

Gypsy Moths 'Threaten Survival of Russia's Amur Tigers'

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The moths' larva is harmful for fruit trees and trees that offer sustenance to various animals in the region, including Amur tigers.

Russia's federal veterinary watchdog has warned that moths in the country's Far East pose a threat to the endangered Amur tigers, and to the ecosystem as a whole.

In a statement issued Tuesday, the agency said that an unprecedented number of the insects had been recorded in Primorye this year, with thousands of hectares of land affected. The moths' larva is harmful for fruit trees and trees that offer sustenance to various animals in the region, including Amur tigers.

Scientists say the huge number of gypsy moths this year stems from favorable weather conditions for the insects in 2012-13.

To combat the onslaught of the gypsy moths, the agency has prepared plans to set up quarantine zones in the region.

There are only a few hundred Amur tigers left in their natural habitat in Russia's Far East. The animal is classified as an endangered species by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

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