

Non-detriment finding for Amur tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*)

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Scientific Opinion of the Panel on CITES of the Norwegian Scientific Committee for Food and Environment

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VKM assessment:

Non-detriment finding for Amur tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*)

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Competing interests: VKM Panel on CITES declares no competing interests in relation to this NDF.

Date: 12.12.2023

Scientific name: *Panthera tigris* subsp. *altaica* Temminck, 1844

Common name: Amur tiger, Siberian tiger

Norwegian name: Amurtiger, Sibrisk tiger

Type of permit: CITES Appendix I (Norwegian CITES Regulation Annex 1, List A).

Country of Export: Norway (NO)

Country of Import: Türkiye (TR)

Purpose and source: The proposal concerns the export of one live female Amur tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*) (source code C) from Kristiansand Dyrepark AS (Norway) where it was born in 2021 to Bursa Hayvanat Bahcesi Zoo (Türkiye) (purpose-of-transaction code Z).

For Appendix I species (Norwegian Cites Regulation Annex 1, list A) it is required to establish that exports will not be detrimental to the survival of that species in the wild, in compliance with CITES Article III. In the Norwegian CITES regulation (Lovdata 2018), the criteria for export from Norway is described in Chapter 2, Section 5.

VKM has adopted the definition of detriment, cf. Conf. 16.7 (Rev. CoP17) suggested by the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Scientific Authority (<https://www.fws.gov/international/pdf/archive/workshop-american-ginseng-cites-non-detriment-findings.pdf>):

1. Harvest that is not sustainable.
2. Harvest that harms the status of the species in the wild.
3. Removal from the wild that results in habitat loss or destruction, or that interferes with recovery efforts for a species.

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Conclusion: VKM concludes that the export from Norway to Türkiye of one individual Amur tiger that was bred in captivity will not be detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild.

The conclusion is based on the following factors:

- The individual was bred in captivity from parents that were also bred in captivity and the export does not involve harvest or removal from the wild.
- The export of the individual from Kristiansand Dyrepark AS (NO) to Bursa Hayvanat Bahcesi Zoo (TR) is recommended by, and part of the ex-situ conservation program for Amur tigers run by the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA).

1. Biological information

Distribution

The Amur tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*) is the largest and northernmost subspecies of the species *Panthera tigris* and one of the world's most endangered species. Amur tiger distribution has significantly decreased and is nowadays fragmented. The species occurs in the far southeast of Russia, namely Sikhote-Alin Mountains, Primorsky Krai and north of it, in Khabarovsk Krai south of Amur River. Neighboring Primorsky Krai, it also occurs within the Greater Khingan mountain range in northeastern China. It is assumed to occur also in North Korea. The Amur tiger appears to favor deciduous, riverine forest habitat but occurs also in Korean pine, larch, birch, and oak forests (see Carroll and Miquelle, 2006; Dinerstein et al., 2007; Goodrich et al., 2022; Miquelle et al., 1999; Rak et al., 1998; Tian et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2017; Xiaofeng et al., 2011).

Life history

Amur tigers are generally solitary, reach maturity around four years of age, may reproduce any time during the year and the litter size is normally two to four cubs, occasionally six cubs, that can stay with their mother until the age of 1.5 to three years of age. The generation time of the species is seven to ten years (Goodrich et al., 2022; Kerley et al., 2003).

Role in the ecosystem

Amur tigers are top predators, and the size of their home range is highly dependent on food availability. Amur tigers prey mainly on ungulates but also on wild boar as well as smaller prey including pikas, rabbits and sometimes salmon. Predation on other large carnivores, such as Asiatic black bear or brown bear may also occur (Kerley et al., 2015; Goodrich et al., 2022; Miller et al., 2014).

2. Population trend

The wild Amur tiger population is less than 600 with an estimated number between 460 and 540 individuals, including 100 cubs. The current population trend overall is decreasing while being stated as 'stable' in Russia (Goodrich et al., 2022; Hance, 2015; Tian et al., 2011).

3. Conservation status

Tigers, including Amur tiger, are listed as globally Endangered (EN) by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (Goodrich et al., 2022).

4. Threats

Predominantly human activity is threatening the remaining wild populations of Amur tigers, namely tiger-human conflicts, poaching, illegal wildlife trade of animal parts, habitat loss due to deforestation and climate change. The low number of individuals existing has led to isolated patches of small populations which is reflected by low genetic diversity, that may lead to increased vulnerability and especially to inbreeding depression and thus further threatening of the status of the species. Also, the depletion of prey species has negative effects on the survival of the species in the wild (Dinerstein et al., 2007; Goodrich et al., 2008 and 2022; Henry et al., 2009; Kerley et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2014; Tian et al., 2011 and 2014).

5. Conservation and Management measures:

International legislation

Amur tigers have been listed on CITES Appendix I since 1987 and tigers are listed under EU Wildlife Trade Regulations Annex A since 1997.

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Conservation measures

Since 1947, the Amur tiger has been under protection in Russia (former USSR) and is listed under Class I Protected Species, Critically Endangered, in China's national legislation (Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation, 2010; Zhigang Jiang et al., 2016).

The focal individual is part of an ex-situ conservation program among zoos as well as the Amur Tiger Global Species Management Plan (GSMP), both run by the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) in association with regional zoo associations including the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA). (<https://www.dyreparken.no/opplevelser/amurtiger/> , <https://www.waza.org/priorities/conservation/conservation-breeding-programmes/global-species-management-plans/amur-tiger/>).

6. Trade/use

Legal

Legal international trade concerns live animals born in captivity, in zoos or other facilities. Animal parts in trade include skins and trophies originating from the pre-convention period (trade.cites.org).

Illegal

Illegal tiger trade still occurs on a large scale, especially in body parts, and is a serious problem that is challenging to fight (see e.g., CITES, 2018).

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