

Wildlife diversity increases at planned park



An image of a snow leopard is captured by an infrared camera in the Sanjiangyuan area in January. [Photo/Xinhua]

Wildlife protectionists and herders said the diversity of wild animals has increased in the Sanjiangyuan area, China's first planned national park.

A three-year observation project, which began in 2014, recorded frequent sightings of snow leopards, brown bears, lynxes, Tibetan foxes, wolves, steppe cats and otters in the region, said Xiao Lingyun with Peking University's Center for Nature and Society.

These animals were observed in a 2,000-square-kilometer area, Xiao said.

"From images captured by infrared cameras, we can see these animals often move around, not alone, but in groups, and their movements show they have a rather casual lifestyle," she said.

It is generally known that wild animal habitats have grown increasingly fragmented due to human activity, but the fact that wild carnivores were frequently observed at the source of the Lancang River is a key sign that the area has a diverse animal population, Xiao said.

"Some wild species establish their habitats near residences of local herders, and they are not fearful of humans," said Zhao Xiang, a wildlife protectionist with the Shanshui Nature Protection Center.

Sanjiangyuan literally means “the source of three rivers”, referring to the Yangtze, Yellow and Lancang (Mekong) rivers.

The national park is expected to open in 2020.