



WWF

FACTSHEET

CHINA

2011

## Tigers

# WWF'S CONSERVATION WORK ON AMUR TIGER IN CHINA

### The China Amur Heilong Landscape Geography

The Amur Heilong tiger landscape is made up of a dense forest and rugged terrain along China's Northeastern border with the Russian Far East.

Heilongjiang and Jilin Provinces along the Sino-Russia border harbor the most potential for tiger recovery in China, as it connects with the other major wild Amur tiger habitat in the Russian Far East. There are currently about 20 tigers in the Changbai and Wanda Mountain areas. These forests hold mainly Korean Pines and Chinese Oak, with a total area of 208,709 square kilometres.

### WWF China's Role

WWF has worked in close cooperation with China's Forestry Department in the Jilin and Heilongjiang Provinces since 2006. Tiger protection and recovery research and projects in the Changbai and Wanda Mountains have included: introducing internationally recognized surveillance methods, designing scientific restoration plans for tiger habitats, recovery of tiger prey, trial operations of effective anti-poaching institutions and tiger-friendly forest administration models. WWF continues to proactively promote government led initiatives for the construction of tiger conservation networks and protection policies.



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*An infrared photo of Amur tiger taken in November 2011 further confirmed the possibility of population settlement in Wanda Mountain.*



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*To update information and test survey methods, WWF-China conducted ungulate and tiger surveys at the beginning of 2011.*

## Challenges and Threats

### Population and Development

Human population, combined with economic development, has exploded in recent years. The result for tigers is a degraded habitat that has become increasingly fragmented. Degradation and fragmentation has a negative impact on tiger predation, mating and reproduction and even tiger communication, which affects reproduction and is important for stability of spatial distribution in the landscape.

### Poaching and Snaring

Poaching of ungulates (the main tiger prey) is common in the area, which leads to lack of prey for resident tigers' survival. Snares are a commonly used tool to capture wildlife, and can snag tigers as well. In October 2011, a tiger found dead in the landscape had snare wire wrapped around its neck, and was determined to have died from impaired hunting ability due to the wire.

### Infrastructure

While a much larger population of Amur tigers resides in the Russian Far East (about 400) across the Northeast China border, rail lines, border fences and highways impede their free movement, making it difficult for tigers to migrate across the Sino-Russian border.

### Monitoring Capacity

Local conservation authorities lack a landscape-level monitoring system to determine the quantity and dynamic and distribution of the wild tiger population. This lack of capacity and resources makes planning, assessment and optimization of a complete tiger conservation plan in the region difficult.

## The Amur Heilong Team

WWF-China has a full-time staff of 6 working in the Northeast China office located in the Amur-Heilong landscape. Two staff are working full time with the patrol teams, going on patrols and collaborating on training and other activities.

WWF partners in the landscape include: the State Forestry Administration, Heilongjiang Forestry Department, Jilin Forestry Department, General Administration of Heilongjiang Forest Industry, Heilongjiang Provincial Wildlife Institute, Northeast Forest University, Jilin Provincial Academy of Forest Science, Northeast Normal University, forestry bureaus and nature reserves in the core protected area in Jilin and Heilongjiang Provinces.

## Enforcement and Anti-Poaching Progress in 2010-2011

- WWF-China established an anti-poaching team of 27 individuals in 9 forestry farms, and appointed a coordinator for each farm. A regulated mileage programme was established, which the patrollers have completely fulfilled. During 2011, the team collected 5041 signs or sightings of wildlife and 13 signs of tigers and Amur leopards, as well as removing 296 snares.
- Over 145 people improved their capacities through a series of trainings on anti-poaching and monitoring. The trainings included patrolling management, inspection methods, data recording skills, use of cameras and GPS and the MIST software programme. Participants included forestry bureaus, heads of forestry farms, staff from nature reserves and village patrollers.
- WWF-China introduced and applied the MIST software programme as an anti-poaching patrolling and monitoring initiative in 2009. In 2010 and 2011, the Wangqing and Suiyang Forestry Bureaus established their own MIST databases. WWF additionally held a MIST training for 102 patrollers from the National Changbai Mountain Nature Reserve in Jilin Province. MIST has considerably improved the anti-poaching capabilities of the teams on the ground in the Amur-Heilong landscape.
- To ensure patrolling output, WWF-China worked with the local government to set up a system of rewards and penalties based on results of spot checking inspections during the winter 2010-2011 survey.

