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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TIGERS IN THE MIST

**Helping to save the Amur Tiger using a state of the art
Management Information System (MIST)**

10th June, Terney, Russian Far East

This week, a three-day training workshop took place at Sikhote-Alin State Nature Biosphere Reserve in Primorsky Krai (Russian Far East), to train inspectors in the use of the latest techniques in wildlife protection. The training forms part of a collaboration between four State Nature Reserves/National Parks containing important tiger habitat - Lazovsky, Kedrovaya Pad, Sikhote-Alin and Zov Tigra - the Wildlife Conservation Society, United States Agency for International Development, Phoenix Fund and Zoological Society of London. The goal of this multi-national collaboration is to build capacity with protected area officials to combat poaching of the Amur tiger and to restore their populations.



*©WCS Wild Amur Tiger photographed
in Primorski Krai*

‘MIST’ is a management tool designed to support and improve anti-poaching patrol work. It is based on GIS (geographic information system) technology and allows patrol activities to be analyzed and assessed according to the amount of effort (such as distance covered by foot or vehicle patrols) and the results achieved (such as confiscations of illegal guns and pelts or fines given).

Michiel Hötte, Project Manager, explained “The MIST tool enables wildlife inspectors to record and accurately locate their movements, observations and activities whilst out on patrol. Once all the patrol data is fed into the MIST database, it is possible to evaluate the work to see where patrol effort is most effective, where increased coverage of the terrain is needed and how best to deploy resources. MIST

helps to identify ‘hotspots’ for tiger poaching and to adjust patrolling strategy accordingly. And of course, this monitoring needs to be ongoing..... as new threats appear, MIST provides a means of identifying them and quickly responding”.



Photo: Tony Lynam (WCS)(left) instructing wildlife inspectors from Sikhote-Alin Reserve in the use of a hand-held GPS (Global Positioning System) unit



Photo: Anatoly Alekseyevich Astafiev (Director, Sikhote-Alin Nature Reserve), presenting a certificate of attendance to inspector Aleksandr Masilov (Zov Tigra National Park).



Photo: Left to right: Anatoly Alekseyevich Astafiev (Director, Sikhote-Alin State Nature Reserve/Terney), Yuriy Kazakov (USAID/Moscow), Dale Miquelle (WCS/Vladivostok), Michiel Hötte (WCS/Vladivostok).

There are only about 400 Amur tigers remaining in the wild today, and the greatest threat to their existence is from poaching. Last November, at the St. Petersburg Tiger Summit hosted by Premier Vladimir Putin, representatives of all tiger range countries signed an agreement to double tiger numbers by 2012. In Russia, as in many other tiger range countries, improving anti-poaching efforts is therefore key to achieving the goal of the Tiger Summit.

Today's remaining tiger populations continue to be hunted both for their valuable body parts (which supply a lucrative market in Chinese medicines and an international demand for tiger pelts) and as a retaliatory response to direct competition with humans for land/habitat and tiger prey species. Dr. Antony Lynam, co-facilitator of the training workshop, has extensive experience in wildlife law enforcement across Southeast Asia. "The pressures facing tigers across their range are pretty much the same, regardless of political boundaries. The challenges facing wildlife rangers and law enforcement agencies are also



©WCS Confiscated Amur tiger pelt

similar. The MIST approach has already achieved considerable success in countries like Cambodia, Lao, Myanmar, and Malaysia— where it has proved to be a valuable weapon in the battle against tiger poaching. I am sure that it has the potential to be equally effective in combating poaching in the Russian Far East".

By helping wildlife inspectors to intercept and prosecute poachers, who kill not only the tigers, but also the tiger's prey, this 'SMART', modern tool of technology is making a valuable contribution to the survival of Primorsky Krai's flagship species.

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About WCS:

Wildlife Conservation Society is an American NGO founded in 1895. Its Mission is to save wildlife and wild places worldwide, through science, global conservation and education programs. Together these activities change attitudes towards nature and help people envisage a world where wildlife and humans can live in harmony. Visit www.wcs.org for further information about WCS Global.

WCS Russia, based in Vladivostok, is the WCS representative office in the Russian Federation. Working in collaboration with local NGOs and research institutions, WCS focuses on key species such as the Amur leopard and Tiger, as a means to achieve biodiversity conservation and to protect critical habitats throughout the Russian Far East.

Visit www.wcs.org/where-we-work/asia/russia and www.wcsrussia.org for information about WCS Russia programs.

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About Zoological Society of London (UK):

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