

# Lifting China tiger trade ban proposed

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A Chinese wildlife expert says legalizing the trade in tiger body parts is necessary to finance continued preservation programs.

Liu Dan told China's Xinhua news agency Saturday the Siberian tiger refuge in Heilongjiang will have about 1,000 tigers by 2010 and will require a significant increase in funding for care and feeding.

Liu proposes allowing the parting out of deceased tigers to dealers in traditional Asian medicines as a means of financing continued breeding and preservation. He pegged the cost of feeding a tiger at \$13 per day and reminded that the big cats aren't interested in excuses when lunch fails to show up.

"Lifting the ban provides a good outlet for the dead tiger bodies and generates more revenues for the parks, which will lead to better protection of the animals," Liu reasoned.

Xinhua said that while conservationists are taken aback by Liu's proposal, he contends legally selling tiger components would both generate revenue and possibly cut down on poaching.

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