

INTERIM REPORT FROM PHOENIX FUND

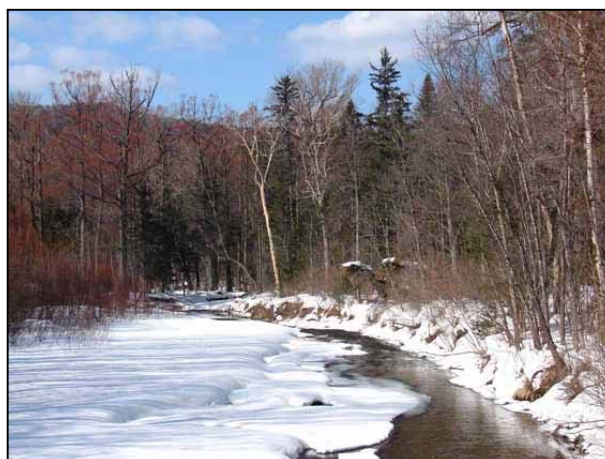
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| Grantor: | The Dreamworld Conservation Fund |
| Project Name: | Joint Anti-Poaching Activities in the South of Khabarovsk Krai |
| Grantee: | The Phoenix Fund |
| Report Period: | January 1 – June 30, 2009 |
| Grant Period: | January 1 – December 31, 2009 |

I. Project overview

The objective of the project is to ensure Amur tiger habitat protection and population survival in Primorsky and Khabarovsk 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.



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Spring in Khabarovsk Krai

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 neighbouring China. The catastrophic situation affected endangered population of Amur tigers. Thanks to anti-poaching activities of Inspection Tiger in Primorsky Krai and south of Khabarovsk Krai, tiger numbers have crept back to between 431 – 529. Three-man Khabarovsk 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

Staff

The team consists of two Inspection Tiger officers and a wildlife manager who have been working within the team for eight 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 Khabarovsk State Committee on Environmental Protection.



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Inspector checks hunter's gun license

Cooperation

The team cooperates with Environmental Prosecutor's Office (to initiate criminal proceedings efficiently), police departments of Khabarovsk city, Lazo and Vyazemsky districts and Federal Security Bureau specialists (to conduct joint patrols and initiate criminal proceedings), Fish and Hunting Departments of Rosselkhoznadzor, gamekeepers and employees of the protected areas (to conduct joint patrols, obtain 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, rubber motorboat, PC and notebook, and pistols for self-defense at its disposal. To increase the efficiency of team's work it is necessary to purchase:

- Off-road truck (GAZ-66, made in Russia);
- Double cabin mini-truck (made in Japan);
- Diesel jeep;
- Snowmobile and sledge;
- GPS car navigator;
- Big and small iron dismountable cages for animals;
- Satellite phone, 5 handheld radio stations and 2 automobile transceivers;
- 338 Win Magnum ; 9,3x62;
- Pneumatic rifle to immobilize animals and tranquilizers;
- Flare pistols, noise grenades, and signal mines;
- Night vision device;
- and shooting net gun.

Power

At present the primary goals of Inspection Tiger is keeping the Red Book (list of the endangered species) of the Russian Federation and control of observance the Strategy of Conservation of

Rare and Disappearing Animals, Plants and Mushrooms, approved by the Ministry of Natural Resources in 2004.

Anti-poaching methods

The main anti-poaching methods are as follows:

- 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 and near farmstead fields;
- Checking winter cabins after hunting season is closed;
- Tracking hunters in spring when there is thin crust of ice over snow;
- Alluring poachers by imitating stag's mating call that attracts female of the species in autumn. Usually, when a poacher hears such a roar, he took his gun and began hunting.

Additional activities

The Khabarovsky team investigated tiger-human conflicts whenever required. Sometimes, rangers repaired their vehicle by themselves. On average, they spent up to 10 days per month to do minor repairs, including repairs in the field. For large-scale repairs (axle, engine etc.) the team had its vehicle repaired at a repair service. In addition, the team carried out education and outreach project through giving lectures at schools and interviews to mass media.

Results

During the reported period the Khabarovsky team managed to conduct 23 joint patrols with journalists, wildlife managers, gamekeepers, fish inspectors, police officers and Federal Security Bureau officers. All in all, they seized nine hunting rifles, five citations were forwarded to police to investigate criminal proceedings, institute administrative proceedings against 22 violators. Also, the team captured an Amur tiger and transported it to Utyos Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre.

From January to June the team often had its patrol car repaired. The car is a complete write-off. The lack of a driver and an additional specialist also complicated the team's work. For example, it was a challenge for the team members to put a nonimmobilized tiger weighing 100 kg on a car without a special cage. They need aid but it was a danger to attract casual assistants. Another thing that very complicated the team's work is new rules on taking animals from the wild (as of February 25, 2009) that permit presence with an unloaded hunting rifle (cartridges in a pocket) in hunting grounds all the year round.

Plans for the future

The team will continue its collaboration with Phoenix Fund, law enforcement agencies, Hunting Management Department and Protected Areas Department of Khabarovsky krai, Fish Inspection, gamekeepers, civilians and mass media.

III. Anti-poaching activities

This project has been made possible in 2009 with the support from the Dreamworld Conservation Fund and the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and 21st Century Tiger. From January 1 to June 30, 2009 the team carried out 23 anti-poaching patrols, issued 26 citations on environmental violations, filed 22 administrative actions against violators, seized nine rifles and 100 kg of wild meat, captured one Amur tiger and transport it to Utyos Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre, initiated five criminal proceedings and gave nine interviews to journalists.

January

In January the Khabarovsky team carried out four anti-poaching patrols, revealed six violations of hunting regulations, and seized three illegal rifles.

On January 12, a joint patrol with an inspector of Khorsky Fish Inspection was conducted in the water protection zone of the Matay river. The team met with local residents and held talks on rules of human behaviour in tiger habitat.

On January 17-18, inspector Yanovsky went on a patrol with V. Vasiliev, an officer of PA Management Department. On January 18, after following a trail of footprints near the Trety Podkhorenok stream the team stopped V. Milukov with a carbine who was hunting for ungulates out of season. The officer of PA Management Department drew an administrative report and seized the gun. Later on, the carbine was handed over to the police office of Vyazemsky district. On the same day, the anti-poaching joint team followed human tracks near the Chetvyorty Podkhorenok stream and detained A. Sinitsin for illegal hunting. The inspector issued a citation and seized a gun. Afterwards, while patrolling on the car the team stopped a man walking on the road with a backpack who introduced himself as a resident of Shumny village Mr. Petrov, polypore gatherer. No gun or hunted bag was found with Petrov, although following his tracks the inspectors found an illegal carbine under a dead tree. The inspector drew up a report. Later on, a parked minivan was noticed down the road. When examining human footprints leading from the vehicle towards a stream, a rifle was discovered in a hollow of a tree 200 meters away from the road. The gun was withdrawn and handed over to the police office. The inspector drew up a report.



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Inspector examines a loading platform of hunter's truck

On January 21, a cameraman and a reporter of NTV channel joined the team during a patrol on the territory of Vyazemsky game farmstead. Near the Trety Podkorenok stream a hunter was detained for illegal hunting.

On January 26-27, a joint patrol with a police officer and a Fishing Inspection specialist was conducted in Lazovsky game farmstead. On January 27, near the Khasami river the inspector issued a citation on S. Bazhenov for illegal hunting without hunting permit. All documents were passed to Protected Areas Management Department for follow-up.

February

In February the Khabarovsky team carried out three patrols, revealed a violation of hunting regulation and three violations of fishing regulations. On February 2-6 and 9-12 the team had its patrol vehicle repaired.

On February 13-14 the inspectors went to Utyos Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre in Kutuzovka village to witness a postmortem examination of a tiger cub. The animal was transported to the Utyos a couple of days before for rehabilitation and further release back into the wild. Unfortunately, the young predator died suddenly. The postmortem revealed that the cub had died due to pneumonia.

On February 19-20 the Khabarovsky team members and wildlife managers conducted a joint patrol and stopped a GAZ-66 off-road vehicle near Medvezhy stream. A passenger with a rifle was made to pay a fine for illegal presence in hunting grounds during closed hunting season. Moreover, the man did not have a gun license.

On February 24-26, the patrol vehicle was repaired.

On February 27, a joint patrol with a fishing inspector was carried out along the Kiya river. During the patrol three violations of fishing regulations were revealed.

March



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Inspectors search a hunter's backpack

In March the Khabarovsky team held three patrols, revealed two hunting violations, made four administrative reports in cooperation with the police and one report in cooperation with Fish Inspection, and confiscated two smoothbore guns.

On March 5-6, there was a joint patrol with a police officer and a fish inspector on the territory of Lazovsky game farmstead. The inspectors examined a loggers' camp and found red deer meat. The cook said that the deer had been killed and partly eaten by a tiger, and they just took the rest of it. However, the rangers found an illegal gun that belonged to one of the loggers. The team made an administrative report on the man for keeping a

shotgun improperly. On March 6, the inspectors saw a fresh footprint and, following it, detained a man who was hunting ungulates out of season. What is noteworthy, he was detained a year ago for the same violation. The inspectors made an administrative report and withdrew the gun.

On March 19-20, in cooperation with a Fish inspector the team was on a patrol in Birsky Wildlife Refuge.

April

In April the team held four patrols, revealed three hunting violations, drew two administrative reports in cooperation with the police and a report in cooperation with Fishing Inspection from the Khorski district. The team withdrew three illegal smoothbore guns and 100 kg of poached meat. Also, the inspectors checked two messages on tiger presence near human settlements and captured a tiger that posed a threat to people.

On April 1-3, the team was on a patrol with two Fish Inspection specialists, a traffic policeman, and a Federal Security Bureau representative in Lazovsky game farmstead. On April 1, on a logging site the team found an illegal gun and passed it to a police station. Later, two poachers were detained for killing a red deer and a roe deer with illegal guns. An administrative report was made on one of the violators, and the other was subjected to criminal proceedings.

On April 2, the inspectors found red deer meat in a logging camp in the vicinity of the Sriedny Katen river. It turned out to be impossible to find out whom the meat belonged to. The team passed a report and poached products to the police.

On April 15-17, the team in cooperation with Fish Inspection patrolled down the Khor, Nemtu and Mukhen rivers. They met with the head of Mukhen village and had an explanatory talk on rules of behavior to avoid conflicts with tigers.

On April 22, Eduard Yanovsky, the team leader, got information that a tiger had come to the site of topographical works. Upon arrival on the scene, the inspectors questioned the workers and found out that the tiger had come to close proximity of the site. First, it was calm and then suddenly started growling and went away only when the people turned on a petrol-powered saw. The predator came for the second time and behaved in much the same way. The inspectors find out that the tiger had 8 cm (3.1 inches) paw width. According to the topographers, it looked very skinny. The inspectors gave recommendations to the people on how to avoid accidents with conflict tigers.

On April 27, the Khabarovsk Department of Federal Nature Use Service (Rosprirodnadzor) got information that a tiger, presumably knocked down by a vehicle, was hanging around the road occasionally attacking cars as they attempted to pass. Caught on camera by the Khabarovsk anti-poaching team, the tiger was eventually captured and taken to the Utyos Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre near Khabarovsk in order to prevent possible injury to both the tiger and people. Preliminary examination showed the predator was without any visible injuries though exhausted and inert. Eduard Kruglov, the rehab centre Director, did not deny the possibility of plague. Wildlife Conservation Society specialists headed for Khabarovsk to do detailed medical examination, determine the reason for such abnormal behaviour and take a decision about rehabilitation of the tiger. A thorough medical examination proved the tiger had no plague virus but most obviously poisoned itself with some unidentified substance. The young male tiger is being treated and fed fresh meat and milk to regain his strength. We do hope it will get better and will be released back into the wild.



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Tiger roaming on roads

May



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Inspectors remove fishing net from a river

In May the team realized five patrols, revealed a hunting violation and five fishing violations. On May 13-14, the inspectors were on a patrol in water protection zone of the Kiya river. They made a report on a man for carrying a gun during closed hunting period.

On May 16-17, the team was on a patrol along the Matai river, laid a night ambush but revealed no violations. On May 21, a fisherman was stopped for illegal catch of taimen (sort of salmon), goldilock and grayling fish. The total amount of damage equaled 50,000 roubles (\$ 1,563).

In May a logger was charged with a fine for repairing his tractor in the water protection zone

of the Khor river.

On May 27, the team found remnants of a wild boar, killed on a salt lick illegally made by man. The inspectors forwarded a report to the police for a check.

On May 31, two reports were made on fishing violations.

June

In June the team in cooperation with police officers and inspectors of Khorsky Fish Inspection conducted four car patrols.

On June 3-4 the joint team patrolled the area of Lazovskoye Hunters and Fishermen Society. On June 3, they laid a night ambush near forest road abutting Kutuzovka village in order to catch a hunter who had reportedly gone hunting at salt licks. Early morning the inspectors stopped a motorcyclist. He had neither hunting rifle nor wildlife products. When examining the salt lick the inspectors did not found signs of hunting, nevertheless they informed the motorcyclist that hunting without a permit is prohibited.

On June 12-13 the team, together with fishing manager, patrolled water protection zone of the Kiya river and issued three citations on fishing violations.

On June 18-19 the inspectors, fishing manager and police officer patrolled the area of Lazovsky gamel farmstead. On June 18, when searching a jeep near the Khodynka river, the inspectors found cartridges for a rifle. Officially, the jeep's driver did not possess a rifle. When the inspectors asked him to give them his ammunition voluntarily, he rejected to do it. The inspectors seized the cartridges, documented the violation and forwarded all materials to police office to initiate criminal proceedings. On June 19, the team stopped another jeep with a carbine inside. As the carbine's owner had a gun license, the inspectors gave an informative talk about a ban on hunting without a permit.

On June 25-26 the team patrolled along the water protection zone of the Matai river and issued two citations on fishing violations.

IV. Education activities

Art contest, design and publication of tiger calendar for 2010



© Phoenix Fund
Calendar's cover sheet

Publishing tiger calendars is already a tradition, which contributes to people's awareness about the Amur tiger and threats to its survival, and encourages children's creative work. When participating in art contests devoted to nature conservation, children try with much pleasure and interest to find out about a lifestyle of this and that animal, what problems animals face to survive in the wild and how people affect animals' state. Moreover, often parents join their kids during their preparations for the contest, and together they learn more interesting and unknown facts about wildlife.

In the beginning of the year 2009 art contests devoted to Amur tigers and their conservation were carried out at schools in Primorye. Over

420 children from six districts of Primorye, namely Terneisky, Pozharsky, Krasnoarmeisky, Lazovsky, Khasansky and Nadezhdinsky as well as from Vladivostok city, Arseniev and Ussuriisk towns sent their entries. The best tiger drawings were chosen for the calendar in the end of March. Our designer elaborated the design of the calendar putting schoolchildren's drawings and information on Amur tiger together. In June the calendars were published. Every contestant will receive a calendar. The rest calendars will be used for awarding young active ecologists, participants of various nature-oriented competitions and actions as well as winners of contests during Tiger Day-2009 that is to be held in Vladivostok on September 27.

Tiger Day in Bichevaya village (south of Khabarovsk krai)

One of the ways to make people conscious about ecological problems is wildlife festivals. In September 2000, Phoenix organized the first Tiger Day in Vladivostok, and within a year it developed into a wonderful festival that is celebrated across the country. The festival begins with a carnival procession, and is followed by theatrical performances, games and educational contests. Phoenix organizes Tiger Day Festivals in seven towns of Primorye. This year Phoenix plans to hold a holiday not only in Primorye, but also in Khabarovsk krai, namely Bichevaya village. At present time, preparatory work is being done. The holiday in Bichevaya village is scheduled on September 27, 2009.

ATTACHMENT

Results of anti-poaching activities of Khabarovsky team, January – June, 2009

| Activity | January – June 2009 |
|--|---------------------|
| I. Violations documented: | |
| 1.1. Hunting | 11 |
| 1.2. Fishing | 15 |
| 1.3. Forest resources | - |
| 1.4. Protected areas | - |
| 1.5. Other | - |
| 2. Weapons seized and handed over to the police | 6 |
| Illegal rifles | 3 |
| Legal rifles | |
| 3. Confiscated poaching devices: | |
| a) Fishing nets | - |
| b) Boats | 2 |
| 4. Poached wildlife confiscated: | |
| 4.1. Meat of Siberian stag | - |
| 4.2. Sable | - |
| 4.3. Squirrel | - |
| 4.4. Roe deer meat | - |
| 4.5. Wild cat | - |
| 4.6. Meat of Wild boar | 100 kg |
| 4.7. Meat of Manchurian deer | - |
| 5. Investigated conflict tiger cases | 1 |
| 6. Initiated criminal proceedings | 5 |
| 7. Work with mass media | |
| TV features | 9 |
| Newspapers | - |