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Amur Tiger to Be Struck From Endangered List

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The upcoming Red Book list on endangered species features two noticeable absences — the Amur tiger and the gray whale.

Other changes in store for Russia's Red Book, which is updated every 10 years, include the coordination of its data with the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List and a more objective approach, Izvestia reported.

The Red Book is coordinated by the A.N. Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution, which acknowledged that the previous list included many animals that didn't belong.

Work on the book won't be completed until November, but among the animals that may leave the list is the black crane, the Amur tiger and the gray whale.

The decision is a result of both an increase in the species' numbers and new standards for including animals that come as a result of merging the Russian and IUCN standards.

Valentin Ilyashenko, who is leading the project, said the number of Amur tigers, also known as Siberian tigers, has remained stable for about 15 years and that the big cats are even beginning to expand their territory.

Gray whales, a group of which have a migration route near Russia's Pacific coast, have made an even more dramatic recovery, with numbers increasing to an estimated 30,000 worldwide from a low of 2,000.

Ilyashenko cautioned, however, that removing species from the list may pose new dangers for the animals. In the case of the gray whale, the responsibility for its preservation would shift from the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry to the Federal Fisheries Agency, which he said may decide to allow the animals to be hunted.

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