



МИНИСТЕРСТВО ПРИРОДНЫХ
РЕСУРСОВ И ЭКОЛОГИИ
РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ



Results of Snow Leopard Monitoring for 2025–2026 in the Ubsunur Hollow Nature Reserve

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Biosphere Reserve, Russia

Ubsunur Hollow State Nature Biosphere Reserve

Established: January 24, 1993

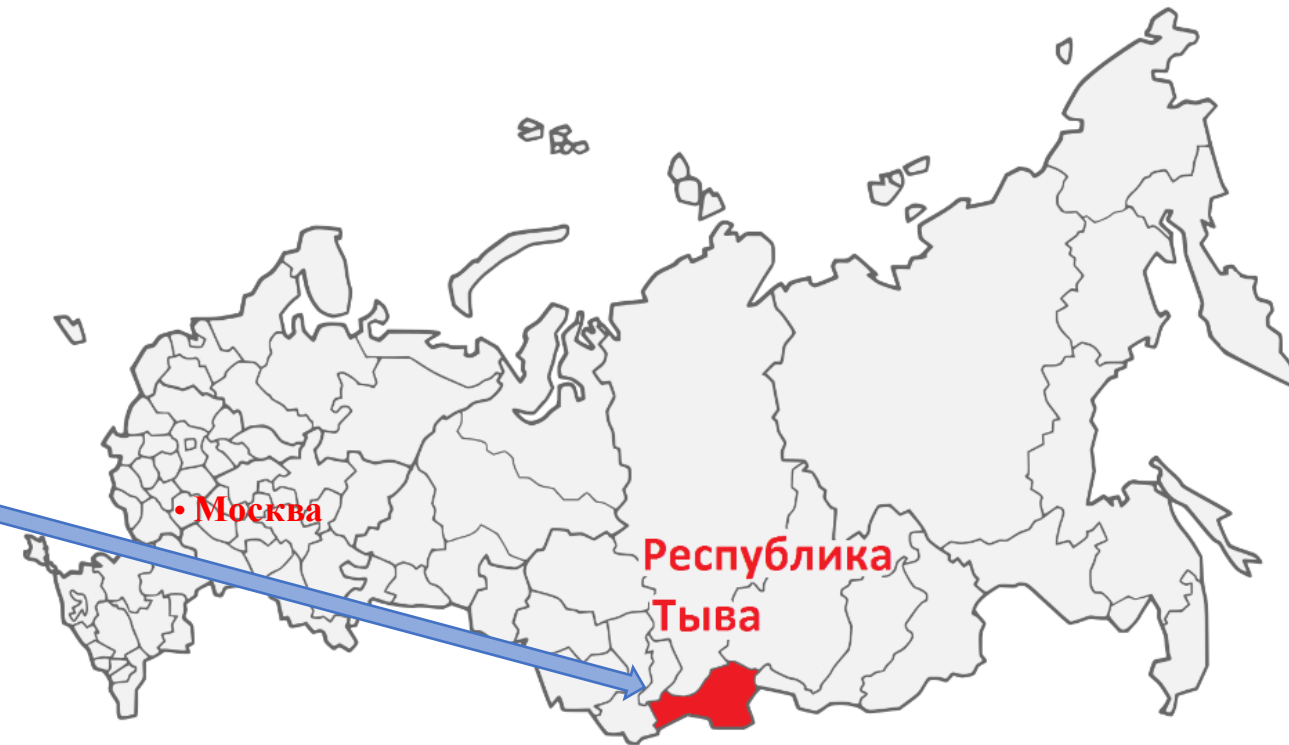
Total area: 925,136.4 ha, including core area: 323,198.4 ha; buffer/protection zone: 601,938 ha

Biosphere Reserve status (UNESCO MAB Programme): 15 Dec 1997

UNESCO World Natural Heritage inscription: 5 Jul 2003

Establishment of the Transboundary Ubsunur Hollow Reserve: 30 May 2011

Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Ubsunur Hollow: 15 Sep 2023



Snow leopard (*Panthera uncia* Schreber, 1775) is one of the rarest large cat species in Russia and the highest-altitude felid adapted to the harsh mountains of Central Asia. It is listed in the Red Data Book of the Russian Federation (Category 1) and classified as Vulnerable (VU) by the IUCN. The species is a priority target of Russia's Biodiversity Conservation and Ecotourism



Development program.

В Туве ирбис распространен почти по всей территории, исключая больше равнинные территории.

На территории Тувы ирбис занимает различные биотопы на высоте 500-3500 м над у.м.

При этом оптимальные участки отмечаются на высотах 700-2800 м. На территории заповедника ирбис обитает в пределах охранных зон двух кластерных участков «Монгун-Тайга» и «Хан-Дээр»

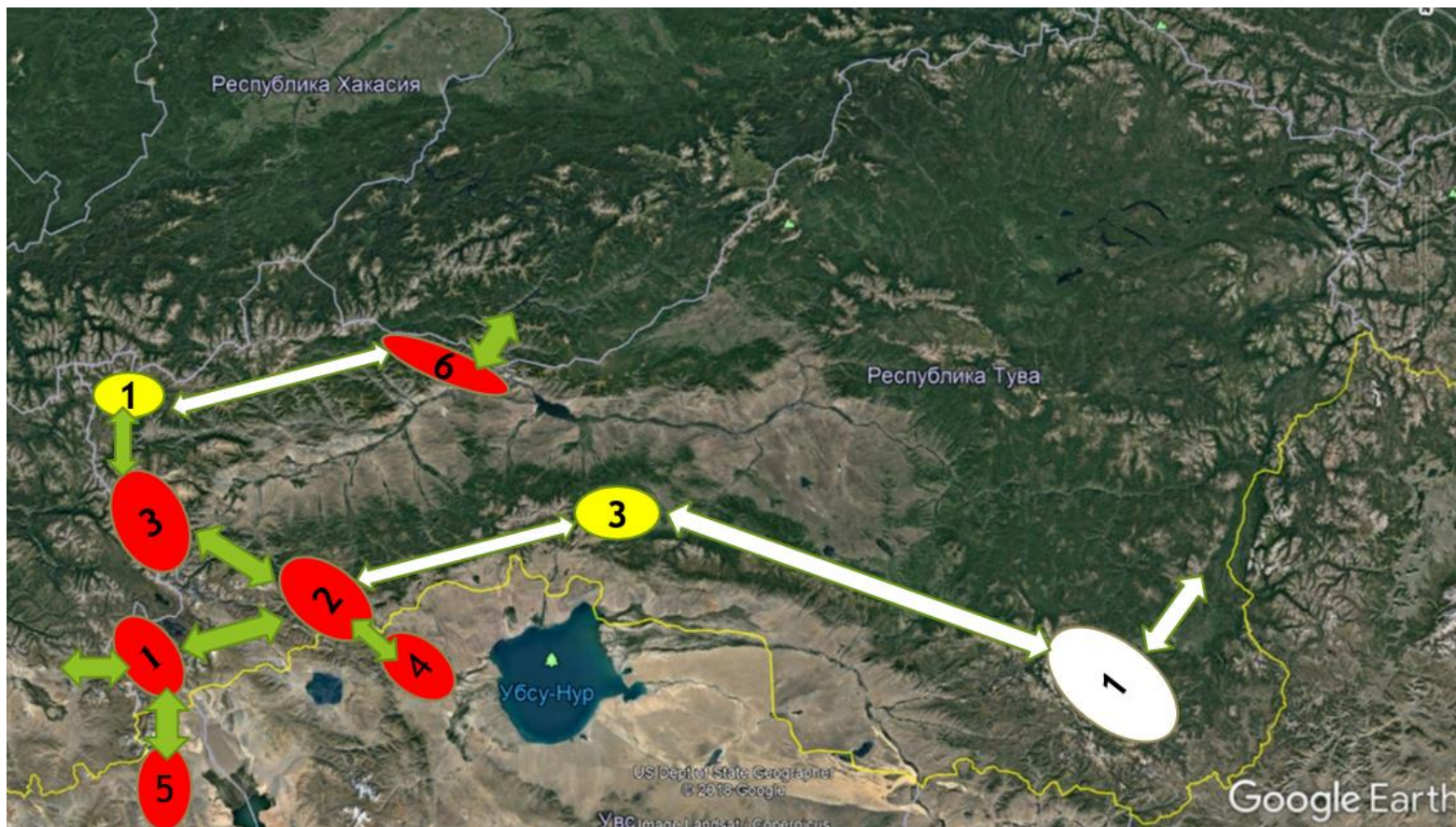
The key habitat requirement is the absence of deep snow cover, rugged terrain with rocky outcrops, and the presence of Siberian ibex populations.

Snow leopard habitats in Tuva:

Key core areas: Chikhachev Ridge, Tsagan-Shabetu Ridge, Shapshal Ridge, Tsagaan Shuvuut Ridge (Mongolia), Chikhachev Ridge (Mongolia), Khemchik Ridge.

Areas with critical or vanished populations: Alash Plateau, Tannu-Ola Ridge.

Sangilen Highlands: one snow leopard photographed in 2023; additional observations reported.



Research on snow leopards in Tuva began in 2004 through a joint team from the Altai and Ubsunur hollow reserves. Since 2010, systematic monitoring has been conducted. Between 2010 and 2026, eight winter snow leopard surveys were completed.



We actively cooperate with the Mongolian reserve on snow leopard conservation. Joint annual surveys are conducted in transboundary areas. Additional activities are planned under the 2024–2026 Russia–Kyrgyzstan environmental cooperation program.



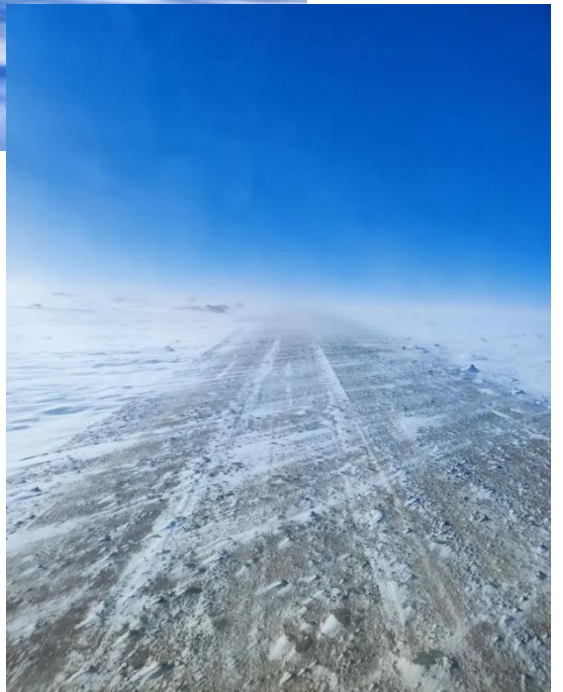
Primary data are collected using two complementary methods: spatial analysis of snow leopard tracks along transects in permanent sampling cells and camera-trap data analysis. Camera traps allow ecological and behavioral studies that are difficult with other methods. Interviews with local residents are also conducted. Surveys follow the standardized monitoring program using the NextGIS Collector application.



More than 100 camera traps have been installed in the Mongun-Taiga and Khan-Deer cluster areas and their buffer zones (Mongun-Taiga massif, Tsagan-Shibetu, Chikhachev, Khemchik and Kurtushibin ridges).



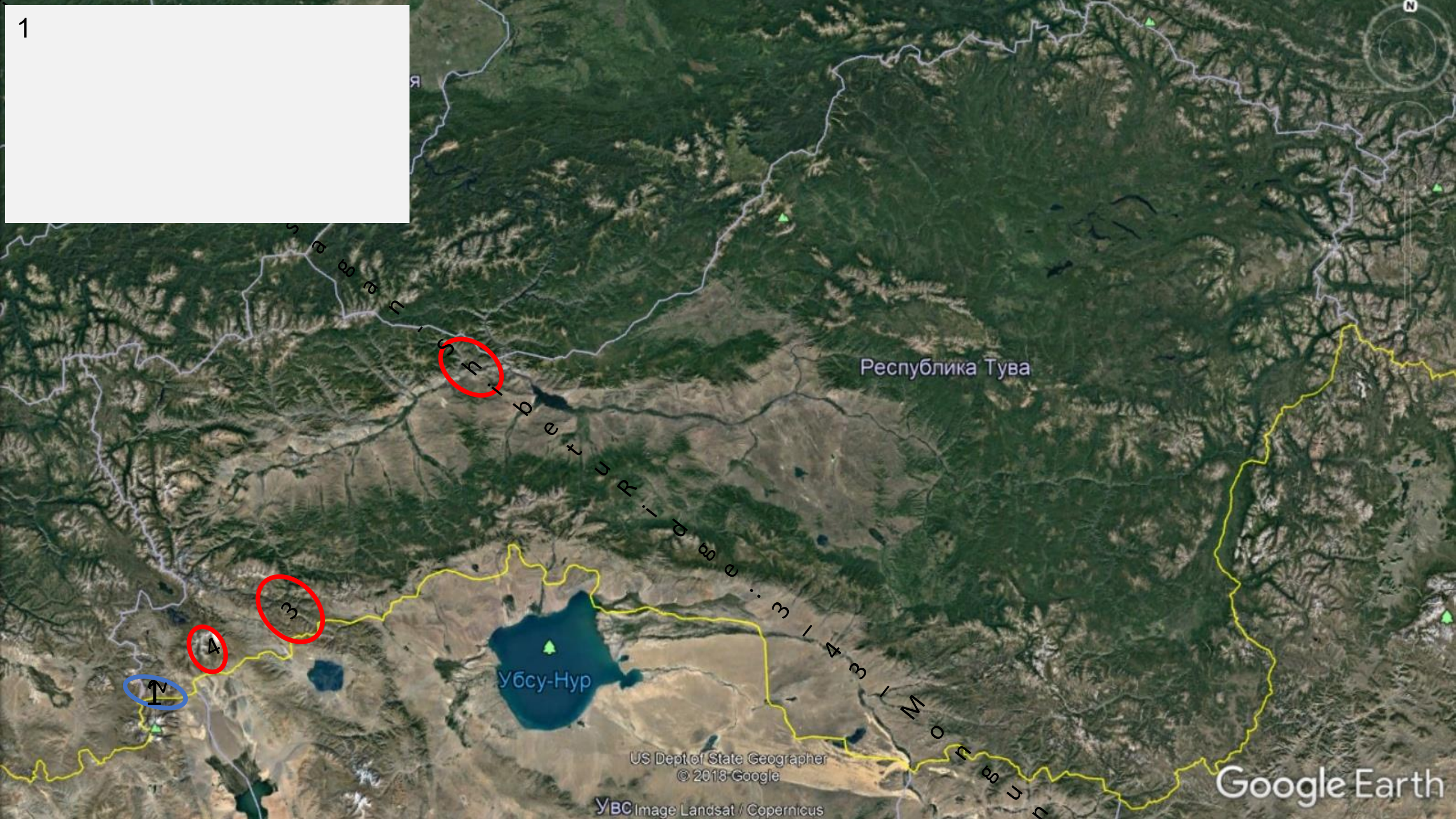
With support from the Interregional Snow Leopard Association, a winter snow leopard survey was conducted in the Mongun-Taiga cluster area from 19 February to 4 March 2026 on long-term monitoring sites in the Chikhachev and Tsagan-Shibetu ridges and the Mongun-Taiga high-mountain massif.



A winter survey was also conducted in the Khan-Deer-3 cluster area. Since 2022, camera traps have repeatedly recorded three snow leopards (two males, Sayan and Shugursky, and one female, Darya). These animals migrated from the Sayano-Shushensky Reserve and belong to the unified Western Sayan population. This area is a key snow leopard habitat in the Western Sayan Mountains.



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Республика Тува

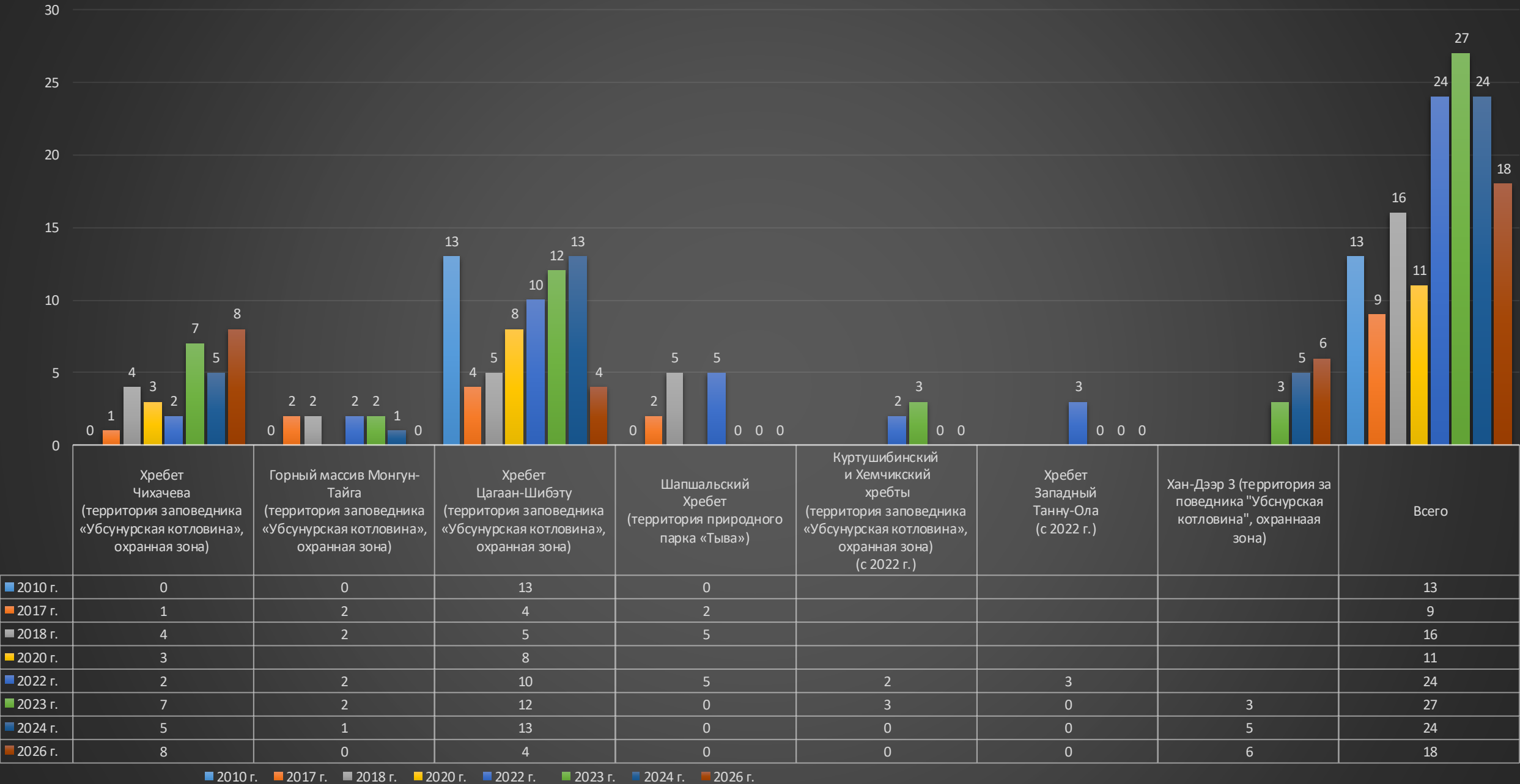
Убсу-Нур

US Dept of State Geographer
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Численность ирбиса (снежного барса) по Республике Тыва с 2010 по 2026 гг.



■ 2010 г. ■ 2017 г. ■ 2018 г. ■ 2020 г. ■ 2022 г. ■ 2023 г. ■ 2024 г. ■ 2026 г.

Snow Leopard Profiles



Within the buffer zone of the Mongun-Taiga area

Самка	Самец	Котята	Пол не определен
Акыс/Аккая	Транзит		2 особи (SL-011, 2022 г.)
Баяара/Инемара	Мажор		SL_016
SL_011	Монгулек		SL_019
SL_20	Ошку/Богутарь		SL_018
			SL_017
			SL_021
	Итого: 15		

Within the buffer zone of the Khan-Deer-3 area

Самка	Самец	Котята	Пол не определен
Дарья	Саян		2 особи (4 точки, 2025 г)
4 точки (Дарьина, 2022 г)	Межел (Дарьин, 2022г)		
Без имени, сестра Али (Дарьина, 2024)	Али (Дарьин, 2024)		
	Итого: 8 особей		

THREATS AND CHALLENGES TO SNOW LEOPARD CONSERVATION IN TUVA AND ADJACENT AREAS



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- Human-related factors:
 1. Seventeen snow leopard deaths are known. Fifteen animals were shot, one was caught in a snare, and one was poisoned with barium fluoroacetate. In three cases the cause was undetermined.
 2. Decline of prey populations due to uncontrolled poaching.
 3. Habitat degradation and fragmentation caused by overgrazing, road development, and year-round poaching.



Improving snow leopard protection outside protected areas.

1. Strengthening the interagency anti-poaching team established at the Ubsunur Hollow Reserve.



Includes representatives of environmental and law-enforcement agencies. Expanding the group to an interregional level is important.

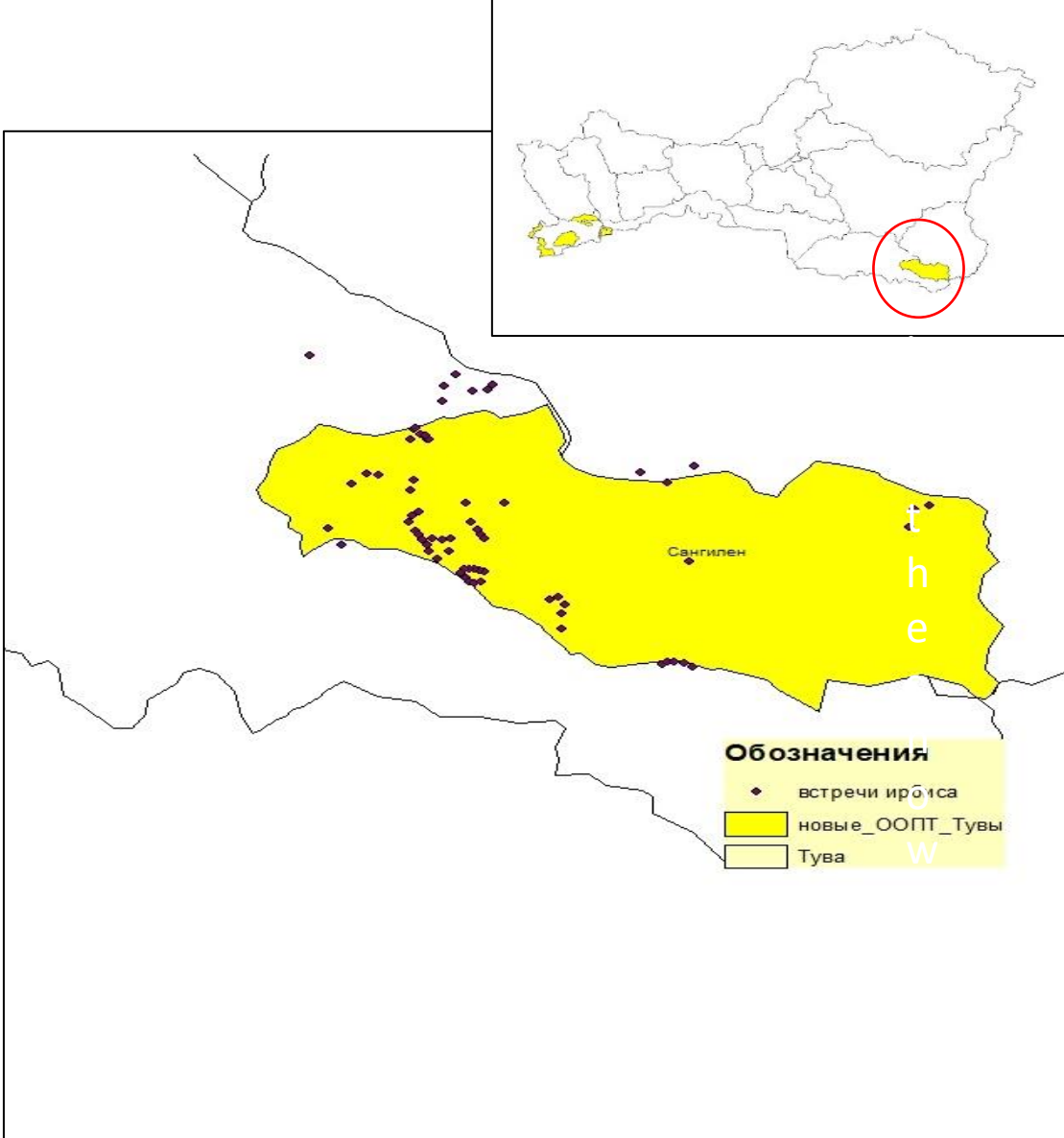
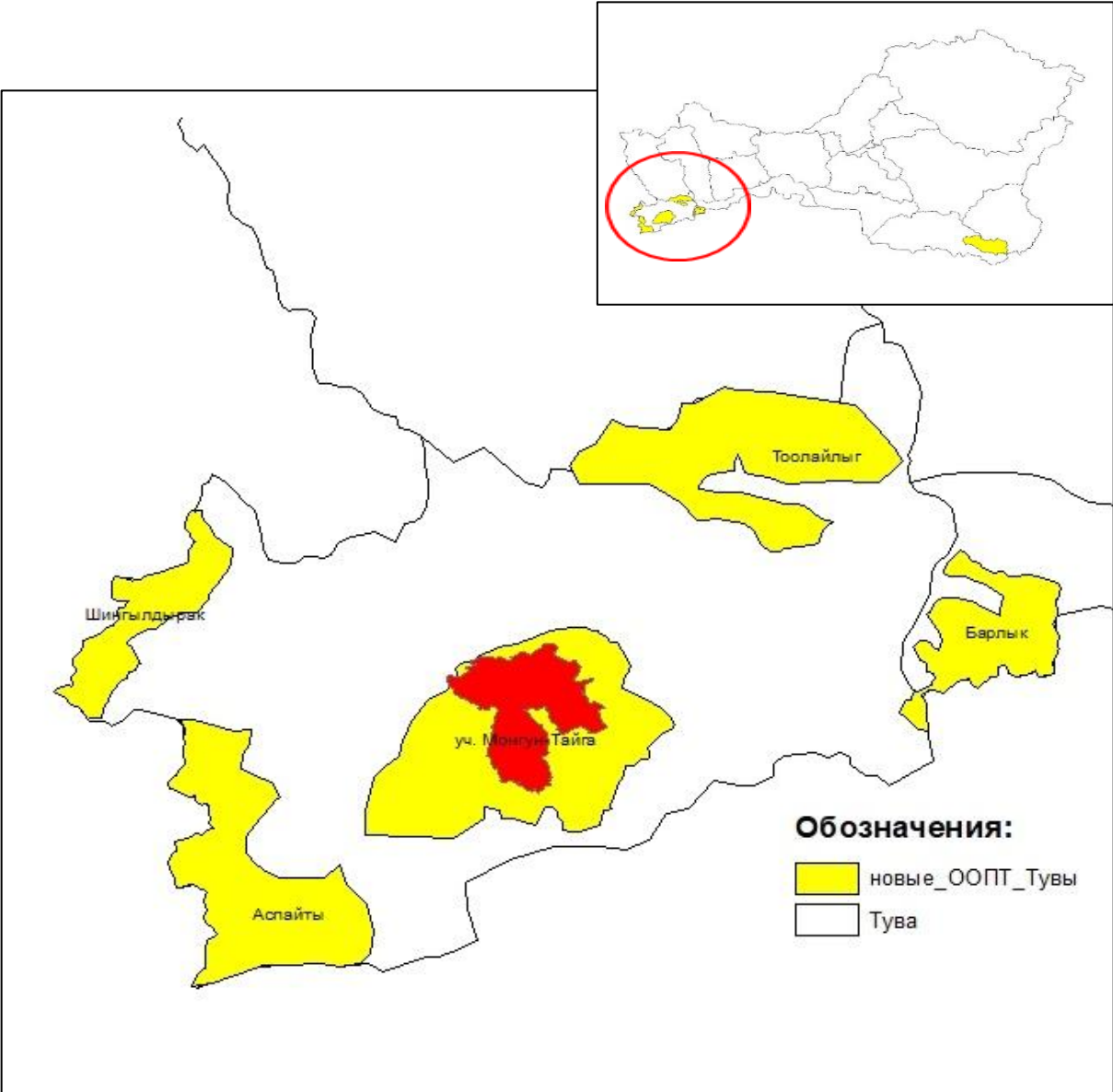
2. Insufficient numbers of government wildlife inspectors in key areas.

3. Combating snare hunting.

4. Promoting social projects that engage local communities in ecotourism and sustainable resource use.



Предлагаемая схема новых ООПТ, первостепенных для сохранения ареала ирбиса в Туве и прилегающих территориях



Results of snow leopard conservation activities in 2025–early 2026



As part of the program, a number of major activities were implemented:

Participation in the international conference 'Study and Conservation of the Snow Leopard Worldwide: Joining Efforts' (Kazan, March 2025);

Expansion and analysis of the camera-trap network in Khan-Deer-3 and Mongun-Taiga;

Traveling photo exhibition 'Spotted Treasure', children's art exhibitions, and presentations at Snow Leopard ski marathons;

Educational outreach through the public library system;

Republic-wide drawing contests and events for International Snow Leopard Day;

Television and radio appearances;

School volleyball competitions;

Distribution of educational materials;

Literary contest dedicated to the Shagaa holiday.

Thank you for your
attention!

