

**A Short Report on Spotting Snow Leopard in Qinghai Province, China – Sid Francis, Zeng Zhang, Roland Zeidler, Sichuan Birding**  
[chengduuk@hotmail.com](mailto:chengduuk@hotmail.com)

This report is an update on trips we have organized in Qinghai Province China that involve sightings of Snow Leopard.



Snow Leopard on a Domestic Yak kill, October 2017 – photo by Zeng Zhang

Previous reports on Qinghai Snow Leopard trips we have been involved with are –

[SNOW LEOPARDS FROM THE CAR, Qinghai: 27 February to 12 March 2017 Richard Webb](#) – guided by Sid Francis

[QINGHAI – TIBET, 7 - 22 September 2016 - Jean-Michel Bompar](#) – guided by Zeng Zhang and Roland Zeidler

However, after difficulties accessing this area, we were tipped-off by locals over another Snow Leopard site that is found around 4 hours to the west of our previous site. Here again we have had difficulties with access, which have involved difficulty in acquiring permission from the local authorities for the right of entrance and lodging with local families. But luckily on each occasion we have visited – autumn 2016, spring 2017 and autumn 2017 – we've been able to secure these permissions and the invaluable help of a local herder who has turned out to be top-quality Snow Leopard guide.

The last two trips have been over an extended period that have lasted 20+ days – our October 2017 trip was 27 days in length. During this trip our guests were able to see Snow Leopard over at least once over 20 days with an average of 30 minutes/observation. It was estimated that up to 14 animals were in the area, but obviously some animals were recorded more than once. Apart from single

animals Leopards were also observed as pairs and three animals together (female and two juveniles). All the sites were accessible by 4WD vehicle, over rough unpaved tracks, while spotting was facilitated by following the guide up onto higher ground to the viewing points from which he had found the animals. Closest views were at sites where animals were feeding on kills. An indication of how close the animals could be approached is given by our photographs – all taken by Zheng Zang – which are taken by a 300mm (on a DSLR) without any converter - and two films of the leopard, on the kill, taken by same camera, and not involving any image cropping;

<https://youtu.be/TzWWmcLkWDw>

<https://youtu.be/4PGUkeBTE24>

The animal is shown feeding on a young Domestic Yak. This obviously causes a conflict between herders and Leopards, but the chance of extra income that could be derived out of Snow Leopard tourism will hopefully bring an element of economic protection. The other common prey species is Blue Sheep, which are abundant in the area. Other notable species are Alpine Musk Deer, White-lipped Deer and Tibetan Bunting



Two Snow Leopards on a high ridge, October 2017– Zeng Zhang



On a high snowy crag – photo Zeng Zhang



Blue Sheep – photo by Zeng Zhang