Snow Leopard Expedition
with BBC Planet Earth II’s Duncan Parker and Explorer Behzad Larry
Ladakh, India
March 2, 2020 to March 13, 2020
(12 days/ 11 nights)
# Your Tour at a Glance

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tour Dates</th>
<th>March 2- March 13, 2020</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tour Price</td>
<td>$30,813 per person if 2 guests. $16,693 per person if 4 guests.</td>
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<td>Tour Size</td>
<td>2-4 guests with expedition leaders Duncan Parker and Behzad Larry</td>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 2. Day 1</td>
<td>Leh</td>
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<td>March 3. Day 2</td>
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<td>March 4. Day 3</td>
<td>Hemis National Park</td>
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<td>March 5. Day 4</td>
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<td>March 11. Day 10</td>
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<td>March 12. Day 11</td>
<td>Return to Leh</td>
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<td>March 13. Day 12</td>
<td>Fly, Leh to Delhi</td>
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**The Indus Valley copyright Behzad Larry.**
Your Expedition Route
Expedition Summary

Track and film the elusive snow leopard with part of the BBC's Planet Earth II crew. Join explorers and snow leopard experts Duncan Parker and Behzad Larry in the Trans-Himalayas of Ladakh, India to track the ghost of the mountains on a two-week expedition. As an expedition member, you will track and film one of the rarest big cats in the world alongside snow leopard experts and the same tracking crew as the BBC’s Planet Earth II and National Geographic's Hostile Planet, while camping and trekking in the high altitude Hemis National Park. This itinerary book-ends the ultimate expedition grade adventure with luxurious stays.

Why is this expedition unique?
Have you ever dreamed of life behind the camera while watching your favorite expedition and nature shows? If you’ve always wanted to experience life behind the lens, living, and filming alongside animals in the wild, then this expedition is for you. Not only will you be traveling with the A-Team of snow leopard trackers, you’ll be growing (or gaining if you’re a novice!) your skills as a tracker, photographer, and filmmaker. Plus, you’ll gain a truly incredible perspective on animals and ecosystems in some of the highest mountains in the world.

Highlights
- Track, film, and photograph snow leopards with a BBC/ NatGeo filmmaker
- Set-up camera traps on 15,000 ft ridges used by Planet Earth, Hostile Planet, & Steve Winter.
- Learn from professional filmmakers, photographers, and trackers
- Participate in ground-level conservation of snow leopards
- Incredible opportunity for experiential travel and a digital detox

Potential Species Encountered
Snow leopard, Tibetan wolves, red fox, Eurasian lynx, blue sheep, Tibetan arghal, Tibetan urial, Asiatic ibex, golden eagles, lammergeier, Tibetan partridges, etc.

Tour Starts: Leh, India
Tour Ends: Leh, India

Difficulty Level
Full Expedition. Participants must be active and fit.

Crew Size
- 2 Expedition Leaders, Duncan Parker and Behzad Larry
- 2 Snow leopard trackers
- 8 Support staff
Your Expedition Leaders

**Duncan Parker**

Duncan is an expeditionary camera operator and filmmaker who has worked on filming snow leopards for National Geographic’s Hostile Planet and the BBC’s Planet Earth II. Besides snow leopards he has also worked on BBC’s Natural World, CATS, BBC’s Siberian Tiger, BBC’s Expedition Burma and the BBC’s Wild Japan. Duncan also leads an in-house technology lab for the BBC natural history unit. Working with a vast array of camera formats, from current 4K cameras, to specialist low light cameras, grips and accessories. Being a passionate photographer and trained conservationist, Duncan enjoys making films that can make a difference in the world. When not working, he enjoys climbing and caving in Wales or building filming contraptions in the workshop.

**Behzad Larry, FRGS**

Behzad Larry is a professional photographer, historian, and adventurer. An avid explorer, Behzad specializes in documenting the wildlife, people, and landscapes of the high Himalayas, Central Asia, and the Tibetan Plateau. He has tracked snow leopards for over five years with over 35 snow leopard sightings.

Behzad has lived and worked across North America, Eastern and North-Western Africa, and South Asia.

He has been featured frequently in travel magazines and has done travel features for both print and web. He is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and a Nikon Pro.
Your Expedition in Detail

Day 1: Arrive in Leh and Acclimatize

Take a morning flight from the Delhi airport and fly to the old silk route town of Leh, nestled in the mighty Trans-Himalaya at 11,000 feet.

You will be transferred to your room at the Grand Dragon Hotel. Today, you must rest all day to acclimatize to the high altitude of 3,400 meters. You must limit your activities to properly acclimatize.

Leh, the capital of Ladakh, was an important stopover on trade routes along the Indus Valley between Tibet to the east, Kashmir to the west and also between India and China for centuries. The main goods carried were salt, grain, pashm or cashmere wool, charas or cannabis resin from the Tarim Basin, indigo, silk yarn and Banaras brocade.

Suite at the Grand Dragon Hotel

Day 2: Leh

After an early breakfast, drive down to the monastery of Thiksey to attend morning prayers. This is a beautiful and calming experience steeped in the tradition of the Gelugpa, or yellow hat order, of Buddhism, headed by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama.

After the morning prayers have concluded, drive around the beautiful Indus valley and view the monastery of Stakna towering above the meandering Indus. Then drive to the monastery of Matho to view a different order of Buddhism and take in the sights of the Indus valley from up high. Proceed for a private lunch with a family in a traditional home in Leh.

Rest at your hotel after lunch, since this is just your second day at altitude, and then head out again to view a sweeping and glorious sunset from the Shanti Stupa, or peace pagoda, built by the Japanese, with commanding views of Leh and the towering Stok Range.

Suite at the Grand Dragon Hotel

Day 3-10: Looking for Snow Leopards

Tracking the Leopard:
The high reaches of the Ladakh Range are prime territory for the magnificent Snow Leopard. As the winter sets in and the snow line descends, these shy and elusive creatures move down to lower altitudes in search of their prey, the bharal (blue sheep), urial (Tibetan mountain sheep), and the argali (Marco Polo sheep), the
mountain sheep and antelope of this region. With an expert crew of trackers and spotters, we’ll search Hemis National Park on daily treks to track and photograph snow leopards on this once-in-a-lifetime trip.

You’ll be in Hemis National park for 8 full days. On the 9th day of the tour, you’ll hike back out of the park and return to Leh by car.

You will spend these days walking through the mountains each day while your spotters work their magic. As you explore, you will discover snow leopard pug-marks, snow leopard marking rocks, herds of blue sheep and Asiatic Ibex, and walk past wolf and fox prints in the ice.

Each day at dawn and dusk, your spotting team will scan the ridges for movement as snow leopards like to walk ridges so they can peer for prey on both sides of the mountain.

Snow Leopards are some of the most elusive animals on earth. Spotting them is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Tracking these ghosts of the mountains is not an exact science, but we do have world class expert spotters and trackers on hand. Our chief spotters Khenrab Phuntsog and Smanla Tsering were the head guides for BBC’s spectacular snow leopard filming in the new Planet Earth II, shot exactly where we will be.

Our expert spotters rely on intelligence gathered from local villages, forest department officials, and their own knowledge of the individual cats. This means that we may need to be move at short notice, especially if a leopard is sighted in a nearby valley or across a nearby mountain. The only way to move around in Hemis National Park is to walk, so participants must be ready and excited to trek.

Photographing the Leopard:
While the tracking team is at work, we’ll embark on setting up camera traps to film and photograph the snow leopard. Camera traps are an essential tool when tracking, filming, and capturing footage of snow leopards from a close distance. Enclosed in weather sealed bodies and triggered by infrared beams, they allow researchers and film crews a deeper insight into what a snow leopard does on its own. We will place several camera traps in valleys, ridges, and near marking rocks which the snow leopards frequently visit to leave their scent and to mark their territory.

With the camera traps set, there’s even more anticipation. You’ll be anxious to get up each morning to see if any movement was caught. After reviewing footage, there may be some adjustments that need to be made based upon the camera’s settings or a snow leopards known movements. In the evening, we’ll screen some of the footage of past expeditions to understand the drama of storytelling with animals and nature and some of the behind-the-scenes details. Stories are best exchanged over a warm beverage!
Expedition Ecosystem & Conditions:
Hemis National Park is India’s largest conservation area with over 1,700 square miles of territory. The park lies within the Karakoram-West Tibetan Plateau alpine steppe ecoregion, and contains pine forests, alpine shrublands and meadows, and alpine tundra. Most reports indicate that the park is home to a large breeding population of snow leopards mainly in the Rumbak and Matho area.

Along with the Snow Leopard the Park is home to Argali (Great Tibetan Sheep), Bharal (Blue Sheep), Shapu (Ladakhi Urial), and plenty of domesticated yaks. A small population of the Asiatic Ibex is also present in Hemis. Other predators besides the snow leopard include the Tibetan wolf, the Eurasian brown bear (endangered in India), and the red fox. Small mammals include the Himalayan marmot, mountain weasel, and the Himalayan mouse hare.

The park is a good place to study Himalayan and Trans-Himalayan birds of prey including the golden eagle, the lammergeier vulture, and the Himalayan griffon vulture. The Rumbak Valley offers good opportunities for birdwatching, including several Tibetan species not common in other parts of India. Birds present here include brown accentor, robin accentor, Tickell’s leaf warbler, streaked rosefinch, Tibetan snowfinch, chukar, fork-tailed swift, red-billed chough, Himalayan snowcock, and the fire-fronted serin.

16 mammal species and 73 bird species have been recorded in the park so far.
While the Snow Leopard is an amazing sight, the terrain they live in is high, harsh, and difficult. Participants on our Snow Leopard Expedition must be fit, have medical clearance from their physician to be at high altitudes (above 10,000 feet), and should be able to walk 4-10 kilometers (2.5 – 6 miles) per day in sometimes rough, mountainous terrain. There are always plenty of staff around to help you. If you’d rather ride a horse, that can be easily arranged.

February in Ladakh is quite cold. While the sun is out, temperatures remain around freezing or even above freezing. However, as the sun goes down, temperatures plummet and it can get cold, to about -20°C. Your camp site will have custom made heavy canvas tents, replete with carpets, cots, and incredibly warm expedition grade sleeping bags rated to -40°C. Your tents will be heated with a propane burning heater. We have recorded the tents to be at least 20° warmer than the outside. You’ll be comfortably warm while you’re sleeping, but you’ll still need to be able to cope with the rigors of a winter expedition. Camp toilets are clean and simple long-drop Central Asian style composting toilets. If you’d like to shower, a heated shower tent and buckets of hot water will be provided.
Unlike an African safari, this wildlife spotting expedition is tough, but it is incredibly rewarding should you be prepared to rough it out. We’ve selected amazing hotels in Delhi and Leh so you can get a relaxing start and end to the trip.

The sight of a Snow Leopard in the wild is something you will never forget.

Stay at the Voygr Expedition Camps in Hemis National Park.

Day 11 : Leh

Return to Leh and to the Grand Dragon and celebrate your epic journey with your team.

Free afternoon and evening in Leh.

Suite at the Grand Dragon Hotel

Day 12 : Delhi.

Fly to Delhi in the morning
Your Accommodations

The Grand Dragon Hotel, Luxury Suite

The Grand Dragon is Leh’s premiere hotel, with commanding views of the magnificent Ladakh Range. The colossal Suites, which are spread over 900 sq. ft., comprise of a plethora of facilities to make your stay pleasant – air purifiers, central air conditioning, washroom-floor heating and Italian marble with 4 fixture modern fittings stall and amenities in the bathroom. Added to this is the alluring charm of the elegant teak wood cornices, furnishings in jewel-toned brocades embossed with floral designs and geometric motifs- a stunning display of the arts of Ladakh and Tibet. The room is the ideal retreat for you to unwind in an ambience of luxury.

Voygr’s Expedition Camps

Voygr’s expedition camps are set up in the remotest regions of Ladakh with no infrastructure, but stunning landscapes and incredible photo opportunities, especially for wildlife and nomadic groups. Fully furnished tents include carpets, cots, heating, and extremely warm sleeping bags (rated to -40ºF). A large plush central tent acts as a lounge with a full bar and heaters.
Financial Arrangements.

Costs Include
- All accommodations as stated in the itinerary;
- Duncan Parker and Behzad Larry as expedition guides
- 4 Camera traps provide remote capture
- All filming permits + camera trap permits
- All meals;
- All road transport;
- All entrances;
- Business class domestic flights in India;
- Laundry services at the Grand Dragon in Leh;
- All alcohol at the Voygr Expeditions Camps while on expedition.
- All guiding services of expedition leaders Duncan Parker and Behzad Larry

Costs Exclude
- Your own camera trap (in case you want remote footage that is entirely your own)
- Accommodations in New Delhi
- Travel / medical / cancellation insurance; REQUIRED
- Items of a personal nature e.g. curios, souvenirs, beauty treatments
Reservations & Payment

FEES AND PAYMENT:
50% of the payment is due at booking. 100% of the payment is due 180 days before departure.

Full terms and conditions available at www.voygr.com/terms-conditions

Important

- Costs are subject to major foreign exchange fluctuations and unforeseen increases in expedition related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.
- Furthermore, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware, however, that we will attempt to stick as close to the original program as possible.
- Domestic flights and classes are subject to availability at the time of booking.
- Fitness and health: This expedition requires high altitude travel and participants should be in good general health.
- Accommodation throughout the trip is of the highest standard available in the region.
- A packing list will be provided upon booking.
- We REQUIRE all guests to purchase travel / medical insurance for this trip
- A VALID PASSPORT is essential to all international travel; please check the expiry date of your passport, and ensure you have a sufficient number of blank pages for Visas, entry/exit stamps etc. for the entire intended duration of travel.
- Our intended subjects are wild and free and they are not called, fed or otherwise lured or attracted to our camps or vehicles. Despite every effort by our trackers, guides and expert expedition leaders, there may be a chance that desired subjects may not be present for sighting opportunities - the only guarantee of a specific subject is that we will do our very best to make this the snow leopard expedition of your lifetime!

Gratuities

Gratuities for local guides, hotel staff, butlers etc. are included on this tour.
Voygr Global Inc is a fully insured American tour operator. Voygr India is a member of the All Ladakh Tour Operators Association and is approved by the Jammu & Kashmir Department of Tourism.

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Call us in India at +91 965 081 8964

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Our photography guides are professionals and members of the following associations:

- Royal Photographic Society (RPS)
- Nikon Professional Services (NPS)
- Safe Travel Global Rescue Partner