

Putin's rare Russian tiger 'emigrates to China'

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A Siberian tiger in Harbin, northeast China's Heilongjiang province. A park specifically for the animals was built in 1996

An endangered Siberian tiger released into the wild by Vladimir Putin has become Russia's latest export to China, after the beast wandered over the border in search of a meal, Chinese state-run media said Thursday.

The animal, named Kuzya, was among three Siberian tigers set free by the Russian president in May and crossed a river forming the border between the two countries, the official Xinhua [news agency](#) reported.

Local officials told Xinhua that Kuzya—a male tagged with a tracking device—would have no shortage of food in his new home, adding: "If necessary, we can release cattle into the region to feed it."

The report said local officials are scrambling to capture the wandering [big cat](#) on camera and locate its precise whereabouts, while removing hunting traps which might bring its roaming to a sharp end.

Putin—known for his outdoor stunts involving animals—released the big cat alongside two others called Borya and Ilona in May, Russian state news agency TASS reported.

Russia's state-owned RIA Novosti news agency quoted the head of a tiger programme as saying he hopes China will "ensure that the fate of the predator follows the framework of international co-operation".

Relations between Beijing and Moscow have warmed significantly in recent years, with Russia turning to its Asian neighbour as a trading partner as the US and Europe have enforced harsh sanctions over the crisis in Ukraine.



The Siberian Tiger Park is located on the north bank of the Songhua River and stretches over an area of 1,440,000 square meters (355.8 acres), making it the largest natural park for wild Siberian tigers in the world

Russia is a major exporter of raw materials to China, often from the Siberian region which is home to the big cats, also known as Amur tigers.

Hundreds of them once roamed the lush pine and oak forests of Manchuria, but due to centuries of poaching only a couple of dozen are believed to still survive in China.

Listed as "endangered" by the International Union for the Conservation

of Nature's Red List, they have fared better in Russia, where more than 400 still live, sometimes preying on local bears.

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