

## **The Siberian or Asiatic ibex; ecology at extremes of its range**

*Joseph L. Fox*

Department of Biology, Faculty of Science, University of Tromsø, N-9037 Tromsø, Norway [<Joe.Fox@ib.uit.no>](mailto:Joe.Fox@ib.uit.no)

*Yash Veer Bhatnagar*

Nature Conservation Foundation, 3076/5, IV Cross, Gokulan Park, Mysore-570002, India

*Bariushaa Munkhtsog*

Biology Institute of the Mongolia Academy of Sciences, P.O. Box 415, Ulaan Baator UB-38, Mongolia

The Siberian or Asiatic ibex *Capra sibirica* is an abundant species with a wide distribution in Asia, extending from the Himalaya Mountains of India to the Sayan Mountains of southern Siberia in Russia. From high elevations in the south to relatively low elevations in the north, the Asiatic ibex's habitat is characterized by remote and very rugged terrain, although the extent to which human activity affects its populations varies widely. The species shows allopatric distributional characteristics with a variety of ecologically similar species in the region, including the markhor *Capra falconeri*, wild goat *Capra aegagrus*, Himalayan tahr *Hemitragus jemlahicus*, and blue sheep *Pseudois nayaur*. Throughout most of its range the Asiatic ibex constitutes a major prey species for the endangered snow leopard *Uncia uncia*, and their respective population status may be closely associated in some regions. We take two examples of ibex populations at sites near the species' southern and northern range extremes, to illustrate some of the variety of its adaptations and ecological relationships.