



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** August 21, 2017

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## **Snow Leopard Conservation Presentation at the Toledo Zoo**

TOLEDO, Ohio – Conservation field work comes to life at your Toledo Zoo on Sunday, August 27 as Dr. Ric Berlinski presents his field work with snow leopards in Kyrgyzstan as part of the global wild cat conservation organization, Panthera.

At 1 p.m. in the Zoo's newly renovated Malawi Event Center, Dr. Berlinski, the Zoo's veterinarian and director of animal health and nutrition, will share memories and insights on the on-going conservation work with the elusive "ghost cat." Berlinski has volunteered with Panthera in the Sarychat- Ertash Strict Nature Reserve located just below the ice sheet at approximately 12,000 feet in the Tien Shen mountain range for the last two years. He was on hand in 2015 when the group captured and radio collared the first ever female snow leopard in Kyrgyzstan and in 2016 helped collar two new male snow leopards with the volunteer team.

Snow leopards (*Panthera uncia*) have pale green or gray eyes, white or gray coats with large black spots and a long tail used for balance and to wrap around their bodies for warmth. They are native to the mountains of central Asia and are known as the ghost cat for their elusiveness and because they are rarely seen due to the extreme temperatures and terrain of their home areas. Snow leopards are listed as endangered on the IUNC red list due mainly to human-wildlife conflict, specifically retaliatory killings for snow leopards preying upon farmers' livestock. Other causes of concern for the snow leopard and its mountain ecosystem include climate change and human encroachment. Current estimates of the wild population are 4,000 – 6,600 and declining.

Dr. Berlinski's presentation is open to the public and free with Zoo admission.

The Zoo is open daily at 10 a.m. and is located on the Anthony Wayne Trail (US 25), four miles south of downtown Toledo. For more information, please visit [toledo zoo.org](http://toledo zoo.org) or call 419-385-4040. Lucas County residents are admitted free of charge on non-holiday Mondays from 10 a.m. - noon. Valid ID showing proof of residency is required. *Submitted by: Kim Haddix*

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