



Tracking the Elusive Snow Leopard

9 Days Tracking the Elusive Snow Leopard

Jul 21-29, 2023



Outline

- Day 1: Yushu, China
- Day 2: Yushu / Snow Leopard habitat
- Day 3-7: Snow Leopard habitat
- Day 8: Snow Leopard habitat / Yushu
- Day 9: Yushu / Depart



Snow Leopard



Overview

Holding 60% of Snow Leopard's habitat, China possibly is home to the most snow leopards in the world. The habitat spans 1,100,000 square kilometers and covers the most of Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. In this exciting tour, we will have the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to search for these rare and elusive big cats on "the Roof of the World". We will spend about one week camping inside the core area of the snowy and deserted habitat and scan the massive rock faces on hill ridges where snow leopards like to perch and get a commanding view around. This vast area is a pasture of a specific family that provides us a relatively stable opportunity to search for them. Despite this, it is still a bit challenging to spot them out of the snowy habitat considering the camouflaged color of their fur.

During our exploration for the leopard, we may encounter some other incredible plateau mammals including Pallas's Cat, Wild Yak, Tibetan Gazelle, Tibetan Fox, Tibetan Wolf, White-lipped Deer, Kiang, etc. For birds, we have good chances of seeing Tibetan Snowcock, Black-necked Crane, Bar-headed Goose, Rufous-necked Snowfinch, White-rumped Snowfinch, Ground Tit, Himalayan Griffon and Lammergeier, etc.



Besides, the marvelous Kangba Tibetan culture is a bonus on this trip. The prevalent Tibetan Buddhist beliefs in the region have worked in many respects to preserve the natural wealth of this wide region. The wildlife abundance of Qinghai along with its beauty and richness can be directly linked to the harmonious coexistence between animals and humans. Here in Qinghai, respect for the equality of nature and animals is a spiritual obligation.



Highlights

1. Tracing Snow Leopard in a reliable habitat.
2. Searching for plateau specials including Pallas's Cat, Eurasian Lynx, Wild Yak, Tibetan Gazelle, Tibetan Fox, Tibetan Wolf, White-lipped Deer, Kiang, etc.
3. Plateau birds including Tibetan Snowcock, Black-necked Crane, Bar-headed Goose, Ibisbill, etc.
4. The breath-taking scenery of imposing snow-capped mountains, vast grasslands, Tibetan nomadic tents.
5. Experienced wildlife guide and local leopard expert that has guided this trip many times ensure you a lifetime traveling experience.
6. A small group size of no more than 8 travelers.
7. Years of working as a local partner for some prestigious western companies specialized in birds and wildlife.
8. A strong logistic team in the office to ensure our trip goes smoothly and every participant has a comfortable and memorable journey.

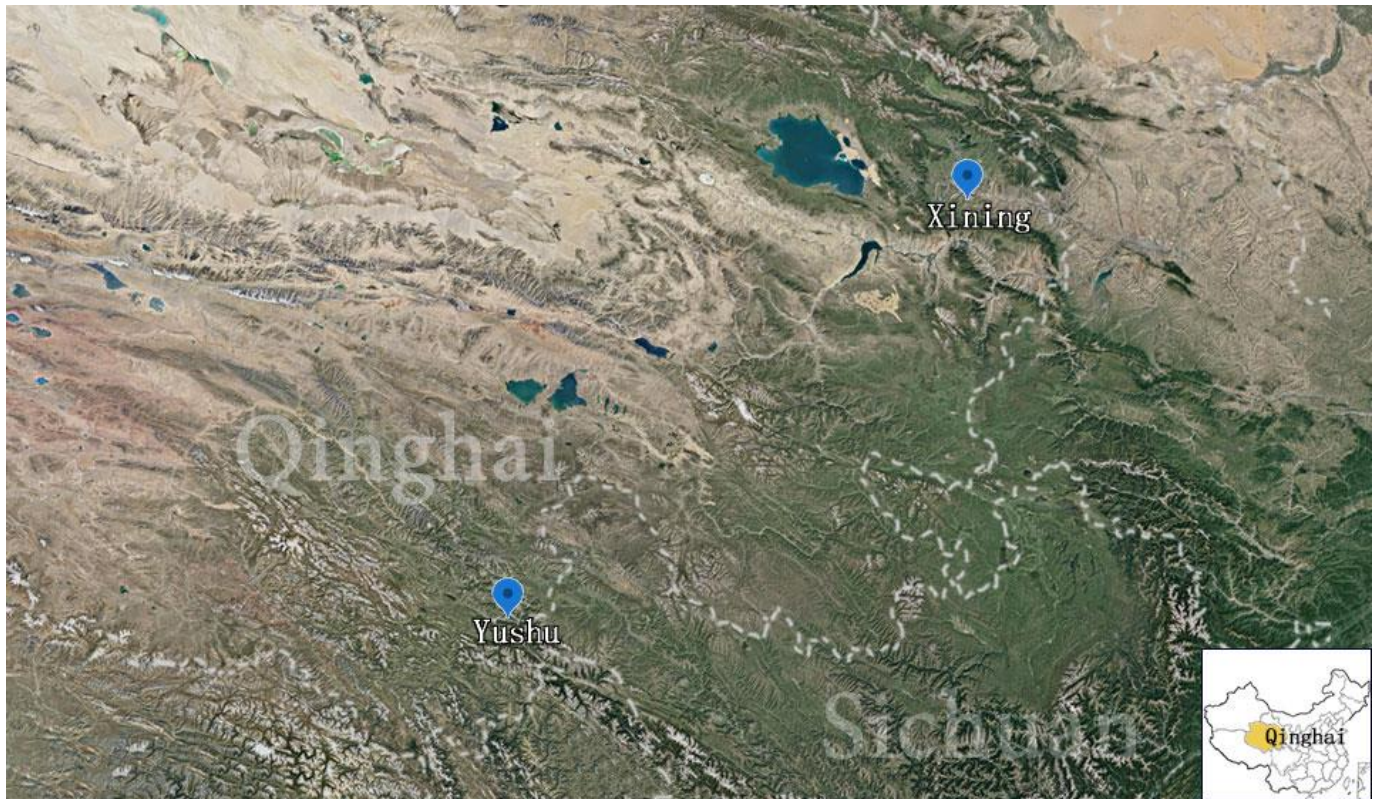


Tour Info Sheet

Highlight Birds	Himalayan Vulture, Saker Falcon, Eurasian Hobby, Little Owl, Tibetan Snowcock, Common Pheasant, Rufous-necked Snowfinch, White-rumped Snowfinch, Ground Tit, Twite, Hume's Short-toed Lark, Asia Short-toed Lark, Mongolian Lark, Tibetan Lark, Black Redstart, etc.
Numbers of Species to Expect	30-50
Ease of Birding	moderate with a few tricky species
Highlight Mammals	Snow Leopard, Tibetan Wolf, Pallas's Cat, Tibetan Antelope, Wild Yak, Kiang (Tibetan Wild Ass), White-lipped Deer, Tibetan Gazelle, Przewalski's Gazelle, Brown Bear, Steppe Polecat, Corsac Fox, Mountain Weasel, etc.
Other Attractions	Tibetan culture, gorgeous plateau scenery
Photography Opportunities	good photography chances for plateau mammals and birds
Habitats Covered	grasslands, deserts, snow mountains, alpine scrubs and meadows, alpine flowstone slopes
Expected Climate	windy and cold, strong sunlight at daytime, snow is possible
Physical Requirements	demanding



Map



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Yushu, China.

Arrive Yushu and meet your AlpineBirding private guide and driver. Today we will stay in Yushu to acclimatize ourselves to the elevation around 3,700 meters. As we will depart to the leopard habitat the next day where the elevation rises to 4,200 meters, we strongly suggest you arrive 1 or 2 days earlier and spend more time in Yushu if you have not been to a high-elevation area like this.

Day 2: Yushu to Snow Leopard habitat.

Our logistic team will set out early to the Snow Leopard habitat to set up camp. We will drive to our destination and start our wildlife exploration on the way. As we drive to the vast grassland of Sanjiangyuan National Park, the largest reserve in China, we can expect to encounter some interesting plateau species such as Tibetan Fox, Tibetan Wolf, Black-lipped Pika, Himalayan Marmot, etc. With some luck, we may see the elusive Pallas's Cat and Eurasian Lynx. In addition, we can also see some stunning plateau birds including Upland Buzzard, Himalayan Vulture, Saker Falcon, Eurasian Hobby, Rufous-necked Snowfinch, White-rumped Snowfinch, Ground Tit, etc.

Day 3-7: Snow Leopard habitat.

We will search for Snow Leopard in different mountains and valleys around our campsite each day along with our local Tibetan leopard guide with years' experience of leopard exploration who also works with many NGOs for plateau wildlife survey and conservation. We will trek to nearby valleys looking for snow leopard trace and its main prey Blue Sheep, as it can be an important clew for us. Our daily schedule is not fixed, we will work out the strategy based on the actual weather conditions and snow leopard movements. The idea is to have the best possibility to track this "ghost cat".



Snow Leopard



Wild Yak

During our exploration on the munificent plateau, we will also have chances to see other mammals like Tibetan Wolf, Pallas's Cat, Tibetan Antelope, Wild Yak, Kiang (Tibetan Wild Ass), White-lipped Deer, Tibetan Gazelle, Przewalski's Gazelle, Brown Bear, Steppe Polecat, Corsac Fox, Mountain Weasel, etc.

Bird watching is also exciting here, we can expect some sought-after species like Upland Buzzard, Himalayan Vulture, Saker Falcon, Eurasian Hobby, Little Owl, Tibetan Snowcock, Common Pheasant, Rufous-necked Snowfinch, White-rumped Snowfinch, Ground Tit, Twite, Hume's Short-toed Lark, Asia Short-toed Lark, Mongolian Lark, Tibetan Lark, Black Redstart, etc.

Day 8: Snow Leopard habitat to Yushu.

This morning, we will continue our exploration and work the final effort on finding our targets. In the afternoon, we will drive back to Yushu overnight at our lovely hotel.



Tibetan Antelope

Day 9: Departure from Yushu.

Following a lovely breakfast at the hotel, we will send you to Yushu Airport to catch your flight. This will conclude the services for this scheduled itinerary from AlpineBirding.



www.alpinebirding.com

For an Exclusive Birding Experience!

info@alpinebirding.com; www.alpinebirding.com