (£) |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| | |

| | |
|--------------|-----|
| N/A | |
| TOTAL | N/A |

| Other items – description | Other items – cost (£) |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| N/A | |
| TOTAL | N/A |

12.2 Additional funds or in-kind contributions secured

| Source of funding for project lifetime | Total (£) |
|---|------------|
| Judith McBean Foundation | ██████████ |
| Trust for Mutual Understanding | ██████████ |
| Global Alliance | ██████████ |
| National Geographic Big Cats Initiative | ██████████ |
| United States Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) | ██████████ |
| Kiyosaki Family Foundation | ██████████ |
| Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) | ██████████ |
| TOTAL | ██████████ |

| Source of funding for additional work after project lifetime | Total (£) |
|---|------------|
| United States Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) Combat Trafficking in High Value Wildlife Products from Big Cats (these funds are for Kyrgyz Republic only – part of larger grant) | ██████████ |
| Conservation Leadership Program | ██████████ |
| Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) | ██████████ |
| TOTAL | ██████████ |

12.3 Value for Money

For the Tajikistan portion of the project, we were able to obtain greater quality for the lowest price. If we implement such a project again, we would do so with only minor adjustments. The biggest evidence we can provide here is that we built 20 corrals that eliminated predator attacks and this ensured that from these villages and their summer pastures, predators are not being killed in retaliation and potentially ending up in the IWT. The best value for money by this project would have been if we had completed remaining three activities of this project. Activities such as televised message to broader public, and completely predator proofing household barns would have provided greater financial and livelihood security for more communities. The televised short movie would have informed broader public about the potential predator attacks and encouraged them to take preventative measures on their own. This part of the project had more potential to cover bigger communities with more impact, but due to not yet having re-established a legal entity, we could not complete the activities.

13. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements of your project during the (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes

I agree for the IWT Secretariat to publish the content of this section.

In Kyrgyz Republic, we were proud to continue the wildlife detection dog training program in partnership with local NGO Ilbirs Foundation and the Kyrgyz Customs Service. We expanded from four operational dog/handler units to nine units which are, or will be, deployed around the country at border and check posts, airports, freight terminals and elsewhere as warranted. The Kyrgyz Customs Service currently has nine wildlife detection dogs who are fully trained to detect narcotics and wildlife scents, including snow leopard, ibex, argali, saiga, and saker falcon. Five dog/handler teams are each stationed regularly in four locations and all dogs continue their daily training on detecting wildlife scents. Thanks to the success of this program, the State Agency on Environment Protection and Forestry at the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic added a wildlife detection dog and handler to their toolkit in 2020. The team is stationed at an "Eco Post" in the south eastern region of the country, where agents check for the illegal transportation of wildlife derivatives within the country.

IWT Fund also supported the retrofitting of two vehicles to safely transport a total of six dog/handler units. Prior to these retrofits, transportation to/from deployment posts was often a challenge because it required handlers to locate a local taxi driver willing to have a loose dog as a passenger since most cars are too small to accommodate a dog crate. This led to postponement or even cancellation of deployments. Additionally, dogs now have access to more off-site training, veterinary care, socialization, and varied stimulation. Previously, there was the threat of dogs overheating while traveling if windows couldn't be opened, and transporting multiple highly-driven dogs was always potentially risky since dogs who are excited to work when loose within the small car could lead to displaced excitement resulting in fights. Our partners WD4C tells us that providing this "Dog Rig" is fantastic because safe transport is a big barrier to programs around the world.

Photos included with report as separate jpg files:

1. IWT037 Kyrgyz Republic - Credit Joel Caldwell - wildlife detection dog team in action
2. IWT037 Kyrgyz Republic - Credit Ilbirs Foundation - wildlife detection dog transport vehicle