



21ST CENTURY TIGER
giving wild tigers a future

Phoenix Fund Anti-poaching activities in Lazovsky nature reserve in 2007/2008

**Final report
September 01, 2007 – August 31, 2008**



**Vladivostok
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FINAL REPORT

Grantor: The Dreamworld Conservation Fund / 21 Century Tiger
Project Name: Anti-poaching activities in Lazovsky nature reserve in 2007/2008
Grantee: The Phoenix Fund
Report Period: September 01, 2007 – August 31, 2008
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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 with its boreal forest is an area now considered to be one of the most important nature reserves in Russia. The forests of the Russian Far East are home to the Siberian/Amur tiger - the largest cat in the world. But the tiger's habitat is threatened through deforestation, poaching, urban expansion, and conversion to agriculture – to name just the key threats to this region.

The Lazovsky Nature Reserve in the southeast of Primorsky region, on the Sea of Japan, was established in 1935. This second biggest nature reserve in the region covers 121,000 hectares; its protected buffer zone is 15,000 hectares. Situated on the eastern slopes of the Sikhote-Alin mountain range, this nature reserve is rich in rare and endangered animals and plants. This nature reserve is the most

important area for Amur tiger conservation in the southern Sikhote-Alin. 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.

Nature reserves are perhaps the most important conservation areas. The status of the nature reserve means that nobody can enter the reserve except for the wildlife, scientists, and rangers. All human activity is prohibited. It does not have a fence along its borders, but there are warning boards around it. Since 1995, the Lazovsky nature reserve is



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 Lazovsky nature reserve



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.

Major and small roads surround the nature reserve. Besides, there are two big towns (Preobrazheniye town – 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. The Lazovsky Nature Reserve still manages to hold back poaching on 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 an important habitat.



© Lazovsky nature reserve
Mountains of the reserve



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Protection division on a patrol

Since 2005 the Dreamworld Conservation Fund has been supporting anti-poaching activities of one of the Lazovsky Nature Reserve teams. From September 2007 to August 2008 the team revealed seven hunting violations, two violations of fishing regulations, four cases of illegal logging, 33 cases of trespassing into the reserve, confiscated 15 illegal weapons and initiated five criminal procedures.

Compared to the previous years, we observe that during the reported period the reserve's team confiscated a significant number of firearms, and cooperation between the reserve and Prosecutor's and police offices strengthened. Big numbers of the confiscated

rifles (15 items) in no way means that nowadays more people enter the reserve illegally. There are no objective reasons for this. The figure shows that protection regime in the reserve has improved, leading to efficient detection of crimes. Additionally, more fines were imposed on violators in comparison with previous years. Although the protection activities have improved, there is a negative aspect. The matter is that criminals do not like such situation and have started to press on the reserve's guards. For example, in May a ranger from the reserve protection unit was severely beaten by strangers, undoubtedly forest mafia or related criminal circles. Despite the threats from criminals, the reserve's teams continue their arduous work to suppress poaching in the reserve and its buffer zone.

Analysis of anti-poaching activities

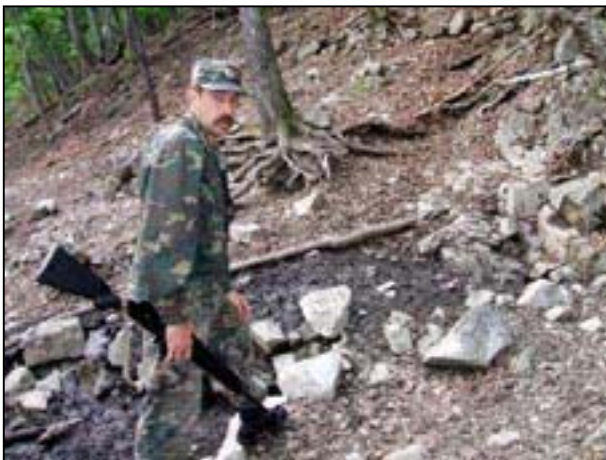
During the reported period the reserve's inspectors worked in the protected area in teams of 4 - 5 people. Two or three teams were always on-site. The participation of other law enforcement



organizations in protecting activities in the nature reserve was insignificant. For example, police officers were involved just in several patrols. In some cases investigators and district police officers were drawn in. Unfortunately, there is no public brigade working in the protected area. Supposedly, the participation of public inspectors (civilians) in anti-poaching activities, especially during the summer season, would be highly effective.

Thanks to support from the Dreamworld Conservation Fund and 21 Century Tiger, the anti-poaching team of Lazovsky nature reserve was well equipped. Most of the reserve's guards were provided with protective clothing and footwear for working in the forest any time of the year. The vehicles were being kept up on-the-run, all the other machinery and equipment are in the operative condition. As the majority of patrol vehicles and equipment were purchased long ago, it is necessary to replace out-of-date machinery in the near future. In 2009 it would be desirable to buy a UAZ vehicle for the protected area (PA) or another of the similar type. Some of the radio stations need to be replaced as well. Also, navigators, blower pumps and batteries for the radio stations are required. It is a permanent need to purchase new working clothes and footwear.

The anti-poaching methods have not changed. In snowless season the main activities were foot patrolling and laying the ambushes in spots where violators were most likely to appear. The foot patrolling were conducted either along the boundary of the nature reserve or in the depth of the protected area in order to detect the presence of ginseng collectors, illegally gathering the rare and valuable plant in the reserve. Despite the fact that several people were detained, it was impossible to prove their implication in gathering wild ginseng. According to the violators they were just admiring the scenery and got lost.



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Foot patrol

Patrols along the reserve's border were held basically to reveal poaching. With the same purpose temporary or stationary ambushes were made near the places of most probable poachers' intrusions, mainly the closest to settlements, near the places of seasonal accumulation of ungulates, and near the salt licks or pathways. To avert illegal hunting by boat, the reserve's guards conducted patrols on foot or by a motorboat along the west coast. Although no violation was revealed there, it would be helpful to establish hidden stationary observation points on the shore and accompany it with motorboat patrols for more efficient work.

In the period of snowfalls, when it was easy to find violators' footprints, car patrols were carried out, as there are roads along the reserve's perimeter. Snowmobiles were used in difficult-to-access areas.

From the second half of December 2007 special attention was paid to the protection of coniferous younglings, with foot patrolling prevailed. Four cases of illegal logging were determined. Violators were detained and made to pay fines. During the salmon spawning, foot patrols were conducted along the spawning rivers in the nature reserve. One violator was caught entering the reserve with an aim to get salmon trout. The inspectors seized a harpoon and imposed a fine on him, although the violator did not catch fish.



The spring was dry. From the end of March till early May there was numerous forest fires in the neighboring territories. Some of the conflagrations threatened to overcome the borders of the nature reserve. All the main teams were thrown to fight with the fire. For the reported period the reserve's inspectors extinguished fifteen fires and inflammations on the area close to the PA and extinguished two fires directly in the reserve. Only with the rains started in the middle of May it became possible to shift the forces onto the anti-poaching activities in the reserve.



© Lazovsky nature reserve

A hunting rifle abandoned in the reserve

During the reported period six violators were arrested, eight illegal weapons and two poached sika deer were confiscated. In two cases, though violators were detained in the PA with rifles, investigators refused to initiate criminal proceeding, and they were brought to administrative responsibility. In two other cases it did not turned out well to detain violators hunting illegally in the reserve, however they dropped their guns during the pursuit. The guns turned out to be carbines with silencers. It was the first time the reserve's inspectors managed to withdraw such kind of arms.

In 2008, new fines for Red Book species kill were approved. So, for the kill of a tiger the penalty would be 500,000 rubles (\$19,305), and for sika deer – 30,000 rubles (\$1,158). Hopefully, this would have a beneficial effect on anti-poaching activities.

In comparison with a previous year the achievements of the anti-poaching team have slightly improved, but still it leaves much to be desired.

Plans for the future:

1. Further improvement of the anti-poaching methods;
2. Arrangement of effective training system for state inspectors;
3. Creation of two anti-poaching teams in the nature reserve;
4. Further purchasing of field equipment;
5. Increase in wages of state inspectors and improvement of working conditions.

Project activities

With the support from the Dreamworld Conservation Fund and 21 Century Tiger the anti-poaching team of Lazovsky Nature Reserve continues implementing its activities in 2007-2008. Table in the attachment shows its results for the reported period.

For the period September-November 2007 the reserve's guards filed charges on three illegal hunters, an illegal fisherman, six men that intruded onto the reserved territory on foot or by car. The rangers confiscated a homemade rifled gun, two smoothbore guns and a



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At camp



harpoon. They discovered a poached sika deer and a Himalayan bear. A criminal procedure has been initiated for illegal hunt.



© Lazovsky nature reserve
Musk deer found dead

a double barrel gun with cartridges and an accumulator light. The violator did not deny his guilt. He showed the place where he had hidden a deer head, skin and hooves. The rangers forwarded the reports and the material evidence to the police.

The rangers discovered a killed bear in the forest; a criminal remained unknown.

In December during a December 08-15 patrol, the law enforcement team of Lazovsky Nature Reserve filed charges against four illegal loggers, two hunters and two men who illegally entered the reserved territory. They withdrew rifles and smoothbore shotguns. Two criminal cases were initiated against poachers. During the holidays season patrols were conducted more intensively, three anti-poaching teams worked all at once on the territory.

In early October the reserve’s protection division got a tip that a certain Mr. Bogach and his friends came to Svobodnoye village to hunt. The rangers already had some information on the man: namely that he had no licensed gun and was not a member of any hunting society. Despite this he penetrated onto the reserved territory with a view to dig out ginseng. Once the team stopped him and filed charges for violation of reserved regime. There was not enough evidence to register ginseng poaching. This time with the help of communicants the officers spotted and detained Mr. Bogach at night near its most recent bag – a sika deer, listed in the Red Book of Russian Federation. He was caught red-handed: with meat, a knife,



© Lazovsky nature reserve
Accident during a patrol

more intensively, three anti-poaching teams



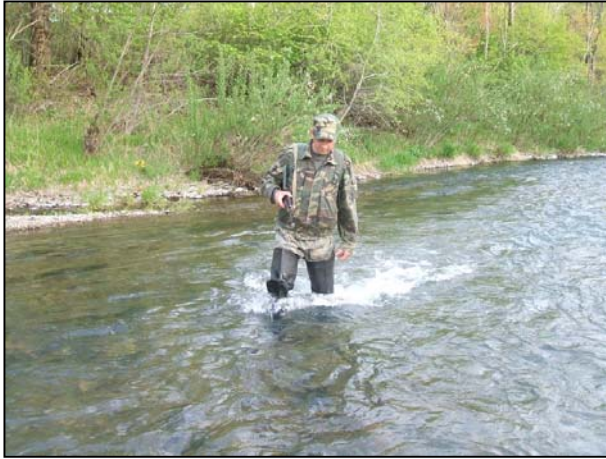
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Tracking violators

On December 01, rangers noticed signs of illegal entrance into the reserve near Sokolovka natural landmark. They laid an ambush by the boundary and several hours later apprehended two armed men. Special attention was paid to protection of young conifers during the holiday season. Four cases of illegal logging were revealed.

A dead sika deer was found in the reserve. Bloodstains led to the feeding ground of “Medved” (Bear) hunting grounds bordering the reserve. The officers called for the police that proceed with investigation.



In January – February the protection division of the reserve stopped six trespassers and confiscated a rifled gun. The detainees wanted to hunt within Lazovsky forestry. The work was organized by groups of 3-5 officers. Three teams at a time operated in the field. All the rangers are fitted with field equipment: radio stations, authorized guns, “UAZ” off-road vehicles, and fuel for them. Patrols were done both along the boundaries and deep into the forest. Costal areas were patrolled on foot. During hunting season more rangers were involved at the same time, and each ten days they spent four-five days in the forest. Their activities on the sanctuary protection proved very efficient. Thanks to timely patrols the reserve animal world did not suffer any considerable losses.



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Everyday difficulties

In March the team patrolled the reserve on a regular basis to prevent wildlife crimes and maintain efficient protection regime. On March

25, the rangers saw two armed people. After a long chase the violators managed to escape throwing away their guns. The officers picked them up and passed on to the police station together with a report on the violation. In March the team extinguished five burnings on the territories adjacent to the reserve and one inside the reserve.

In April-May the inspectors of Lazovsky nature reserve patrolled the area by teams of 3-5 people, with two-three mobile groups constantly on the alert. The teams were equipped with proper clothing, communication devices, food and other necessities to protect the territory. In the end of March, April and early May there were numerous forest fires in the areas adjacent to the reserve. Nine forest fires were extinguished in the neighboring territories and two forest fires were put out inside the nature reserve.

During snowless seasons the patrolling by car did not have a big effect, therefore the inspectors patrolled mainly on foot the perimeter and the core of the reserve as well as the costal zone of the protected area. They conducted 4-5-day patrols to inspect area from Preobrazheniye village to Cape Kit (Whale) and regularly laid ambushes near natural salt licks, possible spots of illegal intrusion of armed violators. As a result, the inspectors found some signs of illegal people’s trespassing, but did not manage to detain intruders.



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Fires threaten the reserve

In May a ranger from the reserve protection unit was severely beaten by strangers, undoubtedly forest mafia or related criminal circles. He was threatened with murder. The police started a criminal case. The victim was under treatment at Vladivostok regional hospital.



In June the team patrolled by three groups of 3-4 people. Each group spent 20 days in patrols. The inspectors patrolled mainly on foot the perimeter and the core of the reserve as well as the costal zone of the protected area with use of motorboat. Two illegal intrusions into the reserve were revealed. Each violator paid a fine of \$85USD. While patrolling Goraly cape, the team found and destroyed an unauthorized fresh water intake for ships. In July-August the team continued patrolling the reserve and the buffer zone.

Acknowledgement

Phoenix Fund thanks most sincerely the Dreamworld Conservation Fund/21 Century Tiger for continuous interest in wildlife conservation in the Far East of Russia and invaluable financial support that enables us to make our anti-poaching activities realizable and more efficient.

**ATTACHMENT**Results of anti-poaching activities in Lazovsky nature reserve, September 2005 – August 2008.

Activity	September 2005 – August 2006	September 2006 – August 2007	September 2007 – August 2008
I. Violations documented:			
1.1. Hunting	11	2	7
1.2. Fishing	1	4	2
1.3. Intrusion	20	45	33
1.4. Gathering wild plants	1	3	0
1.5. Logging	-	3	4
2. Illegal weapons confiscated and handed over to the police	3	2	15
3. Wildlife products confiscated/discovered:			
3.1. Dead sika deer	2	1	2
3.2. Himalayan black bear			1
3.3. Dead musk deer			1
3.4. Wild boar	2		
4. Initiated criminal proceedings	3	1	5
5. Protocols forwarded to the police and Prosecutor's office for criminal procedure	-	-	6
6. Poaching devices confiscated:			
6.1. Traps		3	0
6.2. Fishing devices		2	2
6.3. Snare	8		
7. Extinguished fires	-	-	17
8. Convicted persons	6	1	3
9. Fines imposed	13,500 roubles (\$521)	15,400 (\$594)	48,900 roubles (\$1,888)