



21ST CENTURY TIGER

giving wild tigers a future

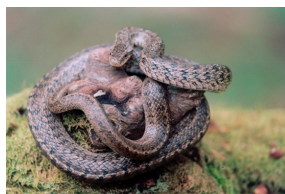
Phoenix Fund

Anti-poaching activities

in Lazovsky nature reserve in 2009/2010

Final report

September 1, 2009 – August 31, 2010



Vladivostok
Russian Far East
2010



FINAL REPORT

Grantor: The Dreamworld Conservation Fund / 21 Century Tiger
Project Name: Anti-poaching activities in Lazovsky nature reserve in 2009/2010
Grantee: The Phoenix Fund
Report Period: September 1, 2009 – August 31, 2010
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The goal of the project is to create conditions to ensure the long-term protection of the Amur / Siberian tiger population, its prey and habitat in Lazovsky Nature Reserve / zapovednik, Primorye, Russian Far East.

Background

The Lazovsky Nature Reserve in the southeast of Primorsky region (about 250 km far from Vladivostok city) was established in 1935. On February 12th, 2010 it celebrated its 75th anniversary. This second biggest nature reserve in the region covers 121,000 hectares; its protected buffer zone is 15,000 hectares. Due to its peculiar relief and location, the reserve is home to 2,000 plant species of various geographical zones (e.g. taiga, tundra and even subtropical zone), 57 animal species and 319 birds. The protected area (PA) is famous for such rare animals as Amur tiger (also known as Siberian, Manchurian, Ussuri, North-Eastern Chinese tiger), goral and sika deer, as well as relict yew trees. The general extension of the reserve is 240 km, where included 36 km along the coast of the East Sea / Sea of Japan. The southeastern borders of the reserve are spread along the coast. The Lazovsky Reserve is composed of continental area and two islands in the East Sea / Sea of Japan, namely Petrov and Beltsov ones. Lazovsky Nature Reserve is one of the most beautiful places in Primorye with its mountains and waterfalls, taiga forest and islands.

This nature reserve is the most important area for Amur tiger conservation in the southern Sikhote-Alin mountain range. For the last 20 years the reserve has maintained the highest tiger density in southern Primorye and one of the highest in the whole tiger habitat. Nowadays, there are about 10-12 resident or constantly visiting tigers. One to three litters are born to resident tigresses annually. High prey densities and efficient anti-poaching and fire-fighting activities of the reserve promote high density of endangered Amur tigers.



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Lazovsky Nature Reserve in winter

Major and small roads surround the nature reserve. Besides, there are two big villages (Preobrazhenye village – 12,000 people and Lazo village – 2,500 people) close to it. Difficult economic situation and unemployment, especially in remote areas of the region, represent the biggest problems for conservation. Besides, the reserve borders upon numerous hunting leases, and it often happens that animals migrate and fall prey to hunters. The Lazovsky Nature Reserve still manages to hold back poaching in its territory and adjacent areas, but in order to improve its activities and strengthen protection of endangered wildlife of the reserve it is crucial to support the anti-poaching teams and improve their field equipment. This will allow to

decrease the number of poachers/intruders and maintain high densities of the Amur tigers and other animals, as well as conserving the important habitat.



Nature reserves (*zapovedniks*) are perhaps the most important conservation areas. In Russia, the status of the nature reserve means that nobody can enter the reserve except for the wildlife, scientists, and rangers. All human activities are prohibited. It does not have a fence along its borders, but there are warning boards around it. Since 1995, the Lazovsky Nature Reserve is considered one of the best in Russia on the basis of their protection, education and outreach activities. But it is a state organization and the federal funding is not sufficient for efficient protection of the unique biodiversity there.

Since 2005 the Dreamworld Conservation Fund has been supporting anti-poaching activities of one of the Lazovsky Nature Reserve's teams. Thanks to continued support from the Dreamworld Conservation Fund and 21st Century Tiger in 2009-2010, the anti-poaching team of Lazovsky Nature Reserve was provided with fuel, field clothes and and necessary equipment. The inspectors who reveal the greatest number of violations were awarded with bonuses (supplement to monthly salary).

We present here for your consideration an interim report on the activities carried out from the 1st of September 2009 to the 31th of August 2010.

Project activities



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Inspector discovered signs of poaching (deer hides and bones) on the area adjacent to the nature reserve

With the support from the Dreamworld Conservation Fund and 21st Century Tiger the anti-poaching team of Lazovsky Nature Reserve continued implementing its activities in 2009-2010.

The four-people rapid response team and subsidiary patrol teams (9 rangers in total) worked to prevent and stop violations in the reserve. They also participated in tiger census. The officers used UAZ all-terrain vehicle, motor boats, photo cameras, authorized arms and other necessary equipment. Most of the time they patrol the territory on foot. The rapid response team worked in shifts, namely the

inspectors worked their allotted hours within 10 days, after which they were given time off. The other patrol teams normally left for the patrol in the morning and returned in the evening. Sometimes the rangers made longer patrols of 2-3 days.

For the period from September 1, 2009 to August 31, 2010 the team revealed 38 violations (illegal hunting, trespassing and gathering wild plants), seized three shotguns, and initiated three criminal proceedings on sika deer poaching. Table in the Attachment I shows the results for the reported period.



Patrol on foot

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Description of field work

In September, the team carried out patrols to hinder people from entering the protected area illegally and gathering roots of wild ginseng. The inspectors patrolled on foot, by vehicle and boat, and made ambushes to detect violations. As a result, they revealed one case of illegal fishing, detained two men for gathering ginseng roots and apprehended five people for illegal presence in the reserve.

In October-November, the reserve's staff members were focused on preventing illegal hunting within the protected area. Special attention was paid on weekends. The inspectors patrolled on foot, by vehicle and patrol motorboat, and laid ambushes at places of possible poacher intrusion. As a result, a man was detained for illegal presence in the reserve. Once, the reserve's staff participated in extinguishing a forest fire that occurred 2 km far from Lazo town. Due to strong wind it took three days to put out the fire.



© Phoenix
Forest fire on the area adjacent to the nature reserve

In October, two brothers (Andrei and Alexander Bogach), who were detained in June for illegal presence with firearms in the protected area, were charged with illegal hunting. Alexander was given a six-month suspended sentence. Andrei was sentenced to a six-month imprisonment.

In December, it was easier to track violators because of snow coverage. The team patrolled mostly by vehicle and snowmobile. The inspectors patrolled on skies when the area was inaccessible to motorized vehicles. Heavy snowfalls made most part of the protected area totally inaccessible and the staff members could concentrate on places of possible trespassing. Only one person managed to enter the reserve illegally, but he was apprehended by the inspectors.

In January 2010, the anti-poaching team of four people in cooperation with subsidiary teams of forest organizations conducted regular patrols on the protected area. The teams were equipped with means of communication, digital photo cameras, outfit and other necessary equipment. The patrols were carried out by an UAZ vehicle and a snowmobile.

Due to high snow the inspectors did not patrol deep into the reserve. It was quite easy to discover footprints of intruders left on snow cover. Regular patrols made it possible to minimize illegal intrusion into the protected area. Once, the inspectors detained a man for illegal fishing in the reserve. The violator was made to pay a fine of 1,000 rubles (AUD \$38). The only area of concern was a sector of the reserve's boundaries adjoining a Lazo-



Snowmobile patrol

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Preobrazhenye highway where numerous cases of poaching were recorded. The point is that due to heavy snowfalls ungulates, mostly sika deer that is included in Russia's Endangered Species List, were driven from the reserve towards river valleys and public roads to find food where poachers were waiting patiently for deer to come. Time and again local people informed about discovered signs of poaching, namely deer hide, head, blood spots etc. Therefore, the inspectors kept a close watch on this area and forwarded the information about revealed violations to local police station.



© Phoenix
Deer killed in Lazovsky nature reserve

In February, the anti-poaching team of four people and one team of Lazovsky forestry patrolled the protected area and abutting territories and revealed two cases of poaching. The patrols were carried out by an UAZ vehicle, a snowmobile and on foot.

On February 5, while patrolling along Lazo-Preobrazhenye highway close to the reserve's boundaries, the inspectors noted fresh footprints leading inside the protected area. About 150-200 meters away from the road they spotted a violator dragging a carcass of killed female sika deer. When the man saw the inspectors approaching him, he throw down the deer and tried to make away. The inspectors pursued him until the violator reached his car

parked by the roadside. He managed to get in the car, but the inspectors blocked his way and ordered him to get out. The violator refused to leave his car and threatened the inspectors with a traumatic pistol. Then, he snatched a moment and tried to escape driving his jeep. Two reserve's staff members jumped into the poacher's car. The rest team members continued chasing on the patrol vehicle. Near the violator's house the poacher was ultimately blocked and detained. The man turned out to be a local police officer. In this respect, a criminal proceeding was initiated. The violator was dismissed immediately from his post.

On February 20, another case of deer poaching in the reserve was recorded. Poachers allegedly shot a deer right from the public road. The violators drove away from the scene as soon as they noticed the patrol vehicle approaching them. Unfortunately, the inspectors failed to chase the poachers.

In late February and early March the reserve staff reported to Phoenix about numerous cases of sika deer poaching in the Lazovsky district. Because of heavy snowfalls last winter deer went down from the hills to the valleys close to automobile roads, and fell easy victims to poachers. More than 50 tracks of dragging poached deer out of the forest in snow were found around Lazovsky Nature Reserve. Mostly, deer were hunted at night, with the help of headlights. Sometimes poachers left parts of dead animals on the place, such as head, skin, and legs. When patrolling the area to ensure obedience to environmental laws, sometimes



© Phoenix
Hard winter conditions



law enforcement officers and other people involved in investigation of poaching cases faced pressure from poachers, especially when violators represent high-rank officials, military or police service. Once, when trying to stop a poacher who turned to be a local policeman, the Lazovsky Nature Reserve staff member was threatened with a pistol. Poaching was flourishing in areas adjoining the reserve's border, and the authorities did not hurry to put the situation under control. However, the hunting period on ungulates was already closed, and any hunt on deer was considered poaching. To stop sika deer poaching is especially vital for Lazovsky district, chosen in the long-term as a place for realization of the governmental plan of the second Amur leopard population breeding. Prey depletion could have had a negative impact on tigers and leopards' survival.

Phoenix was the first to set an alarm. Having collected all the documents and GPS coordinates of the places where remnants of deer were found, we jointly with the Lazovsky Nature Reserve specialists addressed the provincial Primorsky Game and Rare Species Department urging them to take measures. The police – who is authorized to open criminal cases – refused several times to do so, and only after interference of the district Prosecutor's office started criminal proceedings on mass sika deer killing. One of the violators – the police officer was dismissed from his job, and we hope it will serve a good lesson for others.

In March – May the teams detained four trespassers of the protected area regime and imposed fines in the amount of 1,000 roubles (AUD 37) on each of them. Since mid-April the teams spent more time checking salt licks, as ungulates visited them more often to replenish their supplies of minerals, and could get an easy game for poachers who hid on trees. In proximity to the reserve's border by an illegally made salt lick the rangers discovered remnants of a killed sika deer.

In the result of the teams' work trespassing was minimized. The inspectors extinguished two large forest fires on the adjacent territory. The reason for them was uncontrolled agricultural burning.

In June – August 2010 the guardians worked by groups of 4-3 people and cooperated with a patrol team of Lazovsky forestry. The guardians spent 20-22 days in patrols. They worked in shifts, namely they worked their allotted hours within 10 days, after which they were given time off. In summer it was difficult to track violators. The patrol staff members maid ambushes in places with high probability of trespassing. The reserve's coastline zone was patrolled by two groups simultaneously. One group patrolled on a motor-boat, the second one – on foot. All in all, the joint patrols resulted in revelation of 19 violations, including 18 cases of trespassing and 1 case of illegal gathering of wild plants.

In August there was an influx of tourists visiting Kit, Kabalnaya, Peschanaya and Olenevod bays as well as Petrov Island. Given that stationary posts were established there to watch over the holidaymakers. No violations were revealed.

**ATTACHMENT I**Results of anti-poaching activities in Lazovsky nature reserve, September 2009 – August 2010

Activity	Quantity
I. Violations documented:	
1.1. Hunting	2
1.2. Fishing	3
1.3. Trespassing	32
1.4. Gathering wild plants	2
1.5. Logging	-
2. Weapons confiscated and handed over to the police	3
3. Wildlife products confiscated/discovered:	
3.1. Dead sika deer	2 (80 kg)
3.2. Asiatic black bear	-
3.3. Musk deer	-
3.4. Wild boar	-
4. Initiated criminal proceedings	3
5. Protocols forwarded to the police and Prosecutor's office for criminal procedure	3
6. Poaching devices confiscated:	
6.1. Traps	-
6.2. Fishing devices	-
6.3. Snare	-
7. Extinguished fires	-
8. Convicted persons	2
9. Fines imposed	AUD \$873 (23,500 roubles)
10. Restitution imposed	AUD \$1,840 (47,855 roubles)



ATTACHMENT II

