

Media release

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Rare Snow Leopard Cubs Make Debut at Thrigby Hall Wildlife Gardens Norfolk

Two rare snow leopard cubs, the first to be born at Thrigby Hall Wildlife Garden near Great Yarmouth, have made their handling debut.

The cubs born to mother Nima and father Mohan in June have been handled for the first time by Ian McNichol, Senior Veterinary Surgeon of Acle Anchorage Veterinary Hospital. They were sexed, vaccinated and health checked. Ian McNichol gave the cubs a clean bill of health and pronounced them to be both male.

Snow leopards (*Uncia uncia*) are classified by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as endangered because of their low numbers in the wild and growing human pressure on their habitat, www.iucnredlist.org.

They live in the mountains of 12 countries across Central Asia. Numbers are estimated at between 4,000 and 6,500, but as they are spread over such a huge area, contact opportunities for breeding are very poor.

Mother Nima was born in Belgium in 2012 and father Mohan was born in Zurich in 2013. The two snow leopards came to Thrigby Hall as part of an international breeding programme, coordinated by the studbook keeper, Leif Blomquist of Helsinki Zoo.

Ken Sims and Scott Bird Directors, Thrigby Hall Wildlife Gardens said: "We are privileged to host these beautiful cats and to make a contribution to the conservation work of progressive zoos."

Thrigby Hall Wildlife Gardens is at Filby near Great Yarmouth, t. 01493 369477, www.thrigbyhall.co.uk. The Wildlife Gardens open every day at 10am.