



INTERIM REPORT FROM PHOENIX FUND

Grantor:	The Dreamworld Conservation Fund
Project Name:	The Khabarovsky team's anti-poaching activities
Grantee:	The Phoenix Fund
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I. Project overview

The objective of the project is to ensure Amur tiger habitat protection and population survival in Primorsky and Khabarovsky regions, including:

- Strengthening protection activities in tiger habitat by carrying out joint patrols consisting of state law enforcement officers and public environmental investigation teams,
- Engaging local communities to actively participate in conservation,
- Gaining in support from the local people.

The Russian Far East is the only area in the world where both the Amur tiger – more commonly known as the Siberian tiger - and Amur leopard still exist in the wild. In spite of worldwide publicity, these big cats still face many threats - illegal poaching, human encroachment, deforestation, and a lack of natural prey species. An estimated 450 mature Amur tigers and 35 Amur leopards are left in the wild, and of the surviving tigers, only approximately 10% are found within protected areas. The numbers protected are not enough to sustain the population, and thus the future of the tiger is still at stake and depends on the attitude of the local people towards them. Tigers are still being poached for their skins, bones and other parts that are valued for their medical purposes in Asia. The insatiable demand for tiger ingredients appears to be the main driving force behind this poaching and traffic.

Inspection Tiger was formed in 1994 within State Ecological Committee of Primorsky krai. Creation of Inspection Tiger was more of necessity: in the beginning of the 90th, after opening the borders and dissolution of the federal nature conservation system, everything that could have been sold in Ussury taiga was pillaged and smuggled to neighboring China. The catastrophic situation affected endangered population of Amur tigers. Thanks to anti-poaching activities of Inspection Tiger in Primorsky krai and south of Khabarovsky krai, tiger numbers have crept back to between 431 – 529. Three-man Khabarovsky team is part of Inspection Tiger. Edward Yanovsky, the leader of the team, possesses large personal experience in wildlife conservation and has been leading the project throughout years. The team is specially trained and equipped to conduct anti-poaching patrols and to investigate human-tiger conflicts.

II. Project description

Team members

The team consists of three Inspection Tiger officers who have been working within the team for six years. The officers graduated from Irkutsky Agricultural Academy with a degree in Biology and Hunting Management. Before starting their work as Inspection Tiger officers, they worked for four years in Khabarovsky State Committee on Environmental Protection.



Cooperation

The team cooperates with Environmental Prosecutor's Office (to initiate criminal proceedings efficiently), police departments of Khabarovsk city, Lazo and Vyazemsky districts (to conduct joint patrols), Fishing and Hunting Departments of Rosselkhoznadzor, gamekeepers and employees of the protected territories (to conduct joint patrols, obtain current information, use motorboats and other transport) and mass media (to cover team's activities and nature conservation issues).

Equipment

The team has an UAZ vehicle (manufactured in 2001), Motorola wireless handheld radio stations, video and photo cameras, GPS-unit, motorboat, PC and notebook at its disposal. In 2007, the team purchased a GPS-unit, photo camera and pistols for self-defense. There is a need to purchase a new UAZ vehicle (a minibus) next year.

Legal situation

For the last several years Rosselkhoznadzor and Inspection Tiger agencies have undergone multiple changes in their structures, status and power. Unfortunately, it has had a negative effect on activities of these organizations. In connection with reorganization of Inspection Tiger and changes in its staff list, the power and rights of Inspection Tiger officers have not been determined yet. At present, the main objective of Inspection Tiger rangers is to conduct activities to conserve wildlife listed in the Red Book of Endangered Species of the Russian Federation and take measures specified in the Strategy on Conservation of Rare and Endangered Fauna and Flora (approved by Ministry of Natural Resources on April 06, 2004).

Development in poaching, wildlife trade, related threats

The team leader considers poaching level stable compared to the previous years.

Anti-poaching methods

The main anti-poaching methods are:

- Patrolling hunting grounds by car. The rangers, together with police officers, stop and check vehicles moving out of the forest;
- Patrolling on rivers by motorboat. Fishermen often have rifles in their boats and they visit hunter's cabins located near riverbanks;
- Checking logging camps and sites in winter. The rangers often find illegal rifles hidden in a cab of logging vehicles;
- Checking apiaries at night and making night ambushes on logging roads;
- Checking winter cabins after hunting season is closed;
- Tracking hunters in spring when there is thin crust of ice over snow.



© Inspection Tiger
Khabarovsk team officer measures the diameter of felled logs



Additional activities

The Khabarovsk team investigates conflict tiger cases whenever that is required. Sometimes, rangers repair their vehicle by themselves. On average, they spend 5-7 days per month to do minor repairs, including repairs in the field. For large-scale repairs (axle, engine etc.) the team has its vehicle repaired at a repair service. In addition, the team carries out education and outreach project through giving lectures at schools and interviews for mass media.



© Inspection Tiger
Repair in the field

Results

The team results are improving thanks to gained experience in fieldwork and good equipment.

The most significant results for the first six months of 2007 are:

- Revealing illegal logging of yew tree, precious wood species listed in the Red Book of Endangered Species and prohibited to cut;
- Detaining poachers for illegal hunting for ducks listed in the Red Book;
- Detaining intruders in the protected territory;
- Seizing great number of illegal rifles (15 items).

Plans for the future

The team intends to improve its results and establish good relations with environmental law enforcement agencies.

III. Anti-poaching activities



© Inspection Tiger
Rangers check gun license and permit to hunt

This project has been made possible in 2007 with the support of the Dreamworld Conservation Fund, the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and 21st Century Tiger. For the reported period the team conducted 20 many-day patrols, drew up 19 reports on violations of hunting regulations, revealed 9 violations of fishing regulations, seized 15 illegal rifles, 7 fishing nets and investigated 3 conflict tiger cases.

On January 16-17, the officers patrolled Vyazemsky state industrial enterprise.

On January 17, in the valley of the Golda river in the hunting grounds the team stopped a man who had a carbine SKS without hunting license, and drew up an administrative report against him.



On January 21-24, the rangers conducted a patrol together with employees of the Department Against Economic Violations of Lazo district, and with gamekeepers of Khorsky forestry.

On January 24, on the territory of the aforementioned forestry the IT officers revealed illegal logging of yew, which is included into the Endangered Species of Russian Federation. The violator, a worker from “Tekhnoles” company sawed a tree 52 cm (20 inches) in diameter and cut off a branch leaving the rest of the tree on the place. He explained that he intended to make a handmade article of it. The team handed the materials to the Department Against Economic Violations of Lazo district.



© Inspection Tiger
Checking woodcutting area

On January 24, close to the Podkhorenok river the state officers detained two men with illegal guns Toz-63 and Izh-18. They made a report on the violation and passed it on to the hunting manager of Vyazemsky district.

On January 25-26, the team checked the message from Khabarovsk Service of Nature Protected Areas that on Khabarovsk – Nakhodka automobile road in Pozharsky district tiger cubs were found. The officers arrived at the place but did not find them. They saw traces of two young cubs 5-6 (2-2.3 inches) and 6-7 (2.4-2.8 inches) paw width at 223-224 km of the road Khabarovsk – Nakhodka. Having followed the traces of the second cub the officers concluded that the animal was not very exhausted. On January 26, they started tracing the first cub with smaller paw width. Analyzing its behavior the specialists concluded that it was not weak either. It ate remnants of meat of red deer. Having perceived it is chased it started moving quicker. It was clear the officers would not be able to approach the animal that day. Returning to the car they decided to search for traces of the third cub, as according to the received information they were three in number. The rangers discovered adult tiger tracks 8-9 cm (3.1 – 3.5 inches) paw width, presumably of a tigress.



© Inspection Tiger
Ranger found a skin of wild animal

The same day at 6 p.m. the team met two local hunters, acquaintances of the two rangers, who explained that a tigress with two cubs lived within their hunting ground during 2005-2006 hunting season. This season she left her cubs. There is no data that the tigress was killed. In case the version that the cubs cannot hunt large ungulates is true, it was decided to follow the situation and depending on the circumstances to capture the cubs or feed them additionally.

Young cubs may come onto the roads and become victims of vehicles or be killed by poachers. That’s why the team planned to conduct a joint patrol with a hunting manager and an employee of the district police station aimed at stopping people with illegal guns and searching for guns kept illegally in the nearest



logging sites.

On January 30, the rangers transported an extremely exhausted female tiger cub to the Far Eastern Zoo in Khabarovsk. An apiarist from Lermontovka village of Bikinsky district when walking to his apiary near the Verkhnyaya Birushka spring found a cub aged 4-6 months. It cannot roar or move because of atrophied muscles and weights about 15 kg. Zoo veterinarians accepted it and gave injections of vitamins. They said the animal had very slim chances to survive. Unfortunately, the cub died on February 01.



© Inspection Tiger
Rangers give the tiger cub an injection

On February 02-05, the Khabarovsk anti-poaching team, together with gamekeepers and a wildlife manager of Lazo district patrolled “Matai” military hunting society. On February 02, the joint team arrested Mr. Lomaev for illegal hunting for sable near the Kamen river. The violator did not have a permit to hunt.

On February 03, the team examined a place where Mr. Kirgizov, local of Dolmi village, had found a tiger cub with a trap on his fore paw, near the Khima-3 river. The rangers determined that the tiger cub had lived at Mr.Kirgizov’s house for two-three weeks. No tigress tracks were found there.

On February 05, the rangers arrested Mr. Stepanov who was hunting with illegal rifle TOZ-34. The rangers drew up a report on violations of hunting regulations, confiscated the rifle and imposed a fine on the violator.



© Inspection Tiger
Team ranger found a dead deer

On February 09-11, the rangers were tracking two tiger cubs. According to the obtained information the cubs were extremely emaciated.

On February 20-24, the Khabarovsk team in cooperation with a wildlife manager and a fishing inspector carried out a patrol in Lazovsky hunting society. On February 21, while checking a cabin in “Angelina” logging camp, the rangers found an illegal rifle IZH-27. The rifle was forwarded to Lazo police office to determine the rifle’s owner. On the same day near the Katen river the team found one more illegal rifle TOZ-63 without a trademark number; the rifle was hidden in a tractor. The weapon was handed over to police for further

investigation.



On February 24, when the team was checking “Glen” logging camp, the rangers found poached red deer in a cabin. None of the loggers had a permit to hunt. The rangers drew up a report and forwarded all documents to Lazo police department.

In March the Khabarovsky anti-poaching team conducted four patrols and confiscated five illegal rifles, two sable skins and meat of poached roe deer.

On March 03-07, the Khabarovsky team in cooperation with a wildlife manager of Lazo district and a ranger of Khorsky fishing inspection patrolled the hunting grounds of “Kafe” society of indigenous people. On March 03, the rangers arrested Mr. Chuikov for illegal hunting near the Petrovsky stream and confiscated an unregistered rifle TOZ - 63 №62211. The violator was made to pay a fine; the rifle was handed over to Lazo police department. Later on, the rangers arrested Mr. Polyakov with an illegal rifle IZH -54 №67486 and two sable skins. The man did not have a permit to hunt. The rangers drew up a report on violations of hunting regulations, confiscated the rifle and the skins and forwarded all materials to the local police department.



© Inspection Tiger
A huge number of poached fur-bearing animals found in a winter cabin

On March 05, Mr. Golikov was arrested by the joint team near the Sredny stream. The rangers drew up a report on violation, confiscated an illegal rifle TOZ № 11232 and handed it over to Lazo police department.

For the period March 13 - 17 the Khabarovsky team and the wildlife manager of Lazo district patrolled “Mataisky” wildlife refuge. On March 16, the rangers detained Mr. Kalambukhin with meat of roe deer near the Balaza river, drew up a report on violation and forwarded all documents to Lazo police department to initiate criminal proceedings. On March 17, Mr. Melnik was arrested with carbine KO-44 № BE2561 near the Khima-3 river (territory of “Mataisky” wildlife refuge). The rangers drew up a report and forwarded it to Lazo police department. On the same day the rangers arrested Mr. Amedov with an illegal rifle IZH - 27 № 04342 in “Mataisky” wildlife refuge.

On March 23-24, the team and gamekeepers patrolled “Matai” military hunting society. On March 24, the rangers arrested Mr. Karavaev with an illegal rifle IZH – 18 near the Dolminsky stream. All documents on violation were forwarded to Lazo police department.

In April Khabarovsky anti-poaching team carried out five patrols, drew up seven reports and confiscated four rifles, three rubber boats, and seven fishing nets.

On April 02-04, the team and a wildlife manager of Lazo district patrolled Lazovskoye hunting and fishing society. On April 02, two rifles were found near a winter cabin in the Kamen river valley. The rifles (16-gauge IZH-27 and 32-gauge IZH-18) turned out to be unregistered in police department. The team rangers handed the illegal rifles over to Lazo police department.



On April 07-10, the state rangers in cooperation with a wildlife manager of Vyazemsky district patrolled Vyazemsky commercial hunting society. On April 07, the team arrested Mr. Slobodenuk with a rifle IZH-27. The arrested man did not have a permit to hunt and a gun license. The rangers confiscated the rifle and imposed a fine on the violator. Later on, near the Trety river the team rangers arrested Mr. Rudenko with a rifle IZH-27. The man did not have a permit to hunt. The rangers seized the rifle and imposed a fine.



© Inspection Tiger
Rangers found illegal fishing nets

On April 13-14, the Khabarovsk team and a police officer of Lazo district patrolled Lazovskoye hunting and fishing society. On April 13, Mr. Tkachenko was arrested for illegal waterfowl hunting. The rangers drew up a report and forwarded it to a wildlife manager of Lazo district to bring administrative action against the violator.

On April 23-24, the Khabarovsk team rangers, a wildlife manager of Lazo district, and fishing managers of Rosselkhoznadzor patrolled Lazovskoye hunting and fishing society. On April 24, the joint team drew up four reports on violations of fishing regulations and confiscated three rubber boats and seven fishing nets.



On May 06-10, the team in cooperation with the wildlife manager of Lazo district, fishing manager, and police officer patrolled Lazovsky hunting and fishing society. On May 06, the joint team arrested Mr. Peshkov for illegal hunting at salt-licks with illegal rifle TOZ-63 near the Dzyava river. The rangers confiscated the rifle and handed it over to Lazo police department, drew up a report and imposed a fine on the violator.



On May 07, a man was arrested for poaching a roe deer near the Katen river. The violator paid a fine for the damage

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Rangers draw up a report on poaching (big photo).
Metal bucket with wildlife meat (small photo)

caused to the nature.

On May 16-17, the Khabarovsk team, together with the fishing managers of Rosselkhoznadzor, patrolled along the Kiya river. As a result, two violations of fishing regulations were revealed.

On May 24-25, the joint team conducted a two-day patrol to reveal ecological violations in Lazovsky hunting and fishing society. On May 25, two men were arrested for illegal fishing on the Khor river.

On June 04-07, the team together with employees of Khabarovsk Department of Federal Nature Use Service, a hunting manager of Lazo district, a police officer and fishery rangers went down the Kafe river by boat. On June 06, the team stopped Mr. Fedulov in the mouth of



the Petrovskaya river for violation of hunting regulations in the Amur river basin and drew up a report against him. On June 07, in the vicinity of the Salanka river the officers made up a report against Mr. Nikiforov for illegal hunt.



On June 12-14, the team went on patrol with a gamekeeper of “Matai” hunting lease.

On June 14, close to the Borodkin creek the rangers saw a red deer poaching place. The hunting manager of Lazo district was commissioned to lead an administrative investigation.



On June 18-19, the team with a wildlife manager of Vyazemsky district started for a patrol in Vyazemsky state industrial farm. No violations were revealed.

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Rangers found “lobaz”, a hidden construction to hunt, and poached wildlife meat

On June 29-30, the rangers in cooperation with a police officer and fishery officers of Khabarovsk Department of Federal Service for

Veterinarian and Vegetation Sanitary Supervision headed down the Khor river. They imposed a fine and drew up a report against a man who carried a shotgun in the hunting grounds without a license.

**Table 1. Results of anti-poaching activities of Khabarovsky team, January – June 2007**

Activity	January - June 2007
I. Violations documented:	
1.1. Hunting	19
1.2. Fishing	9
1.3. Forest resources	1
1.4. Protected areas	-
1.5. Other	-
2. Illegal weapons seized and handed over to the police	15
3. Confiscated poaching devices:	
a) Fishing nets	7
b) Boats	3
4. Poached wildlife confiscated:	
4.1. Meat of Siberian stag	2
4.2. Sable	3
4.3. Squirrel	-
4.4. Roe deer meat	2
4.5. Duck	-
4.6. Wild boar	-
5. Initiated conflict tiger cases	4
6. Initiated criminal proceedings	3
7. Work with mass media	
TV features	2