

TIGER RELATED CRIME AS AN OBSTACLE TO TIGER CONSERVATION: ADDRESSING THE ISSUE ON THE CASE OF AMUR-HEILONG REGION

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Amur tiger is the world's most northern sub-species of a Tiger. In early 19th century, the animal was present in most of the Far Eastern regions in Russia, as well as in the Greater Khingan Mountains and west Wandanshan Mountains in China. Due to unregulated hunting and poaching, Amur tiger was significantly extirpated across the most of its range, until total ban on tiger hunting was introduced in Russia in 1947 and massive restoration activities were launched in Russia in the 1950s and later in China. Currently, Amur tiger population has restored its previous range across Sikhote-Alin in Russia and in the forested areas of Heilongjiang and Jilin provinces in China. Latest entire range tiger census in 2015 showed that the population has increased to as many as 540 animals in Russia. However, there still remain threats to the species survival, such as poaching (occasional and intended); natural habitat degradation and destruction, exacerbated by the prey depletion. The presenter will talk about the Amur tiger conservation efforts taken in Russia and China, focusing on the problem of tiger poaching and illegal trade, its drivers and measures taken by both countries to address the problem. The author uses multidisciplinary methods such as spatial analysis, illegal tiger trade analysis, results from the field market surveys and application of the holistic indicator framework. The findings indicate that successful collaboration of the law enforcement and nature conservation agencies coupled with stronger penalties and adequate legislation are the main components to successful conservation of the Amur Tiger population.

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