

Phoenix Fund

Wildlife Conservation in the Russian Far East in 2010: Western anti-poaching team

Final report
January – December 2010



Phoenix Fund
Suite 409, 2 Petra Velikogo Street,
Vladivostok 690091, Russia
Phone: +7-4232-205053 , Fax +7-4232-205048
E-mail: fund@phoenix.vl.ru
Website: www.phoenix.vl.ru



I. Project Overview

Tigers, which numbered 100,000 worldwide a century ago, are now estimated at just 3,200, mostly in India, Russia and Indonesia. A drastic fall in tiger numbers was caused by rapid economic growth, poaching and habitat loss.

The Amur tiger (also known as the Siberian tiger) once roamed the forests and mountains of the Russian Far East by the hundreds. But hunting and trade destroyed them, and by 1940, when Lev Kaplanov, the director of a Russian nature preserve, did the first scientific count, he found only 20 to 30. By 1948, the Soviet government had outlawed tiger hunting and there was little means or reason to violate the law. Guns were strictly controlled, the border with China was very much closed, preventing trafficking, and the sale of tiger parts was prohibited. As the Soviet Union slowly crumbled into chaos, however, those controls disappeared, replaced by poverty that encouraged hunting and a ready market in nearby China, where tiger parts are valued for folk medicine. From 1995 to 2005 the number of Amur tigers was increased to 500 thanks to comprehensive tiger conservation measures.

However, in October 2009, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) reported about Amur tiger's decline. Given that tigers reflect the health of the ecosystems in which they live and on which people depend, it was necessary to take immediate and urgent actions, otherwise wild tigers would disappear forever. "Tigers need three things," said Dale Miquelle, Director of WSC-Russia. "They need space. They need their habitat and prey protected - deer and wild boar. And they need laws against poaching vigorously enforced. It's a very simple formula. It's very doable."

In this regard, thanks to timely support kindly provided in 2010 by the Kolmarden

Fund Raising Foundation, the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and 21st Century Tiger, we took measures to reinforce capacity of the Western anti-poaching team of regional Game and Rare Species Department (also known as Primorsky Hunting Management Department). The team has been operating in five northern districts of Primorye, still rich in wildlife and cedar forests and representing historic range of Amur tigers.

During the reported period the Western team achieved good results, but the team's leader Alexander Samoilenko believes that the outcomes could have been much better. According to him, low fines for wildlife crimes (up to \$33) reduce to zero their protection efforts. "A hunter can pay a low fine and poach again", Alexander says. "As a rule, nowadays poachers are equipped with all-terrain vehicles (4WD jeeps, snowmobiles, paragliders), firearms and communication devices much better than law enforcement officers. And for such poachers a fine of \$33 is a mere thing. More drastic measures need to be taken. We need tougher sanctions such as revocation of hunt permit or imposition of high fines for wildlife crimes. And there has to be strong political will to conserve tigers".

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin knows well that there is a need for tougher sanctions for tiger poaching and its prey to preserve the royal beast. Speaking at a conference organised by his United Russia party in Khabarovsk Putin agreed that the fine of \$33-48 for tiger poaching was too small. Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov, who was accompanying Putin on the tour, told reporters that Russian Ministry of Natural Resources had already tabled a bill providing for harsher punishment for poaching and illegal hunting. "It includes separate articles on tigers and leopards, stipulating harsher punishment for poaching, including arrest and imprisonment," Ivanov said.



We are hopeful that after a tiger protection program has been taken under personal control by Putin, Amur tigers have more chances for survival in Russia.

Below, we present our final report on anti-poaching activities conducted by the Western team from January through December 2010.

II. Project Implementation

Support for Western wildlife managers' team

Initially, the Western wildlife managers' team was headed by Rosselkhoznadzor¹ and was responsible for preventing and revealing poaching and illegal logging. Unfortunately, since the 1st of January 2008, as a result of an administrative reform in Russia, Rosselkhoznadzor partly lost its law enforcement rights. The local Primorsky Krai government became



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Checking hunter's documents

responsible for protection of both forests and fauna within the province. And Rosselkhoznadzor was empowered to control the new Game and Rare Species Department (GRSD) and check how inspectors protect forest and wildlife resources. When the GRSD was established in January 2008, it had only 19 staff members, but later it became

¹Rosselkhoznadzor – Russian Federal Veterinary and Phytosanitary Monitoring Service

possible to recruit more officers (up to 43) with money from regional budget. Alexander Samoilenko, leader of the Western team, applied to be included as a staff member of the new fauna protection department. And due to bureaucratic procedure for getting approval of his candidacy for leader of GRSD' anti-poaching unit, Alexander was included in



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Team found poached prey in a car

the department and received law enforcement rights only in the beginning of the year 2009 and could start working in February 2009.

From January 1st through December 31st 2010, the team patrolled five districts of Primorye, namely Dalnerechensky, Pozharsky, Krasnoarmeisky, Kirovsky and Terneisky, and showed good results: it conducted 98 patrols, revealed 63 violations of nature protection regulation, confiscated three poached roe deer, two red deer and two Himalayan bears, two ducks and a pheasant, and seized 15 illegal rifles and 13 traps. Five criminal proceedings were initiated (see Table 1).

From January through April the Western team in cooperation with police officers patrolled in Dalnerechensky, Pozharsky and Krasnoarmeisky administrative districts of Primorye, conducted 18 many-day patrols, revealed 23 violations, including 19 hunting violations and four unauthorized logging, seized three illegal rifles, and initiated five criminal proceedings. Sometimes representatives



of local media joined the team to cover its anti-poaching work.

On January 3, while patrolling hunting grounds near Salskoye village, Dalnerechensky district, the team detained a man with a 16-gauge smoothbore firearm for hunting without a hunt permit, hunt license and gun license. The inspectors issued an administrative citation, seized the shotgun to hand it over to Dalnerechensky police station and imposed a fine of 2,000 roubles (\$68).

During a patrol on January 22, in Dalnerechensky district the team apprehended a man with a 12-gauge shotgun for hunting without a hunt permit and license. The violator was made to pay a fine of 1,000 roubles (\$34).

On February 10, when patrolling along the boundaries between Dalnerechensky and Kirovsky districts, the team revealed an unauthorized cutting of oak. Violators tried to disappear from the scene by DT-74 tractor, which was shortly found 8 km away from the logging site. Later, a tractor's owner and organizer of the illicit logging was apprehended and taken to Kirovsky police station for further investigation.

On February 20, a man with a rifle was detained on hunting grounds of Krasnoarmeisky district, 30 km away from Tayozhnoye village, for deer hunting during a closed season. The inspectors issued an administrative citation and made the violator pay a fine of 2,000 roubles (\$68).

The same day later the team apprehended a man from Spassky district who came to hunt near Tayozhnoye village by van. A search inside revealed fresh meat of red and roe deer and a rifle. It was obvious that hunting had taken place during a closed season. The violator paid a 2,000-rouble (\$68) fine for illegal hunting and

8,000-rouble (\$272) restitution value for wildlife.

In the evening one more violation was revealed close to Tayozhnoye village. A local was detained for illegal hunting. When searching his car the inspectors found red deer meat. The man did not have a hunt license. The inspectors issued an administrative citation and imposed a fine of 2,000 roubles (\$68).

Besides anti-poaching activities, the team members also participated in wildlife census that took place in January – February on hunting grounds of Polyana and Dalnerechensky hunting leases.

On March 15, during a routine patrol in Dalnerechensky district the team revealed an authorized cutting of Korean pine and oak trees. Four loggers were apprehended and taken to Dalnerechensky police station for further investigation. A criminal proceeding was initiated.



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An illegal logging site discovered

On March 20, when patrolling near Malinovo village, Dalnerechensky district, the team discovered an illegal logging site. Following footprints left on the snow the inspectors managed to detain a man with a wireless station. The man was taken to Dalnerechensky police station for further investigation. A criminal proceeding was initiated.



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**Inspector Roman Kozhichev
makes a report on poacher**

On March 24, an unauthorized cutting of Korean pine was revealed near Glubinnoye village. People involved in illegal woodcutting scattered in all directions as they saw the inspectors approaching them. The inspectors informed Krasnoarmeisky police station about the fact.

On March 29, a resident of Dalnerechensk town was detained with a 12-gauge shotgun for hunting during a closed season. The inspectors issued an administrative citation and imposed a fine of 1,000 roubles (\$34) on him.

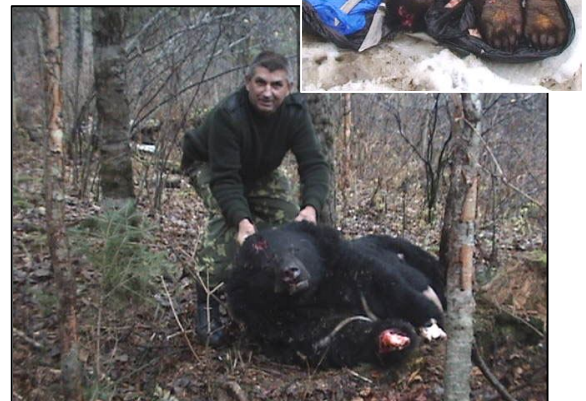
On March 30, the team together with employees of Krasnoarmeisky Prosecutor's Office conducted a joint patrol and apprehended two groups of people for unauthorized cutting of Korean pine, oak and ash tree. There were two Husquarna chain saws and two dragging tractors found on the scene. Additionally, two skins and meat of roe deer was discovered there. A task force of Krasnoarmeisky police station was sent to the scene for further investigation. An executive director of logging enterprise was brought to court for illegal wildlife harvesting. He was charged a fine of 1,000 rubles (\$34) for illegal hunting and sentenced to restitution in the amount of 6,000 roubles (\$204).

On April 3, while patrolling along the Bolshaya Ussurka river the team detained

a resident of Dalnerechensk town for waterfowl hunting without a hunt permit and gun license. The man had already killed three drakes. The inspectors imposed a fine of 1,000 roubles (\$34) and restitution.

On April 9, a man was apprehended on hunting grounds of Dalnerechensky district for illegal waterfowl hunting. He had neither a hunt permit nor gun license. The violator paid a fine of 1,000 roubles (\$34).

On April 12, the team patrolled hunting grounds in Dalnerechensky district and apprehended a man for illegal waterfowl hunting near Golubovka village. The violator did not have a hunt permit and was imposed a fine of 1,000 roubles (\$34). The same day later another man was detained for illegal waterfowl hunting. The man had no hunt permit. The inspectors issued an administrative citation and impose a fine of 1,000 roubles (\$34). Several hours later, a man was apprehended for illegal waterfowl hunting near Lazo village. The violator



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**Alexander Samoilenko found a female bear
without paws and with gall bladder removed**

had no hunt permit and gun license. He was made to pay a fine of 1,000 roubles (\$34). A 16-gauge firearm was seized and handed over to Dalnerechensky police station.

On April 17, the team detained a man with a 16-gauge gun for illegal waterfowl



hunting. He was subjected to administrative punishment.

On April 19, near Salskoye village the team detained a man for illegal waterfowl hunting and made him pay a fine of 1,000 roubles (\$34).



© Phoenix
Two row deer skins found near a logging site
on March 30, 2010

On April 20, while patrolling Krasnoarmeisky district the team detained a local from Roschino village who had killed two bears. A research inside his vehicle revealed bear paws, gall and fat. Also, following the footprints leading from the vehicle to a place where a female bear had been killed, the inspectors discovered two bear cubs in a hollow of a tree trunk. The cubs were taken and given to a local of Novopokrovka town for temporary keeping. The inspectors took action against the poacher and initiated criminal proceeding for bear poaching. On April 22, a man was apprehended for illegal waterfowl hunting. The violator had no hunt license and was subjected to administrative penalty.

On April 23, the team detained a man for illegal waterfowl hunting on the Malinovka river. The violator had no hunt permit and was imposed a fine of 1,000 roubles (\$34). The same day later the team apprehended one more violator near Vedenka village. The man was subjected to administrative penalty for illegal waterfowl hunting on the Malinovka river.

On April 26, while patrolling hunting grounds of Polyana hunting lease, the team members detained a man with a 16-gauge firearm for illegal waterfowl hunting. The violator did not have proper documents to hunt and was made to pay a fine of 1,000 roubles (\$34). The inspectors seized his illegal rifle to hand it over to Dalnerechensky police station.

In May the team made three several-day patrols in the hunting grounds of the north (Kirovsky, Dalnerechensky and Krasnoarmeisky administrative district). No serious violations were revealed.

In summer poaching at salt-licks is common in Primorye. However, there were days this summer in 2010 that the hot weather led to record high temperatures (40 degrees Celsius). There were no doubts that the summer was one of the hottest. Due to abnormal heat, violators of hunting regulations did not trouble much law enforcement officers.

On June 7, the team apprehended a local from Dalnerechensk town for hunting without a hunt permit. The law enforcement officers issued an



© Phoenix
Rescued bear cub

administrative citation on the violator. During a routine patrol in Krasnoarmeisky district on July 14 the team detained a



man for hunting at salt-licks with an illegal smoothbore gun. The violator was subjected to administrative punishment. Another violator, citizen of Vladivostok, came to hunt in Krasnoarmeisky district without a hunt permit. He was apprehended in possession of a smoothbore gun and fined for violations of hunting regulations. On July 31, while patrolling Dalnerechensky district, the law enforcement officers found a sack with a 12-gauge rifle that was hidden in a bush near a path leading to a salt-lick. The rifle was handed over to local police station.

In August during numerous patrols aimed at revealing poaching all people encountered turned out to be involved in illegal gathering of ginseng roots.

On September 11, when patrolling Dalnerechensky district near Martynov village the team found tire tracks allegedly left by Toyota Land Cruiser jeep. Following the tracks, the law enforcement



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A hunter with an illegal rifle

officers found another car tracks and two kilometers away from the first place they noticed a Toyota High Lux jeep. Judging by the tracks left by car's owner and passengers, the officers deduced that the people had gone to hunt and decided to wait them. After awhile they heard voices of approaching people. From their ambush position the law enforcement officers saw that the men came with sacks fully laden. Two men stayed at the jeep, and the other

two went back into the forest. After some time they appeared again with more sacks fraught with something. Having loaded everything in the jeep, the men started driving slowly towards the ambush position of the law enforcement officers. When the jeep approached their ambush, the officers emerged from their concealed position and stopped the vehicle. The passengers were very nervous and the officers saw them filling in special forms to identify kill and date of harvest. The search inside the jeep revealed six sacks full of red deer meat and radio stations. Four men were subjected to administrative punishment.

On September 18, the team continued patrolling Dalnerechensky district and detained a man for illegal deer hunting during mating season. The violator had a 12-gauge smoothbore gun. The law enforcement officers issued an administrative citation on him. The same day later in the evening the team found a truck parked on the wood road. It was decided to make an ambush and wait a truck's driver. After awhile a light appeared in the wood. A man came up to the truck, used a deer bugle to attracting male red deer and made his way back into the wood. For some time the law enforcement officers saw a lantern light blinking among the trees and heard crackle of broken branches. After awhile the man returned and started the truck. At that moment the officers came up to the man and asked him about the reason for his late presence in the forest. The man explained that he had come to get firewood. When searching the man, the officers found neither gun, nor bugle. It was decided to examine the area around the truck. Following footprints left by the man, they directed into the wood and after awhile found a 7.62-gauge rifle with four cartridges hidden behind a pine tree. Near the rifle there was a bugle. When the officers returned to the place where they had questioned the hunter, there was neither truck nor hunter. But the officers identified the violator easily because of his previous violations. The rifle was handed over to the local police for further investigation.



On September 22, the team set off for a patrol in Krasnoarmeisky district. When patrolling hunting grounds near Glubinnoye village, the law enforcement officers detained a man with a 20-gauge smoothbore gun for illegal deer hunting during mating season. The gun was handed over to local police station. The violator was subjected to administrative punishment.

On September 28, while patrolling soy fields in Dalnerechensky district, the team apprehended a man for illegal hunting without a hunt permit and was fined.



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A truck and two illegal rifles

On October 4, the team continued patrolling Dalnerechensky district and detained a man for pheasant hunting without a hunt permit. The law enforcement officers issued an administrative citation against the violator. On October 7, another man was apprehended in the same area for hunting without a hunt permit. The violator was subjected to administrative punishment. Two violators of hunting regulations were arrested on October 12 and 13. Both men had no hunt permit.

On October 16, two men were detained for illegal hunting at night using spotlight. The law enforcement officers issued administrative citations upon the violators.

On October 19, during a patrol in Dalnerechensky district the team apprehended a man for badger hunting with the use of traps. The violator had no hunt permit and was subjected to administrative punishment. Later in the evening the team detained a man for hunting while operating a car. The violator was fined.

On October 20, at 2 a.m. the team detained two men for night hunting with illumination while driving a MTZ-80 tractor. The violators made an attempt to escape and threw away their guns, but they were caught and subjected to administrative punishment. Their guns were found later.

On October 22, a man was arrested in possession of a firearm for illegal waterfowl hunting. The law enforcement officers issued an administrative citation on him. On October 26, the team continued patrolling Dalnerechensky district and detained a man for firing from the road. The same day later two police officers were apprehended for night hunting with illumination. One of the violator had a 7.62-gauge rifle. Both violators were subjected to administrative punishment.

Between 27 and 30 October the team patrolled Terneisky district. A three-day patrol resulted in revelation of eight violations of hunting regulations and seizure of three illegal firearms. All violators were subjected to administrative punishment.

On November 4, while patrolling hunting grounds along the border between Dalnerechensky and Krasnoarmeisky districts, the team spotted two men with dogs. One man had a rifle. When the men noticed the law enforcement officers chasing them, they threw away the rifle. Later, the firearm was found in snow and handed over to the local police. The same day later a man was detained for night hunting while operating a vehicle. The violator was fined.



On November 6, the team set off for a patrol in Krasnoarmeisky district. When patrolling hunting grounds of Dalnee Hunters and Fishermen Society, the law enforcement officers detained a man for hunting while operating a vehicle. The violator had no hunt permit. The law enforcement officers issued an administrative citation against the violator.



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Checking a hunter

On November 8, a man was apprehended for illegal waterfowl hunting and fined. On November 13, a local from Novopokrovka town was detained for hunting from a MTZ-82 tractor. The violator had no hunt permit. The law enforcement officers imposed a fine on him. On November 15, the team patrolled Dalnerechensk district and arrested two men for hunting without proper permits. As the violators had no gun license, their guns were seized and handed over to the local police station. The violators were subjected to administrative punishment. The same day later a man was arrested in possession of roe deer meat. The violator was made to pay a fine.

On November 19, the team was patrolling Kirovsky district when the law enforcement officers apprehended a man for hunting from a vehicle. The violator had a smoothbore gun. The officers issued an administrative citation against the violator. On November 22 and 23, two men were detained for hunting without proper

permits. The law enforcement officers imposed fines on the violators.

On November 24, the team went to Pozharsky district and patrolled areas near Yasenevy village. Not far from the human settlement the team apprehended a man with a 7.62-gauge rifle for hunting from a vehicle. The violator was subjected to administrative punishment.

On December 2, while patrolling Krasnoarmeisky district, the team members apprehended a group of poachers who used two paragliders to hunt illegally. One of the violators had a 7.62-gauge gun with telescopic sight and 30 cartridges. None of the men had a permit to hunt. The law enforcement officers issued administrative citations against the violators.

Acknowledgments

The Phoenix Fund expresses warm thanks to Kolmarden Fund Raising Foundation, Zoological Society of London and 21st Century Tiger for providing continuous support for the Western anti-poaching team that operates in the north of Primorye to prevent poaching and habitat destruction in natural tiger range. Thanks to this support, we helped increase capacity of the team to combat poaching, enhance wildlife and habitat protection, and increase awareness within the local communities about the importance of wildlife and habitat conservation through information work.

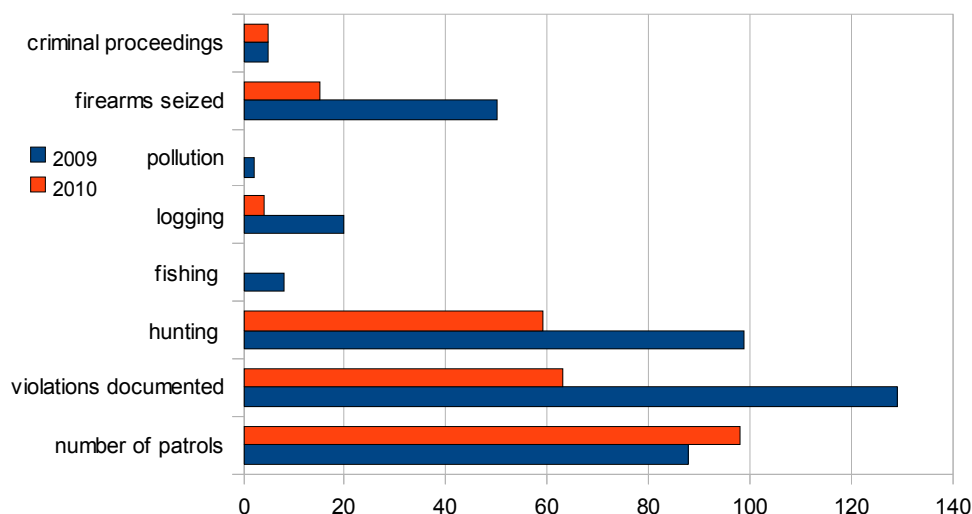
Also, our special thanks goes to Alexander Samolienko for his passion for wildlife and devotion to his work.

ATTACHMENT

Table 1. Quantitative results of anti-poaching activities by Western team in January-December 2010

Activities	January – December 2010
1. Number of patrols	98
2. Violations documented:	63
2.1. Hunting	59
2.2. Fishing	
2.3. Logging	4
2.4. Pollution	
3. Illegal weapons seized and handed over to the police	15
4. Wildlife confiscated:	
4.1. Black bear	2
4.2. Duck	2
4.3. Roe deer	3
4.4. Musk deer	
4.5. Red deer	2
4.6. Pheasant	1
5. Traps seized	13
6. Initiated criminal proceedings	5
7. Fines imposed, US\$	1,655
8. Fines paid, US\$	1,655
9. Compensations imposed, US\$	1,480
10. Compensations paid, US\$	1,480

Diagram 1. Comparative analysis of anti-poaching results in 2009-2010



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



Administrative division of Primorsky krai

- 1 Anuchinsky
- 2 Dalnerechensky
- 3 Dalnegorsky
- 4 Kavalerovsky
- 5 Kirovsky
- 6 Kranoarmeisky
- 7 Lazovsky
- 8 Lesozavodsky
- 9 Mikhailovsky
- 10 Nadezhdinsky
- 11 Oktyabrsky
- 12 Olginsky
- 13 Partizansky
- 14 Pogranichny
- 15 Pozharsky
- 16 Spassky
- 17 Terneisky
- 18 Ussuriisky
- 19 Khankaisky
- 20 Khasansky
- 21 Khorolsky
- 22 Chernigovsky
- 23 Chuguevsky
- 24 Shkotovsky
- 25 Yakovlevsky
- 27 Artyom
- 28 Vladivostok
- 31 Nakhodka
- 33 Partizansk
- 36 Bolshoy Kamen



Districts patrolled by the Western team in 2010

