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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Geographic Expedition Documents Wolverines and Snow Leopards in Mongolia

Bozeman, MT April 16th, 2013 - During a month-long ski traverse, the [Ring of Darhad Expedition](#) has documented wolverines and collected DNA samples in the mountains of northern Mongolia. They also photographed and measured tracks potentially belonging to a snow leopard, a rare species believed to have been eradicated from this ecosystem. These are exciting findings for the [National Geographic Expeditions Council](#) -sponsored expedition which is conducting a winter wildlife survey of Mongolia's Darhad Region with a special focus on wolverines.

On March 27th, the team of five set out to search for hair, tracks and scat of wolverines and 20 other species during a 400-mile circumnavigation of the Darhad Valley, a rugged mountainous region in northern Mongolia. Thousands of students and educators are following the expedition through [updates](#) from the team and standards-based [lessons](#) have been developed for teachers.

The Darhad Region is the southern extent of the wolverines' range in Mongolia and researchers want to learn more about wolverine populations in the area. "Now we have a definite indication that there are wolverines in the areas where we found tracks. We now have a better idea of where to set up camera traps and hair snares for later research," explains expedition member Rebecca Watters, a leading wolverine researcher in Mongolia.

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Finding what could be snow leopard tracks is an incredible discovery for the team, who had a slim hope of discovering signs of this elusive cat, which many researchers believed to have been driven out of the Darhad Region. There are local accounts of snow leopards told by Mongolian herders and hunters who travel into the mountains, but no DNA or track evidence to bolster this claim. Expedition leader and Executive Director of [Adventurers and Scientists for Conservation](#), Gregg Treinish says, “The local people say that snow leopards still live in this area, and our discovery of these tracks has our team convinced that snow leopards may still inhabit these mountains.”

While trudging through deep, unstable snow over high mountain passes, the team has identified the tracks of several other species including wolves, lynx, moose, fox, and deer as well as spotting several ptarmigan. Treinish explains, “This wildlife survey will help researchers better understand what species of wildlife exist throughout this entire region and in what densities.”

[The Ring of Darhad Expedition](#) and the associated educational curriculum would not be possible without a grant from the National Geographic Expeditions Council as well as support from Montana State University’s Institute on Ecosystems. Generous support was also provided by expedition sponsors Mountain Hardwear, Osprey Packs, Clif Bar, Horny Toad, Rite in the Rain, Supai Gear, The Brunton Group, NRS, AlpineAire Foods, Primus, Big Agnes, Smith Optics, Madshus, Baffin, Kahtoola, Steripen and Voile.

For more information, educational resources, and to keep track of the team please visit www.mongoliaexpedition.com or contact ASC Program Director Brendan Weiner at brendan@adventureandscience.org.

About Adventurers and Scientists for Conservation

Adventurers and Scientists for Conservation was founded in January of 2011 with the understanding that many people traveling in the outdoors genuinely want to do more for the places they visit but often struggle with how to help. ASC exists to bridge this gap by pairing adventure athletes traveling to some of the earth's most difficult-to-reach places with the scientists who need information from these areas. ASC also has the goal of creating unique and innovative learning experiences about science while saving the scientific and conservation communities millions of dollars in data collection costs. For more information visit www.adventureandscience.org

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