

'Putin's Tiger' Kuzya Back in Russia, For Now

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"Putin's tiger," named Kuzya, has returned to Russia.

An Amur tiger released into the wild by President Vladimir Putin has returned to Russia, but Chinese officials have predicted it is likely to be lured across the border again in search of food.

A tracking device attached to Kuzya showed the animal was back in Russia on Tuesday, an unidentified official from China's wildlife conservation service told the country's official Xinhua news agency, citing reports from Russian monitors.

But a deputy chief of the State Forestry Administration's Feline Research Center, Zhang Minghai, said: "Kuzya is very likely to visit China again as it marked the areas he visited with his urine, designating his 'territory'," Xinhua reported.

"China has a sound forest ecosystem and plenty of food," the official was quoted as saying.

Kuzya was one of three Amur tigers released back into the wild by Putin in May, along with

Borya and Ilona.

In October, the tiger made headlines after it swam across the Amur River and into China.

Yet another tiger released two weeks later under the same animal protection program, Ustin, followed Kuzya into China and is blamed for slaying at least 15 goats at a farm on Heixiazi Island.

Kuzya has also ventured into Chinese villages, but unlike Ustin, is not suspected of killing any domestic animals, Zhang told Xinhua, though he may have slayed a few chickens, according to earlier media reports.

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