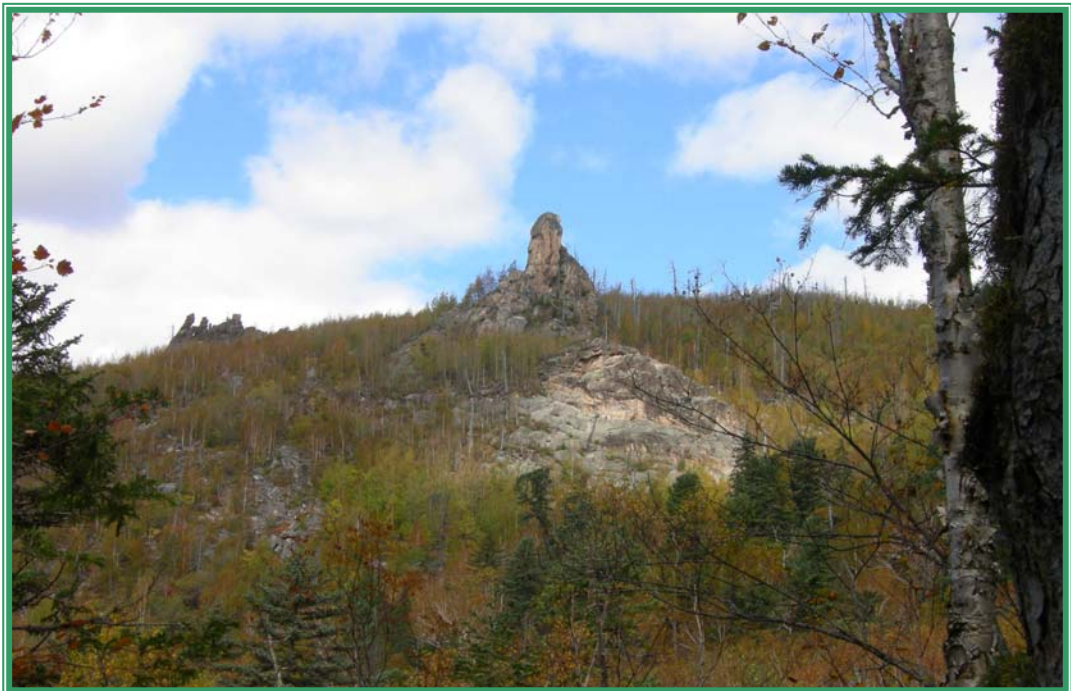


Phoenix Fund

Wildlife Conservation in the Russian Far East in 2010: Udege Legend National Park

Interim report
January – June 2010



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I. Project Overview

Over the past century, wild tiger numbers dropped from 100,000 to about 3,500 today due to adverse human activities. Primorsky region 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, people must take immediate and urgent actions, otherwise wild tigers will disappear forever.

In 2009, we started a new project - support for the federal-level Udege Legend National Park. The 88,600 ha national park was created in June 2007 in the north-east of Primorye with the purpose of conserving the practically virgin taiga forests, and the unique lifestyle and culture of the Udege people, local aborigines few in number. According to 2004 tiger census (WCS-WWF), there is a high density of 50 tigers in Krasnoarmeisky district. The census conducted in the Udege Legend National Park showed that there are at least seven tigers (including three females, one of them with two cubs) more or less permanently residing in the Park itself or migrating to and from the adjacent areas. Thus, the Park is located in the core area of tiger habitat, and has a big potential for increasing both tiger and tiger prey populations for the whole region.

The purpose of the project is to strengthen anti-poaching and habitat protection activities in Udege Legend National Park through conducting regular patrols and supplying rangers with fuel and spare parts. The new Park desperately needs support from NGOs as the Federal Government has not yet allocated enough funds for the Park to work in full force and in the most efficient way. Since the park's creation, Phoenix has been supporting anti-poaching activities in the protected area. The inspectors conducted regular patrols to prevent poaching and fires and reacted promptly to any related information. They also helped

resolve predator-human conflicts and emergencies (people disappeared in taiga, first aid etc) and have explanatory talks with the local communities. The teams patrolled the Park on a daily basis by vehicle, boat and on foot. They checked visitors and stopped illegal woodcutting. In 2010, with the help from the Kolmarden Fund Raising Foundation and 21st Century Tiger, a snowmobile was purchased for law enforcement inspectors to patrol the area after major snowfalls, conduct winter animal surveys and organize rescue operations to save ungulates stuck in snowdrifts. Within the framework of the project, the anti-poaching brigades of the Park were provided with fuel for patrols and spare parts for their vehicles.



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Laulinsky prizm famous rock
at the Udege Legend Park

We expected the federal financing for the anti-poaching teams to increase, however at the present time the Park still needs additional financial support from non-budget sources to stand on its own feet and operate in full. The federal financing for 2010 for all protected areas in Russia remains the same as in 2009.

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. This report contains information about the anti-poaching activities in Udege Legend National Park from January 1 through June 30, 2010.



II. Project Implementation

Support for anti-poaching team of Udege Legend National Park

In the course of the project we managed to approach the goals, which are: to enhance protection of the tiger prey populations and habitat in Northern Primorye, and to decrease the number of poachers and wildlife traders. Below is the description of the major anti-poaching activities for the reported period.

January

In January, the law enforcement personnel of the Park conducted five many-day patrols and revealed two violations (trespass and illegal possession of weapon). Protecting wildlife habitat and revealing new-built winter huts/hunter's lodge was a priority for the guardians. All in all, they checked existing winter huts twelve times and visited recreation centres six times for inspection.



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Guardians issue an administrative citation

On December 30, 2009 the team consisting of three people patrolled the area up to the Frolov stream and in the evening returned to the ranger's station at Dalny Kut village. The next three days were spent patrolling the area by snowmobiles on the following routes: Dersu village – mouth of the Armu river, mouth of the Armu river – the Lesovoznaya river, mouth of the Armu river – the Krasnoarmeisky stream. On January 3, the Park's guardians broke a trail from Dersu village to the Kondratov stream

through the Bolshaya Ussurka distributaries. That trail was important for further wildlife census to be held in the Park later on. On January 4, the team members did patrol car maintenance and harvested firewood to heat the ranger's station. On January 5, the team returned to the Park's headquarters in Roschino village.

On January 6, the team of four men set off for a patrol and examined the area up to the Beglyanka river. No violations were revealed. The next day the guardians conducted a snowmobile patrol near the mouth of the Armu river, checked Ust-Arminskaya recreation centre and hunters lodges at the mouth of the Malaya Pikhtovka river. No violations were revealed. On January 8, the team divided into two groups to conduct snowmobile patrols in two places. One group started to break a trail towards the Bolshaya Ussurka river. The other one moved towards Orochensky bog, place of worship and famous tourist attraction site. The next day the law enforcement personnel continued breaking trails. Over the next two days the team patrolled along Dalny Kut - the Frolov stream - the Agapov stream route. No violations were revealed. On January 12, the guardians checked potential violation spots near the Koreisky stream. No signs of illegal hunting or human presence were observed.

On January 13-14, the team made up of four law enforcement officers patrolled along Dersu village-the Agapov stream- the Frolov stream route. No violations were revealed. On January 15, the team conducted a snowmobile patrol from Dersu village to the Mikhailovsky stream, visited Mr. Shevkin, local beekeeper and made a warning notice to keep his dog on a leash. While on snowmobile patrol on January 16, the team stopped a snowmobile with two people, one of which had a gun. The law enforcement officers issued two citations on the violators for trespass and illegal possession of weapon. Patrolling during the next three days did not reveal any violations.

On January 20, the team of six people,



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Wildlife census

including specialist on eco-tourism set off for a patrol. On January 21, the team divided into two groups. One group of three law enforcement officers helped a tractor driver to prepare a tractor and use it to clear roads. Then the three officers patrolled the road running inside the Park. In the evening they saw spotlight and blocked the road. When they stopped a car, they saw journalists from regional TV channel who came there to shoot a film about Old Believers. As for the second group, which consisted of two guardians and the specialist of eco-tourism, it arrived at the Bolotny stream and stayed in a winter hut. During the next four days the first group patrolled the area along Dalny Kut village – the Agapov stream – the Frolov stream. The members of the second team cleaned trails following the stream upwards. No violations were revealed.

From January 25 to February 1, the team of four law enforcement officers patrolled the area. During the patrol a big number of wild animals were observed. No violations were revealed.

February

In February, the law enforcement staff carried out five many-day anti-poaching patrols and revealed no violations. Prevention of any violations, collection of biological samples and participation in wildlife census and tiger monitoring program took top priority over all other activities. On the whole, the law enforcement service coped with the task. A lack of violations in

February could be explained by several reasons, such as: 1) the Park's roads were still covered with snow which made northern, eastern and southern Park's boundaries inaccessible for poachers; 2) the law enforcement personnel patrolled the areas on a regular basis on the whole Park's area because of wildlife census and other scientific work taking place in the Park.

On February 1, the law enforcement personnel of the Park went to pass "qualifying exams" in order to continue conducting anti-poaching patrols. From February 2 through February 5 the team of four officers patrolled the Park's area to prevent trespass or illegal hunting. While moving along the Park's road the guardians observed numerous tracks of wild animals, mostly roe deer and red deer. No violations were revealed. On February 6, during the daytime the team members repaired their snowmobiles and in the evening patrolled on the road till 8 p.m. No movement was recorded. On the following day the law enforcement officers patrolled by two groups. One of the groups detained a trespasser and made a warning notice that presence on the protected area without entry permit is strictly prohibited.



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Hard winter conditions

From February 8 through February 11, the team of four men patrolled inside and along the perimeter of the Park. No violations were revealed.

On February 12, the team set off for a night patrol and discovered a place where a sika



deer had been supposedly killed. Judging by tracks, the violators were hunting on the road while operating a vehicle. The poachers allegedly put the dead animal in their car, without skinning it. When the officers returned to the scene on the following day, they ascertained that there were several people involved in poaching. The guardians took photos of tire tracks and footprints to identify violators. They followed vehicle tracks leading to Ostrovnoye village, however could not find the vehicle in the human settlement. A villager told that he had seen a man driving that vehicle but the suspect disappeared since February 12. The anti-poaching team split up into two groups. One group patrolled on the road, the other one made an ambush at the spot where the deer had been killed. Unfortunately, the violator was not noticed anywhere.

On February 15, the team of three officers set off for a patrol. No violations were revealed. On the following day the law enforcement officers found fresh tiger tracks (pad width of 8 cm) and collected tiger scats for further analysis by scientists according

to an agreement signed between the Udege Legend National Park and Severtsev's Ecology and Evolution Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences. During the next two days no violations were revealed. On February 18, the Park staff assisted a group of scientists in transporting and releasing a tigress. Earlier, she was captured because of her frequent comings to human settlements and examined by veterinarians. As she was concluded to be rather healthy, she was released near the Park's boundaries deep in the forest with no access to villages.

On February 15, while patrolling the area near the Bolotny stream the team of four officers spotted fresh tracks of two red deer and two tigers (with pad width of 11 cm and 8 cm). On the following day the team members found fresh tracks of lynx and noted bear claw scratches on the trees. On February 17-19, they found tracks of tigresses (pad width of 8 cm) and tiger tracks (pad width of 1 cm) and many marks of bear presence (dens and claw marks). On February 23, the team split up into two groups. One group collected biological samples and participated in wildlife counts. The other group discovered a den where a tigress with a one-year cub lived. The officers recorded coordinates using the GPS unit and took photos of the den.

On February 22 – March 1, the team of three law enforcement officers patrolled the Park, stopped two vehicles for inspection, and revealed no violations. The guardians noticed that thin crust of snow hinders ungulates in their efforts to move. Searching for forage, the hoofed animals were driven to flood plains. During the many day patrol, the team members observed many wild boar and roe deer herds (4-6 individuals in each herd) moving towards farmers' fields.

March

In March-April, the law enforcement staff carried out nine many-day anti-poaching patrols, checked 39 park visitors, revealed two violations, withdrawn one illegal rifle. Existing winter huts/hunter's lodges were inspected 23 times during the reported



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Immobilization of tigress for transportation and further release into the wild



period.

On March 1-8, 2010 the team made up of four law enforcement officers patrolled along Dalny Kut – Agapov spring – Levomikhailovsky spring - Dersu village route. On March 2, while the team was repairing a snowmobile a vehicle passed by. The inspectors caught up the car but the driver had no park visit permit therefore an administrative report was written. Later the two inspectors went on a patrol to a tourist recreation site and noticed unleashed dogs. The first warning was made to a camp's guards who put the dogs on chains immediately. During the rest of the patrol the team was inspecting the territory of the national park on a snowmobile or on skis. No violations were revealed.



**Hanging information signs
along the Park boundaries**

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On March 8-15, 2010 another groups of inspectors relieved the previous shift. For the first three days of the patrol no violations were registered. On March 11, the inspectors stopped a truck with a snowmobile in a trailer. After a check the inspectors found out that a truck was delivering a snowmobile and building materials to a tourist station. The driver had a park entrance permit. On March 12, the team noticed the tracks of a snow mobile leading to the park. The inspectors followed the tracks but the trespassers had already left the territory of the park.

On a patrol March 15-22, the team revealed no violations of protected area regime.

On March 22, the four inspectors carried out a patrol along Dersu village and found the traces of two poached ungulates dragged along the ground that were slightly powdered with snow. On March 23, the five inspectors headed towards "Sebuchari" camp for the patrol while two other inspectors were conducting the investigation of traces found the day before. For the rest of the many-days patrol no infringement were registered.

On March 29, the mobile team made up of three inspectors started the anti-poaching patrol in Dalny Kut village heading towards Dersu village. On their way the inspectors met Mr. Kyalunziga who carried an illegal smoothbore rifle. The violator handed it over to the inspectors voluntarily and said he had just found it in the forest. An administrative citation was issued and the rifle was apprehended. On March 30, the team conducted a check at Mikhailovsky spring to make sure there were no illegal infringements.



**Park staff makes crossing over
the Bolshaya Ussurka river**

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April

On April 1, the team patrolled along the Dalny Kut village – Ostrovnoe village route and noticed the track of a vehicle. Having followed the tracks the inspectors revealed no violations. On April 2, the team was on duty at Bolshaya Ussurka river crossing. During the last three days of the patrol no violations were revealed.

For seven days (April 5-12) the team of



three inspectors was conducting a patrol on the Dalny Kut village - Agapov spring – Zabolnoe hole – Dersu village route. The detected no cases of infringement.



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Inspectors conduct controlled burn

On April 12-19, the team spent eight days patrolling the Udege Legend national park and on the adjacent territories. On April 13, the team participated in a training on controlled burning and fire-safety. In the morning, on April 18, the team conducted a talk with the residents of Dersu village on fire-safety rules and were on duty at Koreisky hole the rest of the day. During the patrol no violations were registered.

On April 19-26, the mobile team of four inspectors carried out a regular patrol and during the seven days registered no infringements.



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Mobile check-point at main road

On April 27, after a one day of anti-poaching patrol the inspectors worked on creation of fire-breaks. The rest of the patrol (till April 30) the team were either on duty or conducted the controlled burnings to prevent fires from penetrating into the Park from the adjacent areas.

May

On May 3-10, a team of three rangers went on a patrol in the vicinity of Dersu village on the Park territory, made a check-point at the only road to stop violators from bringing poached animals from the forest. Due to rainy weather there were no people entering the Park or leaving it. On May 7-9 the team went down the Bolshaya Ussuryka river by boat, discovered 12 illegal guns, and issued a citation on two violators. The fishermen claimed that only two nets belonged to them, and that they did not know who had fixed the other nets.

On May 10-17, a group of two inspectors made a motorboat patrol. They destroyed three fishing nets and an illegal salt lick made by poachers to attract animals. They checked two authorized salt licks and found no violations. One of the inspectors heard a gunshot in the vicinity of a salt lick, but no people were seen.



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Rangers discovered illegal salt lick

On May 17-24, a group of four men went on a patrol, the two of them by boat along the Armu river and the other two by vehicle. On May 20, they made a day-long check-point by the road Dalny Kut – Dersu. All the



people that were stopped had documents in order and carried no guns.

On May 24-31, a group of two men patrolled by boat along the Armu and the Malaya Pikhtovka river. The vehicle stuck in mud and the rangers spent five hours dragging it out. During the rest of the patrols no violations were found. On May 29 and 30 they transported a group of tourists to Ust-Armu base.

Education and outreach activities



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Park's warden Yuri Trusch meets with local people

In addition to regular checks of law obedience, the team also carried out outreach activities at the local community and with the owners of the adjacent hunting grounds in order to give them objective information about the benefits of the Park's creation and its positive impact on their lives and work.

During the reported period, while patrolling the protected area, the inspectors spoke to anglers, hikers and holidaymakers to raise their knowledge of correct human behavior during their stay in the national park. Any patrol could serve as an occasion to outreach work.

Also, there were several training sessions for the Park's personnel to teach the employees to communicate with local people and interpret information about the park's natural and cultural resources, and increase public awareness and understanding of the values of the park.



**Results of Protection Division
of the Udege Legend National Park
January – June 2010**

Activity	Quantity
Several-day patrols	29
Including:	
- foot	18
- night	8
Man-days spent on patrols, total	712
Checked:	
- people	119
- hunting/fishing/tourist bases and camps (number of times)	24
- hunters' huts	33
Reports made:	19
- fishing violations	8
- hunting violations (including carrying a gun)	9
- violation of protected area regime (moving on a motor boat during spawning season and other)	1
- illegal logging	1
Confiscated:	
- fishing nets	32
- harpoons	1
- guns	1
Criminal proceedings initiated:	1 (illegal logging)
Fines imposed, \$:	1,569
Claims brought, \$	625,322 including \$620,690 for an illegal logging site discovered (investigation in progress)



Acknowledgements

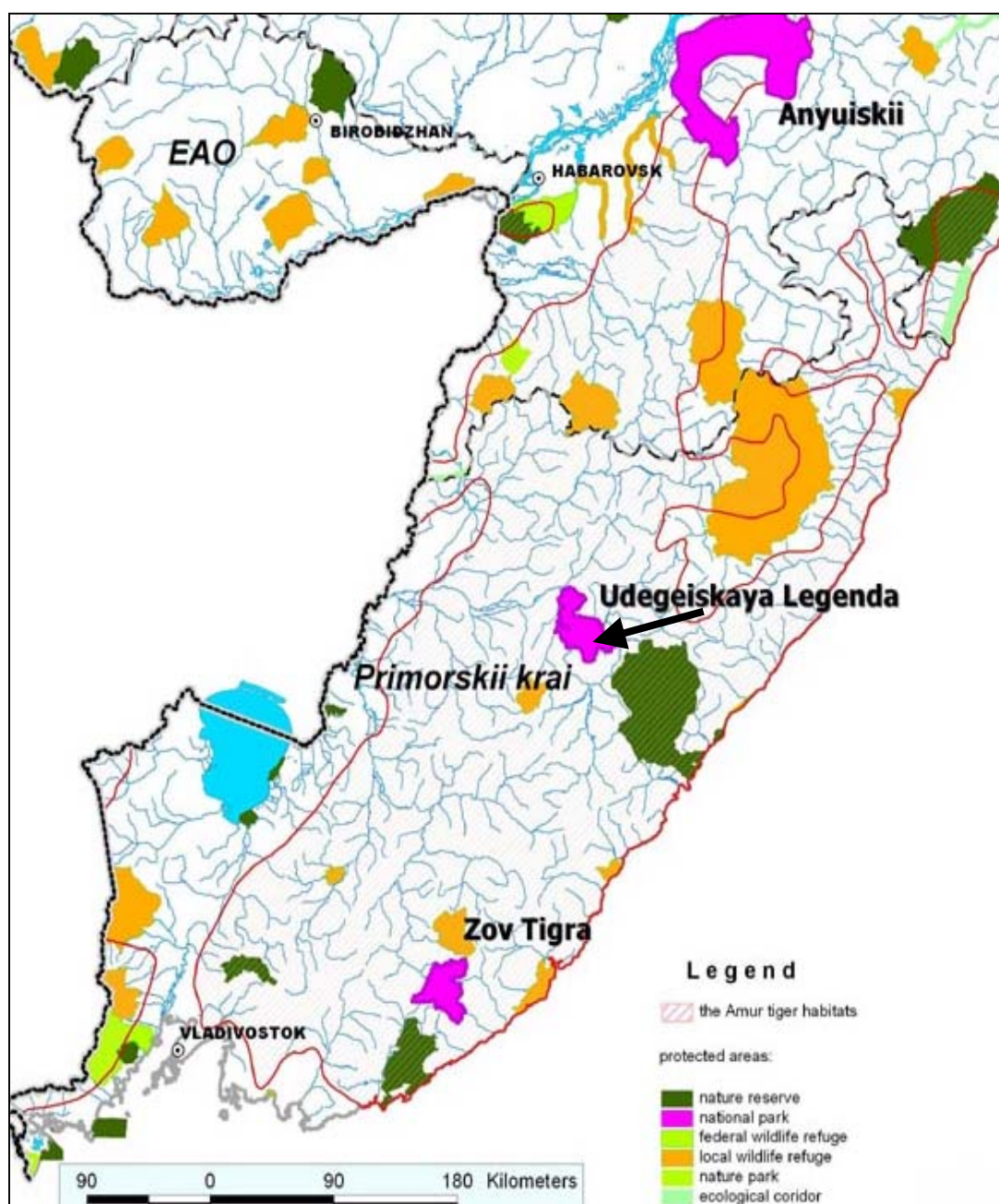
Phoenix Fund expresses warm thanks to Kolmarden Fund Raising Foundation for providing support for the Udege Legend National Park during the first - the most difficult - years of its operation.

Thanks to your support, we helped increase capacity of the anti-poaching teams to reduce poaching activities, enhance wildlife and habitat protection in the Park, and increase awareness within the local communities about the importance of wildlife and habitat conservation through information and outreach work.



Map 1. Protected Areas in Primorsky krai

Udege Legend (Udegeiskaya Legenda) National Park





Map 2. Udege Legend National Park

