



Amur/Heilong Eco-region Complex Newsletter Issue 2, Oct. to Dec. 2006

Achievements

1. An open-ended partnership between WWF Mongolia and other NGOs operating in the AHEC has been catalyzed.

The partnership will cover the whole Eastern 3 provinces of Mongolia - an economic zone known as Zuun Bus. WWF, The Nature Conservancy and the Wildlife Conservation Society will work in unison to bring a cross-section of government and civil society together for the sustainable future of the area. This will reduce overlap and confusion and bring about greater learning from each organization's strengths. In working together, a more coherent, powerful voice and action will be possible.



Partnership meeting in Mongolia

All 3 partners have shared interests in the biodiversity of Mongolia's eastern region and complementary methods and organizational strengths. Bringing extensive global conservation experience, the Zuun Bus Partnership offers to work with the MNE (Ministry of Nature & Environment of Mongolia) to build consensus around a set of strategies for advancing biodiversity conservation in eastern Mongolia. To do this, WWF, WCS, and TNC will work independently and cooperatively.



Dermot O'Gorman presented Leaders for a Living Planet (LLP) award to Mr. Wang Min, the Governor of Jilin Province

2. WWF presented LLP awards to Governor of Jilin Province and raised WWF profile intensively

On November 7th, Dermot O'Gorman presented Leaders for a Living Planet (LLP) awards to Mr. Wang Min, Governor of Jilin Province and Mr. Liu Yanchun, Director General of Jilin Provincial Forestry Department for their outstanding contribution of 10 years hunting ban and its strong willingness to continue cooperation with WWF and



Amur/Heilong Eco-region Complex Newsletter Issue 2, Oct. to Dec. 2006

other international conservation organizations to carry out community-based capacity building education, trans-border protection of endangered species like the Amur tigers and the forest certificate. The Vice-governor emphasized the formulation and implementation of wildlife conservation plan, esp. Amur tiger plan in his speech at the ceremony. WWF provided 130,000 yuan for the excellent individuals and outstanding organizations. WWF RFE dispatched three colleagues attending the ceremony.

Jilin Forestry Department expressed its willingness to work out a provincial tiger conservation action plan with the support of WWF. The plan would be in compatibles with the of Heilongjiang province both of which would be an integral part of Russian Far East and NE China tiger landscape conservation action plan. Heilongjiang Forestry Department already agreed with this concept of action plan and would like to join the preparation process.

The hunting ban and LLP celebration were widely reported thereafter which helped raising WWF profile in China. A strong relationship has basically been built up with Jilin Forestry Department and other key stakeholders in NE China.

3. Tiger M&P Workshop co-sponsored by WWF RFE and WWF China

On Nov. 8th –10th, 2006, Sino-Russia Big Cats & Ungulates Monitoring and Patrolling Workshop was held in Hunchun National Nature Reserve, Jilin Province. WWF Harbin Office hosted this WS to enhance the cooperation between China and Russia in wildlife monitoring. Officials form Jilin Provincial forestry department and 2 experts form Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces attended the workshop. WWF RFE dispatched two experts and one assistant supporting the workshop. All the participants Visited Quanhe Frontier Camp Backyard to check the information on young tiger, visited Bird Banding Station in Machuanzi Town. Mr. Lang Jianmin, division chief of Hunchun NNR delivered a presentation on conservation activities of Hunchun NNR. After 3 days discussion and communication, experts from China and Russia came to an agreement about monitoring methodology in principle. Sino-Russia United Monitoring Work Plan was formed accordingly and a trial on-site monitoring would be carried out in Hunchun followed by core staffs/experts training in Russia. A Sino-Russian joint monitoring methodology would be developed soon. According to Hunchun NNR, this workshop is just the basic need of them and would do help a lot for the future tiger conservation work. They expressed long term but sustainable support of WWF and a strong will to learn by doing.



Sino-Russian experts were discussing tiger & ungulates monitoring methodology



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Amur/Heilong Ecoregion Complex Newsletter

Issue 2, Oct. to Dec. 2006

It is the first time that the two offices of WWF cooperated in NE China after the establishment of WWF Harbin Office.

4. Project report “ Assessment of the Population Density of Ungulates and the Level of Their Forage Use in the South-West of Primorye” has been prepared.

The project has two main goals: to evaluate overall number of wild ungulates and find out supplies of main forage to further plan activities for leopard and tiger conservation. The report that includes information on plots with different levels of ungulates densities will serve as a base for developing action plans on ungulates management. For low-density plots ungulates recovery measures will be planned; for plots with high-density action plan on prevention high mortality of ungulates under severe winter conditions (in other words mobilization plans) will be elaborated and brought to action.

To date, thanks to WWF's efforts, Primorskii province Authority on Protected Areas has adopted decree on bringing mobilizations plans into action in province-wide wildlife refuges. Mobilization plan for “Borisovskoye Plato” refuge, one of the key habitats for the Far Eastern leopard, has been already approved. Also, Department for Nature Use at Primorskii krai Administration has adopted decree on bringing mobilizations plans into action by all hunting estates.



Hunting estates prepare themselves for severe winter - the hay will be fed to wild ungulates (by P.Fomenko, WWF-FEB)

5. IRBM Workshop helped establish partnership and outline future work scope in NE China

On November 16, 2006, Water Environment Conservation Workshop of Heilongjiang River Basin was held in Changchun city. Experts and officials from Songliao Committee, Songliao Water Resources Protection Bureau, the Standing Committee of Jilin People's Congress, Jilin Environmental Protection Agency, Jilin Water Conservancy Department, Jilin Agriculture Department, Northeast Normal University attended the workshop.



Amur/Heilong Eco-region Complex Newsletter Issue 2, Oct. to Dec. 2006

Management system of Heilongjiang river basin eco-region, status of water resources and water environment, monitoring capability building, water resource land conservation, agricultural non-point pollution, etc, were discussed with participants' good suggestions accordingly. The workshop helped Harbin Office establish preliminary relations with key water issue experts and officials and know their potential demands based on which a draft work scope has been identified and sent to CPO for consideration.

Approved by WWF CPO, Harbin Office would attend on-line IRBM training, which will help establish capability building for future successful work.

6. A new documentary about the Far Eastern leopard -- "Safeguard Those Who Remain", was produced.

This fall, WWF-FEB together with three partner organizations started a new project "The Far Eastern Leopard: Safeguard Those Who Remain". The project is targeted at conservation of each remaining leopard with the help of local people living side by side with the rare cat. The project consists of three phases: information campaign, concrete activities on leopard conservation, and "adopt a leopard" campaign. To date, the first phase of the project is underway. Two documentaries "Land of the Leopard: Seasons" and "Safeguard Those Who Remain" are produced; festival "Land of the Leopard" involving all villages and towns in southwestern Primorye conducted; Cooperative Agreement on the Far Eastern Leopard Conservation signed by eight leading conservation organizations. Only together we can save the last leopards. The film - "Safeguard Those Who Remain" does not simply reveal overall problems facing rare cats but gives unique information about each leopard left in the southwest Primorye.

Picture caption – The new documentary cover – each of the remaining leopard has its own story.



Safeguard Those Who Remain



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Amur/Heilong Ecoregion Complex Newsletter Issue 2, Oct. to Dec. 2006

7. Good partnership has been built up among key Nature Reserves and Forestry Bureaus in NE China.



After the FY06 funding for three demonstration sites (Hunchun NNR, Wang Qing Forestry Bureau, Dongning Er'duan NR), Harbin Office allocated 130,000 yuan for further capacity building of the three sites in order to speed up the start up of future monitoring plan along Sino-Russian border area where Amur tigers concentrate.

It is the fact that the present system of Hunchun NNR restricted the conservation work for several years. But with the presence of WWF Harbin Office, the Director of Hunchun Forestry Bureau, Mr. Huang Baoshan who is also the Director of Nature Reserve welcome WWF to carry out conservation activities and expressed his strong support for any conservation career in the future. Dongning County Forestry Bureau and Wang Qing Forestry Bureau were eager to cooperate with WWF. Xiaobei Lake which locates in Ning'an County would be designated to NR with the support of WWF Harbin Office and joint the tiger conservation efforts next year.

According to FY07 Work Plan, 120,000 yuan was contracted for NR designation and tiger management areas construction in NE China.

Besides that, WWF Harbin Office financed Xingkai Lake NR attended 10 years anniversary of trans-boundary Kingkai Lake NR establishment and Dalai Lake NNR for Sino-Russia-Mongolia Children Drawing Exhibition.

WWF Harbin Office met staff of Zhalong Wetlands National Nature Reserve



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Amur/Heilong Ecoregion Complex Newsletter

Issue 2, Oct. to Dec. 2006

Other information

1. WWF Mongolia traveled with WWF-US Amur-Heilong Programme Leader through Onon River Basin area. The purpose of the trip was to learn the current environmental and socio-economic situation of the area. The current activities of Khan Khentii and Onon-Balj Protected areas were also researched.

2. WWF Mongolia participated in a meeting of the international investors in the Eastern region of Mongolia. WWF Mongolia participated in the 'infrastructure and tourism' sub-meeting. Within the 'nature, environment and mining' sub-meeting, a presentation was given on the WWF, WCS & TNC "Zuun bus" Partnership.

3. A brochure about far eastern birds and ways of their smuggling --"Birds of Prey", was published with technical and information support from WWF. This is the fifth brochure in the series designed for cadets of the Customs Academy and for serving customs officials.

4. UNEP/GEF TDA Workshop held in Harbin. Thereafter, Mr. Yuriy Darman, Head of WWF RFE, visited WWF Harbin Office.

5. Ms. Li Bing of WCS China visited WWF Harbin Office and expressed good willingness of future cooperation

6. Asian Big Cats workshop, aiming to develop a Strategic Action Plan about Tigers and Other Asian Big Cats Conservation in China, was held in Beijing.

7. With much support from WWF-FEB, the Federal Service of Veterinary and Phyto-Sanitary Supervision has formed a combined operation group of 27 inspectors including fish- and hunt-inspectors to suppress violations of nature protection legislations. The group has already proved its high efficiency.



Darron Collins attended the field trip in Mongolia



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Amur/Heilong Ecoregion Complex Newsletter

Issue 2, Oct. to Dec. 2006

8. A wild Amur Tiger was photographed by infrared camera in Hunchun National Nature Reserve.

9. A tiger was found dead in Sino-Russia boundary.

Coming Event

Vaccination of wild boars will start in January-February in RFE to prevent hog plague epidemic. Five model hunting estates and "Borisovskoye Plato" refuge, one of the key habitats for the Far Eastern leopard, will conduct vaccination in their territories. Last year, vaccination was a success: four tests out of five proved existence of antigens to hog plague.

In January, 30 000 hunters of Primorskii province will receive instructions on how to behave in the tiger and leopard habitats and how to react when meeting these rare predators in the wild. The instructions will be inserted into official hunting ticket and distributed by WWF's partner organization province-wide Society of Hunters and Fishermen.

Sino-Russian United Monitoring & Patrolling activity will be further implemented. In February-March, the Far Eastern census will be conducted in the southwest Primorye. Received data combined with camera tracks data will enable conservationists to know the situation with the leopard in the whole habitat. Group of China experts and staffs would be invited to have a on-site training, after that, on site monitoring and training event will be conducted in Hunchun NR accordingly.



A wild Amur Tiger was photographed by Hunchun NNR