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June 9, 2009, 5:35 pm

Afghanistan Protects 33 Species

By [Andrew C. Revkin](#)



[Wildlife Conservation Society](#) Wildlife Conservation Society researchers working with local community rangers in [Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor](#) recently captured several elusive snow leopards using cameras that automatically photograph animals when an infrared beam is tripped.

Amid [Afghanistan's struggles to stem violence](#) and [political instability](#), the country is slowly moving forward to protect its biological and environmental patrimony. The country recently established its [first national park](#) and now has created [a list of 33 protected species](#), ranging from the [snow leopard](#) to the obscure [goitered gazelle](#) and [paghman salamander](#). The [Wildlife Conservation Society](#) on Tuesday released photographs of snow leopards taken last month in the [Wakhan Corridor](#) region using automatically-triggered camera traps, a technology [I've written about in the past](#). Here's [more on Afghanistan's new wildlife laws](#).

Along with the merits of such photography as a research tool, personally I love the gritty, red-eyed off-center photos that are produced. They are the antithesis of the perfect [razor-sharp wildlife photography](#) typical of masters like [Art Wolfe](#).

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By 2050 or so, the world population is expected to reach nine billion, essentially adding two Chinas to the number of people alive today. Those billions will be seeking food, water and other resources on a planet where, scientists say, humans are already shaping climate and the web of life. In Dot Earth, reporter Andrew C. Revkin examines efforts to balance human affairs with the planet's limits. Supported in part by a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, Mr. Revkin tracks relevant news from suburbia to Siberia, and conducts an interactive exploration of trends and ideas with readers and experts.



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Energy

New Options Needed



Access to cheap energy underpins modern societies. Finding enough to fuel industrialized economies and pull developing countries out of poverty without overheating the climate is a central challenge of the 21st century.

- [Africa's Energy Gap](#)
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Enshrined in history as an untouchable frontier, the Arctic is being transformed by significant warming, a rising thirst for oil and gas, and international tussles over shipping routes and seabed resources.

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Society

Slow Drips, Hard Knocks



Human advancement can be aided by curbing everyday losses like the millions of avoidable deaths from indoor smoke and tainted water, and by increasing resilience in the face of predictable calamities like earthquakes and drought.

- [Times Topics: Disasters](#)
- [Thirsty Giant, India and water](#)
- [The Future of Calamity](#)

Biology

Life, Wild and Managed



Earth's veneer of millions of plant and animal species is a vital resource that will need careful tending as human populations and their demands for land, protein and fuels grow.

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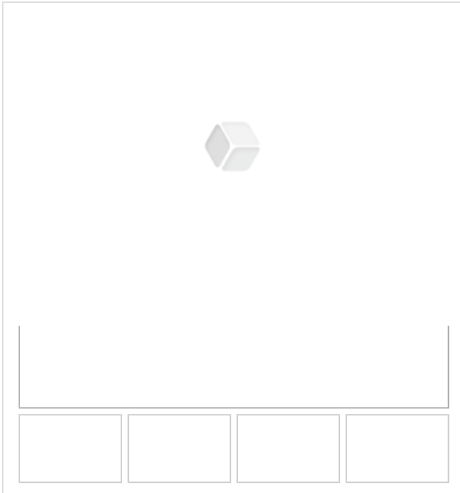


[A Planet in Flux](#)

Andrew C. Revkin began exploring the human impact on the environment nearly 30 years ago. An early stop was Papeete, Tahiti. This narrated slide show describes his extensive travels.

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Video



[Dot Earth on YouTube](#)

Many of the videos featured here can be found on Andrew Revkin's channel on YouTube. Recent reader favorites:

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- [Local Cooking](#)
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Poverty, Development, and Design

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- [TVE Asia Pacific](#)
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- [Appropriate Infrastructure Development Group](#)
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- [TedBlog](#)
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Media and Environment

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- [The Observatory \(CJR\)](#)
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Amid other struggles, Afghanistan creates its first laws protecting wildlife.

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A contest seeks creative and effective ways to use imagery to convey risks related to global warming.

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A population explosion among rabbits on a Canadian campus.

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[How Carbon Markets Can Make Both Economic and Ecological Sense](#)

Paying developing countries to preserve their forests and jungles could be an efficient way of preserving habitats for elephants and orangutans, according to a new study.

News From Green Inc.

[Energy, the Environment and the Bottom Line](#)



How will the pressures of climate change, limited fossil fuel resources and the mainstreaming of "green" consciousness reshape society? Follow the money. Our energy and environment reporters will track the high-stakes pursuit of a greener globe. Join the discussion at [Green Inc.](#)

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[Shell's Cellulosic 'First' Is More of a Second](#)

Much fanfare attended Shell's announcement earlier this week, at a service station in Ottawa, that it was the first to sell cellulosic ethanol to the public. A smaller service station, however, said that was simply untrue.

[Clean Coal Project Revived in Illinois](#)

A major public-private project to capture and store carbon dioxide that was abandoned by the Bush administration is being restarted, Energy Secretary Steven Chu announced today.

[Biofuels and 'Land Grabs' in Poor Nations](#)

Next-generation biofuels come with promise to reduce competition with food supplies, but a U.N. expert is raising doubts about that prospect.

[Are Discount Airlines Greener?](#)

The founder of discount airline easyJet argues that by using newer, more efficient jets and packing as many people as possible onto each aircraft, his company minimizes the emissions contributions of each passenger.

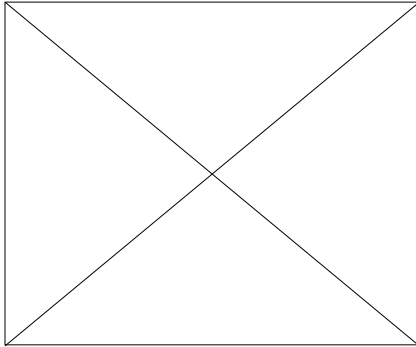
[Japan's CO2 Goal: Not So Shabby After All?](#)

Japan's recent pledge to cut emissions drew complaints that it was too low, but two climate experts suggest that the criticism is misplaced.

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