

Beat: News

Leopard mauls 7-year-old boy to death in Indian Kashmir

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USPA News - A seven-year-old boy was killed Thursday when a leopard entered a village in India-administered Kashmir and attacked him, local authorities said on Friday, raising the number of children killed by leopards in the region so far this year to at least six. The incident happened in the village of Pathan Mohalla, located in Kupwara district in the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir, when the wild animal emerged from a nearby forest.

A 7-year-old boy, identified as Naveed Jahangir, was attacked near his home and died at the scene. "A 7-year old boy, Naveed Jahangir, was attacked by a leopard near his home in the jurisdiction of police station Trehgam," a Jammu and Kashmir police spokesperson said. "The boy was critically injured in the leopard attack and died on spot. The body was handed over to his relatives for last rites." The leopard returned to the forest after the attack, and a large operation was launched to capture or kill the man-eater. Attacks by leopards and bears have been on the rise in India-administered Kashmir in recent years, leading to the retaliatory killings of such animals by local villagers. At least 37 people in the region were killed by leopards and bears between 1996 and 2007, but this year alone wild animals have already claimed the lives of nine people. Thursday's fatal attack came just over a month after a leopard attacked and killed a hunter near the town of Charar-e-Sharief in Budgam district. Witnesses said the man, identified as 30-year-old Nisar Ahmad Ahangar, had tried to kill the wild cat but shot it in its ear, causing the animal to jump at him. Leopards also claimed the lives of three children in August, including a 10-year-old boy who was mauled to death while playing with other children in the village of Karihama in Kupwara district. Days later, a leopard snatched a 5-year-old girl while playing outside her home in Jaden village of Budgam district, and police later recovered some of her body parts. Leopards are the most widely distributed wild cats in the world, with the animal found in all forest areas of Kashmir, making them more common than bears. A study conducted in Kashmir in 2008 suggested that bear attacks frequently coincide with the fruit ripening season in autumn while leopard attacks are more common in the winter-spring seasons.

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