

# Red Pandas



The red panda is slightly larger than a domestic cat with a bear-like body and thick russet fur. The belly and limbs are black, and there are white markings on the side of the head and above its small eyes. Red pandas are very skillful and acrobatic animals that predominantly stay in trees. Almost 50 percent of the red panda's habitat is in the Eastern Himalayas. They use their long, bushy tails for balance and to cover themselves in winter, presumably for warmth. Primarily an herbivore, the name panda is said to come from the Nepali word 'ponya,' which means bamboo or plant eating animal.

## **What animals live in the Asia high mountains? And eight other Asia high mountains facts**

Species like red pandas, Bengal tigers, blue sheep, Argali wild sheep, and ibex are found in Asia high mountains. Learn more about the Asia high mountains and the work that WWF is doing to protect them.

© naturepl.com / Reinhard / ARCO / WWF

## **WHY THEY MATTER**



© David Lawson / WWF-UK

Almost 50 percent of the red panda's habitat is in the Eastern Himalayas. The loss of nesting trees and bamboo is causing a decline in red panda populations across much of their range because their forest home is being cleared.

**Langtang National Park in Nepal is an important habitat for red pandas.**



© Simon de TREY-WHITE / WWF-UK

Red pandas are often killed when they get caught in traps meant for other animals such as wild pigs and deer. They are also poached for their distinctive pelts in China and Myanmar. Red panda fur caps or hats have been found for sale in Bhutan.

## **WHAT WWF IS DOING**

**Yak herder in Bhutan getting ready to move to his winter pasture. We work with yak herders and other community groups to reduce human impact on the red panda's fragile habitat.**



© Tashi Tshering/WWF Bhutan

## **MONITORING RED PANDAS**

WWF monitors red pandas and their habitat across India, Nepal and Bhutan to better understand the species. In 2011, our work helped the government in the Indian state of Sikkim declare that the state held an estimated 300 red pandas. WWF also examines the feasibility of reintroducing red pandas to create populations in identified sites within Sikkim.

## **CREATING COMMUNITY AWARENESS**

Approximately 38 percent of the total potential red panda habitat is in Nepal. We work with yak herders and other community groups to reduce human impact on the red panda's fragile habitat. Any person found guilty of killing, buying or selling red pandas faces a fine of up to \$1,000 and/or up to ten years in jail. Other community

initiatives to stop the hunting and capture of red pandas for income include: Making yak dung briquettes. These provide an alternative way to generate income and can be used for fuel instead of cutting down red panda habitat for wood.

Creating tourism packages. Attracting tourists provides an alternative method for generating income.

