

Amur Tiger Follows 'Putin's' Kuzya Across Border Into China

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The Amur tiger.

A Russian Amur tiger named Ustin has become the second out of five cats released into the wild earlier this year to cross into China in search of food, though a third tiger was stopped before it could reach the border.

Ustin, who is tagged with a tracking device, has traveled at least six kilometers into China and is continuing to make his way away from Russia, environmental official Viktor Serdyuk was quoted as saying Wednesday by the Vostok-Media news site.

Ustin was one of five orphaned tigers found in the Siberian taiga two years ago and reared back to health at a reserve in the Jewish Autonomous region in faraway Siberia.

Three of the five tigers were released back into the wild by President Vladimir Putin during a visit to the region in May. One of the tigers, named Kuzya, earlier made headlines around the world when it crossed the Amur River into China, reportedly in search of food.

According to Serdyuk, Kuzya is quite happy in his new homeland due to the abundance of food on offer there. Villagers recently reported finding a boar which was believed to have been killed by the young tiger, Vostok-Media reported.

Meanwhile another of "Putin's tigers" — a female named Ilyona— was intercepted near the Chinese border on Tuesday, news site Moskovsky Komsomolets reported, without specifying by whom.

The Amur tiger is a highly endangered species, with its total population estimated at about 400, most of them inhabiting the Russian Far East.

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