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Wild Russian Leopards Obey Putin's Command to Go Forth and Multiply

By The Moscow Times

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When President Vladimir Putin commands, even wild leopards obey, footage released this week suggests.

Putin, who has cultivated an image of helping native Russian animals, tasked officials in the Far East in 2010 with setting up the Leopard Land national park, dedicated to promoting the wild population of the critically endangered Amur leopard, native to areas in both Russia and China around the Amur River.

A video released this week by officials at the park shows a rare glimpse into the mating activity of the leopards, although the couple apparently waited for nightfall before getting truly intimate.

In the video, a male leopard named Meamur rests on a rock after feasting on a deer, when a frisky female named Beri approaches him. She gives him numerous signals that she is ready

to mate, including a flirtatious roll around the snowy ground, but he just sits there, watching.

As darkness falls, however, they move to a more private location.

"There is every chance that soon there will be a new family at Leopard Land," the park's website said in a statement enthusiastically detailing the video.

The park said wildlife experts had been waiting decades for such a video, which was shot from one of several "camera traps" designed to specifically film leopards when they come within range.

Conservation efforts so far have been successful, and the population of the far eastern Amur leopard has risen at the park by almost a dozen in the past two years.

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