



WWF Russia

WWF Mongolia Programme Office

WWF China Programme Office

## Amur/Heilong Ecoregion Complex Newsletter Issue 10, October 2008 to January 2009

### Achievements

#### 1. A Mobile Anti-Poaching Unit "Irvs-5" (Snow Leopard-5) was established in Onon-Balj area

An agreement between WWF Mongolia and the State Specialized Inspection Agency was reached to establish a Mobile Anti-Poaching Unit "Irvs-5" (Snow Leopard-5) in Onon-Balj area. As one member of the exercise, WWF has carried out the intelligence survey on current poaching and illegal wild life trade in Headwaters of Amur-Heilong River, which revealed



Meeting with Sokhonda PA Administration

© WWF-Mongolia

that illegal wildlife harvesting and trade in the region are likely to be organized with end users either in China or Korea. State inspector from "Irvs-3" working in the western part of the country joint a 2-week training in Onon-Balj area for newly hired "Irvs-5" member.

Thanks to close work with the Directorate of the Special Protected Area Administration of the Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism, the Ministry has decided in December 2008 to move the Onon-Balj National Park Administration to Dadal. This decision enables WWF to further strengthen collaborative conservation efforts between OBNP and WWF Mongolia in Onon-Balj area. OBNP Administration and WWF have already agreed to work in WWF building. Such agreement enables knowledge sharing between WWF experts and Park Administration experts. As a collaborative member, WWF has already provided 6 mobile phone sets to the OBNP rangers and specialists enabling charge-free communication between rangers and OBNP administration.



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### 2. Amur Leopards benefit from Russian conservation concession

For the first time ever, a partnership between WWF and a for-profit timber company has been awarded a “conservation concession” to restore approximately 10% of the critically endangered Amur leopard’s habitat. The Forest Department of Primorskii Province in Russian Far East has leased out a forest of 45,300 ha in the southwest of Primorye Nerpinskii rybcoop for the next 25 years. WWF and Nerpinskii rybcoop plan to implement a project that will increase biodiversity by selectively removing oak trees, which will open the forest canopy and make way for the more valuable and native spruce, Korean pine and Manchurian fir trees.

Only lease holders, who have long term rights to use forest resources in an environmental-friendly way, would invest time and energy to restore the forest. WWF has been looking for a reliable partner for this project for many years. “Nerpinskii rybcoop, a well-known enterprise in Khasanskii district of Primorye, has become such a partner.

### 3. Amur tiger tracks captured in Dahuanggou Forest Farm of Wangqing Forestry Bureau



Amur tiger track in Dahuanggou © WWF-China / LUO Xingbi

A forest frog raiser in Binglang valley of Dahuanggou Forest Farm of Wangqing Forestry Bureau provided pictures he had taken on Nov.5<sup>th</sup> about a series of tracks, which was later proved to be Amur tiger tracks. On Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>, another



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tiger information reached Jilin Provincial Forestry Bureau. On hearing the news, accompanied by workers of Wangqing Forestry Bureau and Dahuanggou Forest Farm, experts from Jilin Provincial Forestry Bureau and staff of WWF Changchun Programme Office investigated and recorded in the found sites. Referring to the information like pad width, forest type, elevation, etc, experts say it was an Amur tiger. Tiger tracks found in the managing zone of Wangqing Forestry Bureau showed the fact that tigers are going deeper into the inner land from Sino-Russia border areas. Therefore, it is quite critical to enhance tiger conservation in Wangqing and Hunchun, which contributes to tiger restoration in the whole Changbaishan area. In the following few month, WWF Changchun Programme Office will cooperate with Jilin Provincial Forestry Administration to conduct field project and make Dahuanggou a pilot site for further project promotion.

**4. A research conference was organized to discuss environment and sustainable development issues in Onon river basin**

In December a research conference was co-organized by the National University of Mongolia, research institutes of the Academy of Science and WWF. It was the first time for researchers, professors and students from universities gathered to discuss environment and sustainable development issues in Onon river basin.



Research conference © WWF-Mongolia

This was one of the WWF Mongolia initiatives to raise public and researchers' attention to values and problems facing with Onon river basin – the headwater of Amur River, identified by WWF as one of the 35 high



priority places. During the research conference, 13 selected research papers covering from insects, bats to medicinal plants were presented for discussion. WWF Mongolia will support compiling and printing all 21 research papers submitted by the scientific community for the research conference.

## 5. A new decree gives hope for the survival of thirty remaining Far-Eastern leopards



Land of 30 remaining leopards

© WWF-Russia / S. Karamanchuk

On October 27, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin signed a decree on creation of a new nature sanctuary for the endangered Far-Eastern leopards. The new protected area totaling 169,429 ha joins two small protected areas into one, called *Leopardovy Zakaznik* (Leopard nature sanctuary), and managed by the Ministry of Nature Resources of Russia.

Before the decree, the three protected areas had all been managed by different state agencies, which sometimes created confusion. The transition of all three areas under supervision of one ministry (and the merger of two protected areas) will help implement a single leopard conservation strategy on the whole protected area without wasting time on coordinating activities of different agencies. WWF proposed this change as early as 1999, in its Strategy for conservation of the Far Eastern leopard in Russia.

WWF hopes that the Ministry will immediately start improving management of the protected area to ensure effective leopard conservation. WWF is ready to provide help and advice to the new sanctuary.



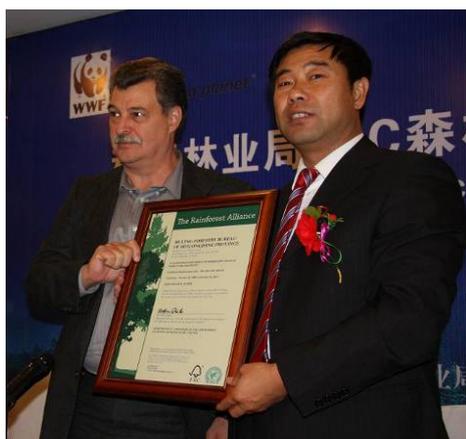
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### 6. Another 210,000 ha newly FSC certificated forests will benefit tiger conservation



Muling Forestry Bureau got FSC certificate © WWF-China / LUO Xingbi

On Oct. 29, Muling Forestry Bureau FSC certificate ceremony was held in Mudanjiang. Before Muling, WWF has supported Youhao and Dongfanghong Forestry Bureaus of Heilongjiang Province and Baihe Forestry Bureau of Jilin Province on FSC certification. Up to now, including 210,000 ha in Muling, the total certificated area in NE China amounts to 947,000 ha.

Currently, WWF is cooperating with Mudanjiang Forestry Administration Bureau, conducting HCVFs identification in two of its FMUs. WWF will continue to promote high conservation value forest concept and FSC certification in AHEC, by which to facilitate sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation, especially Amur tiger.

### 7. JSC Primorskiy GOK: an area of 49,000 ha forests got FSC certificate

JSC *Primorskiy GOK* has been certified for Forest Stewardship Council on forest management in leased areas of 49,000 ha and chain of custody was also certified, thus it became the second RFE logging company with FSC certificate. The Certification will be valid from December 16, 2008 to December 15, 2013. WWF-Russia is being in partnership with the company for two year already, providing assistance to *Primorskii GOK* in all stages of certification process. Right away the company fully implements WWF recommendations on HCVF and key biotopes management.



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### 8. 24 wood samples from Changbaishan and Wandashan has been sent to Germany

From Oct. 7<sup>th</sup> to Oct.19, the first stage of wood sampling project was conducted by WWF Changchun Programme Office in Changbaishan and Wandashan area, the overall goal of this project is to develop efficient and cost-effective methods for all stakeholders to better control the declaration of origin of wood. WWF RFE and WWF Changchun Programme Office will collect wood samples in Russian Fareast and NE China separately then send samples to a laboratory in Germany for analysis. Hopefully, the concentration of the stable isotopes (O, H, S, N) will give information about the origin of the wood.



Wood sampling © WWF-China / HOU Baisen



Wood samples were passed to Head of AHEC Steer Committee © WWF-China / LUO Xingbi

Until now, wood sampling in Changbaishan and Wandashan has been finished and samples of all the 24 sampling sites has been sent to Germany, date and method of next stage of this project will depend on the analysis result of the first stage.



## 9. Voluntary brigades fought forest fires in the Land of Leopard

WWF Russia handed 30 air pumps, backpack water pumps, protective outfit to a team formed by 15 voluntary brigades who were equipped and trained by WWF. 35 firemen were fighting catastrophic forest fires in the very heart of the Land of Leopard — the territory of a newly declared PA *Leopardovyi* wildlife refuge. As



A volunteer joint fire fighting in November in Land of Leopard © WWF-Russia / K. Kobayakov

*Leopardovyi* still does not have administrative body and the staff are not able to combat forest fires so the brigades came to help. With funds provided by WWF, brigades managed to suppress fires. WWF hopes that all measures will help to conserve forest since Russian Government pays attention to forest fires prevention and combating.

## 11. Assessment and prioritization of key actions of Participatory Natural Resources Management and Conservation in Forest Areas of Mongolia were worked out

In collaboration with the FAO funded project “Capacity Building and Institutional Development for Participatory Natural Resources Management and Conservation in Forest Areas of Mongolia” WWF Mongolia has carried out a participatory assessment and prioritization of key actions. The findings of the assessment show that local communities are keen to take a lead in conservation work but need initial coaching and seed fund. The finding of the assessment is shared with the GEF Small Grant Programme with whom WWF Mongolia has entered into a joint communique for collaboration.



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### 10. 2008, a year for Ramsar Sites

2008 was announced by WWF as a Year for Ramsar Sites to attract attention of the governments of Amur River basin countries to their conservation. In the Amur River basin there are 15 Ramsar sites of international importance, including 6 in Russia, 6 in China and 3 in Mongolia. WWF together with its partners - 6 nature reserves, 4 student environmental protection groups, 4 grass-roots – decided to raise public awareness about the importance of Ramsar sites conservation.



WWF-Russia Amur branch presents Russian Ramsar sites at the International conference in Seoul © WWF-Russia / S. Titova

Over 35,000 people took part in different events dedicated to the Year for Ramsar Sites. These were exhibitions, mini-classes, kids drawing contests, interactive games, expeditions and field summer camps, seminars and conferences.

The job done allowed WWF Russia to give an one-and-a-half hour presentation about Amur River Ramsar sites at the Tenth Ramsar Countries Conference held in Seoul, Korea, in late October. Amur Ramsar Regional Initiative was also announced. The Initiative has been supported by representatives from China and Mongolia; cooperative planning is under way.



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### 13. A broad-scale project was set to develop model territory of using nature resources in traditional ways

To conserve the unique nature of Bikin River WWF together with *Tiger* tribal community and Association of Indigenous Peoples of North and Far East started a broad-scale project to develop model territory of using nature resources in traditional ways. This is in addition to the ongoing partnership in the Bikin River protection, Rangers School support and TACIS project which is aimed at revival of national culture and traditional trades of the Udege and Nanai tribes. The aboriginals received rights to lease 1,3 mln ha forests to hunt by using traditional techniques; documents are being processed to lease entire Bikin Korean pine nuts harvesting zone for the sustainable use of non-timber forest products.

### 14. More than 20,000 people were involved in 2008 Green Ambassador Campaign

From Sep. 25 to Nov.10, 2008, 2008 "Green Ambassador Campaign" picture exhibition were held in 7 universities of Jilin and Heilongjiang Province, including Northeast Forestry University, Harbin Institute of Technology, Harbin University of Commerce, Harbin Normal University, Northeast Normal



GAC Essay Collection © WWF-China / LUO Xingbi

University, Changchun University of Science and Technology and Jilin Agricultural University. More than 10,000 people visited the exhibition. An essay collection called "Get into Wusuli River, Protect Flagship Species" was also published. This book collects field activity reports and personal thoughts towards GAC itself and some environmental problems. On Dec. 29, 24 ambassadors were awarded with WWF certificates and 6 of them were awarded "Excellent Ambassadors" for their outstanding performance in the campaign. During the whole process of 2008 GAC, more than 20,000 people were involved.



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### Others

#### 1. An agreement to reduce poverty was signed

On October 16<sup>th</sup>, ADB, Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism and Ministry of Finance of Mongolia have signed cooperation agreement for the implementation of the "Poverty Reduction through Community-Based Natural Resource Management Project". Following the government and ADB level collaboration agreement. WWF Mongolia has entered into a cooperation agreement with Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism and all local governors where the project will be implemented.

#### 2. 20 to 20: Carbon Footprint Action Art Campaign in Changchun



Receiving energy saving handbook

© WWF-China / LUO Xingbi

On Dec. 6, 2009, organized by WWF China Energy Group, Carbon Footprint Action Art Campaign was held in 12 cities throughout China. While in Changchun, volunteers and their actions attracted many people's attention: volunteers distributed "20 to 20" Energy Saving hand book to people, explained what is "Carbon Footprint" and how can people save energy in their daily life, etc. People were also encouraged to

print their footprint on a big map of a blue Earth, through which they can see their daily activities would leave impacts on the beautiful planet. What's more, by realizing this, they signed their names on the big map to show their determination to energy-saving.



### 3. Over 1,000 kg peppers from earthquake-hit areas were sold in NE China

During the 5.12 earthquake, Sichun and nearby areas had undergone so much tribulation. However, the Chinese government and her people have been doing the best to help disaster-hit area recover its mother land. WWF China also helped a lot. Take Pepper-selling Fair for example, totally 27,240kg pepper from earthquake-hit area—Mao County of Sichuan Province were sold in about 100 cities throughout China by the combined



Pepper-selling Fair in Harbin © Volunteer

efforts of WWF China and Carrefour, while 925 kg in Northeastern China--Changchun and Harbin. Originally, 50 or so volunteers were recruited in Changchun and Harbin to carry out a 40-days event, the fact was that in less than 2 weeks, almost all peppers were sold out and many of Carrefour markets applied to buy-in more peppers. Successful pepper selling anyhow gives hints of alternative livelihood in NE China.

### 4. Let's foster FSC in RFE

Opportunities of green purchasing in RFE with focus on the current status and prospects of FSC development in Russia were presented by WWF officers to lead Chinese flooring manufacturers at 2008 CWI Wood Flooring Cooperation Summit held in Shanghai in November. It was strongly recommended to Chinese companies to catalyze FSC certification in RFE. Because at present FSC is the easiest and likely the only tool to prove legality, satisfy with Japanese procurement policy, and avoid problems with Lacey Act. Top managers of two biggest Chinese flooring manufacturers expressed interest in sourcing sufficient amount of FSC certified wood in RFE and even for first time declared readiness to pay premium for FSC wood.



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### **5. Let Korean Pines give nuts but not timber**

In November, representatives of WWF officers and representatives of companies involved in NTFP harvesting in Primorskii Province attended Annual national conference about China's importing and exporting of pine nuts organized by China Chamber of Commerce for Import/Export of Foodstuffs, Native Produce & Animal By-Products. WWF made presentation on problems concerning Korean pine nut supply from RFE and proposed to build direct links with RFE businesses which work for sustainable NTFP harvesting in forest leases. After the conference, the Russian delegation visited three nuts processing factories in Mudanjiang (Heilongjiang Province) and Meihekou (Jilin Province); comprehensive information about Chinese Korean pine nuts businesses was collected.

### **6. Sichuan delegation visit for HCVPs identification exchange**

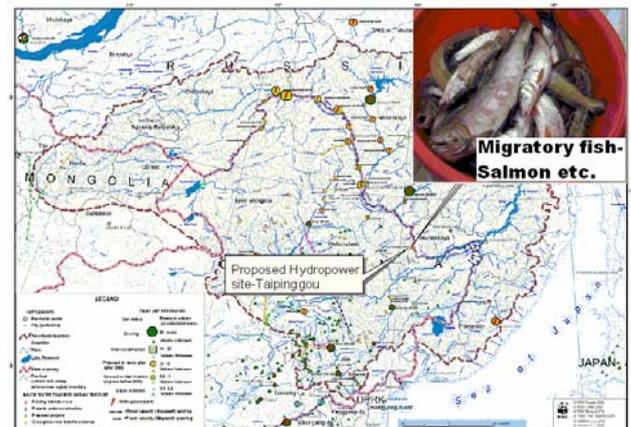
From Dec.14-20, 2008, Sichuan Forestry Department team visited Jilin for HCVPs identification exchange. Up to now, altogether 4 FMUs have got FSC certificates. HCVPs identification standards of FMU level have been developed for Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces by the help of WWF, which have been adopted to support Muling and Dongfanghong FSC certification. The HCVPs identification and FSC certification will be promoted in Minshan landscape, so WWF Chengdu Programme Office organized a 7-person team to visit Jilin for experience sharing and exchange with stakeholders and experts of Jilin Province. This trip will help Sichuan team understand HCVP concept and FSC certification procedure, related experience shared will make FSC certification and HCVPs identification in Sichuan easier.



## Short News

- A decision is adopted to construct a tunnel under the Narviskii pass when reconstructing Razdolnoye-Khasan highway. This will help to preserve the important corridor for predators and ungulates migration.

- From Oct. 12 to 15, Free-flowing international medium workshop was held in Changchun. WWF Mongolia, WWF Russia and WWF China agreed on the frame of FFS research report and main study methods.



- A decision was made by the court to a case against Mr. Kozlov who allowed illegal logging in the *Tayozhnyi* territory that caused the damage high enough to 360,000 Euros to the wildlife refuge *Tayozhnyi*. It was WWF-Russia who sounded the alarm and later provided expertise and information in numerous checks and inspections to the site done by Governmental nature protection agencies.