

First snow leopard caught on NABU camera in Kyrgyzstan

Title

A stately **snow leopard** has been caught on one of the 18 cameras recently set up by **NABU** (BirdLife in Germany) in the **Tian Shan mountains**, in Kyrgyzstan, one of the species' last refuges. Nobody knows exactly how many of these endangered cats still live in the wilderness, but experts estimate that there are about 4,080 to 6,590 snow leopards that roam across an enormous area of 2 million square kilometres in Central Asia. In the mid-1980s, between 1,200 and 1,400 animals still lived in Kyrgyzstan, at that time a large part of the world's snow leopard population. Today, however, there are only approximately 200 to 300. *Even though there are laws to protect the snow leopard, many animals still fall victim to poachers*?, NABU vice-president Thomas Tennhardt said. NABU has been committed to the protection of snow leopards in Kyrgyzstan since the early 1990s. *The cameras will help us observe snow leopards in the wild and to track the animals. In the long run, this will allow us to provide a more precise estimate of their overall population size*?, Tennhardt explained. Sharing knowledge and strengthening the conservation of the snow leopard will play a central role during the first **Global Snow Leopard Forum** in October. Initiated by NABU, this international conference will hopefully contribute to saving the species from extinction. At the invitation of Kyrgyz president Almasbek Atambajew, representatives of all twelve states to which the snow leopard is native, will come together for the first time. *The aim is to exchange experiences in the protection of snow leopards and to agree on an international, binding conservation plan*?, Tennhardt said. For more information: please contact **Boris Tichomirow**, Head of Central Asia programs at NABU.
