



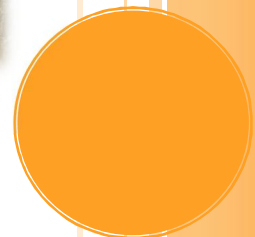
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION IN THE RUSSIAN FAR EAST IN 2011

*Anti-poaching activities of the Western wildlife
managers' team*

Interim report (January 1st – June 30th 2011)



Phoenix Fund
July 29, 2011



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Project Overview

Over the past century, wild tiger numbers dropped from 100,000 to about 3,500 today due to adverse human activities. Primorsky krai¹ of the Russian Far East is the only area in the world where Amur tigers and leopards still exist in the wild. In October 2009, the Wildlife Conservation Society reported about Amur tiger's decline by 40% compared to 2005 estimates. Given that tigers reflect the health of the ecosystems in which they live and on which people depend, we must take immediate and urgent actions, otherwise wild tigers will disappear forever.

To fight poaching the Phoenix Fund, with the help from the international community, has been supporting state law enforcement units in Primorye. One of them is the Western wildlife managers' team that operates in the north of

Primorye, thanks to continuous support from the Kolmarden Fund Raising Foundation and 21st Century Tiger. Northern Primorye, least cultivated area with rich biodiversity, is of great value for Amur tiger and a unique natural site of the region. That area has the last untouched Korean pine forests. The Western team established within the Special Task Force of Primorsky Hunting Management Department has been protecting the area since 2002. It was one of the best and most effective teams of the Hunting Department. After a prolonged administrative reform in nature conservation system in Russia in 2007-2008, Alexander Samoilenko, leader of the team, was offered to join the provincial Game and Rare Species Department and become in charge of one of its anti-poaching teams. Since February 2009, he has been operating in the field, mostly in three northern districts of Primorye. During the years of its operations Western team revealed 585 violations and confiscated 123 illegal rifles along with dozens of poached animals and their derivatives (as of June 2010). In addition to revealing hunting violations, the team cooperates

¹ Primorsky Krai, informally known as Primorye, is a federal subject of Russia. Primorsky means "maritime" in Russian, hence the region is sometimes referred to as Maritime Province or Maritime Territory. Primorsky Krai, bordered by China, North Korea, and waters of the Sea of Japan, is the southeasternmost region of Russia, located between 42° and 48° north latitude and 130° and 139° east longitude.

closely with other environmental law enforcement agencies and public rangers (volunteers) to uncover illegal logging.

The goal of the project is to strengthen protection activities in Amur tiger habitat (north of Primorsky krai) by carrying out regular anti-poaching patrols.

We strongly believe that the continuous anti-poaching activities in the north of Primorye will help ensure sound protection for the Amur tiger population, its habitat and prey.

Below, we present our interim report with brief description of the anti-poaching efforts and main achievements.

Project Activities

From January 1st through June 30th 2011 the team achieved the following results: 20 illegal hunting revealed, an illegal logging site discovered, 18 illegal firearms seized, and two criminal cases initiated.

From January 1 through April 10, 2011 the Western team carried out 26 anti-poaching patrols, issued ten citations for violations of hunting regulations, seized eight illegal rifles, and revealed one unauthorized logging site. Mostly, the team patrolled hunting grounds in Dalnerechensky district. Winter

2011 was very cold and snowy. Deep snow cover (1 meter or 39



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An illegal rifle seized from a violator inches) hindered the wildlife managers in their efforts to reach remote areas. During that time it was possible to patrol the area only by snowmobile, on foot or skis, and the roads should have been cleared by bulldozer beforehand. Given that, access to the hunting grounds became hard for hunters. The wildlife managers nevertheless spotted a man with a rifle on January 5, 2011. As soon as the man saw the wildlife managers' patrol vehicle, he took to his heels but after running 80 meters (0.05 miles) through deep snow he was nabbed. As the detainee had no gun license, the wildlife managers seized his rifle to hand it over to police officers for further investigation. Moreover, the man had neither hunting permit nor hunting license. The wildlife managers issued an administrative citation against the violator.

On January 22, the team received information about illegal deer

hunting on the border between Krasnoarmeisky and Dalnerechensky districts. Next day the team together with local gamekeepers went to check the obtained information. When patrolling by snowmobile the wildlife managers spotted snowmobile tracks. Following the tracks, they found two snowmobile operators who had killed a roe deer. The wildlife managers apprehended the violators, seized an illegal rifle, imposed a \$1,000-restitution and initiated criminal proceedings.

On February 2, the wildlife managers patrolled the Upper Malinovka River and detained a man with a rifle for illegal hunting. They issued an administrative citation and made the violator to pay a fine.



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An illegal logging site

Besides anti-poaching patrols in February and March, the team also held meetings with local communities to give explanatory talks about people's responsibilities

for violations of hunting regulations.

On March 10, there was a court session against a man charged with illegal hunting. The judge ordered him to pay \$2,500 for illegal hunting of red deer.

On March 15, when patrolling near Malinovo village, the team discovered an illegal logging site. Over 100 cubic meters of ash-tree and elm were harvested illegally and piled up there. People involved in an unauthorized logging managed to escape. The wildlife managers documented everything and forwarded all materials and collected evidence to Dalnerechensky police office to initiate criminal proceedings.

In April-June the team registered 10 cases of illegal hunting, confiscated ten illegal guns, including two rifles, and initiated four criminal cases: two on illegal hunting, and the other two on illegal keeping and carrying of rifled arms.

Among the detained violators there were a police officer from Dalnerechensk town, who poached an endangered mandarin duck, and a head of a village, deputy of Dalnerechensk municipality, who poached a red deer. The second case was covered by the local and regional media.

On April 4, while patrolling the hunting grounds at 9 a.m., the

team members found footprints allegedly left by three persons with dogs. The footprints led deep into the forest. The wildlife managers decided to make an ambush. At 2 p.m. three hunters with dogs and rifles came out of the forest. They turned out to have been deer hunting on thin ice crust. The violators had neither gun license nor hunting permit. The wildlife managers seized illegal rifles and forwarded all documents to local police office for further investigation.

On April 3, the team spotted a car and human footprints with dog tracks running from the car towards forest. It was decided to make an ambush and wait until someone came out of the forest. At 11 a.m. a man with a rifle appeared and was detained. He turned out to have been deer hunting using his dogs. No gun license was on him. The wildlife managers seized the rifle and forwarded it to Dalnerechensky police office. It was determined later that the rifle had been stolen in Armenia in 1990. A criminal investigation was initiated

On April 7, local gamekeepers apprehended two men for illegal waterfowl hunting. They killed a duck, but when the hunters saw the gamekeepers they threw it away and tried to drive away by jeep. The gamekeepers managed to block their way and called for Alexander Samoilenko. When the

leader of the Western wildlife managers' team arrived, he questioned the detainees who claimed that the gamekeepers planed the rifle on them. The suspects also insisted that they had come there by taxi and that they had nothing to do with the jeep. It was decided to call for investigators from local police office. While the wildlife managers were waiting for the investigators, the violators stepped aside purporting to make a phone call and slipped away. When the investigators arrived, they confiscated the vehicle and the rifle and took all the papers with information about the violators. Next morning the violators were summoned to the police office, but only one of them showed up. The man told that he was the owner of the jeep and that it was him who hunted the day before. According to him, another man, who turned



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**Inspectors find red deer meet in a jeep
June 12, 2011**

out to be his son, had been there to take birch sap. But the man told nothing about duck they killed illegally. The violator was brought

to the scene where the investigators found a dead mandarin duck listed in Russia's Endangered Species List. The man confessed to shooting the duck. Given that, a criminal proceeding was initiated and the violator was ordered to pay a \$1,000-restitution.

On April 8, while patrolling near Vedenka village, the wildlife managers heard gun shots going off from a motor boat on the Malinovka River. It was decided to make an ambush near a place where poachers were likely to land. Only at 8 p.m. the wildlife managers saw two men in possession with two guns. The violators were detained and subjected to administrative punishment. The guns were seized and handed over to the local police office.

On June 12, Alexander Samoilenko received information about illegal hunting at salt licks near Polyana village. He together with a gamekeeper Oleg Kolosyuk set off to the forest. Driving down the forest road, they found fresh tire tracks, and after following the track for a while they spotted a jeep without license plate. The jeep blocked the narrow road so that it was impossible for two cars to pass

one another. Oleg and Alexander got off the patrol car and forwarded towards the jeep. A driver turned out to be well-known poacher Viktor Bondarenko who had been detained and punished for illegal hunting earlier. Alexander Samoilenko asked the driver to open the jeep's luggage compartment. When searching inside, he noticed a suspicious heap covered by some rags. Having thrown the rags, Alexander saw backpacks full of red deer meat.

The detainee gave the following explanation.

"I have been working as environmental law enforcement officer for 30 years, and I seized over 1,500 illegal firearms and detained a lot of poachers and loggers, but it was for the first time when I faced such impudence. Those people were very aggressive and defiant towards us", said Alexander Samiolenko.

According to Viktor's words, he set off to the forest for a breath of fresh air and met motorcyclists on his way. When the motorcyclists saw his red jeep they probably mistook him for a ranger, threw away their backpacks and disappeared in the forest. And Viktor decided to put the backpacks with deer meat in his jeep. As for two passengers in his jeep, Viktor allegedly met them in the forest too and offered to give a ride. The two men said they had been fishing there. But Alexander Samoilenko did not believe them, because he knew that there was no fishing sites there, not to mention

the fact that the men had no fishing rod on hand.

One of the passengers turned out to be the head of Rakitinoye village Oleg Zamuriy, the other one was his son Vladimir. At first, they were calm and answered all questions. Suddenly, Oleg Kolosyuk noticed that Vladimir tried to hide something in a case. When Oleg asked Vladimir to show him what he was putting in the case, the young men got very nervous and punched the gamekeeper in the chest. Then, Vladimir jumped out of the jeep and hit Oleg in the head several times. Oleg Zamuriy and Viktor Bondarenko also threw at the gamekeeper. Alexander Samolenko could hardly calm down the poachers.

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A further search revealed a double-barrelled gun. Vladimir's trousers were stained with blood. Their jeep was transported to the nearest village where the meat and gun were seized in the presence of seizure witnesses. Alexander Samoilenko informed the police

about the incident and took the gamekeeper to hospital. After a thorough physical examination, a doctor diagnosed brain concussion and some severe injuries to Oleg Kolosyuk's head. "Oleg was severely shaken up, and now he has heart problems" said Alexander Samoilenko.

In 2007, a criminal case was initiated against Vladimir Zamuriy for stabbing a man in Rakitinoye village but got away with punishment. Then, in early 2011, Vladimir became a suspect of criminal case for infliction of a bodily harm. The crime was considered to have been committed through negligence and Vladimir escaped the punishment again. Thus, it is likely that this time the police may find extenuating circumstances and even set free Vladimir and his fellows.

We will keep track of the status of this criminal case and inform you about the progress in our final report.

Attachment

Table. Results of anti-poaching efforts from January through June 2011

Item	Quantity
Patrols	36
Illegal hunting	20
Illegal logging	1
Criminal cases	2
Illegal rifles seized	18