



FINAL REPORT

Grantor: The Dreamworld Conservation Fund / 21 Century Tiger
Project Name: Anti-poaching activities in Lazovsky nature reserve in 2008/2009
Grantee: The Phoenix Fund
Report Period: September 1, 2008 – August 31, 2009
Grant Period: September 1, 2008 – August 31, 2009

The goal of the project is to create conditions to ensure the long-term protection of the Amur / Siberian tiger population, its prey and habitat in Lazovsky Nature Reserve / zapovednik, Primorye, Russian Far East.

Background

The Lazovsky Nature Reserve in the southeast of Primorsky region (about 250 km far from Vladivostok city) was established in 1935. This second biggest nature reserve in the region covers 121,000 hectares; its protected buffer zone is 15,000 hectares. Due to its peculiar relief and location, the reserve is home to 2,000 plant species of various geographical zones (e.g. taiga, tundra and even subtropical zone), 57 animal species and 319 birds. The protected area (PA) is famous for such rare animals as Amur tiger (also known as Siberian, Manchurian, Ussuri, North-Eastern Chinese tiger), goral and sika deer, as well as relict yew trees. The general extension of the reserve is 240 km, where included 36 km along the coast of the East Sea / Sea of Japan. The southeastern borders of the reserve are spread along the coast. The Lazovsky Reserve is composed of continental area and two islands in the East Sea / Sea of Japan, namely Petrov and Beltsov ones. Lazovsky Nature Reserve is one of the most beautiful places in Primorye with its mountains and waterfalls, taiga forest and islands.

This nature reserve is the most important area for Amur tiger conservation in the southern Sikhote-Alin mountain range. For the last 20 years the reserve has maintained the highest tiger density in southern Primorye and one of the highest in the whole tiger habitat. Nowadays, there are about 10-12 resident or constantly visiting tigers. One to three litters are born to resident tigresses annually. High prey densities and efficient anti-poaching and fire-fighting activities of the reserve promote high density of endangered Amur tigers.

Major and small roads surround the nature reserve. Besides, there are two big villages (Preobrazhenye village – 12,000 people and Lazo village – 2,500 people) close to it. Difficult economic situation and unemployment, especially in remote areas of the region, represent the biggest problems for conservation. Besides, the reserve borders upon numerous hunting leases, and it often happens that animals migrate and fall prey to hunters. The Lazovsky Nature Reserve still manages to hold back poaching in its territory and adjacent areas, but in order to improve its activities and strengthen protection of endangered wildlife of the reserve it is crucial to support the anti-poaching teams and improve their field equipment. This will allow to decrease the number of poachers/intruders and maintain high densities of the Amur tigers and other animals, as well as conserving the important habitat.

Nature reserves (*zapovedniks*) are perhaps the most important conservation areas. In Russia, the status of the nature reserve means that nobody can enter the reserve except for the wildlife, scientists, and rangers. All human activities are prohibited. It does not have a fence along its borders, but there are warning boards around it. Since 1995, the Lazovsky Nature Reserve is considered one of the best in Russia on the basis of their protection, education and outreach activities. But it is a state organization and the federal funding is not sufficient for efficient protection of the unique biodiversity there.



Since 2005 the Dreamworld Conservation Fund has been supporting anti-poaching activities of one of the Lazovsky Nature Reserve’s teams. Thanks to continued support from the Dreamworld Conservation Fund and 21st Century Tiger in 2008-2009, the anti-poaching team of Lazovsky Nature Reserve was provided with fuel and necessary equipment.

We present here for your consideration a final report on the activities carried out from the 1st of September 2008 to the 31st of August 2009.

Project activities



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Inspector writing a report on violation -
carrying a gun in the reserve

With the support from the Dreamworld Conservation Fund and 21st Century Tiger the anti-poaching team of Lazovsky Nature Reserve continued implementing its activities in 2008-2009.

For the twelve months of the grant period the protection division of the Lazovsky nature reserve made five reports on hunting violations, a report on a fishing violation, 42 reports on trespassing, 11 persons were stopped when picking wild plants inside the reserve; three smoothbore guns, 80 kg of poached wildlife and two whole poached animals were confiscated. Table in the Attachment I shows their results for the reported

period.

The four-people prompt response team and backup patrol teams worked to prevent and stop violations in the reserve. They also participated in tiger census and scared a tiger from Preobrazheniye village. The officers used UAZ all-terrain vehicle, motor boats, photo cameras, authorized arms and other necessary equipment. Most of the time they patrol the territory on foot. The prompt response team did shift work 10-11 days a month. The other patrol teams normally left for the patrol in the morning and returned in the evening. Sometimes the rangers made longer patrols of 2-3 days.

Special attention was paid to the coastal part of the reserve and forests along the coast, as two endangered species – goral and sika deer – live there. The sea was patrolled by motorboat. Also, the officers laid ambushes in the places of possible landing of violators.

In sum, the officers imposed fines in the amount of 54, 500 roubles (AUD \$2.080), already collected 32,000 roubles (AUD \$1,220), and imposed damage compensation in the amount of 40,000 roubles (AUD \$1,525). The officers initiated seven criminal proceedings, three violators were already were already sentenced.



© Phoenix Fund
Inspectors found a poached deer

With funds provided by the Dreamworld



Conservation Fund the inspectors were equipped with uniforms, repair parts for vehicles, batteries for radio stations, tires and tubes, accumulators, repair parts for blast engines, repair parts for pneumatic fire extinguishers, batteries, UPS and provided with fuel for patrols.

Here is a brief description of the monthly work:



© Lazovsky nature reserve
Inspectors clean forest fireproof roads

In September – November 2008, the inspectors of Lazovsky Nature Reserve conducted the anti-poaching activities in five groups of 4 people each and drew up 26 reports on illegal human presence in the PA. The groups were fully provided with proper equipment for their fieldwork such as communication facilities, firearm, four UAZ off-road vehicles and fuel. Every group worked for 20-22 days. Foot patrols were conducted along the borders of the nature reserve as well as in the depth of its territory. The near-shore zone was patrolled on the motorboats. Several ambushes were made in the spots of the most probable illegal intrusions by violators. The forestry's patrol teams together with the

inspectors of the Lazovsky Nature Reserve took protection measures against the local residents involved in illegal harvesting of the pine nuts. No mass intrusions into the reserve for pine nuts gathering were detected. However, the inspectors suppressed several attempts made by locals to harvest wild herbs there.

On October 13, 2008 the anti-poaching team seized an armed poacher with meat of sika deer. After investigation he was convicted to six-months correctional works with 10% of his salary going to the state.

In November, the court hearings of the Prigodsky's case as of July 2008 took place in Lazo. Prigodsky was detained on July 24-25 with meat of a sika deer (listed in Russia's Red Book as endangered species) in the reserve. He was found guilty of illegal hunting, was imposed a fine of 10,000 roubles (260 AUD) and had to pay reparation of damages in the amount of 20,000 roubles (520 AUD).



© Phoenix Fund
On a patrol

In December there was a sitting of the court on Mr. Bogach's case who had been charged with killing a sika deer inside Lazovsky Nature Reserve back in 2007, but had been avoiding the court all that time. Finally, he was sentenced to six months of community work with 10% income going to the State. All in all, he had to pay 20,000 roubles (520 AUD) restitution.

In December 2008 – January 2009 the anti-poaching team of Lazovsky Nature Reserve revealed two poaching cases, stopped three trespassers and confiscated meat of two poached Himalayan /Asiatic Black bears (classified as endangered species and listed on Appendix I of CITES). The team passed the reports to the police for initiating two criminal procedures. The trespassers paid a fine of 20 AUD each.



In winter due to heavy snowfalls the teams found violators easily following their footprints and car tracks, using a snowmobile.

From the beginning of the year 2009 the Reserve was in urgent need of funds to carry on its protection activities. It is sad to note that financing from the federal budget was postponed due to aftermath of the global financial crisis and the reserve's staff have not received their salary for the first quarter of the year. At this juncture, the support from the Dreamworld Conservation Fund and 21st Century Tiger was highly significant for the Reserve.

On January 22, the inspectors apprehended two brothers, who were going out of the reserve with meat of two poached Himalayan / Asiatic Black bears. The reserve guards called for police officers to register the revealed violation and initiate criminal proceedings.

The anti-poaching team worked effectively in the reserve and in the adjacent Preobrazhensky forestry. As a result, unauthorized entries into the reserve were reduced to minimum. In February protection activities was implemented by the Reserve's team of 4 people and two teams of Lazovsky forestry. The teams patrolled on foot and patrol vehicle on the periphery of the PA. After heavy snowfalls the teams used snowmobile to patrol the territory. Regular patrols proved to be effective. Only once the guards detained a man for trespassing. The violator paid a fine of 1,000 rubles (26 AUD).



© Phoenix Fund
Galina Salkina,
Lazovsky Nature Reserve specialist,
uses flares to deter the tigers away



© Phoenix Fund
Confiscated poached meat

The reserve's inspectors also took part in a tiger count and participated in resolution of conflict tiger cases. They tried to scare three 7-9-month-old tiger cubs away from Preobrazhenye village that is located close to the reserve. The cubs were preying on dogs on the outskirts of Preobrazhenye village. All in all, ten dogs disappeared from the villagers' yards in January. Local people were scared of the tigers and kept their dogs on a leash. The reserve's staff used 12 rocket signal flares to deter the predators.

During the first week of February Preobrazhenye village was still beset by three tiger cubs. As luck would have it, the tigers presented no threat to human life. On February

4, tiger tracks were found around local water supply point. Also, tiger tracks were discovered on the opposite side of the village near the houses. In February, the striped predators killed one more dog at one of the yards, dragged it away and ate it up in taiga. The specialists of Lazovsky Nature Reserve tried to find out why the cubs were wandering within a month without their mother. When tracking the young predators the scientists sometimes found tracks that belonged to an adult tigress. Although, it was not clear whether it was their mother or just a tigress that was roaming alone. It was obvious that the cubs would survive in taiga on their own. They managed to kill a sika deer and ate it. But it was quite clear that dogs were the easiest prey for them. Therefore, the specialists of Lazovsky Nature Reserve drove around the village on a



regular basis and used flares to scare the tigers away deep into the forest where ungulates abound.

In winter, the inspectors participated several times in search of people who got lost in the taiga. Also, the anti-poaching team paid much attention to the protection of Korean pine forests. On December 20, 2008 – January 10, 2009 they worked in two groups of nine people in Kievsky and Preobrazhensky forestry areas. Eighteen times during two months they laid ambushes at night in the places where poachers were often met before. No violations were revealed.

In March – May the team of four people together with two mobile groups patrolled the reserve. The patrols resulted in arrest of four men for trespassing the borders of the protected area. The inspectors patrolled on foot inside and along the perimeter of the reserve. To come through the rough terrain they used a snowmobile. Since mid-April ungulates (deer, wild boars) start coming to salt licks, so the anti-poaching brigades paid special attention to them, inside the reserve and on adjacent territories. They destroyed illegal salt licks made by poachers to attract bag. While checking one of the licks, the inspector found a dead female sika deer caught in a snare. They buried the animal and removed the snare.



© Phoenix Fund
Team found an illegal salt lick

Thanks to regular patrols the number of illegal intrusions into the protected area was minimized. In spring the team managed to put out two forest fires occurred in the reserve. The fires appeared to be caused by uncontrolled burns by farmers.

In early May in the result of an oil spill the coastline of the reserve was polluted, especially Prosyolochnaya and Zarya Bays. In total, 54 tons of sand mixed with oil was removed by the reserve staff. The shoreline of the protected area was threatened with re-contamination if the wastes were not taken away promptly. In case of strong windstorm the dangerous

pollutants could appear again in the sea, and if the weather was hot the plastic bags could start leaking and the oil might penetrate deeply into the soil. There was an urgent need to remove the oily waste from the reserve's shoreline and transport it to a special plant in Vladivostok city for final disposal. Destruction by incineration was impossible as the oil was mixed with considerable amounts of solid material, such as sand, wood, plastic or seaweed. Unfortunately, Lazovsky NR did not have special mechanical equipment to transport the collected wastes. Therefore, Phoenix appealed to the public to help the reserve's staff with tackling the problem. People could help using various ways: any "NTK" subscriber could send an sms to a number 9110 in terms of recently launched SMS-Project "HELP!", the others could make a donation to the Reserve via Phoenix or took part in oil recovery operation as a volunteer. All raised funds were immediately transferred to cover transportation costs of the recovered wastes and their disposal.

The reserve's specialists assisted the investigators with revealing the fact of illegal hunting in the adjacent area and identifying wild meat found by the police officers. As a result, it was determined that a sika deer listed in Russia's Red Data Book had been killed.



© Phoenix Fund
Removing oil spills from the coast

In May-June 2009 the team worked in cooperation with staff members of other forest organizations and revealed five illegal intrusions into the protected area. In the end of May abundant human footprints were found near the Svobodnaya river. It was decided to lay an ambush at the place. On June 3, the ambush resulted in arrest of a young man who had entered the reserve illegally to hunt. The violator had a gun and backpack. The guards called for police. The detainee turned out to have been subject to administrative and criminal punishment for poaching in the protected area. After the detention the inspectors continued waiting

in a concealed position and on June 10 they detained two brothers who intruded the area in order to hunt. These men had been subject to administrative and criminal punishment too. They were taken to Lazovsky police office.

In May, the protection division of the reserve repaired two roads necessary for fire-fighting deep in the reserve, cleared boundary throughcuts and fixed 150 warning signs.

Starting from June till August the reserve's guards conducted many-day patrols deep into the reserve to prevent trespassing by people who gather ginseng roots, fern and ramson (*Allium ursinum*). The teams went on 4-5 day patrols, 3-4 people each. Two or three teams worked simultaneously, which helped to prevent illegal ginseng digging. As a result, four people were detained for illegal intrusion.

In August – September patrols number was increased in the neighbouring bays where many people came on vacation. The reserve rents these beaches to have additional income.

For the reported period the reserve staff put out two large burnings 300 ha. Their reason was uncontrolled agricultural grassland fires on the nearby fields.

In 2009 the anti-poaching brigades revealed and forwarded to investigatory powers five reports on hunting violations. One of the poachers was made to pay a fine of 5,000 roubles (\$166). The reserve authorities appealed against the court's decision as the punishment was too mild. The court studies the appeal but stuck to its first verdict.



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Egret on a lake

Court examination of Bogatch two brothers was postponed till October 2009 as one of them is serving a sentence for the previous violation. Another two criminal cases initiated against Pryakhin brothers, who poached two Himalayan bears, were temporarily suspended.

Several years ago the Lazo Nature Reserve Director introduced a bonus system to encourage those inspectors who were most active in revealing violations. This year approximately AUD \$2,000 was spent for this purpose.



Acknowledgement

We would like to thank the Dreamworld Conservation Fund and the 21st Century Tiger for continuous interest in wildlife conservation in the Far East of Russia and invaluable financial support that enables us to reinforce our anti-poaching activities and make them more efficient.

**ATTACHMENT I**Results of anti-poaching activities in Lazovsky nature reserve, September 2008 – August 2009

Activity	September 2008 – August 2009
I. Violations documented:	
1.1. Hunting	5
1.2. Fishing	1
1.3. Intrusion	42
1.4. Gathering wild plants	11
1.5. Logging	-
2. Weapons confiscated and handed over to the police	3
3. Wildlife products confiscated/discovered:	
3.1. Dead sika deer	1 whole animal + 80 kg of meat
3.2. Himalayan black bear	2
3.3. Musk deer	
3.4. Wild boar	
4. Initiated criminal proceedings	7
5. Protocols forwarded to the police and Prosecutor's office for criminal procedure	7
6. Poaching devices confiscated:	
6.1. Traps	
6.2. Fishing devices	1 spear
6.3. Snare	
7. Extinguished fires	2
8. Convicted persons	3
9. Fines imposed	54,500 roubles AUD \$2,080
10. Restitution imposed	40,000 roubles (AUD \$1,525)



**Financial statement on the funds from the Dreamworld Conservation Fund
spent on anti-poaching activities in Lazovsky nature reserve in 2008/2009**

Item	Sum, AUD
1. Field expenses	4,320
2. Uniforms	3,051
3. Fuel	5,278
4. Repair parts for vehicles	3,102
5. Batteries for radio stations	580
6. Rangers' station repair	95
7. Tires and tubes	299
8. Accumulators	299
9. Repair parts for blast engines	167
10. Repair parts for pneumatic fire extinguishers	50
11. Batteries, UPS	36
14. Awards/bonuses for revealed violations	2,073
12. Law enforcement project coordinator	2,799
13. Overhead (transportation, communication, banking, office expenses)	933
Total:	23,082



ATTACHMENT II

