

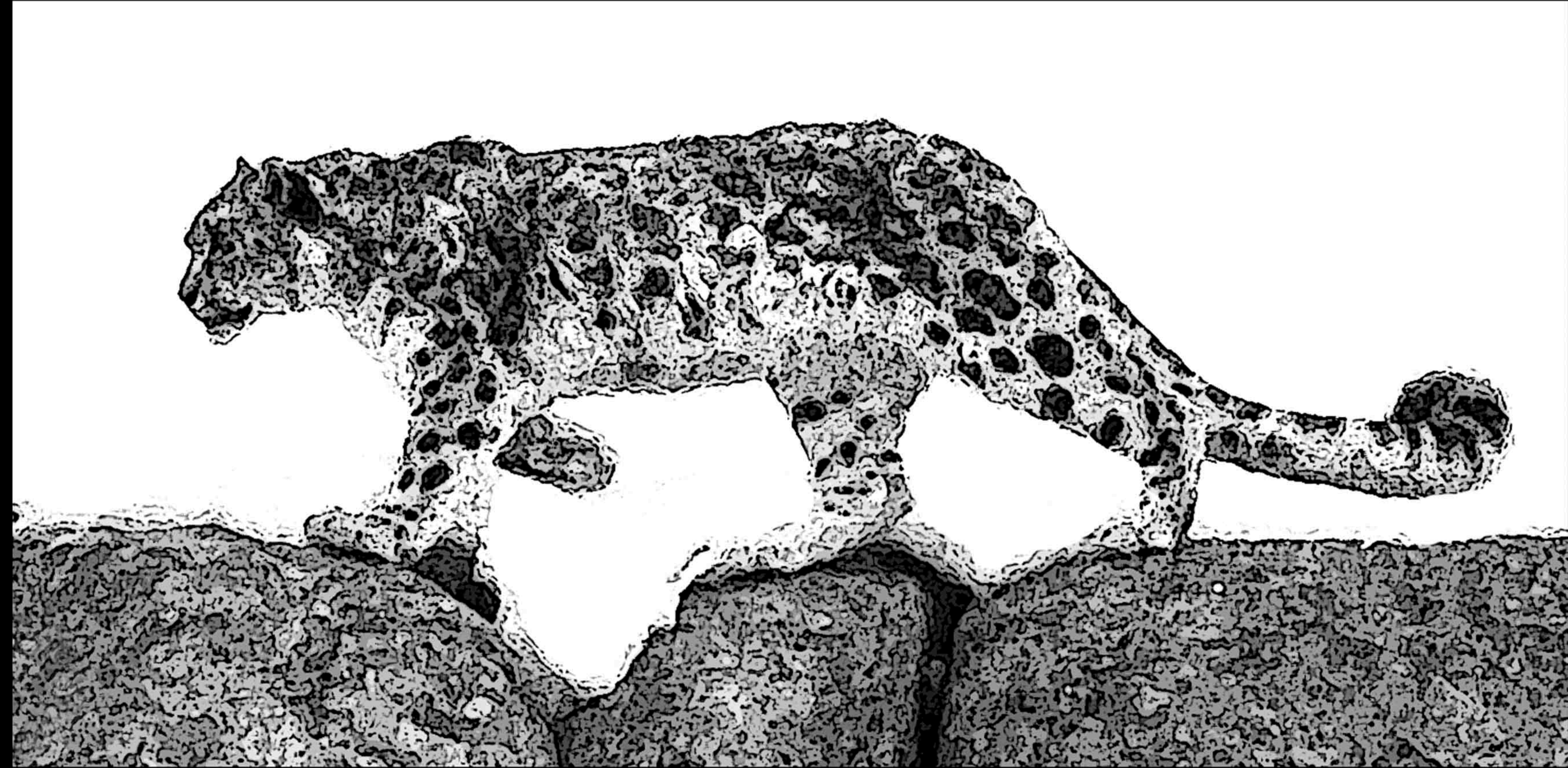


Snow Leopard Lodge

Ulley, Ladakh



SNOW LEOPARD LODGE



LADAKH





The Trans-Himalaya of Ladakh

The cold desert landscape of Ladakh is more than just a barren land with hot summers, frigid winters, enlightened monks and peaceful people. The blue Indus and her tributaries, meandering through mountains, glaciers, high passes and plateaus, have wonders to showcase and stories to tell.

From time immemorial, the strategic location of the city of Leh made it an ideal trading post for people from central Asia, Nepal and India. This further led to a unique intermingling of cultures and thought processes, that eventually led to the creation of the living legacy that is Ladakh. The location in this crucial pocket, between the Tibetan plateau and the mountains, has also made Ladakh the meeting place for wildlife, from Tibet to the east, the Himalayas in the south and the Karakoram mountains on the north and east. Species from the east and west like the Urial, Chiru, Goa (Tibetan gazelle), Argali, Bharal, Ibex, the various hares, foxes and snowcocks, divide this landscape among themselves; a feature unique to Ladakh. The Snow Leopard, wolves and bears have taken over the mantle as the rulers of this wilderness, adding a whole lot of excitement and an additional layer of character to this vast trans Himalayan stage.





The Ulley Story

The village of Ulley lies north of the Indus River, at the head of the valley of the Ulley Chhu, at an altitude of approximately 13,000 feet. The drive from Leh takes one west, reaching Ulley in about 2-3 hours. Ulley itself is a hamlet of just around 7 houses, beyond which are the high summer pastures of the yak and dzo. This is excellent Ibex country and there are few more evocative sights than a magnificently horned male Ibex, standing vigil on some impossibly narrow outcropping, a few thousand feet over a plunging cliff.

This is an area that has only recently been developed for Snow Leopard tracking, and has quickly gained a reputation not just for the high numbers of snow leopards, but as one of the best areas to see Ibex, Urial, wolf, Himalayan fox, bearded and Himalayan griffon vultures and golden eagles.

The presence of multiple valleys and ridges in close proximity, a well connected road network and a team of experienced spotters and trackers, referred to by many as the best they have come across, are some of the main reasons for Ulley's rise to prominence; from being a simple hamlet with 7 houses, to becoming one of the best places in the world to view the elusive big cat of the high Himalayas.



Norbu - Our Chief Spotter

Tchewang Norbu was born and raised in the village of Ulley. As is expected from a young Ladakhi boy, Norbu started taking his father's yak and sheep into the mountains for grazing. This normally routine activity for a boy of his age in Ladakh, turned out to be something that changed his life. He was captivated by the myriad animals that he encountered on these daily walks. His learning and understanding of their behaviour, especially those of snow leopards and wolves that went after his sheep, from these encounters, and his growing interest on this subject over the years, has led him to become one of the best snow leopard spotters on the planet right now.

The Snow Leopard Lodge at Ulley





The Snow Leopard Lodge is the only dedicated wildlife lodge in Ladakh. It began originally as a homestay owned by one of Ladakh's top snow leopard trackers – Tchewang Norbu – under the auspices of a programme initiated by the Snow Leopard Conservancy, designed to use tourism as a conservation tool for the preservation of snow leopards and their ecosystem, by putting tourism revenue directly into the local community.





The Team at Ulley

The experience at the Snow Leopard Lodge is controlled almost solely by the knowledge, experience and efforts of our wonderful spotters. Norbu and his team take up their positions on specifically chosen vantage points every morning, scanning the ridges, rocks and trails from multiple angles, and sometimes, even from multiple valleys. This collaboration of our spotters from different valleys around Ulley, gives the team a clear picture of the movement of wildlife on that day.

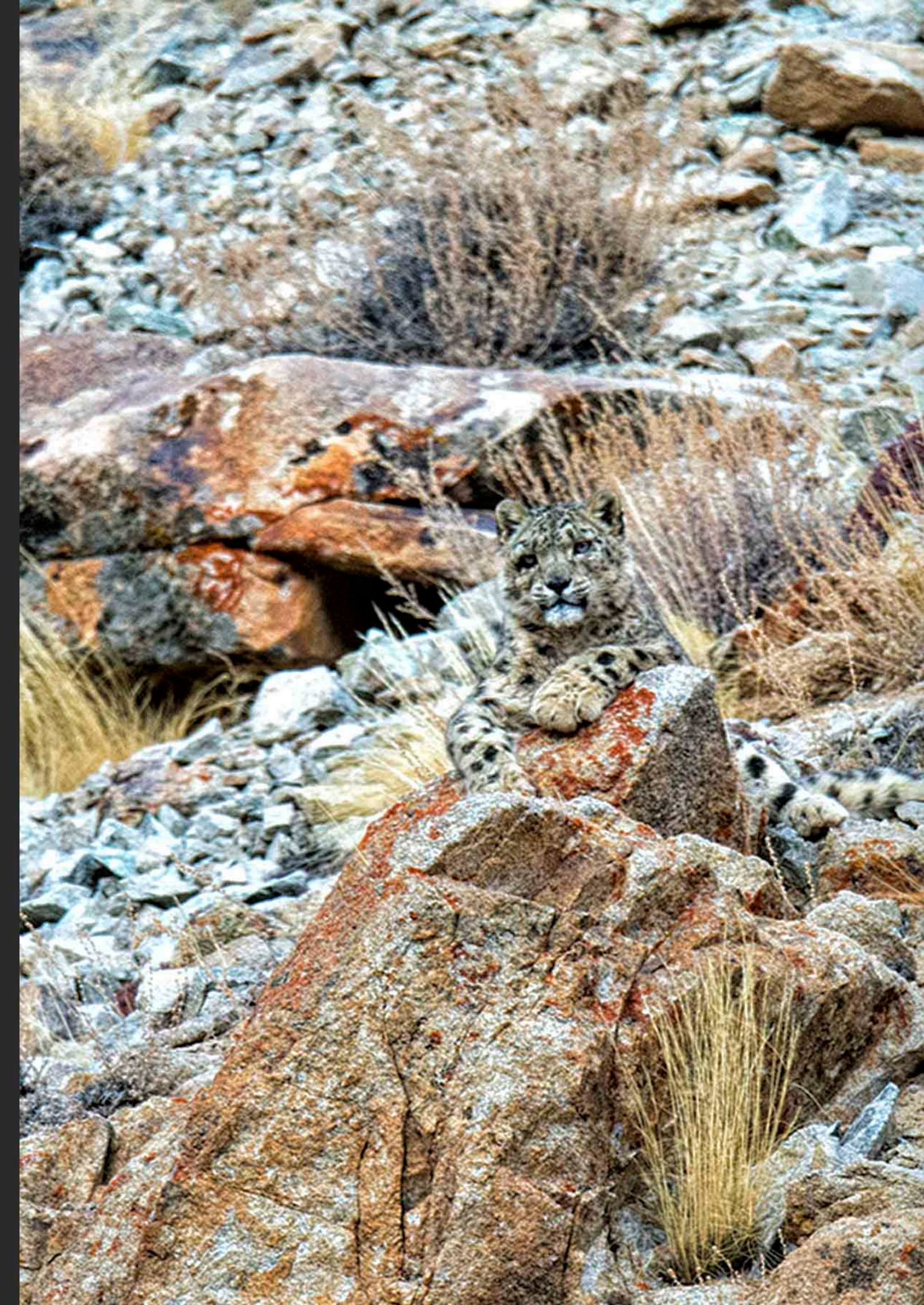
The information thus obtained, is used to devise a plan, which is then executed with the same kind of efficiency, coupled with the flexibility brought about by the well designed and well planned infrastructure of the Snow Leopard Lodge.

Apart from the direct team, the lodge also works with villagers, both close and far, to make sure there is enough information for an educated decision to be made with respect to the best wildlife viewing spots. This also ensures that the benefits of sustainable wildlife tourism are felt beyond the boundaries of our area of operation.





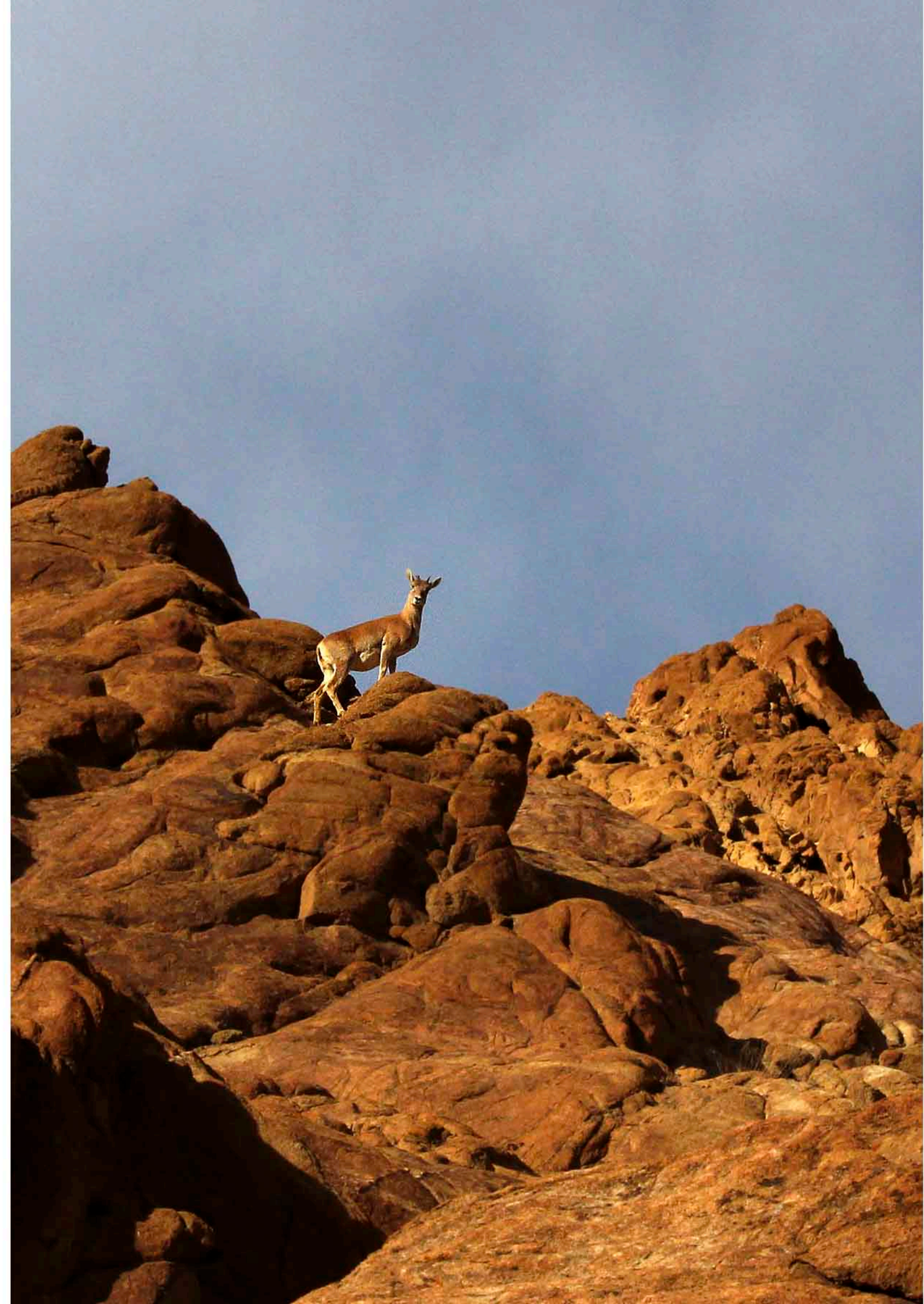
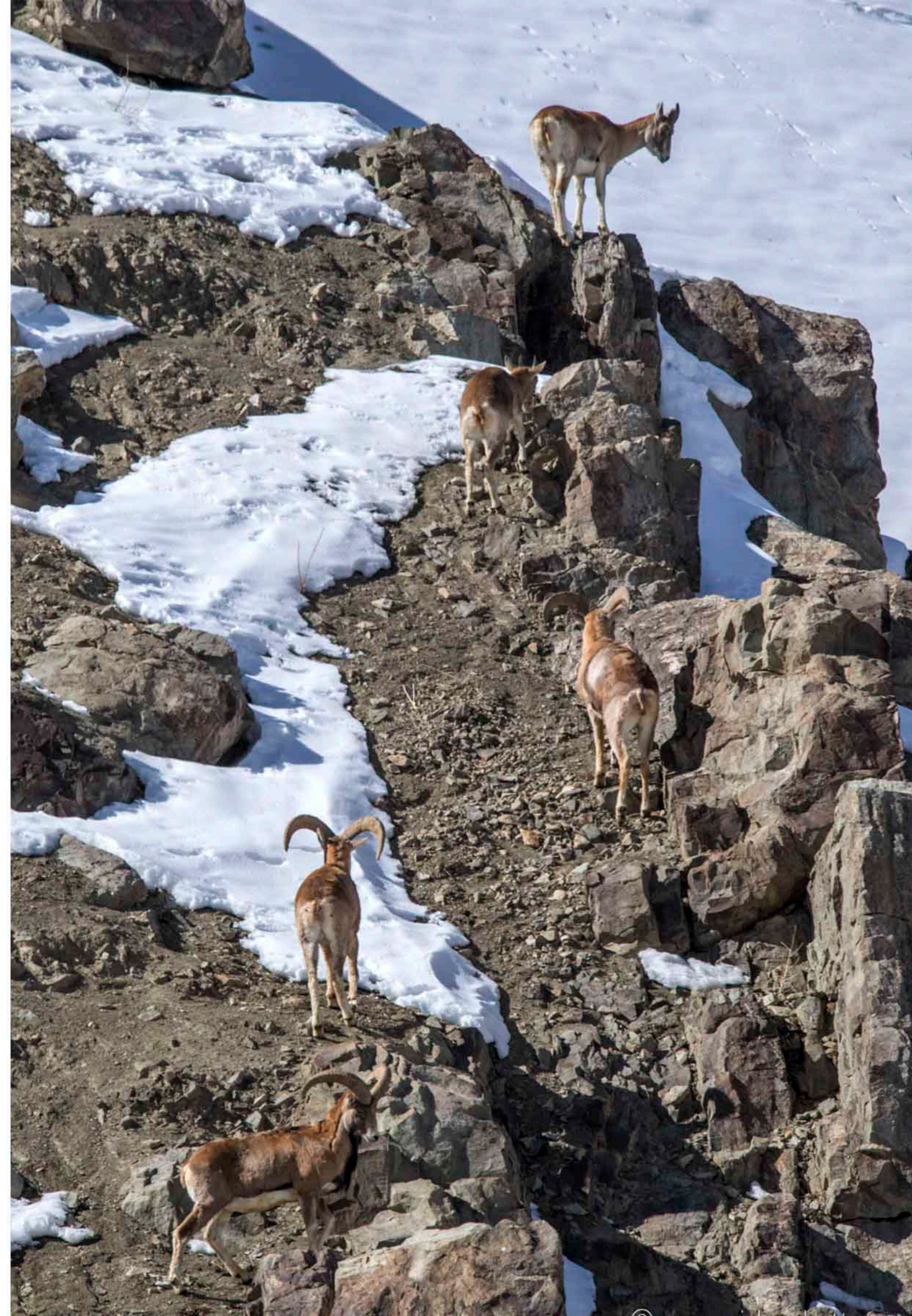
Our neighbours at the Snow Leopard Lodge - The wildlife at Ulley

















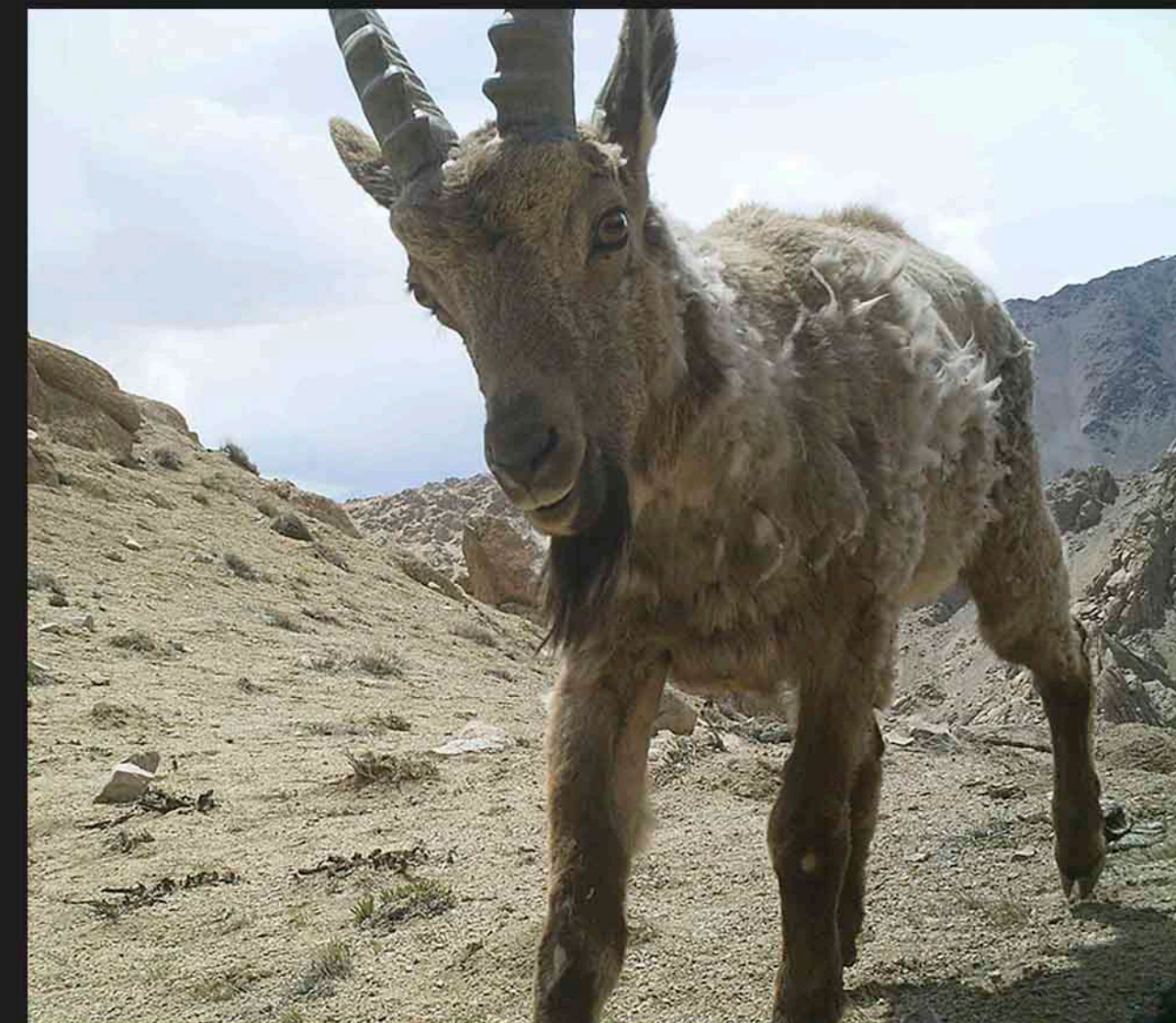
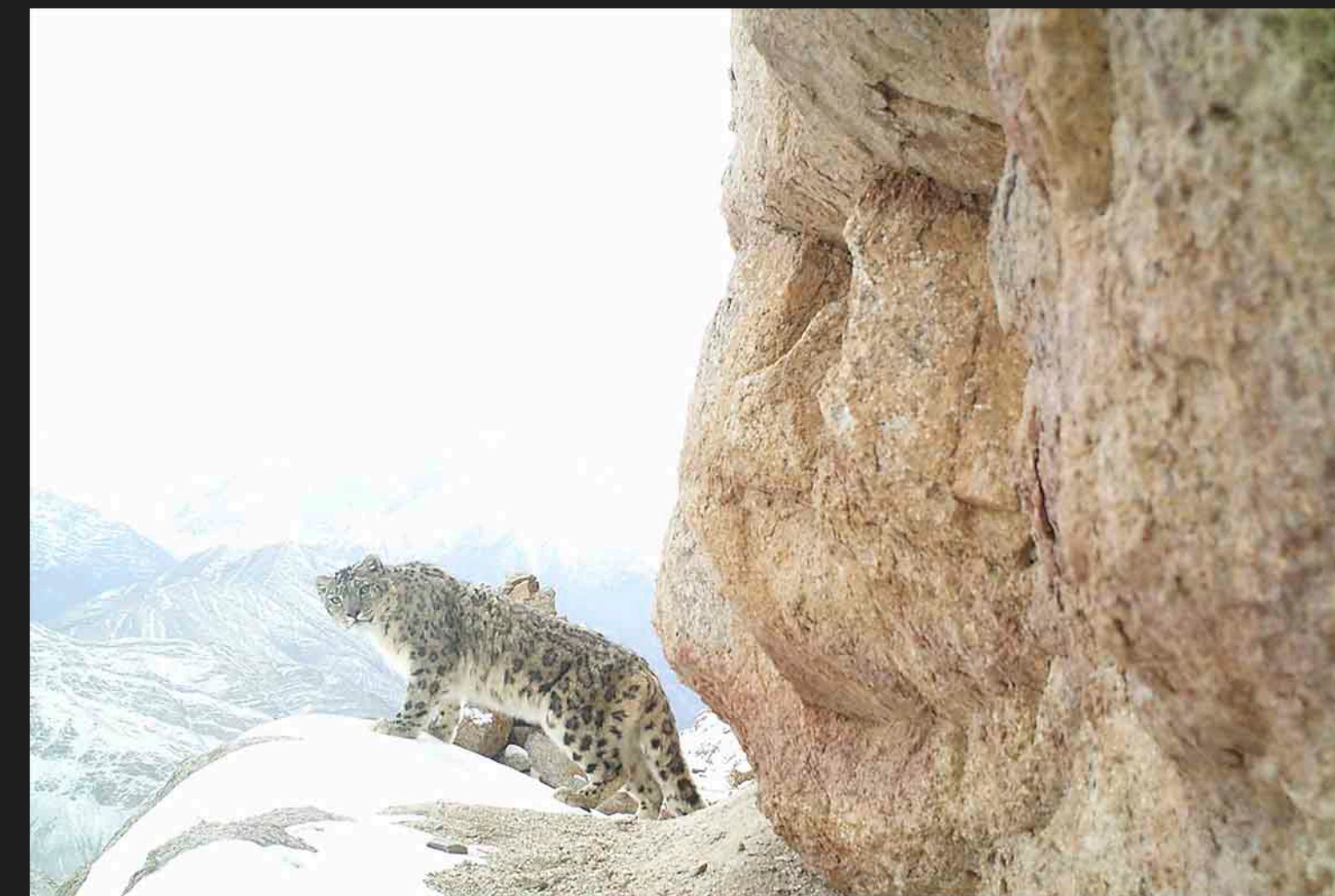




A surprise visitor to Ulley in May,2017 - Bharal or Blue Sheep



A few special moments from our Camera Traps around Ulley











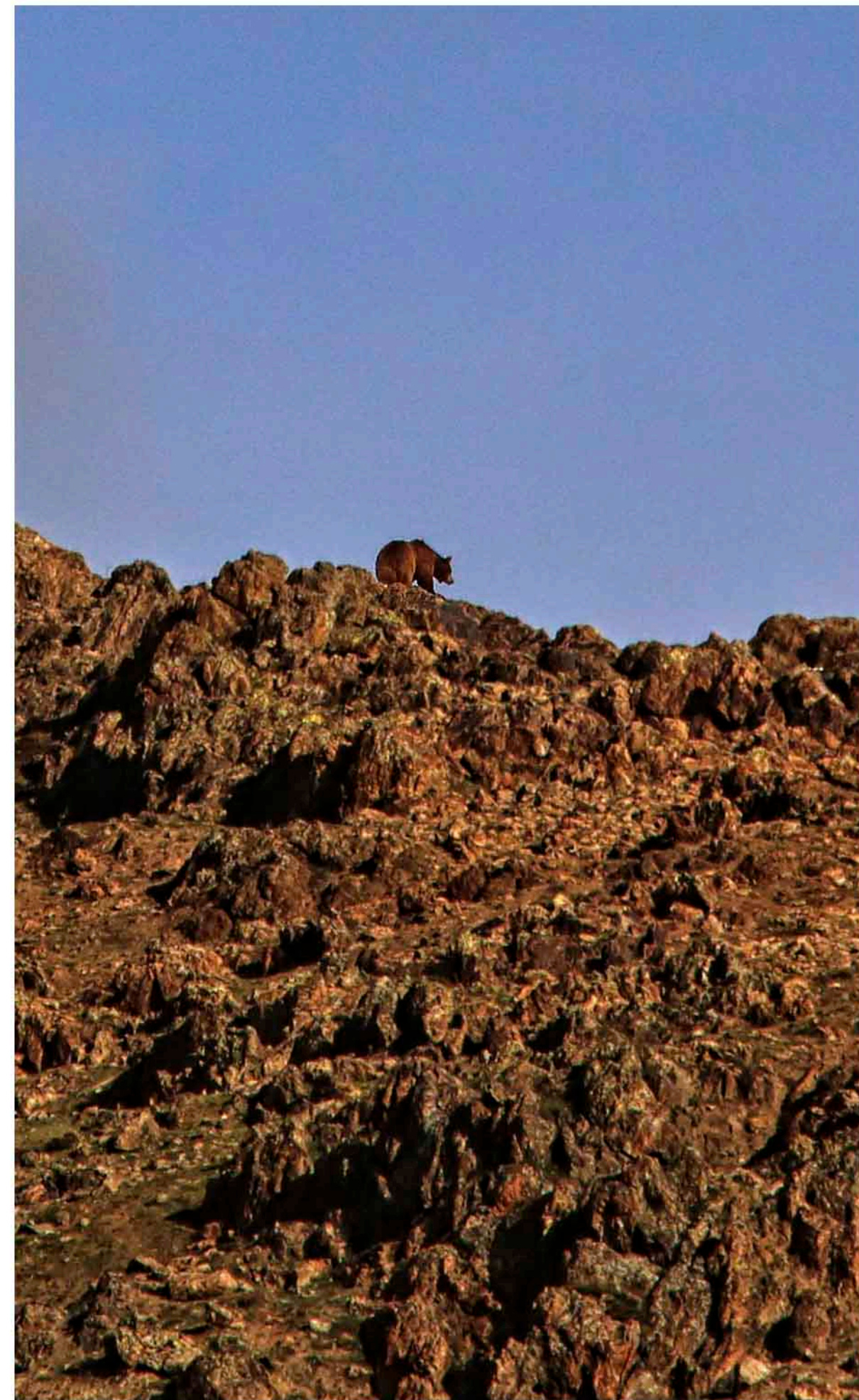


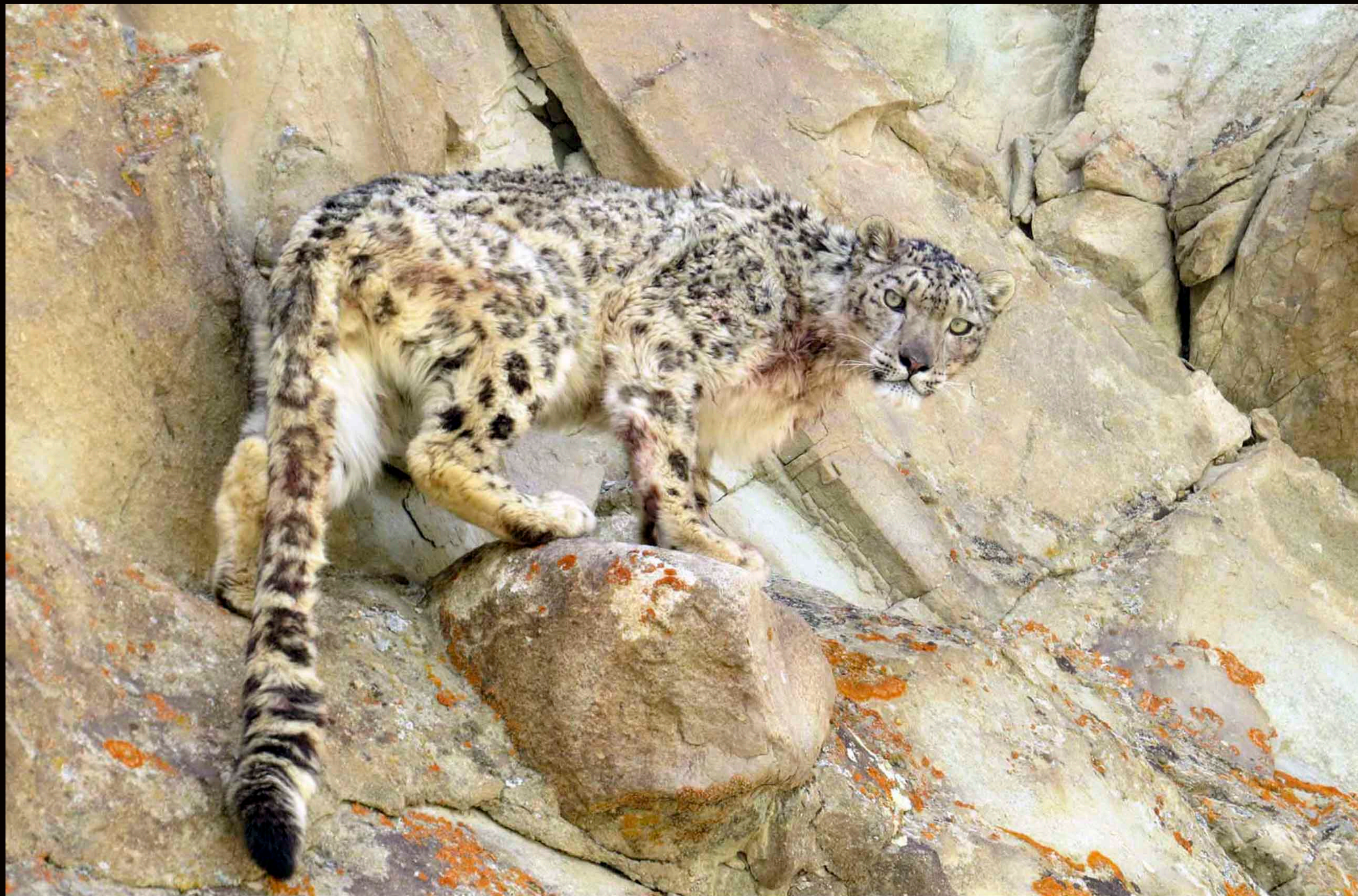






A new world emerges in Western Ladakh - April to December





Snow Leopard Lodge

Ulley, Ladakh

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