



[Home](#) > Snow Leopard, Grey Ghost of the Mountain

Snow Leopard, Grey Ghost of the Mountain

Books Reviewed:

[Snow Leopard, Grey Ghost of the Mountain](#) [1]

Issue:

[240](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Gwynneth Bailey](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Justin Anderson wanted to share his fascinating insights into the rare and magnificent Snow Leopard, after having produced the Mountains episode of **Planet Earth 2**. This remarkable book relates Anderson's journey up into the Himalaya to search for them. Called the Grey Ghost, the snow leopard is a rare and fast becoming endangered species, and his descriptions of the journey, the tracking and sighting of one female, and later, her cub, are magical. There is a huge sense of awe and wonder as Anderson and his guide track the cats further up the mountain. Alongside the telling of the adventure, there is more factual information in small italics for absorbing after reading the account. For instance, we are told that snow leopards live as high as 5,400 metres up in the mountains. Their tails are the longest of all the cat family, working both as a scarf when at rest in the snow, and as a balance when jumping between rocks. Their camouflage is such that they can merge totally into the surrounding landscape. Anderson tells of watching the leopard squirting pee over a rock, a message, a pee-mail for other leopards that she is around. As the sun sinks, the leopard climbs higher, terrain and lack of oxygen preventing any hope of them following. His final view is of her, silhouetted on a summit, singing; a long, haunting yowl, echoing round the mountains, before fading on the wind. And then she is gone, swallowed up by the silence. With brilliant drawings by Patrick Benson, a highly awarded illustrator for such classics as **Owl Babies** (Waddell) and the **Sea-Thing Child** (Hoban), this is a book to be treasured. Benson portrays this creature, her huge furry paws and all-seeing eyes, standing in her environment, merging with the mountainous background, in an animal majesty that could only be evoked by a talented artist. The book closes with a double spread of further information on snow leopards - maybe only 3,920 left in the wild - and links for further research. Finally, a quote from the author: 'The first time I saw a snow leopard I was so excited I danced a little jig of joy'. A celebratory book.

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Links:

[1] <http://pop.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/snow-leopard-grey-ghost-of-the-mountain>

[2] <http://pop.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/240>

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