

# Amur/Heilong Ecoregion Complex Newsletter Issue 3, Jan. to Mar. 2007

## Achievements

### **1. The Zuun Bus Advisory Committee Charter Established:**

The committee involves Mongolian Ministry for Nature & Environment, Members of the Mongolian parliament, Eastern Aimags' residents, WCS (Wildlife Conservation Society) and TNC (The Nature Conservancy). The purpose of the committee is to discuss and advise on potential strategies, priorities, and partnerships for conservation plan for eastern Mongolia.

### **2. A Concept for Developing Eco-tourism In Area (please identify with exact name) Drafted.**

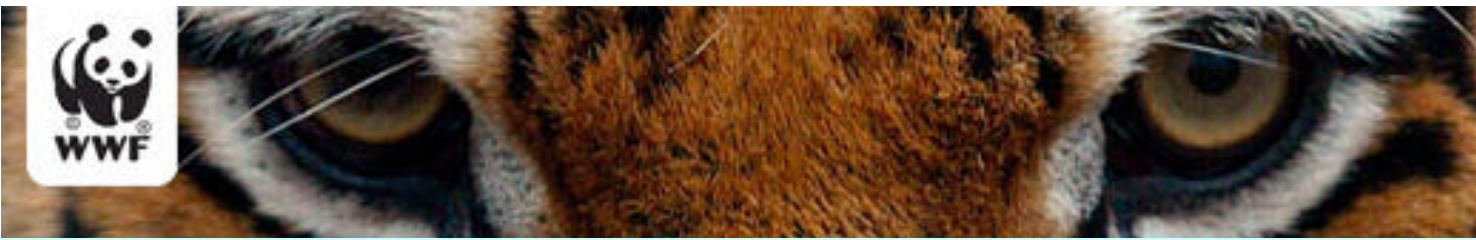
The reasoning behind developing eco-tourism is to provide alternative, environmentally sound, income to local residents. This will enable the people to live a more comfortable, secure life without the need to pillage the local resources for sustenance through illegal logging, hunting and fishing. Raising awareness of environmental issues is also a key product of this activity. In raising local residents' awareness of issues, and the better living conditions and income they can enjoy through protection of their environment, it is envisaged that they will take more ownership of the environment. This should lead not only to a reduction in their own damaging activities, but also to a will to protect the eco-system from damage caused by others such as industry, hunters, and tourists who may wish to steal or damage their local resources.

### **3. A Concept For The Creation Of The Onon River Basin Management Board Drafted.**

A key requirement of the board is to protect the environment through the involvement of all stakeholders at every point in the decision-making and implementation processes. The board will accomplish its conservation goals through measures that aim to reduce the underlying



*The Onon River Basin Management Board*



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threats to the biodiversity of the basin, such as poverty, culture loss, susceptibility to climate change, unsustainable tourism, forest fires and irresponsible mining and logging.

#### 4. Mining Project Implemented In The Onon River Basin

With the support of the Asia Foundation, a responsible mining project (Public Monitoring of Corruption in the Mongolian Mining Sector) has been implemented in the Onon River Basin. The goals of this project are: to monitor the implementation status of the recently revised Mongolian laws on mineral resources and anti-corruption; to inform the public; and to create advocacy for further improvements in the legislation of the mining sector.



*Gold mining in the Onon River Basin*

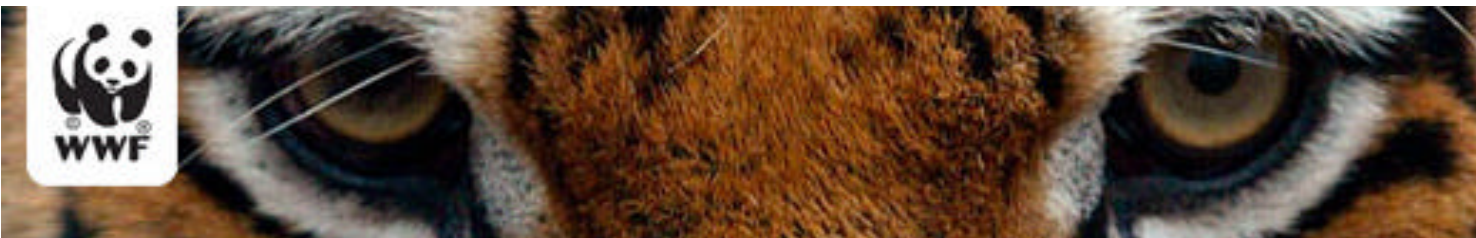
#### 5. New Population Census Of The Far Eastern Leopard Completed

During Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> to Mar. 9<sup>th</sup>, WWF, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), and the Far Eastern Branch of the Russian Academy of Science (FEB RAS) conducted the snow track census of the Far Eastern leopard in Primorye, Russia and neighboring areas of China. The researches covered 160 transect in the area of 4000 square kilometers. The work was not easy to be done because of three heavy snowfalls but nevertheless it was successfully completed. Right away all received data are being processed and put on GIS maps.

Though the final results of the census will be launch at a press conference in mid April we can say that the population is more or less stable. At least four leopards litters found in the wild confirm availability of mature breeding females. During the census, field workers visually encountered six leopards, one fifth of the whole leopard population.



*Leo-census-by Kuchma*



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### 6. New Center Will Help Save Amur

On Mar. 22<sup>nd</sup>, on the International Water Day, in Khabarovsk the Amur Informational Center was opened. Agreement on its opening was signed by the head of the Amur River Basin Authority at the Federal Agency for Water Resources and WWF FEB. The Center's mission is to ensure cooperation between the Amur River Basin Authority and WWF, and other interested governmental, grassroots, scientific organizations and individuals aimed at solving environmental issues of one of the world's ten biggest rivers.

At the moment, collection of basic information about geographical situation, nature conditions, main threats to the river, efforts of Russian and foreign organization on its conservation is underway. All collected and systemized information will be put on Internet. A separate page on the Center's site will be devoted to international treaties, conventions, and legislation. Under the present conditions of interagency disconnection we consider establishing such center to be a success. The Center will accumulate, process and keep all relevant information in one place, which will ultimately help to save the great river from destruction.

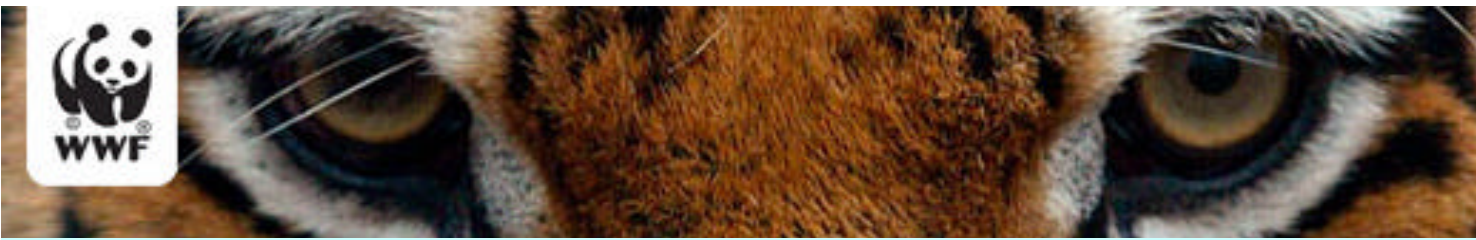
### 7. WWF Takes Measures To Protect Ungulates

This winter heavy snowfalls presented a serious threat to wild ungulates, the main food for tiger and leopards. WWF has provided help to ten hunting estates of Primorskii and Khabarovsk Province and administration of six provincial wildlife refuges. These territories are key habitats for leopard and tiger in the southwest Primorye and Sikhote-Alin mountain range.

As a priority, protection of ungulates was intensified as impossibility to move fast in deep and crusted snow made them easy prey for humans. Almost round-the-clock patrolling has prevented poaching. Six anti-poaching groups as well as the hunting estates staff were mobilized for work in the field. They removed the snow along roads to ease ungulates movements. About 500 rolls of soy and soy straw were put on the feeding grounds along with edible roots, oats and other concentrated forage; hog plague vaccine was added to the forage. Also, undercut of trees is being done for browsing.



*Feeding ungulates-by Maltsev*



WWF Russia  
WWF Mongolia Programme Office  
WWF China Programme Office

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All ungulates recovery measures are being conducted according to mobilization plans developed by refuges and hunting estates and endorsed by Primorsky provincial administration (see more on this in AHEC bulletin #2).

### 8. Sino-Russian Amur Tiger Monitoring Methodology Developed For Use and Modification

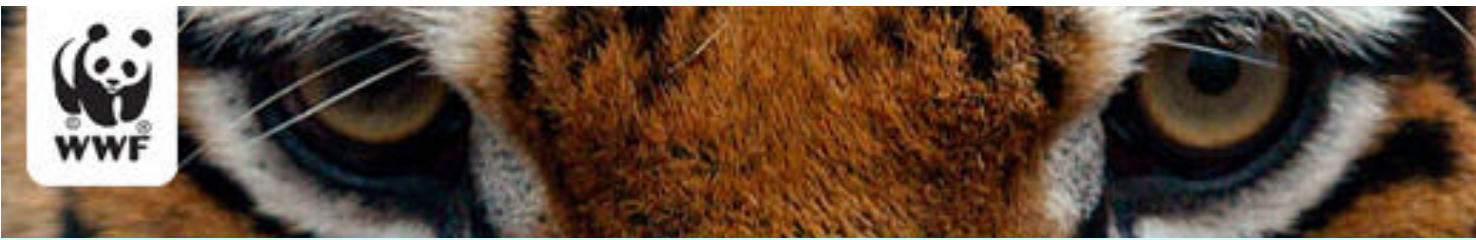
The concrete output of last November Hunchun Sino-Russian Big Cats M&P Workshop was the general understanding of monitoring methodology in principle by experts of Northeast China and WWF RFE. After the workshop, Mr. Wu Zhigang, the Director of Wildlife Monitoring Station of Jilin Forestry Department, developed the draft Monitoring Methodology based on all materials and experiences he could get.

Then, on Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>, 2007, the Amur Tiger and Ungulates Monitoring Methodology Workshop were held in Changchun. Experts from Northeast Forestry University, Heilongjiang Provincial Wildlife Research Institute, Northeast Normal University, Wildlife Research of Changbaishan Academy of Sciences, Jilin Provincial Forestry Science Academy and Dr. Zhu Chunquan discussed the Monitoring Methodology developed by Mr. Wu Zhigang. Good suggestions and comments were given to formulate a more valuable, practical and effective Monitoring Methodology.

During Jan. 27-30<sup>th</sup>, 2007, co-organized by Jilin Provincial Wildlife Conservation Association and Harbin Office, 24 persons of 7 Nature Reserves and Forestry Bureaus of Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces were trained to learn the Monitoring Methodology and footmark identification in terms of lectures and practical exercises. After the training, all the participants were stratified with the organization and contents of the training and considered that the training course was necessary to improve the monitoring capacity of local staffs. 15% participants have basically mastered the Monitoring Methodology after the training.



*Survey in Hunchun National Nature Reserve*



*WWF Russia*

*WWF Mongolia Programme Office*

*WWF China Programme Office*

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The Monitoring Methodology was further discussed during Jan. 31<sup>st</sup> and Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup> with experts from WCS and WWF RFE and utilized in the following training survey in Hunchun National Nature Reserve. Now the Monitoring Methodology has been translated into English for further comments and input.

### **9. A Hunchun Training Survey MOU Signed Among WCS China, WWF China and Two Local Authorities**

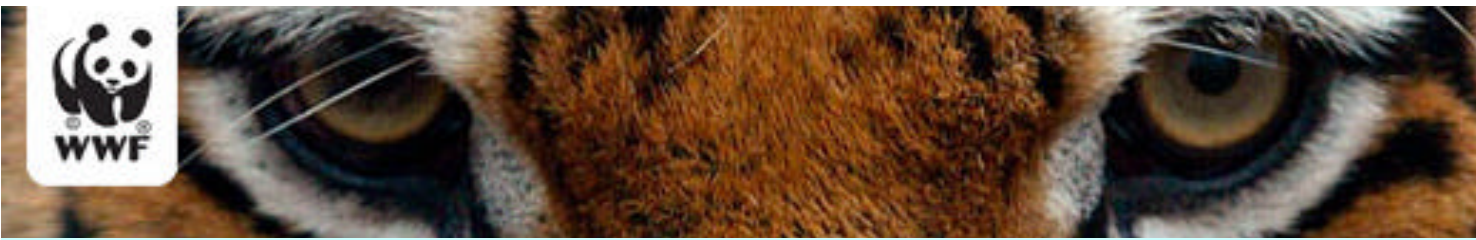
On Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup>, Hunchun National Natural Reserve, Wildlife Monitoring Station of Jilin Forestry Department, WCS China and WWF China signed a MOU on Hunchun Training Survey. The MOU is a milestone of cooperation between WWF China and WCS China for Amur River Basin Conservation, especially the conservation of Amur tiger in North East China.

Amur tiger in Northeast China is extremely endangered and in need of urgent conservation measures. Any conservation plan requires implementation of a monitoring program to assess the status of tigers, and to monitor changes in their numbers, as well as those of key prey species. As part of international efforts to assist in conservation of tigers in Northeast China and develop a monitoring program for tigers and leopards, Hunchun Nature Reserve, Jilin Wildlife Monitoring Station, WCS China and WWF-China agree to follow all the principles of MOU and make efforts to implement this training survey in Hunchun Reserve. The intent of this effort is to provide training to employees of Hunchun and some other areas in Heilongjiang and Jilin (as well as additional Chinese biologists) in how to conduct monitoring of tigers, leopards, and their prey. Additionally, the results will be useful in conservation planning and partial assessment of tigers and leopards in Hunchun reserve.

A monitoring training survey was conducted in Hunchun National Nature Reserve by WWF, WCS and local stakeholders during Feb. 2-9. The training survey report would be finished around May.

### **10. Amur Tiger Conservation Plan Draft Developed For Consideration**

After the latest Strategic Action Plan Workshop of Asian Big Cats in last November, Harbin Office developed the Amur tiger conservation plan based on the study and suggestions of local authorities and experts. The plan includes four long-term goals and 15 mid-term objectives in terms of Amur tiger number and habitats, ecological corridors, the sustainable livelihoods of local residents and restoration of historical distribution.



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The plan would be discussed further together with the one developed by WCS China. An integrated Amur Tiger Conservation Action Plan would be highly appreciated.

## 11. Jilin Delegation Visited WWF Russian Far East

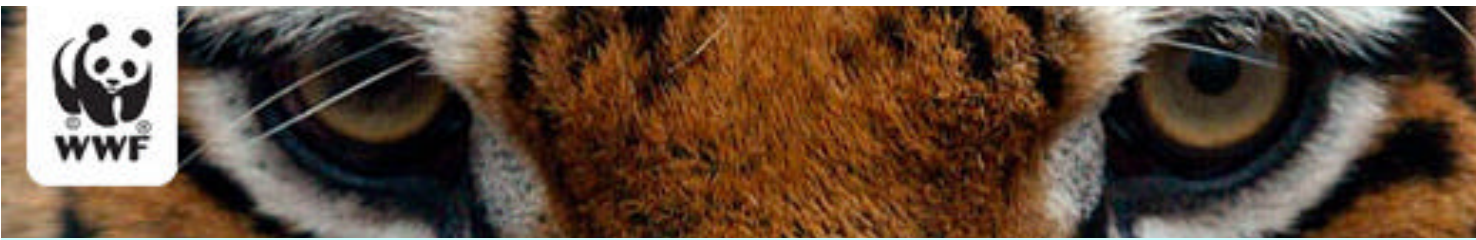
Promoted by WWF RFE and Harbin Office, a 7-person Jilin Delegation lead by Mr. Yu Changchun, the Director of Wildlife Conservation Division of Jilin Forestry Department, visited Russian Far East during Mar. 27<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>. Within the 5 days, Jilin delegation visited Ussuriisk Nature Reserve and Barabash Visit Center of “Land of Leopard”, interviewed the Russian frontier officer and related authorities of the Environmental Conservation Bureau; a MOU about wildlife conservation between China and Russia was signed.



*Jilin Delegation Visit WWF Russia Far East*

## Other information

1. An initial initial Integrated Conservation Management Plan for the Onon River basin was drafted, and decision to concentrate on developing eco-tourism was made, protected area management and the creation of a River Basin Management board was improved.
2. A GIS (Geographical Information System) specialist through co-funding of WWF-US and TNC was hired. WWF Mongolia will now have the capability of establishing a GIS database to allow a full ‘gap analysis’ and CAP (Conservation Action Planning) according to TNC methodology.
3. Following a field visit to the Onon River Basin and discussions with soum (district) officials, the location of a new field office was agreed to be in the town of Dadal. The design and builders of the office were also agreed upon.



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4. In February, WWF launched the “Korean Pine the Tree of Life” campaign to protect the Korean pine stands from all types of cutting. Campaign participants are sending post cards and e-petitions to the Russian president Vladimir Putin, residents of remote areas will gather together to prepare and sign appeals to Governors of Primorskii and Khabarovskii provinces, on the Earth Day kids will conduct rallies “Let’s Save Life for Korean Pine and the Earth”.

5. In January, WWF-US kicked off “Adopt a Leopard” project through creation of the Amur Leopard Conservation Society. Using track analysis, scat analysis, and camera traps, WWF and its partners have uncovered the detailed life histories of 15 cats. Each member of the Amur Leopard Conservation Society adopts one of these 15 leopards, and helps secure its future in an increasingly hostile world. Annual membership donation is \$10,000

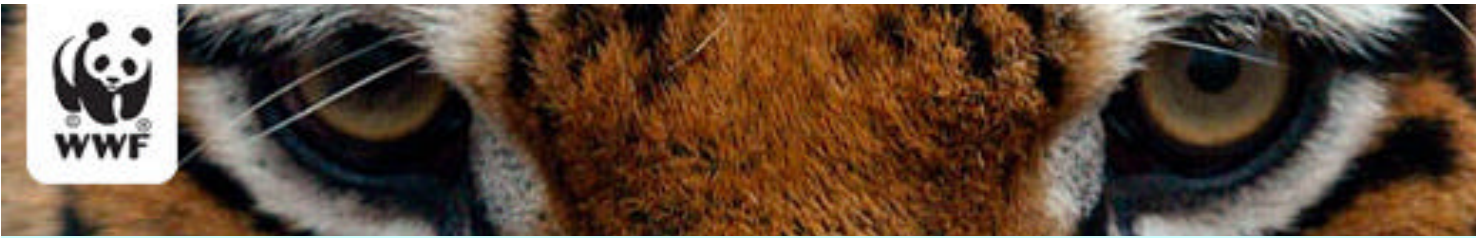
6. The Russian Federal State Service on Ecological, Technological and Atomic Control has officially approved the documents for Koz’mino Bay as the oil terminal of the East Siberia-Pacific Ocean pipeline. So, now we can be sure that pipeline would not go through the Land of Leopard.

7. In March 2007, a tiger book named *Wang Zhong Zhi Wang—Amur Tiger* was published in Changchun by Jilin Province Science and Technology Press House, with the support of WWF Harbin Office. The book has four parts mainly present us the real story of Amur tiger and its conservation, which is helpful for education of all stakeholders to take part in nature protection.

8. On March 10<sup>th</sup>, HCVF Hunchun Demonstration Project Inception Workshop was held in Changchun. Delegates from Jilin Forestry Department, Dr. Zhu Chunquan, Wang Xiangyi and Harbin Office members attended the workshop. During the workshop, progress and problems were exchanged. A draft work plan was developed for the implementation of the demonstration project.



*HCVF working meeting in Changchun*



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9. On Apr. 2<sup>nd</sup>, Dr. Cong Li, the assistant of Yichun City government, who works on nature conservation for many years, visited Harbin Office. Ms. Cong introduced the conservation work that Yichun government has been doing and showed the information about Korean Pine, an endangered species in Xiaoxing'an Mountain. Ms. Cong expressed their willingness to cooperate with WWF to protect this endangered plant and raise the awareness of local people.

### Coming Event

1. A special BOP (Business Operation Planning) Workshop of WWF China would be held in Changchun and Yanji during April 26<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>. Field trip to Changbai Mountain would be followed up after Changchun half day meeting. The workshop would focus on AHEC programme with involvement of local senior officials, experts and network colleagues.