Ladakh adopts State animal and bird

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Ladakh on Wednesday adopted two endangered species, snow leopard and black-necked crane, as the State animal and the State bird, two years after it was carved out as a separate Union Territory (UT) from the erstwhile State of J&K.

"The snow leopard (*Panther unica*) and black-necked crane (*Grus nicricollis*) shall be the State animal and State bird respectively of the UT of Ladakh from the date of issue of the notification," reads an order issued by the Lieutenant Administration (LG) of Ladakh.

Black-necked crane, only found in the Ladakh region, was the State bird of J&K before August 5, 2019.

"Black-necked crane and snow leopard are two endangered species and the pride of Ladakh," said Konchok Stanzin, councillor from Chushul constituency.

Snow leopard numbers are dwindling worldwide.

Black-necked cranes are only found in Ladakh's Changthang region. They are described as majestic birds – around 139 cm long with a 235 cm wingspan and weighing 5-6 kg. The bird's sighting is considered auspicious in Ladakh.

Snow leopard, whose numbers are dwindling wordwide, has been categorised as "vulnerable" in the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List.