we are creating an ecoregion
where human live in harmony with other animals
for a living planet

TOGETHER
Dear friends, we present you "TOGETHER", our N.38 quarterly Newsletter. Good reading!

This is a call to action to every Organisation, institution, government, business and every person to raise Global awareness and gather around our common property to give it our love and attention. Earth is our one and only home and our home is in great danger. The planet Earth is dying and you are also dying because the planet Earth is You. Humanity must stand as ONE against self-destruction. It's not late, there is still time for Us to act. Emerge from the crowd, join Us to help save and conserve our Planet Regardless of all the difficulties, we are not giving up because “Together anything is possible”.

On behalf of the three offices, we would like to wish you a great, blissful, healthy, prosperous and happy New Year 2016. May this New Year come with new beginnings, fresh starts and promises of a brighter future for our planet. Most importantly, may this New Year give us fresh opportunity to shape our world.

May the Force be with Us!
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A word to the world

High accolade of the Amur-Heilong Ecoregion (Russia)

WWF Global Conservation Programme Report 2015 gives high marks to the efforts of the Amur Heilong Programme. “One programme dealing with differing and changing contexts is the Amur Heilong Programme. WWF can clearly demonstrate through its indicators that it has made a difference in this region. For example: The Amur remains the longest free-of-dams river in eastern Asia; Amur tiger and Amur leopard numbers are increasing in northeast China and the Russian Far East; financial and political support has been leveraged for conservation in Russia and subsequent improved new legislation. However, due to very different political, cultural and economic environments, this work requires different approaches by the three WWF offices (China, Mongolia, Russia) whilst operating under a mutual understanding of what can be achieved realistically in a transboundary context. Other offices need to follow suit and better understand and adapt to the complexity of their local context.”

New hope for the survival of Amur Leopard in China

After several years of field research and data analysis on Amur leopard, WWF and the Feline Research Center jointly published the results as scientific report in Nature Series. This report untitled “New hope for the survival of Amur Leopard in China” gives evidences of Amur Leopard’s occurrence in China, assesses its population structure and distribution, discusses the impact of habitat loss, prey density and the presence of tiger on its survival. The results show that there still exit a hope of Amur Leopard recovery in Northeast China with 2 million ha of existing and potential habitats, composing 37 patches. These patches can potentially support a total number of 195 individuals. It also gives the perspectives for better management and conservation practices for the protection of Amur Leopard in China.

WWF’s camera trap monitoring data show that there are 16 Amur leopard individuals and a breeding female with 2 cubs. Benefiting from the complete logging ban in Northeast China and hunting ban in Jilin Province, a fast recovery of Amur leopard in Northeast China can be expected.
Svetlana Titova (on the photo), senior officer, Elena Starostina, press secretary, and Pavel Fomenko, biodiversity conservation program coordinator at WWF Russia Amur branch, were awarded by the government with a title “A Honored Worker of Nature Protection”.

“WWF Russia owes these people its positive image and high profile in the Russian Far East. We are proud of the great results we achieve thanks to their tireless efforts and deep dedication. Receiving this award means that the Russian Government trust WWF and highly praises our achievement,” comments Yury Darman, head of WWF Russia Amur office, a distinguished ecologist of the Russian Federation.
United for Conservation effectiveness

To share experience in tiger conservation and strengthen cooperation for mutually beneficial joint activities, Asian Big Cats Programme (ABC) of WWF China invited WWF Thailand Tiger Team to visit Amur tiger conservation projects from December 22-26, 2015.

During this time, the two teams visited WWF local partners and on the ground projects. With series of reports and group discussions, local partners learned the successful practices of tiger camera trap monitoring system and SMART system in Thailand. While in the field, they were lucky to find two evidences of tiger presence in the area: tiger’s tracks and wild boar killing scene in Baishishan Forestry Bureau, and other tiger footprints in Huangnihe Nature Reserve. All is indicating tiger population expansion to the Huangnihe-Dongningcheng-Xiaobeihu-Tianqiaoling area.

Thailand tiger conservation has gained great achievements in past years especially in Mae Wong and Khlong Lan National Parks where increased tiger population with more reproducing families and sufficient prey source indicate WWF Thailand Tiger team’s perseverance and hard work on anti-poaching, habitat restoration, PA management capacity building and community engagement. Facing the same threats, such experience sharing between two important tiger range countries is to be encouraged and consolidated for tiger conservation.

also been closely involved with and has led major environmental policy and institutional developmental initiatives.

Importantly, Batbold is no stranger to WWF Mongolia having been with us from 2001-2003 and again from 2006-2009 as Conservation Director. His departure for the Ministry of Environment in 2009 was a loss for WWF Mongolia and so we are extremely pleased that he has decided to return “home” to WWF.
More than 60 experts from Russia, China, South Korea and Japan took part in the conference “The Amur tiger: population status, problems and protection prospects”, held in Vladivostok on 13-15 December.

The leading scientists and experts representing academia, NGOs and government agencies summed up the five year results of implementation of the Strategy for Conservation of the Amur Tiger expiring in 2022. The results demonstrate that Russia is on the right track to fulfil its international obligations to protect this rare predator.

“We succeeded in enlarging, thanks to joint efforts, the living space for this endangered species. After 5 years, the total area of protected tiger habitat increased by more than 1.5 mln hectares and reached 24% of the Amur tiger home range”, comments Yury Darman, PhD, head of WWF Russia Amur Branch.

At the conference the scientists and experts suggested new ideas to be included in the Action Plan of Strategy for Conservation of the Amur Tiger. Experts believe that these amendments adopted at the Conference will help to achieve the goal of increasing tiger population, as well as ensure peaceful coexistence of tigers and humans on one territory.

More details are here: http://www.wwf.ru/resources/news/article/eng/13912

On the verge of transboundary PAs network (China)

Information exchange between the PAs lying on the both side of the Sino-Russian border took place during November. Data such as PA’s name, target species, surface, and conservation activities were delivered to the PAs members of Transboundary network in both Russia and China. In planning, new Network between Russia and China along mainstream of Amur River and Ussuri River will involve 26 Nature reserves (both national and provincial level), cover 1,770,000 ha forest range or wetland range.

As a transboundary cooperation platform, WWF global flagship species Amur tiger/leopard and their prey, as well as WWF Amur regional flagship species Oriental White Stork will be involved into this network as target species. Moreover, this network will provide opportunity to keep watchful eyes on other endangered species like salmon, Kaluga sturgeon, leatherback and butterflies.

In the beginning of December 2015, Mr. Liu Peiqi and Mr. Li Qian met with Ms. Sun Weibin (Director of conservation section of Heilongjiang forest department) and Mr. Guan Yun (Deputy Director of conservation section of Heilongjiang forest department) to discuss the next-step to push forward network cooperation work in 2016.
You said Big Cats?

WWF extends its prey recovery expertise to Hanma national nature reserve (China)

In December 3-4, 2015 a reserve recently established was visited by WWF experts. This reserve about 107,348 ha is bordering Russia (Chitinskaya province) in Daxinganling area (Greater Khingan area). During this visit, the reserve administration and WWF discussed their future cooperation strategy which was mainly about prey restoration experience sharing, technical assistance and guidance, radio GPS collar tracking technology training and Application.

Hanma nature reserve retains the most important moose population as well as a not insignificant population of deer, brown bear, wolverine, sable, lynx and other important wild animal and plant resources. Although this nature reserve is not in a tiger priority area, we hope that this cooperation can help to continuously improve the management level of national nature reserve in Northeast China.

Primorsky Province Hunting Department enforces protection of hunting lands (Russia)

Opening of the hunting season was marked by a joint anti-poaching raid organized by Primorsky Province Administration and the Ministry of Internal Affairs with the support of WWF and the Amur Tiger Center. Five anti-poaching brigades went to patrol the territory of seven districts of Primorye. Rangers try to conduct primarily night raids when poachers not only transport their kill but try to hunt using spotlights blinding helpless animals. During the first days of the raids 26 administrative cases were initiated.

According to Pavel Fomenko, biodiversity conservation program coordinator at WWF Russia Amur branch, “The effectiveness of raids increases several fold when the staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs joins our raids”.

More details are here: http://www.wwf.ru/resources/news/article/eng/13840

The Amur leopard perfects its hunting skills in a new enclosure (Russia)

WWF invested about 70 000 USD into modernization of an enclosure in the Center for rehabilitation of Tigers and other Rare Animals located in the village of Alekseevka, in Primorye. The Center has become a home for a young Amur leopard that was found injured this June. WWF has immediately provided financial support necessary for the treatment. And when it became clear that the animal would soon recover and that there were chances to release it into the wild WWF focused its efforts on renovation of the enclosure his proper rehabilitation.

The enclosure was extended three times – now it covers 1,5 hectares. Its height was also increased by 50 centimeters and now reached 5 meters. From the inside the enclosure was covered with metal and an inward overhang was added to block the cat form a possible escape. Additional equipment was fixed to register all his hunting episodes.
**New Year presents for tiger-mother and her cubs**

Early in December the camera traps set in the Bastak’s Nature Reserve captured a tigress nicknamed Zolushka (meaning in Russia Cinderella) and the cubs. This is the first litter of the Amur tiger born in the left bank of the Amur River in the third millennium. To help the Bastak NR to ensure individual protection of the tiger family WWF purchased a winter tent and satellite telephone while the Amur Tiger Center bought an off-roader.

Coming into being of tiger cubs means a lot both for Evreiskaya Province and for everyone dedicated to the tiger conservation. It confirms that the restoration of tiger has started in this area and that the tigers come back to the place after 40 years-long absence.

In February 2012, Zolushka, being a cub herself, was found starving in the forest. After being rehabilitated she was released into the wild in the Bastak Nature Reserve in May 2013. The Reserve’s staff monitored the animal on a constant basis. Camera traps set in the NR 1,5 years ago yielded shots confirming the birth of two cubs.

**Soon a new NR in tiger range area-Dongjincheng to promote inner land’s settling down of Tiger (China)**

After successful discussion with relevant authorities, based on the recommendations of WWF, a new nature reserve will be established in April 2016 in Dongjincheng. This nature reserve about 60-70,000 ha will serve as potential settling down area for population of Amur tiger in Zhangguangcailing landscape. Neighboring with Tianqiaoling Nature Reserve which was promoted by WWF last year and the existing Huangnihe National Nature Reserve, this protected area network will serve as key habitat for Amur tigers to promote the settling down of Amur tigers in inner land of China and also will play a corridor role between Laoyeling border landscape and Zhangguangcailing landscape.

**Sweden helps to preserve Russia’s northernmost tigers**

The experts from WWF Sweden and “Nordens Ark” Zoo spent two weeks in the Russian Far East to see the progress of the “Northern Tiger” Project that was started in 2011 in Nanaisky District, Khabarovsk Province. They got acquainted with the work of rangers, tourist infrastructure, visited rangers’ stations and visitor center. They traveled up the Anyui River to enjoy the beauty of the local wildlife.

According to Ola Jennersten, senior conservation advisor, WWF Sweden, “The result in Anyuisky Park with a doubling of tigers is indeed both impressive and encouraging. The staff of the park and the Hunting inspection has done very good work to increase anti-poaching activities and winter feeding of herbivores”.

This year during the full range Amur tiger survey 12 adult tigers and 6 cubs were registered in Anyuisky National Park; 10 adult tigers were portrayed by camera traps. Annual tiger monitoring in the area shows a steady increase in the number of rare cats.

Signs marking the return of wild tiger in China

The pugmarks of wild tiger were found in Xiaobeihu protected area and Erzhan Forest Farm in Heilongjiang province at around 300km far away from the Sino-Russian border. According to experts and authorities from the national forestry bureau, judging from the footprints and activities of this tiger, it seems that is a domestic tiger which is very familiar with the region.

Chang Youde, Senior Officer of Asian Big Cats Programme, WWF China, said that “these two signs of the Amur tiger show that the Amur tigers are expanding their areas in the far inner land of China. Combining with the frequent occurrences of tigers in neighboring Huagnihe forest farm and Tianqiaoling forest farm, this is an indication of tigers settling down in the inner land.”

Traces of wild Amur tigers have also been spotted in areas administered by the Tianqiaoling Forest Administration in Wangqing County and Baishishan Forest Administration in Jiaohe City. Due to the relatively short distance between these locations, experts think that it should be the same tiger.

"The Amur tigers once wandered in Tianqiaoling area but became extinct in the mid 1980s. The comeback of the tigers shows that they are expanding their sphere of activity from the border areas to the inland regions," said Wu Zhigang, a researcher with the provincial academy of forestry and advisor for tiger office.

The Tianqianling-Huangnihe-Dongjingcheng-Xiaobeihu area is the key habitat in Zhangguangcailing landscape, which is the inner land landscape of Amur tigers in Northeast China. About 5-6 individuals along this area are helping Amur tiger population settling down in the landscape.

Chang Youde also pointed out that the occurrence of tiger in Tianqiaoling area shows that the existing corridor between Zhangguangcailing landscape and Laoyeling landscape (a landscape home to key Amur tiger population with around 20 individuals and breeding females) is been used by tigers.

Since 2006, WWF is working with local and governmental authorities to reverse the decline of tiger population through anti-poaching, law enforcement, protection of tiger habitat and its prey, tiger friendly infrastructure and economy. While we are on the half-way to our commitment of doubling tiger population, such discovery is to remind us that our efforts are bearing fruits and there is much more left to do. But “Together anything is Possible”.

Wild tiger into the conquest of inner land of China
Heilongjiang province has decided to catch up with its neighboring Jilin province regarding the situation of its tiger population. Comparing to Jilin province, where there is a deep understanding on tiger population, Heilongjiang province has few data on Amur Tiger. To fill in this knowledge gap, Heilongjiang province has started the implementation of tiger census in the scope of the whole province from October 2015 to June 2016. This census will combine a series of data sources such as informative records, snow transect, camera traps and DNA analysis.

Mr Liu Peiqi, WWF bird specialist, director of WWF northeast China office, stated that: “Our hopes are high to see the outcomes of this census. It is something WWF has been advocating for long time. Now that it is happening, it will help us to understand the population structure and distribution of Amur tiger in Heilongjiang, as well as some other useful data. Ultimately, when combining these data with the ones we already have for Jilin province, it will generate a relatively full picture of Amur tiger population in Northeast China. To get such figure in 2016, which is a half-way from our commitment of doubling tiger, will be a strong signal for tiger conservation in China.”

The Amur Tiger Conservation Action Plan in Heilongjiang is published! (China)

With the support of WWF and the participation of most of Heilongjiang provincial conservation authorities, Amur tiger action plan for the province has been developed. This action plan is an integrated plan which emerged from discussions between the Heilongjiang Forestry Department and the General Forestry Bureau of Heilongjiang Forestry and Industry Group, combining all comments from Amur tiger expert, local forestry bureaus and nature reserves. Based on the threats to Amur tiger survival and the challenges to conservation management, this document outlines the strategy for full and efficient protection of tigers in the province.
**Ungulates in tiger habitat supplementary fed (Russia)**

WWF Russia purchased 150 tons of free-running forage to supplementary feed ungulates and 25 tons of dry vaccine against hog plague. The forage was distributed among the responsible hunting users who have already started to put it on the feeding grounds. First observations prove that the animals feed on this forage very actively. Along with this Primorsky Province Hunting Department has enforced anti-poaching patrolling of the near-feeding-grounds area. The reserve forage supply is a necessity caused by poor crops of Korean pine nuts and acorns in the most part of the Amur tiger range this year.

A snowy winter can result in the mass die off of wild hoofed animals. The last snowfall brought about one-meter-deep snow cover on the right bank of the Amur River. This is too challenging for the animals deprived of proper amount of natural forage.

Over the years WWF Russia has been supporting a network of partner hunting clubs trying to maintain a high number of ungulates in key tiger habitats. The joint efforts have resulted in a stable population numbers and steady increase in prey in these areas.

Soon, the Amur Tiger Center will buy additional 150 tons of forage as wild ungulates should be fed through December-April until the fresh grass appears.


In October, WWF Russia launched a fundraising camping planning to raise around 31 000.00 USD.


**Food for ungulates during winter (China)**

As for previous years, Suiyang, Wangqing, and Huangnihe, the three Amur tiger national protected areas conducted anti-poaching and supplementary feeding works with the support of WWF.

This time the work was extended to areas outside the nature reserve in order to have a comprehensive supplementary feeding and anti-poaching activities. Meantime, during these activities, tiger traces were found in Muling forestry bureau which, later on, was identified as a male tiger after analysis of its pad size, footprints distance, feces and urine. Li Qi, WWF prey reintroduction specialist said: “From Amur tiger conservation landscape scale, this is wonderful! Now, with this finding, Suiyang, Tianqiaoling and Muling have formed a complete and continuous unit therefore becoming an important channel for tiger settlement, migration and proliferation.”
According to the latest data received from a collar equipped with GPS-module, over the last week the tiger is roaming close to Gur-Khoso Nature Park in Khabarovsky Province. So far, the prognosis of the specialists regarding Uporny survival in the wild is optimistic. The animal hunts successfully and so far avoids human settlements and motorways. However, the staff of the Khabarovsky Province Hunting Department maintains high state of readiness, receiving data on Uporny’s locations in online mode. If the tiger comes too close to human settlements or main roads they are ready to go to the site immediately to prevent the human-tiger conflict and to ensure tiger protection.

According to Pavel Fomenko, biodiversity conservation program coordinator at WWF Russia Amur branch, “Scientific data we receive on Uporny’s movement are unique. We are gaining valuable experience that will enable us to avoid potential problems if we need to release other tigers into the wild”.

Nearly seven months passed since Uporny has been released into the wild. An important task for specialists now is to keep predator’s movements under control.

More details are here: http://www.wwf.ru/resources/news/article/eng/13794

Jilin province supports CA/TS (China)

The First Global Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards Consultation Meeting was held on November 13-16 in Bangkok, Thailand. It was organized by the Government of Thailand with support of WWF, co-hosted by Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) and ended with strong commitments from the participating 11 Tiger Range Countries, 8 NGO partners and other conservation international agencies (UNDP, IUCN). As representative of China, the deputy director of Jilin Forestry Bureau also attended the meeting along with Mr Liu Peiqi and Ms Peng Jianyu.

During the meeting, the experts from WWF and other NGO shared experiences and discussed next steps, the CA | TS role and significance in the implementation of the Global Tiger Recovery Programme, which was announced at the Tiger Summit in St. Petersburg in 2010 setting a goal to double the number of tigers in the wild by 2022. At the meeting it was decided that 150 of the world’s most important sites for tigers are either fully CA|TS accredited or well on the path to accreditation by 2022.

The deputy director of wildlife conservation department of Forestry Bureau of Jilin Province showed a great interested in the implementation of CA | TS and conservation experience sharing. He stated that “Saving tigers is about concerted actions. Sikhote-Alin Nature Reserve in Russia has received CA | TS certificate, therefore for the sake of tigers, China also must implement it, because for those animals there is no border. International cooperation and experience sharing are of crucial importance, if we want to meet our goals.”

China is expected to pilot CA|TS in Huangnihe Nature Reserve of Jilin province. This tool will be helpful for Nature Reserves and other conservation management departments to find their gaps on tiger conservation work.
When the belt is green

A new protected area, Verkhneamursky Wildlife Refuge (239,639 hectares), was established by the initiative of scientists and environmentalists from Zabaikalsky Province, with the support of WWF Russia and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Industrial Policy of Zabaikalye.

According to Petr Osipov, deputy head of WWF Russia Amur Branch, “It is very important that scientific data collected in cooperation with WWF became the background for the government’s decision to establish the Refuge. Over the last three years, the territory of protected areas in Zabaikalsky Province is practically doubled.”

The refuge should serve as one of the compensatory measures to reduce the negative environmental impact of economic activity in the area, allowing saving the biodiversity and valuable wildlife species.

Transboundary cooperation of PAs located in China along Sino-Russia border and Verkhneamursky Wildlife Refuge will promote conservation of unique ecosystems of the upper reaches of the Amur River.

More details are here: http://www.wwf.ru/resources/news/article/eng/13916
Parameters of management effectiveness of Khar Yamaat Nature Reserve have been increased (Mongolia)

The management effectiveness for the Khar Yamaat Nature Reserve has been carried out to assess the activities reflected in its management plan. The first ever assessment was done in 2014 using a participatory approach and the management effectiveness was evaluated to be 46.2 percent. This second assessment had involved 58 people to ensure the maximum participation, including local residents from two soums, representatives from government entities, and members from community-based organizations. The results spelled out to be increased to 53 percent demonstrating an improvement by 6.8 percent compared to the results of one and half year ago. During this period, the parameters of law enforcement, planning, research, finance, assets, tourism and partnership have been increased by 5-28 percent while the effectiveness of human resource management, and patrolling have been decreased. The protected area administration took note of recommendations issued through this assessment and will apply for future protection measures.

WWF-Mongolia took charge of the management of Khar Yamaat Nature Reserve since 2013, legalized through an agreement with the Ministry of Environment, Green Development and Tourism and authorities of Khentii and Sukhbaatar provinces.
Mongolian gazelle finally came back to Dauria grasslands (Russia)

About 6,100 Mongolian gazelles inhabit the Dauria Nature Reserve, the Dolina Dzerena Federal Wildlife Refuge (the Valley of the Mongolian gazelle), and its adjacent areas. The census confirmed that after 20 years of hard work on conservation of this unique animal, the Mongolian gazelle has settle down in Zabaikalsky Province forever. The census also showed that the animals are doing well, continue to explore new areas, and this summer calf crop was larger in numbers than usual.

For 15 years WWF has been supporting the efforts of protected areas and regional authorities of Zabaikalsky Province to restore Mongolian gazelle in Russia, to monitor and protect the population, and to create protected areas for this rare species conservation.

Issues of joint monitoring, research, and control over the animals migrating across the state border were discussed in Ulaanbaatar at a meeting of the Russian-Mongolian Committee on Nature Conservation. As the first steps the parties agreed to develop a system for joint monitoring and protection of rare species to be part of activities of transboundary PAs.

More details are here: http://www.wwf.ru/resources/news/article/eng/13846
The protection of the Mongolian gazelle is one of priority actions of WWF-Mongolia. One of innovative communications campaigns, initiated by WWF-Mongolia has been organized for the second year throughout the soums where the Mongolian gazelle inhabit. This year, the campaign took place from 25th November to 10th December and engaged even more partners such as community-based organizations, TNC, Khar Yamaat and Toson Khulstai Nature Reserves’ Administrations and soum authorities. The main goal of this campaign is to raise awareness about this species, change local people’s attitude and behavior through engaging into them into different kinds of activities. The main call for action addressed to local residents was to abstain from eating the Mongolian gazelles’s meat. Organizers were pleased to note that many participants gave oath not to eat meat of this animal anymore. Last year, during the same campaign, there were 283 people who gave oath not to eat gazelle’s meat, and out of these people, 124 have confirmed they kept their promise. Overall, residents were satisfied with side events that the campaign involved and asked to undertake such positive intervention more often in order to reach more audiences and achieve results.

Because they move in big herds, the Mongolian gazelle is a migratory ungulate that is the most affected by poaching. According to Mr. Vadim Kirillyuk, the Russian scientist, there were big herds counted up to 150 thousand individuals of Mongolian gazelle in Toson Khulstai back in 2000. However, this number has been decreased down to as few as 50 thousand in 2013 which mean a hundred thousand individuals of gazelle were killed in a matter of little more than a decade. If no intervention is initiated, there is a high possibility that this species will be wiped out of the Earth.
Corn stalk burning on the field is a farming practice that is seriously and negatively impacting the air and the environment in northeast China. To tackle this problem, WWF in partnership with local partners has initiated a pilot project to promote the alternative use of corn stalk as a bio-combustible for stove, with the financial support of China Green Foundation. This pilot is conducted in Fuzi village in Qian’an county where 100 households have been selected to try out recycling mechanism of corn stalk as bio-fuel for stove produced by different companies. At this stage of project, the preliminary analysis of the survey shows that a feasible mechanism can be develop for the alternative use of corn stalk and to stop field burning.

In this mechanism, WWF provide corn stove to local families (free of charge) which in turn commit to not burn stalk in the field. As a by-product of the impressive yield in the region, there is 100 million tons of corn stalk produced annually and left on the field. Although there are several ways of using corn stalk, 50% of the stalk is burned generating air pollution (smog and haze), GHG, but also damaging soil structure and fertility and leading to millions of people breathing a hazardous air every day. This cocktail of chemicals is generated by coal-fired power plants, factories and vehicles but worsen by field burning, and it is responsible of heart disease, stroke, respiratory illnesses, birth defects and cancer. Therefore the field burning has become not only an environmental issue but also a health concern threatening the integrity of Chinese society as a whole.
Veto on illegal timber in action (Russia)

The largest supplier of hardwood flooring in the US, the company Lumber Liquidators, will pay $10 million fine for the import of wood materials made of Mongolian oak illegally logged in the Russian Far East. In addition to the fine Lumber Liquidators will be obliged to establish a strict system of risk assessment in all flooring supply chains that the company is utilizing.

According to WWF-Russia, it will serve as a good lesson for timber importers used to think that it’s possible to export illegally harvested timber from Russia with impunity. The decision made by a US court creates a significant precedent for implementation of the “Lacey Act”, which prohibits the import of illegally produced wood materials to the US and requires providing documentation confirming the legality of timber.

WWF Russia hopes that these market-based tools to combat illegal logging will support responsible Russian forest users who are often not competitive because the black market of illegal timber is driving the prices down.

More details are here: http://www.wwf.ru/resources/news/article/eng/13786
The Bikin National Park created (Russia)

On November 3, 2015, the government of Russia created the Bikin National Park. More than 1,16 million hectares of forests in the Bikin River in Primorsky Province has been taken under protection. According to Yury Darman, head of WWF Russia Amur branch, “The forests of the Bikin River, often referred to as “the Russian Amazon’ constitute the biggest area of intact mixed forests in the Northern Hemisphere. These forests are home for 10% of the Amur tiger population. The creation of the Bikin National Park practically marks the completion of establishing the protected areas network necessary for the adequate protection of Amur tigers. The newly designated park also takes in the account the interests of the Indigenous people living in the region, the Udege and Nanai aboriginal tribes”.

In 2010, an outstanding global value of the Bikin River Basin forests was proved by including this massif into the UNESCO World Natural Heritage List. The newly created Park is the traditional land of Udege people and home for the Amur tiger.

More details are here: http://www.wwf.ru/resources/news/article/eng/13838

Rural residents gained legal knowledge (Mongolia)

The three-phased event, titled “Mountain Island in Endless Grassland” was held in Tumentsogt soum of Sukhbaatar province and Bayan-Ovoo soum of Khentii province on 3rd of October, 2nd of November and 7th of December 2015 respectively. This event’s main activity was a Q&A session and aimed at raising awareness on importance of nature conservation and adopting environment-friendly lifestyle. The competition, organized by WWF-Mongolia and the administration of Khar Yamaat Nature Reserve had primarily targeted at local residents to improve their legal knowledge, especially protection regimes within the protected area.

In the first phase, there were three teams from each of two soums and tested their skills and agility. There were approximately 80 people present. The second phase was held in Bayan Ovoo soum of Khentii province involving remote rural residents. The third phase of the competition took place among the selected best teams in Bayan-Ovoo soum on 7th December 2015. Out of selected teams only four have participated due to unforeseen weather conditions that hindered the participation of other three teams. The team of “Tugiin Mod” bagh (smallest administrative unit) of Bayan Ovoo soum has won the first prize while the team “Eco ambassador” from Tumetsogt soum won the second prize and the third prize was granted to“Han Hohii” team from Tumetsogt soum. The best teams demonstrated interesting performances about how pasture, livestock and herder should live in harmony with nature and how to use the pasture in sustainable way. In total, an estimated around 1000 people attended the three-phased event and gained legal knowledge, specifically the law about protected areas.
Community Based Tiger Friendly Non Timber Forest Products (NTFP) Trade Show--“China Shop” Exhibition in Wuhan (China)

In order to reduce the extractive pressure on the forest, WWF started to pilot the model alternative livelihoods benefitting local communities in Wangqing and Huangnihe Forestry Bureaus. In FY15, WWF helped these two forestry bureaus set up their own cooperatives and developed their products: pine nuts and honey. During the “China shop” exhibition opened in Wuhan, the Tiger Friendly NTFP was the leading attraction for the public and the market. This exhibition, jointly organized by China Chain Association and Beijing Zhihelianchuang Company, last for 3 days from November 5-7, 2015. More than 550 famous retailers attend the exhibition. The exhibition also attracted 10 thousands managers and professional buyers. During the exhibition, WWF drive the products principle and the stories to the market. The response was over expectation. This exhibition will be a milestone not only for the NTFP but also a new era for the tiger conservation model in AHEC.

Communities are confident to protect the nature and improve their livelihood (Mongolia)

The association of Community-based Organizations (CBO) of Onon River Basin was established in 2013 and aims at consolidating efforts for nature conservation and livelihood improvement. In this reporting period, the association has conducted evaluation of its CBOs and worked hard to assist members in writing project proposals for SME schemes. Despite current efforts, the association acknowledges the need for rejuvenating its activities and decided to change the board director. Mr.Ch.Chinbat, former head of WWF-Mongolia’s Eastern region’s branch office has been selected with majority of voters. The new director has held the first meeting of board members on 4th December 2015 in the capital Ulaanbaatar city. The main outcome of this meeting is that the association board has expressed its commitment and acknowledged the need to solve these issues with consolidated efforts jointly by influential members of regional council based in Ulaanbaatar city. Board director Mr.Ch.Chinbat noted: “Although we face many challenges, I have no doubt that we can overcome them with our common efforts. All participants were very active and encourage us in our future endeavors. We are all committed to create a better livelihood through sustainable use of nature resources”.

KEDR system proved its value (Russia)

The field testing results of the unique system for monitoring forest cover changes KEDR (meaning Korean Pine in Russian) developed and introduced in the Far East by WWF in cooperation with Primorsky Province Forest Department and the Department on Informatization and Telecommunications was highly appraised by Primorsky Province Administration. Field tests have been carried out since August in Roshinskoye forestry unit in Primorye. The results of the field tests impressed both the high officials and the system developers. The system revealed 1350 cases of forest canopy change 42 out of which were checked by the specialists. 79% of cases confirmed changes of forest cover.

As of Andrey Purekhovsky, Amur Info Center coordinator, GIS specialist at WWF Russia Amur branch, one of the developers of KEDR, “The system allows revealing even small scale logging sites, including cutting of a single tree. Moreover, the system is programmed to be self-improving; it is able to learn on its own mistakes and get more accurate every time”.

According to WWF’s experts, to make KEDR more effective it is necessary to form response groups and to organize a dispatch center to coordinate the groups’ activities on-line.

More details are here: http://www.wwf.ru/resources/news/article/eng/13874

Bio-technical measures start yielding positive results (Mongolia)

This winter is excessively snowy and cold that might badly affect not only domestic livestock, but also wildlife. In such circumstances, the bio-technical measures are important to undertake in order to ease difficult conditions. The administration of Onon-Balj National Park in collaboration with the Border protection unit has undertaken bio-technical measures in accordance with approved itinerary and methodology in Dadal, Bayan-Uul and Norovlin soums. They put salt and grass in five ha area on 23 important spots. This activity is being done every winter since 2010 by the Administration staff. The head of the Administration has noted that: “Thanks to bio-technical measures, we see positive results such as creating favorable living conditions for forest ungulates and sustaining their important habitat”.

Bio-technical measures start yielding positive results (Mongolia)
The children’s eco clubs come together for cooperation (Mongolia)

Raising awareness of children and involving them into nature conservation is one effective way to enhance conservation results. This can be achieved through the efforts of children’s eco clubs. WWF-Mongolia has been supporting the children’s eco clubs and encourages them to engage in nature conservation and become agents for change in their respective communities.

The principal of soum’s secondary school has acknowledged the importance of eco clubs and decided to include all pupils of 5th grade into the eco club. To welcome this initiative, WWF-Mongolia has conducted a training for the club facilitator and new members with very basic content such as how to operate a club, what the roles of members, how to plan activities and influence others and so on. Totally, 20 members, a facilitator and the soum ranger were trained. Attendees were particularly interested in benefits of being a member to an eco club and how a club can engage and influence others. The members of eco club from Tumentsogt soum of Sukhbaatar province were invited to this training as this club has experienced and active members. Their input was valuable as peer education is proved to be very effective. The two eco club members have agreed to cooperate further.

Let Economy talks Environment!

HSCB staff became Oriental stork nests keepers (Russia)

Early in October WWF Russia and HSBC staff visited Amursky Wildlife Refuge to get acquainted with the results of long-term efforts of AmurSEU and WWF in the Oriental stork conservation and to participate in their nests treatment.

The bank’s representatives got to know what actions are being done after the birds with offspring left their nests. They also took part the treatment of 11 nests against forest fires.

In total, over 60 trees and erected poles with nests have to be fireproofed and cut around in Amursky, Beryozovsky, and Muravievsky Wildlife Refuges.

HSCB staff saw for themselves that the equipment purchased at the bank’s money like drones and electric strimmers help to monitor the birds and protect their nests.
River Ecoregion Vision

Key species: Tiger, Leopard and Oriental Stork

Migratory species: Mongolian gazelle Taimen

Why we are here
To stop the degradation of the planet’s natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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