



AMUR TIGER CONSERVATION IN ZOV TIGRA NATIONAL PARK IN 2011, RUSSIAN FAR EAST

*Anti-poaching activities and habitat protection in Zov
Tigra National Park*

Final report (January – December 2011)



Phoenix Fund
December 2011

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Anti-poaching activities and habitat protection in Zov Tigra National Park

I. Project Overview



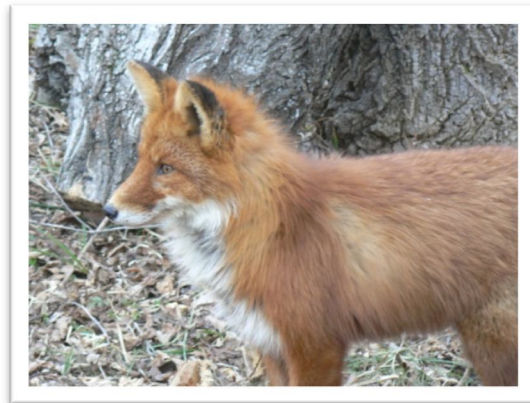
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**Picturesque scenery,
Zov Tigra National Park**

The Zov Tigra ("Tiger's Call" or "Roar of the Tiger") National Park was established in Primorsky krai¹, Russian Far East, in 2007 and officially registered in 2008. The 200,000-acre park protects the big cat's habitat while simultaneously allowing for nature tourism. The Park includes a watershed part of the Sikhote-Alin Mountains and the upper reaches of the Ussurka,

¹ Primorsky Krai, informally known as Primorye, is a federal subject of Russia. Primorsky means "maritime" in Russian, hence the region is sometimes referred to as Maritime Province or Maritime Territory. Primorsky Krai, bordered by China, North Korea, and waters of the Sea of Japan, is the southeasternmost region of Russia, located between 42° and 48° north latitude and 130° and 139° east longitude.

Milogradovka, and Kievka rivers. Geographically it is a juncture of three districts: Olginsky, Lazovsky and Chuguevsky with the highest point of Primorsky krai – Oblachnaya Mountain – in the centre. Nature complexes concentrated in the park have no analogues in any other protected area of the Russian Far East: as many as 57 rare and endangered plant species and six mammals, listed in the Red Book, inhabit the protected area. The Park plays a vital role in Amur tiger protection.



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A fox

There are three resident tigers in the park. The biggest pugmarks belong to a male tiger living in the middle of Milogradovka river basin. The tiger was named Yuri. Another striped cat – tigress – shares the same area with the tiger Yuri.

Pugmarks of the third tiger are often found in the southern part of the protected area.

Though the Park was officially registered three years ago, the Federal Government has not been allocating funds for the Park to operate in full force. The Phoenix



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Amur tiger tracks

Fund has been supporting the Park since its establishment. And thanks to financial support from the Kolmarden Fund Raising Foundation and 21st Century Tiger in 2011 we continued providing the Park's anti-poaching teams with fuel and spare and repair parts for patrol vehicles.

The goal of this project was to strengthen anti-poaching and habitat protection activities in Zov Tigra National Park through conducting regular patrols, creating feeding stations for ungulates, preventing forest fires, etc.

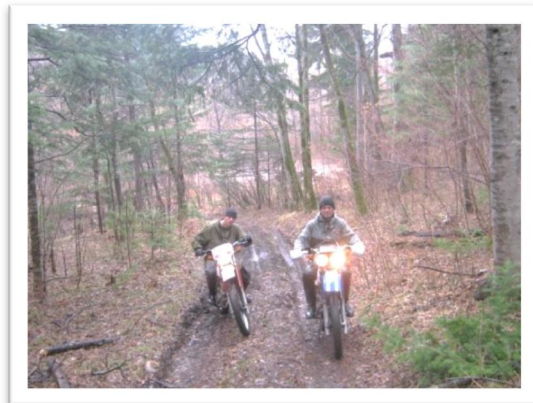
Below, we present our final report with brief description of the anti-

poaching efforts and main achievements.

I. Project Activities

From January 1st through December 30th 2011 the inspectors of Zov Tigra National Park achieved the following results: 576 patrols conducted, six fires put out, 43 citations issued, one illegal logging revealed and one criminal proceeding initiated.

During the first quarter of 2011 the protected area was patrolled by a mobile anti-poaching team and inspectors who were on duty at the inspectors' stations. All in all, the mobile team of Zov Tigra National Park conducted 22 anti-poaching



© Phoenix

The inspectors patrol on motorbikes

patrols (505 km was covered during foot patrols and 855 km during vehicle patrols) and the inspectors on duty carried out 53 patrols.

In January, the mobile team carried out seven patrols (90 km –foot

patrols, 300 km – vehicle patrols). The inspectors who were on duty at Milogradovsky and Ussury inspectors' stations conducted 18 patrols. Due to deep snow and remoteness of the national park from human habitations, there was no violation revealed in the protected area. In order to increase chances for survival of ungulates during high snow cover conditions the team cleaned 22 km of roads from snow in the Park and 18 km outside its boundaries. It let deer to browse on roadside shrubs. Also, 23 km of roads were cleaned from snow along the Milogradovka River. In January, the inspectors participated in wildlife census and spotted many gorals.

In February, the mobile team conducted eight patrols (225 km – foot patrols, 255 km – vehicle patrols). The inspectors who were on duty at Milogradovsky and Ussury inspectors' stations conducted 17 patrols. There was no violation documented in the northern part of the protected area, however the inspectors revealed illegal intrusion by two people into the southern part of the national park. After following the footprints left by trespassers, the inspectors deduced that they had not come to hunt. In February, the inspector continued counting resident wildlife.

Below, we present the data collected during this winter census:

Quantity and range of wildlife in Zov Tigra National Park						
Species	Underwood	Dark coniferous forest	Coniferous –deciduous forest	Swamps, march	Open woodland	Total
Red deer	132	680	357	21	11	1201
Sika deer	14	28	57	-	-	99
Wild boar	20	57	13	-	-	189
Roe deer	11	348	441	-	-	800
Musk deer	7	73		-	-	80
Sable		408	91	8	14	521
White hare	34	630	210	8	32	914
Manchurian hare	13	-	-	-	-	13

According to the census, there are 4 resident Amur tigers in the national park. Also, 4 more tigers visit the protected area on a regular basis.

In March, the mobile team carried out seven patrols (160 km – foot patrols, 300 km – vehicle patrols). Additionally, 18 anti-poaching patrols were conducted by



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The inspectors put out a forest fire on the adjacent area

inspectors on duty at Milogradovsky and Ussury inspectors' stations. Also, the Park's staff conducted 21 patrols (840 km) aimed at preventing forest fires. During the patrols the inspectors put out two agricultural burnings (5 ha) occurred close to the Park's border. Thanks to timely measures and assiduous efforts by the inspectors no fire reached the Park.

From April to June, the inspectors, who were on duty at

the inspectors' stations, worked 10-day shifts and conducted 36 foot patrols per month. The inspectors of the mobile team conducted 10 patrols.

The Park currently has two motorcycles in its arsenal which allow the inspectors to patrol areas of backcountry. The inspectors on motorcycles conducted off-road patrols through the Park's brushy wilderness areas looking for people engaged in illegal activity. As a result, a number of revealed violations increased significantly. For example, six citations were issued during a patrol.



© Phoenix

The inspectors build deer feeding station

During the second quarter of 2011 the inspectors put out four forest fires in areas adjacent to the Park. The most intensive forest fire occurred on May 12. Thanks to timely measures the inspectors managed to prevent

the fire from spreading into the national park.

Additionally, during the reported period the following actions were taken:

1. An extra fire water tank was dug out.
2. Forest roads were improved and four wooden bridges were built.
3. An additional feeding station for ungulates was set.
4. Eco-trails and paths used by the inspectors were cleared from fallen trees.
5. Eco-trails were marked with scarlet ribbons which help tourists to find their way and reach destinations.



© Phoenix

An angler is caught red-handed in a zone where fishing is strictly prohibited

From July through September, the inspectors carried out 16 anti-poaching patrols, covered 4,015 km, including 1,920 km on foot, and issued 32 administrative citations upon violators (13 – in July, 6 – in August, and 13 – in

September). The inspectors mostly were on duty at two main inspectors' stations – Milogradovsky and Ussury – and at Central, a poorly equipped inspector's station that operated occasionally. All in all, the inspectors made 148 rounds/patrols (1,750 km) of the assigned area to prevent and reveal any crimes. The number of patrols was increased compared to the number of patrols in previous months. Every day when it was not raining the inspectors were in the field. In addition, they delivered salt to natural salt licks



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An inspector issues a citation upon violators

and hay rolls to feeding stations for ungulates and restored the park roads.

In the third quarter of the year the inspectors performed much better compared to previous months. A huge influx of visitors during this season accounts for an increased number of violations. From July to September as many

as 1,200 tourists visited the national park. Despite this fact, the anti-poaching teams significantly improved their protection efforts, mostly thanks to their involvement in work with MIST.

In August, while patrolling the southern part of the national park, the team stopped two men who had allegedly entered the protected area by a quad bike to hunt illegally; although, the detainees had no firearms. The inspectors issued an administrative citation upon the violators for illegal presence.



© Phoenix

An inspector evaluates the damage caused by unauthorized logging

In September, the teams patrolled the assigned territories in order to prevent forest fires. The inspectors set up fire warning signs along the perimeter of the protected area. As a result of fire prevention measures, no fires were registered in the national park.

This autumn pine trees produced a good crop of cones in the national park, which prompted people to go deep into the forest to gather cone nuts. In October, the patrolling had to be reinforced as it was a peak season for nut gatherers.

During a routine foot patrol the inspectors discovered an illegal helicopter landing site and an artificial salt-lick nearby. The helicopter pad and the salt-lick were destroyed.

In October-December 2011, the inspectors carried out 13 anti-poaching patrols, covered 798 km, including 584 km on foot, and issued eight administrative citations upon violators. Three citations were issued upon people for illegal gathering of Korean pine nuts. Once, when patrolling along the Park's border the inspectors discovered a few blood spots where a hoofed animal had presumably had a rest for a while. It was impossible to ascertain whether the animal had been shot by someone or injured itself. The rest citations were issued over the water and land pollution and destruction of recreation facilities in the protected area.

The inspectors mostly were on duty at two main inspectors' stations – Milogradovsky and

Ussury – and at Central, a poorly equipped inspector's station that operated occasionally. All in all, the inspectors made 115 rounds/patrols (1,175 km) of the assigned area to prevent and reveal any crimes. The number of patrols was reduced compared to the number of patrols in previous months because with first snowfalls and low temperature in late autumn and winter the number of visits by tourists and violators decreased.

In October, the inspectors carried out patrols in order to prevent and reveal forest fires. Thanks to fire prevention measures the park administration managed to keep the protected area from fires. Besides fire warning signs, the inspectors also set signs to mark the border of the protected area and information boards with information on park's tourist attractions and services provided by the park.

In November 2011, while clearing a public road, unknown persons destroyed over thousands of trees in Zov Tigra National Park. They allegedly tried to clear a way to a site where they planned to build a hunters' recreation centre. Yuri Berseniev, director of the national park, addressed to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology of the Russian Federation and Environmental Prosecutor's Office

regarding the fact of uncontrolled felling of trees. Immediately upon receiving the information, specialists from the Prosecutor's Office, Forest Management Service and regional Department of Rosprirodnadzor² went to the scene to check the obtained information and investigate the case. The case is still under investigation.

In November-December, the inspectors also made fire breaks along the southern border of the protected area. In mid-December, in the run-up to Christmas and New Year's Eve the inspectors increased patrols in order to prevent illegal cutting of fir trees.

Also, in December the inspectors were involved in winter wildlife census which will be finished approximately in early February 2012.

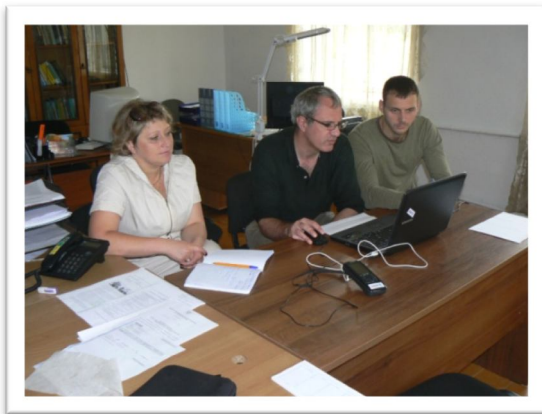
Work with MIST

In order to improve anti-poaching efforts in the Park, in June 2011 the inspectors were trained to work with Monitoring Information System (MIST). The spatial patrol monitoring system MIST has been designed for monitoring anti-poaching patrol efforts and results. MIST patrol monitoring is based on

² Rosprirodnadzor – Russia's Federal Service for Supervising Natural Resources

a GIS (Geographic Information System) database, which means that all patrol data are linked spatially and information can be presented in a highly visual form, using maps and graphics (Please see examples of maps developed by MIST below). Using standardized performance indicators, MIST patrol monitoring makes it possible to assess and compare patrol efforts and results over time and across teams and sites. In Russia MIST

National Park learned how to work with GPS units, collect MIST data and enter the data into the MIST database. After a field-testing in July, on August 1st MIST was officially launched in Zov Tigra National Park.

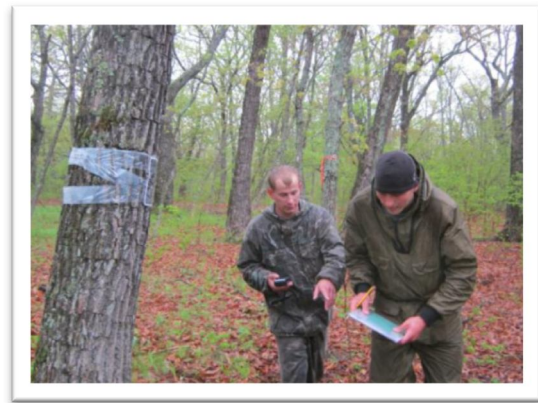


© Phoenix

MIST training for data entry persons at Zov Tigra National Park

has been operating since December 2010 at two protected areas of Primorye, namely Kedrovaya Pad-Leopardovy and Lazovsky Nature Reserve, and since August 2011 at two more protected areas (Sikhote-Alin Nature Reserve and Zov Tigra National Park). This initiative is a joint project implemented by the Phoenix Fund, Wildlife Conservation Society-Russia Program and Zoological Society of London.

During the training session in June 2011 the inspectors of Zov Tigra



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Inspectors Timofey Mudrak, Zov Tigra & Alex Igonin, Sikhote-Alin during practical training exercise to locate GPS marked spot

As a result of MIST training sessions and follow-up meetings, the inspectors became able to record their patrol routes with GPS units and collect anti-poaching data. These data were stored in a MIST database and analyzed by protected area managers under surveillance by representatives of Phoenix, WCS-Russia and ZSL. All MIST data make it possible to determine the quality of the patrol work, and based on this quality, the teams received small or large rewards (\$1,500 was divided each month in the protected area). Before launching MIST, we noticed that many inspectors lacked motivation due to extremely low

salaries and were not interested at all to work with MIST without incentives. However, some of them were interested in improving protection, but hesitant to use new procedures that substantially increase the workload of inspectors. We agreed with the PA management to finance an incentive system that will be based on the quality of MIST work, patrol efforts and patrol results.

After analyzing MIST database and patrol reports, Phoenix together with WCS-Russia and ZSL provided recommendations to each patrol team for improving the patrols. We told teams where they should patrol more often in a specific area, or do more patrols on foot, etc., and then, after a month, we checked how they followed our recommendations. Mostly, they did their best to improve the results and did what we asked them to do. In this way the protection of the protected areas is improving quickly, and especially the patrols have already improved very much.

We understand that the introduction of MIST is a slow process, and it may take several years before the full benefits of MIST are visible. This is in part due to the very human characteristic of "resistance to change", but also to the time required to build a strong data-base upon which actual improvements in patrol work can be measured and compared over time.

It will be possible to draw conclusions about the impact on patrol quality only in 2012 when we can compare the patrol performance in 2011 with the performance in 2012.

Obstacles:

1) Hunting grounds of Medved (Bear) Hunting Lease abut on the borders of Zov Tigra National Park. Members of the hunting lease as well as park staff and tourists have to share a road which is the only public road leading both to the hunting grounds and the protected area. It is sad to note that there is an incessant confrontation between administrations of the hunting lease and the national park. The point is that a director of the hunting lease unreasonably considers the road to be a part of his private properties, and from time to time he is obstructing it to hinder the park inspectors and visitors in their efforts to enter the protected area. Certainly, it negatively affects the protection activities in the park. At the moment, the administrations are negotiating regarding the matter of argument, and we hope that the negotiations will end with a win-win agreement.

2) There are two motorcycles at the disposal of the inspectors. An engine of one bike needs to be replaced.

Results of protection efforts in Zov Tigra National Park (January – December 2011)

Activity	Quantity
Anti-poaching patrols, including:	576
- patrols by mobile team	68
- patrols by inspectors on duty	508
Citations issued	43
Trespassers detained	3
Violations revealed	40
Forest fires put out	6
Criminal proceedings initiated	1
Fines paid	\$220

