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'Putin's Tigers' Loving Life in Wild Russia, Environmentalists Say

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Four "Putin's tigers" have successfully adapted to life in the wild.

Four of the five Amur tigers known as "Putin's tigers" have successfully adapted to life in the wild, a news report said Thursday.

The four tigers are all in good health and have settled down in the Primorye, Khabarovsk and the Jewish autonomous regions in Russia's Far East, the RIA Novosti news agency said Thursday, citing a spokesperson for the federal Amur tiger conservation body, Viktor Serdyuk.

Amur tigers Ustin, Kuzya, Borya, Ilona and Svetlaya were found as orphaned cubs in the Siberian taiga in 2013 and reared back to health at an animal reserve. Last year President Vladimir Putin personally released three of the tigers back into the wild, earning them the nickname "Putin's tigers."

One of the felines, Ustin, soon made headlines after he crossed the Amur River into China and proceeded to cause mayhem in country, leaving a bloody trail of slaughtered livestock in his wake.

He was taken into captivity in December to prevent further killing sprees.

"Ustin would have also adapted to life in the wild had he not gone to China," Serdyuk told RIA, adding the overall experiment should be considered a success.

The Amur tiger is a highly endangered species, with its total population estimated at about 400 — most of them inhabiting the Russian Far East.

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