



WILDLIFE CONSERVATION IN THE RUSSIAN FAR EAST IN 2011

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

Final report (January 1st – December 31st 2011)



Phoenix Fund
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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. However, Amur tiger population is still threatened by poaching, habitat destruction and prey depletion.

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. Nowadays, the team operated mostly in three northern administrative districts of Primorye. In addition to revealing hunting violations, the team cooperates closely with other environmental law enforcement agencies and public rangers (volunteers) to uncover illegal logging.

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

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

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.

Project Activities

From January 1st through December 30th 2011 the team achieved the following results: **70 facts of illegal hunting**

revealed, six illegal logging sites discovered, 31 illegal firearms seized, and seven criminal cases initiated.



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An illegal rifle seized from a violator

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



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An illegal logging site

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.

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 the 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 was 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 supposedly left by three persons with dogs. The footprints led deep



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

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 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.

"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 Samoilenko.

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. 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 Rakitnoye village Oleg Zamuriy, the other one was his son Vladimir. At first, they were calm and answered all questions.



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Tiger track

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 Samoilenko could hardly calm down the poachers.

"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.

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 Rakitnoye 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 which is still under investigation.

From July 1 through September 10, 2011 the team carried out 35 anti-poaching patrols in order to protect and preserve woodlands in Dalnerechensky and Chuguevsky districts of Primorye, issued six citations for illegal hunting, seized two illegal rifles, six snares and four traps, revealed four illegal logging sites and initiated four criminal proceedings.



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An illegal logging site

Due to high temperature in summer season there was no movement or activity at all on those hunting grounds, but on July 12 the wildlife managers detained a group of three violators for felling illegally oak trees 30 km far from Zavetnoye village, Chuguevsky district. All the detainees turned out to be residents of Malinovo village, Dalnerechensky district. While examining the scene where the

loggers were detained, the team members discovered a DT-75 tractor, a Husqvarna chainsaw and 50 cubic meters of the harvested wood and informed about it to Chuguevsky police station. A criminal proceeding was initiated.

On July 28, during a routine patrol in Chuguevsky district the Western team members stopped a man with a 12-gauge illegal rifle. An administrative penalty was brought against the violator.

On September 4, when patrolling hunting grounds in Dalnerechensky district, the team stopped a lorry with two brothers. During a search in the vehicle the wildlife managers discovered snares and traps. The men claimed that they had found those items and never used them. The poaching devices were destroyed.

On September 10, near the Chisty (Clean) stream, 40 km away from Zimniki village, the wildlife managers discovered an unauthorized logging site where oak and ash-tree species had been harvested illegally. The information was forwarded to the local police.

On September 12, a man was found in possession of a 12-gauge loaded rifle. The poacher had no proper documents (hunting and gun licenses). The rifle was seized and forwarded to Dalnerechensky police station for further investigation.

On September 15, during a joint patrol with a TV crew an unauthorized logging site was found. Unfortunately, loggers managed to run away. A logging tractor was seized. All materials and evidence were forwarded to Dalnerechensky police station to initiate a criminal proceeding.



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Alexander Samoilenko talks with illegal loggers

On September 16, the wildlife managers found deer skin and entrails. After examining the scene, they concluded that there had been night hunting with the use of spotlight. It was impossible to identify the violators.

On September 20, an unauthorized logging site was discovered in Dalnerechensky district. The illegal loggers run away. A tractor found on the site was seized. A criminal case was initiated.

On September 24, a man, resident of Salskoye village, was stopped for hunting from his vehicle. An administrative penalty was brought against the violator.

On September 28, the wildlife managers detained a man for red deer hunting. The violator had no hunting and gun licenses. The wildlife managers issued an administrative citation and imposed a fine on the violator. On the same day later another man was detained for illegal red deer hunting. An administrative penalty was brought against the violator.

On September 30, while patrolling hunting grounds in Dalnerechensky district, the team stopped a man in possession of a rifle. The violator had no hunting permit. The violator was fined.

In October, the Western wildlife managers' team carried out 14 anti-poaching patrols in three districts of Primorye, namely Dalnerechensky, Chuguevsky and Krasnoarmeisky, issued ten administrative citations for illegal hunting, and seized five illegal rifles and eight snares.

When patrolling along the Upper Malinovka river, the team detained a man, resident of Vladivostok city, for hunting from his vehicle. The poacher had no hunt and gun license. An administrative penalty was brought against the violator.

On October 7, while patrolling hunting grounds in Chuguevsky district, the wildlife managers found a lorry. Following footprints left by a lorry's driver, the team members determined that he had gone deep into the forest to hunt. It was

decided to make an ambush and wait until a hunter returned. Several hours later, in the twilight they saw an armed man coming out of the forest. The wildlife managers caught the violator and seized his gun. The man had no gun license and hunting permit. The gun was seized and handed over to Dalnerechensky police station.

On October 16, during a routine patrol in Krasnoarmeisky district the team found a motorcycle with a sidecar. After examining the site, the wildlife managers ascertained that two people had gone deep into the forest allegedly to hunt. It was decided to lay an ambush and wait until the hunters returned. As a result of the ambush, the wildlife managers caught two men who confessed to hunting illegally, seized two illegal rifles and found a dead badger in one of men's backpack. The wildlife managers issued two administrative citations against the violators, and handed over the seized rifles to Dalnerechensky police station.

On October 18, the team patrolled hunting grounds in Dalnerechensky district and stopped a motorcycle with a sidecar. When the wildlife manager searched the motorcycle, they found fresh wild boar meat. A motorcycle's driver had no permit to hunt badger. The wildlife managers issued an administrative

citation and imposed a fine on the violator.

On October 19, two residents of Dalnerechensk decided to go badger hunting. They put snares in the forest and waited for animals. The Western team caught the poachers, brought an administrative penalty against them, and removed the snares.



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A rifle and dead badger seized from poachers

On October 22, the team stopped a man for crossing hunting grounds by vehicle with a 16-gauge illegal rifle. The rifle was seized and handed over to Dalnerechensky police station. An administrative penalty was brought against the violator.

On October 23, during a night patrol on soy fields near Rakitnoye village (Dalnerechensky district), the team detained a group of poachers for hunting illegally from a vehicle. One violator broke into a run, but was caught by the wildlife managers. A rifle which he had hid in the forest was found. It was turned out that he had no hunting

license. An administrative penalty was brought against the violator. Later in the morning, around 5:40 a.m. the team stopped a vehicle for a routine search and discovered a smoothbore gun with cartridges. As none of the passengers had gun license, the wildlife managers seized the gun and handed it over to Dalnerechensky police station.

During November – December 2011 the team carried out 10 anti-poaching patrols in order to protect and preserve woodlands in four administrative districts of Primorye, namely Krasnoarmeusky, Kirovsky, Dalnerechensky and Lesozavodsky, issued 17 citations for illegal hunting, seized three illegal rifles, revealed one illegal logging site and initiated one criminal proceeding.



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Timber lorries are inspected by the team

On November 19, the team received information that an Asiatic black bear had been spotted in Sretenka village, Dalnerechensky district. Upon arrival on the scene, the wildlife managers did find bear tracks in one farmer's yard.

However it was impossible to identify whether the animal had left the human settlement. It was decided to spend a night in the village in case of repeated appearance of the bear. And at midnight the bear came back in the village, penetrated into a farmstead, went through a barn's window and killed a pig. According to a farmer's wife, she was awakened by barking and the squeak of the pig at three in the morning. When she went out, she virtually run into the bear. Her scream attracted the attention of passersby who immediately stopped their car and shot the bear dead. Then, they put the dead animal in the car and disappeared. When the Western wildlife managers' team arrived on the scene they could hardly find any evidence. The wildlife managers wrote down all things the farmer's wife told them and forwarded all documents to Dalnerechensky police office.

On November 28, the team stopped a car with a driver who possessed a loaded firearm. As the man had no hunting permit, the wildlife managers issued an administrative citation upon him. The next day, November 29, the team carried on patrolling in the Upper Malinovka river and spotted a 4-WD vehicle parked on the roadside. Judging by footprints around the vehicle, there were several people who presumably had gone hunting. It

was decided to wait until the hunters returned. After a while, two men with backpacks appeared on the opposite river bank. When the men saw the wildlife managers, they broke into a run. A foot pursuit began. When chasing the crime suspects, the wildlife managers found the backpacks thrown away by the hunters. The sacks were fraught with wild meet. Suddenly, the wildlife managers spotted the third man with a backpack moving towards them. The man was caught. He confessed to coming with his two friends to hunt. The wildlife managers waited near the poachers' vehicle until the violators returned. The wildlife



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A poacher detained with a sack full of wild meat

managers issued administrative citations and forwarded all documents to Dalnerechensky police office to initiate criminal proceedings.

On December 4, while patrolling hunting grounds near Vedenka village, Dalnerechensky district, the team stopped a UAZ-vehicle with two men. A vehicle search revealed two rifles. The man had only one gun license and no hunting permit. The wildlife managers issued administrative citations upon the violators and seized an illegal rifle to hand it over to Dalnerechensky police office.

On December 6, during a routine patrol near Rozhdestvenka village the team spotted two men who broke into a run shortly after they saw the wildlife managers. As a result of a foot pursuit, one man with a rifle was caught. He had no hunting permit. His fellow managed

hunters' footprints, the wildlife managers found the second loaded rifle. The rifle was seized to Dalnerechensky police office where further investigation was initiated.

On December 8, the team was patrolling near Pozhiga village when found tracks left by heavy-load vehicle. When following the tracks leading deep into the forest, the wildlife managers discovered an illegal logging site where elm, birch and ash trees were harvested. By and large, over 274 illegally felled trees were found at the site. The wildlife managers informed Dalnerechensky police office about the fact of unauthorized logging. A criminal proceeding was initiated.

On the same day later the team went to patrol in Kirovsky district and spotted a jeep with nobody inside near Khvischanka village. It was decided to wait until the jeep's driver or passengers returned. After 60 minutes, the wildlife managers saw four people dragging a dead wild boar towards their vehicle. As it was determined later, the men killed the animal legally as one hunter has hunting license to harvest a boar. However the hunter violated the hunting rules as every person who kills a deer must immediately fill out the license tag with the date the animal was killed. The wildlife managers issued an administrative citation upon the violator who turned out to be a local gamekeeper. The men who



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The team stopped poachers with wild meat illegally harvested

to escape. The wildlife managers noticed that he had no gun on him, which could mean that he had thrown it away. As it was impossible to find the gun in the dusk, the wildlife managers decided to come back there next morning. On December 7, when following the

helped him drag the dead animal appeared to be police officers. The wildlife managers forwarded all documents to local police office.

On December 10, a man with a loaded gun was detained for hunting illegally from his jeep. The violator turned out to be an employee of local forestry. The wildlife managers issued an administrative citation upon the violator. On the same day later, when patrolling hunting grounds in Krasnoarmeisky district, the team stopped a car with two passengers and a sack with red deer meat. The men had hunting license to hunt red deer, but they did not fill out the date they killed the animals. Two administrative citations were issued upon the violators.

While patrolling hunting grounds in Dalnerechensky district on December 16, wildlife law enforcement officers spotted a heavy-load vehicle parked on the bank of the Milogradovka river. Upon approaching to the vehicle, they noticed human footprints leading deep into taiga. After following the footprints for several minutes, they saw two men with three sacks full of deer meat. The minute the men saw the officers they broke into a run. After a short pursuit, the hunters were caught. It turned out that the men had no hunting permit or hunting license. The hunters tried to deny a poaching charge. The detainees

claimed that they had found meat of red deer left by someone in the forest. The officers forwarded all documents to Dalnerechensky police office for further investigation.

On December 17, the team detained two hunters for illegal hunting. The men illegally killed red deer and two sables. The wildlife managers issued administrative citations upon the poachers.

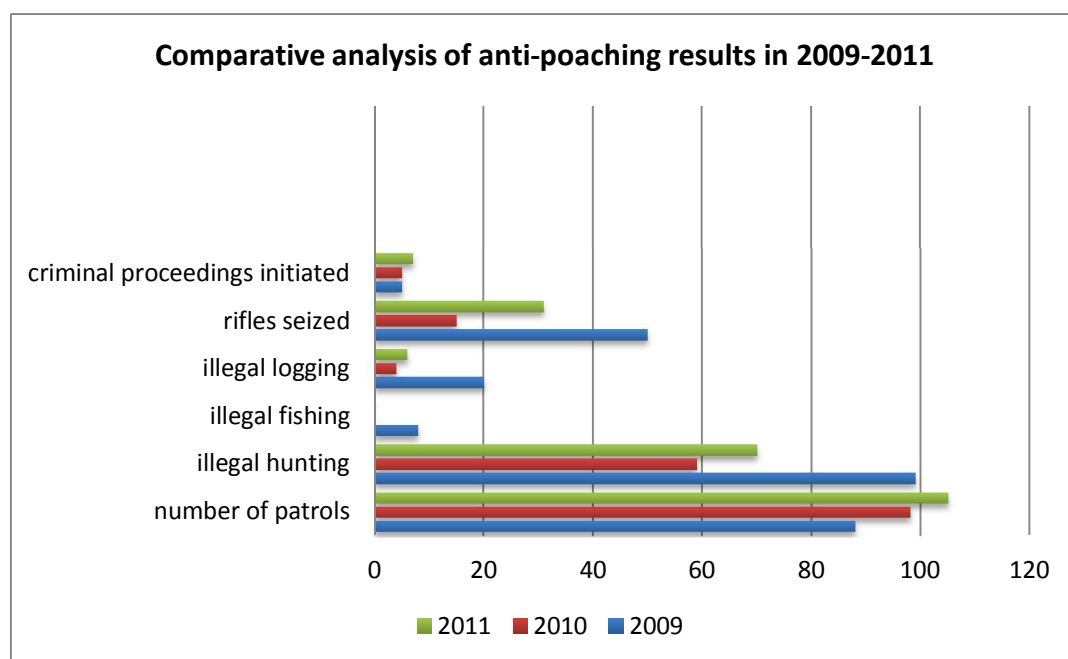
In conclusion, we can see that the Western wildlife managers' team achieved good results in 2011. Moreover, we are glad to inform that Primorsky Hunting Management Department has become more or less independent, and did not request support for 2012. It is a really good sign, and we are glad that thanks to generous support from the Kolmarden Fund Raising Foundation and 21st Century Tiger we could help them to overcome difficult period of time when they lacked funds to operate in full in the field.

Attachment

Table 1. Results of anti-poaching efforts from January through December 2011

Item	Quantity
Patrols	105
Illegal hunting	70
Illegal logging	6
Criminal cases	7
Illegal rifles seized	31
Snares seized	14
Traps seized	4

Diagram 1. Comparative analysis of anti-poaching results in 2009-2011



Indicators	2009	2010	2011
Number of patrols	88	98	105
Violations documented	129	63	76
Hunting violations	99	59	70
Fishing violations	8	0	0
Logging violations	20	4	6
Pollution	2	0	0
Firearms seized	50	15	31
Criminal proceedings initiated	5	5	7