Rare couple of Amur leopards photographed in China

December 5 2012

State media say a pair of mating Amur leopards was spotted in northeastern China, in another indication of a comeback for an extremely rare cat once thought to be next to extinction.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature concluded in 2007 that the cats were extinct in China and a handful lived in Russia. But a survey in China's Jilin province in April found eight of the big cats, thanks in part to a nature reserve created in Hunchun city in 2011.

Hunchun wildlife official Lang Jianmin told China's Xinhua News agency that a field video camera captured a male and female on Nov. 16, looking "very much like lovers." The solitary cats mate about once every three years.

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