



## Press Release

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# Rare images of Amur tiger forensic analysis

*Tiger died of injuries after chewing off her paw to free herself from a snare that she was caught in as WWF warn that this highlights the need for greater protection of endangered species from the illegal wildlife trade*

A powerful and striking [new video and photos](#) of an Amur tiger during a forensic analysis shortly after the tiger had died, has been released by WWF today (25/06/2017). The female tiger, discovered in Luchegorsk, Russia, died of starvation following her injuries through being caught in a snare. These images are a stark reminder of the impacts of poaching on tigers.

The tiger was a young female, a little older than two years of age. She had chewed off her paw to free it from a trap in which it had been caught. The paw, once stuck in the trap, was likely to have developed frost bite. The expert forensic analysis revealed that she then starved to death as a result of not being able to hunt.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, we've lost over 95% of the world's wild tiger population. Tigers' range has shrunk dramatically and they now occupy only 7% of their historic range - and demand for tiger products within the illegal wildlife trade is still high. However in 2016, WWF reported the first ever increase in global wild tiger numbers from as few as 3,200 in 2010, to around 3,900.

**Rebecca May, WWF tiger specialist said:**

"Tigers are endangered and need our support. The increase in tiger numbers is encouraging, but the species' future in its natural environment still hangs on a knife edge, and numbers remain perilously low.

"There now needs to be a monumental push forward to build on this progress. We need commitment and urgent action from all tiger range governments, as well as passion and unwavering support from the public, including from us in the UK."

In 2010 it was reported that over 70% of Amur tiger deaths were caused by humans, mostly through poaching. Forensic analyses and expertise provide information and evidence on potential wildlife crimes associated with poaching and the illegal wildlife trade. And it is largely the illegal wildlife trade and habitat destruction that threaten wild tigers globally.

**Pavel Fomenko (in the pictures), Head of the Rare Species Conservation Program, WWF Russia said:**

"Tigers, as well as many other predator species, are right at the top of the ecological pyramid. It is always very painful; [the tiger in the forensic analysis] was a beautiful young tigress.

"If the tiger disappears from the top it upsets the balance. Only an expert can reveal whether a human has been complicit in the animal's murder or not."

Tigers, as top predators in their ecosystem, play a crucial role in maintaining a healthy habitat for all of the species that live there. WWF is committed, along with tiger range governments and other organisations, to help double the number of wild tigers (to at least 6,000) by 2022 (the next Chinese year of the tiger), through conservation in priority tiger landscapes. This also requires greater effort to tackle poaching and the illegal wildlife trade, and to help communities living near tigers to support and benefit from this ambitious goal.

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#### **Notes to editors**

Photos and video available for use can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2sZ9Nwl>

#### **For further information, please contact:**

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#### **Amur Tiger Facts**

1. The Amur tiger is endangered with around 430 adults in the wild in Russia and a small number have recently been recorded in China. Amur tigers were once widely distributed in north-east China, the Korean peninsula and parts of Russia.
2. The Amur tiger has made a spectacular comeback since the 1930s, when the population fell as low as 20–30 animals.
3. The Russian government has a goal to conserve a healthy population of at least 500 Amur tigers by 2020 by restricting logging in Amur tiger habitat, improve forest protection, increase penalties for poaching and help ensure there's enough prey.

#### **About Tigers**

There are only around 3,900 tigers remaining in the wild. Since the beginning of the 20th century, their populations have decreased by over 95% worldwide. The main cause of the decline has been poaching and habitat loss. Poaching is one of the biggest threats to tigers. 90% of all tiger seizures between 2000 and 2012 occurred within 50km of protected areas. Over the last 150 years, tigers' range has shrunk by nearly 95%. Tigers occupy only 7% of their global historic range.

#### **About Tx2**

In 2010 WWF made a promise, along with tiger range governments and other organisations, to double the number of tigers in the wild by 2022. By 2016 we reported an increase in global wild tiger numbers from as few as 3,200 to around 3,900 that are estimated to remain in the wild today. Though progress has been made, tigers still need help if we are to reach the goal of 6000+ tigers in the wild by 2022, the next Chinese Year of the Tiger. That's why we are launching this I Protect Tigers campaign to increase the support for this from the public and to encourage governments and others in the tiger range states to do much more.

#### **About WWF**

WWF is one of the world's largest independent conservation organisations, with more than five million supporters and a global network active in more than one hundred countries. Through our engagement with the public, businesses and government, we focus on safeguarding the natural world, creating solutions to the most serious environmental issues facing our planet, so that people and nature thrive. Find out more about our work, past and present at [wwf.org.uk](http://wwf.org.uk). WWF is calling on the public to become Tiger Protectors by giving £5 a month

**To find out more search WWF Tigers or go to [wwf.org.uk/tigerprotector](http://wwf.org.uk/tigerprotector) for more info.**