

**PROGRAMMATIC REPORT
ON
INSPECTION "TIGER"
1999**

**Global Survival Network
(now WildAid)**

by
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Report compiled from report submitted by Inspection Tiger January 2000.

Executive Summary

In 1999, anti-poaching patrols took place in 16 administrative regions of Primorsky Krai, Russia. Inspection Tiger's biodiversity conservation activities continue to focus in on:

- Amur tiger and leopard conservation;
- Wild ginseng conservation efforts;
- Monitoring illegal logging;
- Protecting hunting resources, and;
- Protection of marine life.

Inspection Tiger has observed that the illegal trade has become more “hidden.” Moreover, information about Inspection Tiger in the mass media has drawn attention to its work, and has made the work of the rangers more dangerous and risky. More and more often Inspection Tiger is being met with more organized, more highly skilled, and frequently armed traders.

To improve coordination with other agencies, GSN/WildAid and Inspection Tiger created a new Interregional-Interagency Team that is dedicated primarily to establishing formal, effective working relationships with other wildlife law-enforcement agencies, and law-enforcement agencies in general, conducting wildlife crime investigations, training other Inspection Tiger anti-poaching teams, and report writing.

The Interregional-Interagency Team has proven successful in its first half-year of operations in terms of forging new ties and bolstering existing ties with other agencies. In addition to active patrolling together with members of the Police, Customs and the FSB, a concept strongly stressed and encouraged by WildAid/GSN, a great deal of time was dedicated to investigating illegal channels of wildlife trade.

In 2000, Inspection Tiger and GSN (now called WildAid) plan to help Inspection Tiger become increasingly efficient in the field, and financially sustainable.

In March, 2000, WildAid Director, Steven Galster will meet in Russia with Phoenix and members of Inspection Tiger to plan an anti-poaching needs assessment. Already, WildAid, with support from 21st Century Tiger Fund, has provided a new radio system to supplement the hand-held unit system purchased with DSCF funds. This new CODAN short wave radio system will allow the rangers to use their time and fuel more efficiently, targeting known poachers and traders by acting quickly on receipt of information from different parts of Primorsky Krai, particularly the southern, central and east-northern sections.

Inspection Tiger feels that it is necessary to create a *system* to better train its rangers. The existing practice is not sufficient. Moreover, it would be extremely helpful to develop and publish a practical training manual, develop a lecture series, and produce other training materials. Inspection Tiger also thinks that moral would be even higher, if they had life insurance to cover the high-risk nature of their work.

WildAid would like to plan a ranger training for 2001 for Inspection Tiger members. WildAid has designed a ranger training program in Asia, parts of which are applicable to Inspection Tiger's needs, including:

- patrolling strategies;
- navigation techniques;
- use of GPS;
- crime scene analysis and investigations;
- interviewing and profiling;
- public relations.

Wildlife Conservation Society works with WildAid in Asia on this training program, and provides a very important course in wildlife monitoring.

Highlights of Last two years of operation

In 1998, Inspection Tiger confiscated illegally obtained endangered products:

- 87 musk glands;
- 31,932 grams of wild ginseng root;
- 748 kg of dried sea cucumber;
- 469 cubic meters of valuable forest products;
- Inspection Tiger also investigated 15 cases of close encounters between humans and tigers;
- Assisted customs in confiscating 5 sets of tiger skeleton bones at the border. In one instance 3 sets were found on board a ship along with 19 musk deer carcasses, one lynx skin, 2.2 kg of musk gland, and 44.15 kg of raw deer antlers;
- Also in 1998, two films were made about Operation Amba, one called “Tiger in the Fire” by a local television station, and one as part of an 8-segment National Geographic series called “Animal Rescue International” to be aired first in Europe in 1999.

In 1999:

- For the first time in its history Inspection Tiger confiscated two Far Eastern leopard skins from trade (other leopard skins had been found or removed from dead leopards);
- Inspection Tiger confiscated 80 guns;
- In a joint raid in Ussurisk with the Police and the FSB, Inspection Tiger rangers confiscated: 17647 squirrel skins, 581 Russian *kolinsky* mink skins, 7 otter skins, 1 sable skin, and 1 mink skin from Chinese traders;
- Inspection Tiger confiscated 280 cubic meters of commercial timber, potentially valued at as much as \$25,000-\$28,000;
- In 1999 there was a shift in leadership in Operation Amba -- At the beginning of the year we said goodbye to a retiring Commander Shetinin who was succeeded by Commander Zubtsov;
- The Iman team was eliminated in favor of a new roving GSN- sponsored Interregional-Interagency Team;
- Inspection Tiger and Phoenix starred in a BBC special on tigers over Easter, and gave 19 radio, 13 television, and 20 newspaper interviews;
- Inspection Tiger participated in three environmental conferences and meetings, including a CITES training meeting;
- Inspection Tiger designed and published 2 calendars with the emblems of and advertisements for Inspection Tiger and nature conservation activities.

In the city of Ussurisk, Inspection Tiger rangers identified three locations in which wildlife products are being illegally harvested and then smuggled over the Russian-Chinese border. According to preliminary investigative data, corrupt officials appear to have a direct link to and control over the contraband being smuggled through this channel.

According to Inspection Tiger, new trends are appearing of late. Fewer and fewer Amur tiger derivatives are being visibly traded to China, and more are going to South Korea. Trade to China still goes on, but it is much more masked than in the past. As for the channel to Korea, Inspection Tiger’s observations are that the trade flows through a stable, traditional channel that involves a limited number of professional dealers. These individuals are generally well concealed, and they use high-tech communications and other equipment. In order for Inspection Tiger to deal with these individuals, there must be clear and effective collaboration with Customs, FSB and the Police, as well as with similar agencies in China and Korea. Currently, Inspection Tiger’s interregional coordination team is working on building stronger ties with these agencies

In this regard, Inspection Tiger is placing great hope in its new Interregional-Interagency Team. The reason for this is that once official collaborative agreements have been signed with other wildlife law-enforcement agencies, the hope is that more effective assistance and coordination will be rendered from such agencies.

Introduction

In 1999 Inspection Tiger focused on three primary areas:

1. Strengthening the war against poaching by improving internal organization, better equipping the department, and by increasing the professional skills of the mobile patrol teams.
2. Establishing closer collaborative ties with other wildlife law-enforcement agencies, specially authorized to deal with the war against wildlife trade;
3. Garnering greater public attention toward the threat of extinction for Far Eastern species of plants and animals.

Thanks to your generous support, GSN/WildAid was able to provide another continued year of funding to the following Inspection Tiger teams:

Kirovsky Team	2 people
Bikin Team	3 people
Vladivostok Team	3 people
Khasan Team	4 people
Interregional Team	3 people
Communications Engineer	1 person

To ensure stronger and improved long-distance communication among the teams and with headquarters, GSN purchased Inspection Tiger anti-poaching teams high quality CODAN short-wave mobile radio communications equipment. Two rangers traveled to Moscow to receive training on installation, general maintenance and trouble-shooting skills on the equipment, and the equipment should be up and running by mid-March 2000. GSN also purchased Inspection Tiger rangers Kenwood hand-held ultra-short wave radio units to replace old and worn radio units used for short distances and sting raids. The decision to invest in this communications equipment was a response to a resolution by the April 1999 International Donor's Meeting to discuss the Russian Federation Federal Target Program "Conserving the Amur Tiger."

Moreover, to improve coordination with other agencies, GSN and Inspection Tiger created a new Interregional-Interagency Team that is dedicated primarily to establishing formal, effective working relationships with other wildlife law-enforcement agencies, and law-enforcement agencies in general, conducting wildlife crime investigations, training other Inspection Tiger anti-poaching teams, and report writing. The interregional team has proven successful in its first half-year of operations in terms of forging new ties and bolstering existing ties with other agencies. The next several months will focus more on training to help other Inspection Tiger teams produce the type of high-profile anti-poaching results that the Interregional Team has achieved in recent months thanks to its excellent investigative and confiscation skills.

Organizationally, the GSN/WildAid-sponsored Inspection Tiger teams fall under the Deputy Commander for the "Western" Teams, within the Primorsky Krai Committee for Environmental Protection (GOSKOMEKOLOGIA).

Results

Biodiversity Conservation Focus

Inspection Tiger activities continue to focus on:

- Amur tiger and leopard conservation;
- Wild ginseng conservation efforts;
- Monitoring illegal logging;
- Protecting hunting resources;
- Protection of marine life.

Inspection Tiger has observed that the illegal trade has become more “hidden.” Moreover, information about Inspection Tiger in the mass media has drawn attention to its work, and has made the work of the rangers more dangerous and risky. More and more often Inspection Tiger is being met with more organized, more highly skilled, and frequently armed traders.

In 1999, anti-poaching patrols took place in 16 administrative regions of Primorsky Krai. The regions in which Inspection Tiger teams are responsible for are listed below in Table 1.

Inspection Tiger's Territorial Range

Table 1.

Name of Region	Area	Team Responsible
Dalnerechencky	7233,5	Bikin
Krasnoarmeisky	20603,4	
Lesozavodsk	2991,5	
Pozharsky	22570,4	
Total Area	53398,8	
Dalnerechensk	7233,5	Vladivostokskaya
Kavaperovsky	4215,2	
Krasnoarmeisky	20603,4	
Lazovsky	4691,5	
Oktyabrsky	1632,8	
Partizansky	4253,9	
Chuguevsky	12346,5	
Shkotovsky	2664,5	
Yakolevsky	2400,1	
Total Area	60041,4	
Dalnerechensk	7233,5	Kirovskaya
Kirovsky	3483,9	
Lesozavodksy	2991,5	
Spassky	4206,0	
Chernigovsky	1840,4	
Total Area	19755,3	
Ussuriskyy	3459,6	Ussuriskaya
Khasansky	4130,0	
Total Area	7589,6	
Ussuriskyy	3459,6	Khasansky
Khasansky	4130,0	
Total Area	7589,6	

Organizational activities

1. Inspection Tiger drew up and passed 15 directives to regulate the activities of the teams and Inspection Tiger in general.
2. With GSN support, Inspection Tiger better equipped its teams and improved the level of qualifications of theoretical knowledge of the Inspection's rangers.
3. Through the GSN-sponsored Interregional Team, Inspection Tiger increased the level of coordination among the teams and worked more closely with other agencies to deal with the war against illegal harvest of and trade in wildlife products on the territory of Primorsky Krai.
4. Together with Phoenix "Fund," Inspection Tiger sought financial resources to fund various biodiversity conservation projects.
5. Inspection Tiger worked toward improving public awareness about problems of wildlife conservation in Primorsky Krai, about Inspection Tiger, and about the rules on how to conduct oneself in areas of habitat of wild animals under state protection.

Recently, the Vladivostok team has expanded its patrol area to include the administrative areas of Oktyabrsky, Khorolsky, and Pogranichny, areas that are not heavily populated.

Ever since Inspection Tiger liquidated the Iman team, the Bikin team has expanded its patrol territory to include areas as far south as the Lesozavodsk area, i.e. regions as far as 200 kilometers away from home base. Moreover, this team has made serious progress in nature conservation in the area of halting illegal logging of timber products.

The new interregional, interagency team has held a number of meetings to develop its program. GSN equipped the team with computer equipment. GSN also purchased computer equipment for the Russian Federation State Committee for Environmental Protection, including modem and e-mail connections. By doing this, GSN has enabled a critical and effective communication link between the Primorsky Krai State Committee for Environmental Protection's Inspection Tiger and the Russian Federation State Committee for Environmental Protection in Moscow.

Public Outreach and the Amur Tiger/ Work with the Mass Media

Throughout the year, Inspection Tiger has participated in a number of seminars and conferences at various levels, including some at which Inspection Tiger presented reports. The major events published in the mass media were:

- Participation in TRAFFIC-CITES meeting 15.11.99 - 18.11.99 (Vladivostok);
- Participation in CITES training seminar 4.12.99 - 10.12.99 (Hong Kong);
- Participation in All-Russian Meeting of Directors of Protected Areas, conducted 15.11.99 with participation by the Deputy Chairman of the Russian Federation State Committee for Environmental Protection, A.M. Amirkhanov;
- Participated in the jury for a children's art contest in the Khasan region held in the town of Slavyanka 16.10.99;
- Participated in a seminar-meeting for the State Inspection on Small Claims Court, December 1999;
- Organized the publication of calendars depicting tigers and Inspection Tiger logo;

•Inspection Tiger work was written up in a number of publications of the mass media. In total, over the course of 1999, Inspection Tiger was presented in:

-	Radio interviews –	2
-	Television appearances –	14
-	Newspaper interviews –	5
-	Articles for local and Russian newspapers –	6.

Interregional-Interagency Team

- Inspection Tiger's Interregional Team (IT), financed by GSN and IFAW drew up, agreed to and signed an agreement on collaboration with the Regional Inspection on Marine Life, under the Federal Border Patrol.
- The IT signed a collaborative agreement with the Far Eastern Investigative Branch of Customs, in the area of conserving rare and endangered species of plants and animals, and monitoring the movement of wildlife over the Russian Federation border. Consent has been reached to sign a collaborative agreement with the Primorsky Basin Management Authority on biodiversity conservation. The Primorsky Basin Authority is responsible for managing the reproductive of fishery resources and regulating fishing. Currently, the draft agreement is in the hands of the management of this organization for review.
- Inspection Tiger IT conducted negotiations with a representative of the Internal Security Service for the Primorsky Krai police force. Both sides have agreed to sign an agreement on collaborating in the realm of biodiversity conservation. A draft of the agreement has been prepared, and presented for preliminary review, as well as to introduce changes if needed. (A joint raid was conducted with the police in the Lesozavodsk region, and a member of the police force was detained for carrying a weapon without a license).
- Inspection Tiger IT designed, printed and issued special badges, with a high level of protection against fraudulent reproduction.
- The Administrations of Lesozavodsk and Dalnerechensk have agreed to hold official meetings to discuss possible collaboration in the field of biodiversity conservation in the Lesozavodsk and Dalnerechensk regions administrative regions of Primorsky Krai.
- Inspection Tiger IT reached an agreement to meet with the head of the regional division of the Ministry on Emergency Situations in Primorsky Krai. The goal is to hold a discussion on and reach an agreement to conduct joint activities to resolve “conflict” tiger situations.

In addition to active patrolling together with members of the Police, Customs and the FSB, a concept strongly stressed and encouraged by GSN, a great deal of time was dedicated to investigating illegal channels of wildlife trade.

In the city of Ussurisk, Inspection Tiger rangers identified three locations in which wildlife products are being illegally harvested and then smuggled over the Russian-Chinese border. These sites are monitored on a regular basis. All of the preliminary information that was collected has been transferred to Customs and the Primorsky Krai FSB for further investigation. However, until recently, Inspection Tiger has not obtained any information from these agencies with regard to any further movement on the information Inspection Tiger provided. It is possible that the reason for this is that these organizations are too “closed.” Inspection Tiger was only able to find out the following: Smugglers are using one, at most two, channels of trade, and ever since these smugglers have been in the business (Inspection Tiger estimates this to be from 1991-1992), not once has the channel been truly busted.

According to preliminary investigative data, corrupt officials appear to have a direct link to and control over the contraband being smuggled through this channel.

In this regard, Inspection Tiger is placing great hope in its new Interregional-Interagency Team. The reason for this is that once official collaborative agreements have been signed with other wildlife law-enforcement agencies, the hope is that more effective assistance and coordination will be rendered from such agencies.

Anti-Poaching Data for 1999

Number of violations/Protocols written— 309

Including:

- Hunting resources –	94
- Timber products –	38
- Fish and other sea products–	132
- Ginseng –	12
- Violations in protected areas –	5
- Narcotics-containing wildlife –	3
- Other	25

Number of guns confiscated - 80

- Threaded barrel –	12
- Smooth barrel –	68

Other confiscated illegal tools to harvest wildlife: 117

- Fishing nets –	115
- Fish forks/spears to kill lots of river fish – (“ostroga” – an ancient fishing tool)	2

Confiscated wildlife products:

- Bear paws –	16
- Wild growing ginseng –	6,060 gm.
- Scallops –	94
- Sea cucumber –	55,270
- Fish –	679 kg
- Commercial timber–	125 m ³

Number of joint raids conducted -	143
Number of automobiles inspected -	965
Number of logging lorries inspected –	132
Number of people inspected –	1235
Number of juridical persons inspected –	11
- logging companies -	3

- *Fines levied* – 55,862 rubles

(The current exchange rate at the writing of this report was approximately 28 rubles to the dollar.)

Value of law suits - 5402 rubles
(By law, administrative fines are equal to a certain percentage of the minimum wage, depending on the type of species confiscated. Currently, the minimum wage is about 83 rubles and 49 kopeks.)

- *Value of products confiscated* – 689662 rubles
- Amount of money brought into Ecofund – 675896 rubles
- Number of case materials handed over to
investigative agencies – 17
- Criminal cases lodged - 15

Analytical and investigative work

Inspection Tiger dedicates prime attention to collecting information on facts of illegal trade and about persons involved in holding, purchasing and selling Amur tiger skins and derivatives. Apparently only a limited number of people are involved in this type of activity. Whenever traders are involved in purchasing tiger parts, they are usually also involved in trading bear, musk deer gland, ginseng, furs and other wildlife products. For this reason, Inspection Tiger has been trying to intercept those individuals who are directly involved in illegal wildlife trade.

Amur tiger conservation efforts

Inspection Tiger has developed the following steps to plan actions to confiscate tiger derivatives: collect investigative information about dealers trading in tiger derivatives; analyze the situation on the “black” market; search for potential derivative sellers; prepare for the sting raid; and confiscate the skin.

The process from obtaining information to the actual confiscation can take anywhere from one month to two years, depending on the case. In order to avoid leaks of information, only a few individuals are given any information on the operation. As a rule, no one receives full disclosure on all the details until the very last stage in the confiscation process. Nothing is documented in the process to ensure personal safety of the people involved. The decision to make a confiscation is made when sufficient information has been gathered, and when support from law-enforcement agencies exists. When a sting raid to confiscate a skin is successful, a protocol is drawn up on site, and materials are sent to law-enforcement agencies.

This is how events unfolded in the Kirovsky region, where, on the 19th of October 1999, an Amur tiger skin was successfully confiscated.

For example, the first information that a certain resident of the Kirovksy region had a tiger skin in his possession was obtained by Inspection Tiger two years ago. But, only this past October, was Inspection Tiger able to find a middleman, who was willing to offer his help to Inspection Tiger’s “buyer.” In this case, state inspector V.V. Timchenko played the role of the buyer. This was his second successful operation, and it was not an easy one. The role of the “buyer” needs to be played in way, such that the seller does not have the slightest inclination of suspecting the buyer, because otherwise he will not show the buyer the skin. Furthermore, Inspection Tiger must confiscate the skin the moment the “buyer” is assessing the quality of the skin, and the price for the skin has not yet been set. Another complication is that, as a rule, the seller will only show the skin to one person. It is rare that two people be allowed to be present from the buyer’s side, while on the seller’s side there are usually two or three people for the seller’s protection. As a result, it is difficult to ensure communication between Inspection Tiger’s support team and the

person playing the role of the buyer. Staying in communication is absolutely essential, as the support team must come out from hiding, and arrive at the point of trade at the very moment that the skin is brought out of hiding, unrolled and displayed.

In order to conduct similar operations, Inspection Tiger needs a miniature radio transmitter that could be hidden in the clothing of the state inspector posing as the buyer, so that the support team could stay constantly abreast of the situation through such a device.

Assessments with regard to tiger derivative trade

Currently, significant changes have occurred in the structure of illegal trade in skins, bones and other tiger derivative, as compared with the situation in 1993. Back then, Chinese smugglers purchased skins, bones and derivatives wholesale from poachers. Since 1993, given stricter laws in China, and since the creation of Inspection Tiger in 1994, new trends in tiger part trade are occurring. Namely, more “hidden” traders have started to buy tiger skins. The reason for being “hidden” is that a skin is a direct proof that a tiger was killed. It takes expert analysis to determine whether bones are actually tiger bones, and this takes time. As a result, traders get off the hook, while this process is under way.

According to Inspection Tiger, new trends are appearing of late. Fewer and fewer Amur tiger derivatives are being visibly traded to China, and more are going to South Korea. Trade to China still goes on, but it is much more masked than in the past. According to Inspection Tiger figures from 27 November 1999, a Chinese national living in the city of Ussurisk placed an order among his suppliers (middlemen) for three tiger skins. The activities of this trader are currently under observation. The latest information is that on 14 January a person who placed an order was to have flown in from Hong Kong, but a joint raid with Customs at the airport did not pan out a suspect.

As for the channel to Korea, Inspection Tiger’s observations are that the trade flows through a stable, traditional channel that involves a limited number of professional dealers. These individuals are generally well concealed, and they use high-tech communications and other equipment. In order for Inspection Tiger to deal with these individuals, there must be clear and effective collaboration with Customs, FSB and the Police, as well as with similar agencies in China and Korea. Currently, Inspection Tiger’s interregional coordination team is working on building stronger ties with these agencies.

Efforts to Conserve the Far Eastern Leopard

The Far Eastern leopard has been recognized at the international, federal and regional levels as being a species on the brink of imminent extinction. Internationally, this species has been listed in CITES Appendix I as a species requiring maximum degree of protection.

The Khasan Region of Primorsky Territory is the primary habitat for the Far Eastern leopard. According to a recent count done in 1998 in the south-west corner of Primorsky Krai, it was determined that numbers do not exceed 40 leopards. According to Inspection Tiger, leopards are killed most often when met accidentally by poachers who are out hunting for other game, or by falling into traps set by locals to catch fox or badgers. The Khasan team is primarily dedicated to Far Eastern leopard protection and was created for this purpose.

In 1999, Inspection Tiger rangers confiscated two Far Eastern leopard skins from trade for the first time in the history of the Inspection. The skins were confiscated from two different traders, residents of the Khasan region, when they tried to sell the skins. During the investigation Inspection Tiger rangers determined that both of these individuals were middlemen. According to the sellers, one of the skins was found on the side of the road, and the other got his skin from some unknown person. Criminal charges have been brought against these men by the Khasan Police Department.

Wild Ginseng Conservation

The Kirovsky and Ussurisky teams have been the two teams most devoted to stopping wild ginseng trade, although the Khasan team rangers have also been involved. In total, Inspection Tiger has confiscated about 6160 grams of wild ginseng root from trade. However, despite the increase in numbers of rangers involved, less ginseng was confiscated as compared with past years. This can either be read as that fewer people are harvesting wild ginseng, because they are afraid of getting caught by Inspection Tiger, that there was simply less ginseng this year, or because of the fact that the traders are more skilled and concealed than in the past in buying and transporting ginseng. For example, some traders may constantly switch vehicles in which ginseng is being transported.

The Khasan team was brought into the ginseng operation primarily because of a desire on the part of Inspection Tiger to give these rangers more training and experience in dealing with channels of illegal trade through the channel: Khasan-Ussurisk-Khasan.

Inspection Tiger is also involved in a new project, namely, replanting confiscated ginseng. Inspection Tiger rangers replanted about 700 grams of confiscated ginseng (about 201 roots). Inspection Tiger also developed a plan approved by the Vice Governor to carry out an order by the Governor of the Krai "On Measures to Increase Conservation of Wild-Growing Ginseng and a Proper Harvest in 1999." Unfortunately, the plan did not get very far off the ground, as at the time of its approval, June, it still was not clear how various agencies were going to work together.

According to Inspection Tiger, the problem of illegal international trade in wild ginseng of late has been a topic of discussion at all CITES international meetings.

Inspection Tiger Deputy Commander, A. Kopaev, participated in a December 1999 CITES training seminar in Hong Kong. At the training seminar general information was given about the trans-border network of illegal ginseng trade. It was shown that Hong Kong is the world's largest center for illegal trade (including about 90% of the Russian conditioned root). According to Inspection Tiger, most of the Russian ginseng is harvested in Primorsky Krai, and the primary trade route is Ussurisk (Russia) – SuenFenhai (China) – Shanghai, Guanjo (China) – Hong Kong (China). Expert analysis show that the illegal trade in Russian ginseng in 1998 was about 2000 kg (about \$30,000,000). In 1999, the ginseng trade was about 1000 kg (about \$15,000,000). All, despite the fact that in 1999, the limit on ginseng harvesting set by the Primorsky Krai Administration was a total of 50 kg for the entire Krai for the year.

Conservation of fish stock and other marine products

The Khasan team is in the lead when it comes to fish and marine products. First and foremost, this is because the Khasan team is based in a coastal region, where tiger and leopard habitat includes shoreline areas.

Over the course of this reporting period, the Inspection Tiger teams wrote up 132 protocols on violations of fishing rules and for illegal harvesting of marine wildlife: sea cucumber, scallop, etc. The Bikin team registered 22 such violations. And, overall, 55270 sea cucumbers were confiscated. It is illegal to harvest sea cucumbers due to their low numbers. According to Inspection Tiger, the largest number of protocols written are for marine products violations. It should be noted that when registering such violations, illegal weapons are often found, which are often used to kill other species such as tigers and leopards.

Conservation of Prey Base

Results in this area are telling – in 1999, Inspection Tiger confiscated 80 guns.

The fact that Inspection Tiger confiscated so many guns in 1999, will hopefully be a deterrent for future poachers, who are specifically going out to kill tigers and leopards. It should be noted that it is not a simple task to confiscate a gun. There are many legal nuances involved, and Inspector Tiger rangers' lives are always at risk.

Over the course of operations, the following items were confiscated from illegal trade by Inspection Tiger:

Tiger skins	4
Tiger bones	1 set (309 bones and a skull)
Tiger corpse	1
Leopard Skin	3
Leopard bones	1 set
Lynx skin	1
Bear paws	23
Musk gland	43
Ginseng Root	6160 gr.
Dried Sea Cucumber	55270

Aspects of protecting hunting resources to be noted

Since ancient times, Primorye has been a region known for its rich stock of game animals. In the Soviet years, there were very strict laws against owning weapons, and there were fixed quotas on how much of what could be hunted. These quotas were based on scientific studies to decide what the limit should be on each animal. The hunting process was carefully planned, managed and controlled. Moreover, the system of economic stimulus for hunted game and penalties for illegally hunted animals worked very effectively. In Russia's current socio-economic situation today, completely different mechanisms and principles are at work, hence the need for agencies like Inspection Tiger.

A clear example of how Inspection Tiger protects hunting resources is one of its recent operations during which Inspection Tiger confiscated a huge shipment of furs that were targeted for smuggling into China. According to Inspection Tiger, the Chinese have been interested in furs, ever since the borders opened in 1986.

As the Russian business sector developed, and the market structure changed, Chinese fur traders began to swamp the fur market, gradually turning it into an illicit one. Furs are then illegally shipped to China, and Inspection Tiger has been increasingly following the fur trade.

According to Primorsky Krai Hunting Department figures, the end-of-season squirrel population over the past couple of years has not exceeded 100,000 squirrels, and the sable population – no more than 20,000. Nonetheless, despite such depressed stock numbers, Inspection Tiger recently confiscated a large shipment of furs en route to China. In a joint raid in Ussurisk with the Police and the FSB, Inspection Tiger rangers confiscated: 17,647 squirrel skins, 581 Russian *kolinsky* mink skins, 7 otter skins, 1 sable skin, and 1 mink skin.

According to Inspection Tiger, one member of the three-person group of Chinese nationals, has been involved in organizing this point of illegal trade in Russia for three years now. This particular group is also apparently involved in buying ginseng, musk gland, bear gall, bear paws, and tiger bones and penises. In 1998, Inspection Tiger confiscated 600 grams of ginseng from one member of this group.

Inspection Tiger feels that this type of fur trade is encouraging poaching in general, as well as illegal business, all of which leads to a violation of the principles of rational use of nature. Based on existing norms, the damage to the environment due to illegal harvest of this shipment of furs is valued at about 2,800,000 rubles (\$104,000 US dollars). Experts in Inspection Tiger say that last year poachers killed about 200,000 squirrels, furs valued at 33,600,000 (\$1,680,000 US dollars).

The weak link in Inspection Tiger's public outreach, is that Inspection Tiger failed to actively participate in the education and public outreach program utilizing the Phoenix Fund's Eco-Bus. Our hope is that this year Inspection Tiger will take this program more seriously and engage in more active involvement.

“Conflict Tiger” Program

In September of 1999, a decree by the Primorsky Krai State Committee for Environmental Protection created an Emergency Response Team within Inspection Tiger to deal with conflict situations that arise between humans and tigers. The Vostochnaya team (7 people) is part of this Emergency Response Team. A program and plan of preparatory activities has been developed. According to Inspection Tiger all the work in this area is well organized and being conducted systematically. The results of the work of this group will likely formulate positive public opinion in the future about the interactions between humans and tigers. This, says Inspection Tiger, will have a positive influence on attitudes toward the Amur tiger in general – the symbol of the krai. Inspection Tiger participated in creating and approving two documents related to this issue. The first is a document on recommendations on how to behave in the event of a meeting with a tiger, and the other is a list of actions that rangers should take in the event of a human-tiger “conflict” situation.

Primary Conclusions, Problems and Plans

To become more effective, Inspection Tiger plans to focus on two areas: (1) strengthen interagency ties with all other wildlife law-enforcement agencies and law-enforcement agencies in general, in the area of biodiversity conservation, with Inspection Tiger at the helm; (2) organize within Inspection Tiger, a more comprehensive information-analytic division responsible for gathering information and compiling it in a usable database, using computer technology. Inspection Tiger plans to sign agreements with a number of organizations in Primorsky Krai that are leaders in the field of information technology and are interested in joint activities with the Inspection, specifically to create a common information space on biodiversity nature conservation in Primorsky Krai.

In order to conduct effect anti-poaching work in Primorsky Krai, Inspection Tiger believes that there should be no fewer than 25 rangers on staff.

Inspection Tiger feels it is necessary to bolster the teams with more equipment and gear. First and foremost, this is computer technology that can be used in the field. Also needed, are night vision goggles, both to scope areas, as well as to drive at night without lights, etc. The vehicles that were purchased 2.5-5 years ago, says Inspection Tiger, are worn and will need to be replaced in the next 1.5-2 years.

Inspection Tiger is lacking specialists in information technology, journalism, and education and public outreach. Inspection Tiger feels it needs to bring specialists in, rather than learn to do these things themselves.

Inspection Tiger feels that it is necessary to create a *system* to better train its rangers. The existing practice is not sufficient. Moreover, it would be extremely helpful to develop and publish a practical training manual, develop a lecture series, and produce other training materials. Inspection Tiger also thinks that moral would be even higher, if they had life insurance to cover the high-risk nature of their work.

In 2000, Inspection Tiger and GSN (now called WildAid) plan to help Inspection Tiger become increasingly efficient in the field, and financially sustainable.

In March, 2000, WildAid Director, Steven Galster will meet with Phoenix and members of Inspection Tiger to plan an anti-poaching needs assessment. Already, WildAid, with support from 21st Century Tiger Fund, has provided a new radio system to supplement the hand-held unit system purchased with DSCF funds. This new CODAN short wave radio system will hopefully allow the rangers to use their time and fuel more efficiently, targeting known poachers and traders by acting quickly on receipt of information from different parts of Primorsky Krai, particularly the southern, central and east-northern sections.

WildAid would like to plan a ranger training for 2001 for Inspection Tiger members. WildAid has designed a ranger training program in Asia, parts of which are applicable to Inspection Tiger's needs, including:

- patrolling strategies;
- navigation techniques;
- use of GPS;
- crime scene analysis and investigations;
- interviewing and profiling;
- public relations.

Wildlife Conservation Society works with WildAid in Asia on this training program, and provides a very important course in wildlife monitoring.

FINAL NOTE:

WildAid's field representative for Russia, Karin Elliot, will be at least temporarily leaving Primorsky Krai to spend some much needed time in the United States. Until we replace Karin, Steven Galster will be the primary point of contact for questions. Please understand that this may slow down our reporting for the next month or two, while we reorganize the WildAid office in Vladivostok. We will miss Karin and appreciate her long, hard, successful efforts GREATLY.

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