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Putin's Tiger Sent to Russian 'Rehabilitation Center' for Killing Dogs

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Putin's tiger has been sent to a "rehabilitation center."

One of the Amur tigers released into the wild this summer as part of President Vladimir Putin's animal protection program has been captured and sent to a "rehabilitation center" after residents in the Far East complained that it was killing their dogs.

After returning from a foray into China — where Ustin the tiger earned a bad reputation for killing goats and chickens — the animal "started to hunt stray and domestic dogs" in Russia's Far East, the regional branch of environmental watchdog Rosprirodnadzor said in a statement, Interfax reported Monday.

"A decision has been made to place it in a rehabilitation center," the statement was quoted as saying.

Rangers succeeded in capturing unruly Ustin early on Monday, at which point they discovered that the tiger was injured, a spokesman for the Far East branch of Rosprirodnadzor told news agency RIA Novosti.

"Specialists think that the injury may have been the reason he was going after an easy target — dogs. Overall, the tiger looks perfectly healthy and well-fell," the spokesman said.

Specialists believe that Ustin may still have the opportunity to run wild once again, RIA reported.

Ustin returned to Russia earlier this month after a reported killing spree in China. He is one of five Amur tiger cubs captured in the Far East in 2013, who sprang to fame when President Vladimir Putin released three of them into the wild in May.

The Amur tiger is an endangered species concentrated in Russia's Far East region. There are now about 450 such tigers in the world, RIA reported, citing recent estimates.

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