

## Amur Leopard Photography Tour

**Destination:** Primorye, Russia    **Season:** mid Nov – late Mar



Exclusive access to a specialist photography hide for the Amur leopard



Use of a camera trap & night vision camera, all images & videos are yours



Experience one of the most pristine and beautiful forests in the world in winter



At least 5 different Amur Leopards use the area surrounding the hide



Stay overnight in the photography hide and maximise your chance of a sighting

### Dates:

- (1) Group Tour: 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov – 1<sup>st</sup> Dec 2019
- (2) Group Tour: ~~6<sup>th</sup> Dec – 14<sup>th</sup> Dec 2019~~
- (3) Group Tour: 12<sup>th</sup> Feb – 20<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020
- (4) Group Tour: ~~29<sup>th</sup> Feb – 8<sup>th</sup> Mar 2020~~
- (5) Group Tour: 19<sup>th</sup> Nov – 27<sup>th</sup> Nov 2020
- (6) Group Tour: 6<sup>th</sup> Dec – 14<sup>th</sup> Dec 2020

### Scheduled Group Tour information:

The above dates are for our Amur Leopard Photography group tours. We run the Amur leopard tour both at the start and end of the Siberian tiger tour. (so these can be combined – please contact us for information on this option).

### Private / Tailored Tour information:

This tour can be booked anytime between the middle of November and the middle of March (this is the best season for Amur leopards and is also the only season the photography hide is open), (subject to availability). We also have flexibility for the duration of trip you would like to book.

Some of our clients prefer to book shorter or longer trips and we are happy to provide information about the costs for tailored tours.

Trips for any group size (the photography hide only accommodates 3 people at a time, however a private party can rotate people staying in the hide and therefore have a larger group if you wish; also and any duration of stay are possible, please enquire further for more information on our tailored Amur leopard photography tours.

Single supplements are only for nights in cities, the hide and all forest accommodation is sharing basis

### Prices (2019-20 season):

#### Group Tour - 2019

£3,315 per person

\*single supplement £65

#### Group Tour - 2020

£3,750 per person

\*single supplement £65

#### Group Dates as a Private Tour

£10,995 for a solo traveller

£5,495 per person (2 people)

£3,295 per person (3 people)

£3,800 per person (4 people)

#### Private Tour on Other Dates

£7,450 for a solo traveller

£4,995 per person (2 people)

£3,295 per person (3 people)

£3,800 per person (4 people)

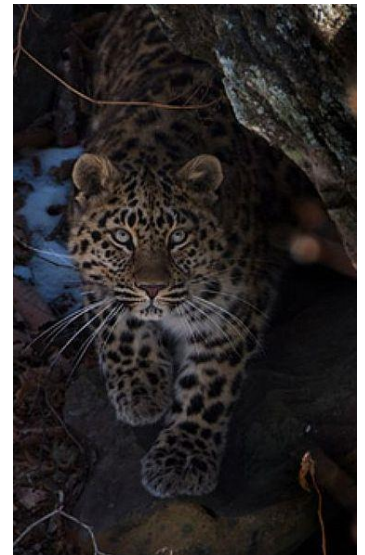
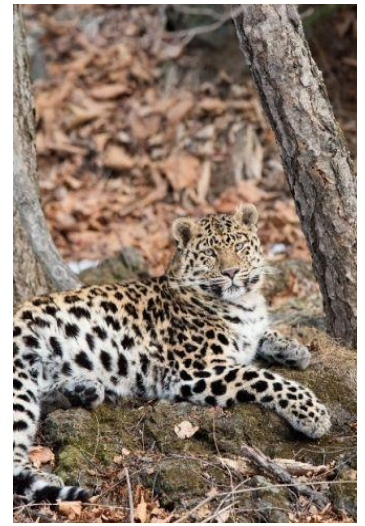
### Overview

**Day 1:** Vladivostok / Forest Reserve

**Day 2-7:** Forest Reserve

**Day 8:** Vladivostok

**Day 9:** Home





# Tour Information

## Introduction

This week long itinerary is centred around one of the least visited and most pristine ecosystems in the world; the Russian state of Primorye may not evoke the same thoughts and emotions as Siberia. But it is this state which harbours the largest areas of intact and protected forests in the Russian Far East. Many parks and reserves have been set up in the last 10-20 years. Mostly down to the love of the big cats and the wilderness that Vladimir Putin has. The rewards for setting up these protected areas, increasing the anti-poaching enforcement and awareness of the problems facing the big cats here are beginning to be seen now. The numbers of both Siberian tigers and Amur leopards have been slowly yet steadily increasing for years.

In a world that is suffering with decreasing numbers of big cats, whether it is for the illegal Chinese traditional medicine market, illegal pet trade, illegal fur trade or retribution killings from local people who suffer livestock and human predations at the hands of big cats; there are many problems resulting in decreasing populations around the world. It is remarkably refreshing that there is some good news for the tiger and leopard here in the harshest and least typical habitat that these adaptable cats inhabit.

However despite this good news and it is true that the numbers are steadily increasing, the number of wild Amur leopards is pitifully low. The last census suggested an increase in the total population by around 50% which is incredible, but this only meant an increase to around 80 individuals that now live in the Russian Far East and just over the border of China. This is a massive increase from around 27 when the national park was set up in 2007.

Obviously being such a rare and elusive animal we cannot guarantee a sighting of the leopard on this trip, all we can do is place you in the best place at the best time and hope that the spirit of the Russian Far East materialises out of the frozen wilderness for you.

This tour is a pioneering tour and you will be amongst the first ever tourists to come here and the first to spend time here during the wonderful winter time to try and find and photograph the Amur leopard.

Because of the nature of Amur leopards we cannot guarantee any sightings; however we can assure you all of an adventure of a life time and one that could result in you becoming one of the only non-Russian people to see wild Amur leopards!

We had great success on our first ever trip with clients here in February 2018 where the clients saw two different Amur leopards and got pictures and videos of both individuals. The first was a pregnant female in the day time (10am) and the second was a large adult male who came and fed on the deer all night, we got great viewings over several hours, fascinating behaviour and pictures and videos from both camera traps and night vision – which is available at the hide on request. And on our second trip (March 2018) we had an Amur leopard visit the hide area, which means a 100% success rate so far in leopard sightings for our trips here.

In November 2018 we continued our great success with sightings of a male and female leopard around the hide. The female is believed to also have a litter of young cubs and we hope by late winter 2018-19 the cubs will be following the female around and possibly visiting the hide too.

## Itinerary

### Day 1 Vladivostok / Forest Reserve

*Arrival*

**Accommodation:**

Forest Reserve  
(Forestry Hotel)

**Food:**

Depending on the time of arrival a light lunch / snacks will be provided and then dinner at the hotel.

**Transportation:**

Private Vehicle

Today you will be met at the airport by your guide / interpreter and taken to the national park (~3 hours). On arrival here we will settle into the log cabin / hotel (it has large apartments which we will share) and have some food, we will meet the park rangers and have a briefing about the park, the hide and the way the photography hide operates here. If time allows (the days are short and the nights long here during winter) we will have a guided walk around some of the forest to look for wildlife and evidence of the elusive leopard. Tomorrow will be your first day in the hide.

### Days 2-7 Forest Reserve

### *Amur Leopard Photography*

**Accommodation:**

Forest Reserve  
(Forestry Hotel)

**Food:**

Breakfast and dinner will be served at the hotel and you will take some snacks into the hide – however smelly foods are not a good idea in the hide.

**Transportation:**

Walking



For the next 6 days you will have access to the hide. The hide accommodates 3 people, there are two bunks and one folding camp bed for sleeping and we recommend people spend the entire time (all 5 nights inside the hide). There is a toilet, gas heater and we will provide lots of food (we will bring food regularly and you will be in radio contact with the main accommodation). We recommend staying inside the hide the entire time and maybe receiving one folding camp bed for sleeping and we recommend people spend the entire time (all 5 nights inside the hide). There is a toilet, gas heater and we will provide lots of food (we will bring food regularly and you will be in radio food deliveries every 2 days as this will dramatically decrease the disturbance around the hide and thus increase the chances of the leopard (there are 3-5 leopards that are currently using the area around the hide according to camera traps) coming around. The location of the hide was chosen to take advantage of natural features (water sources and the popular food trees utilised by the wild boar and deer species here) so that the ungulate animals naturally like to spend time here during the winter. The high density of prey animals around here increased the chances of leopards using the area too. To further increase our chances the area has been baited with salt and other minerals as well as grain for up to 2 months prior to our arrival. This is done just for us and is done in the hope that it will increase the presence of the prey animals and therefore the leopards ahead of our arrival.

The hide has been in use on and off for a number of years, most notably in 2007 when the BBC *Planet Earth* team came here and filmed wild Amur leopards for the very first time. From then until 2015 the hide was used sporadically by the occasional wildlife photographer and film crew. But in general the area was unknown and very difficult to arrange a visit too. Now the hide is open to tourists and Royle Safaris has managed to negotiate the use of the hide on our tours. With the success we have had on our Siberian tiger tours we believe that this is the perfect extension and hope to further show case this species and its stunning habitat to help increase awareness and raise much needed funds which goes the national park and surrounding communities to create a positive association with the wildlife and their continued survival.

In fact on our very first tour here in February 2018 we had success and a sighting and photographs of two Amur leopards.

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## Day 8 **Vladivostok**

### *Travelling*

#### Accommodation:

Hotel Azimut (3\*  
Hotel)

#### Food:

Breakfast will be served at the hotel, no other meals are included today.

#### Transportation:

Private Vehicle

This morning you will leave the hide and come back to the main building for a shower, to pack up and get ready to leave for the city. Once back in Vladivostok the rest of the day will be free for you to explore, rest or do as you please. The city is quite pleasant to walk around, the frozen bay and the cars driving across it is a sight to see, the terminus of the Trans Siberian Express railway is another famous location in the city.

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## Day 9 **Home**

### *Departure*

#### Accommodation:

NA

#### Food:

Breakfast will be served at the hotel with no other meals included today.

#### Transportation:

Private vehicle &  
International Flight

This morning we will leave the hotel after breakfast to catch your return flight home.

#### **Your tour and all Royle Safaris services end upon transfer to the airport**

Please note that the itinerary stated above is correct as our planned intentions for the tour. However adverse weather conditions and other local considerations can necessitate some modifications of the itinerary during the course of the tour; any changes will be made to make the best of the time, weather conditions and other constraints forced upon us and all changes will be made in conjunction with our terms and conditions.



## Tour Inclusions

Absolutely everything mentioned in the above itinerary is included (except where it is expressly mentioned as an optional extra).

- All accommodation as mentioned above or of a similar standard as mentioned.
- All meals as mentioned in the itinerary; **please note that lunches and dinners are not included in Vladivostok but restaurants can be booked for you if you wish.**
- Bottled mineral or purified (boiled) water will be provided throughout and on request.
- Private vehicles for all transfers and excursions into the forest.
- Interpreter (English – Russian) provided from your arrival to departure.
- All fuel, tolls, taxes and other expenses relating to driving.
- All safari drives, hikes, and other wildlife tracking activities as mentioned in the itinerary.
- Access to the special photography hide in Forest Reserve.
- National Park rangers and naturalist guide in Forest Reserve.
- All our reserve entrance fees and permits are also included.
- A selection of field guides and books of the local areas will be available on request.
- Use of camera traps and specialist equipment – you are welcome to take home and keep all pictures and videos that camera traps take during your time in the forest.
- We include one deer carcass as standard – if a cat comes along and eats the entire carcass early into the trip, then a second deer carcass can be provided but is chargeable as an extra – 2019 prices are USD \$800.

## Tour Exclusions

Nearly everything you will need is included in the price you have already paid for the tour. However there are some things not included.

- International flights to and from the tour start and end points.
- Travel insurance including any fees that result from emergency medical or evacuation needs.
- Visa fees for entering the country(s).
- Vaccinations and any medication are not included.
- Any food other than the meals provided and mentioned in the above itinerary; **please not that lunches and dinners in Vladivostok are not included.**
- Alcohol and soft drinks.
- Any items of a personal nature are not included, such as souvenirs, medication, toiletries, laundry and phone calls.
- Tips are also not included.
- Any departure taxes which may be due when leaving are not included (but may be included in the cost of your flights).
- We include one deer carcass as standard – if a cat comes along and eats the entire carcass early into the trip, then a second deer carcass can be provided but is chargeable as an extra – 2019 prices are USD \$800.

**Please refer to our Terms & Conditions (<http://www.royle-safaris.co.uk/terms-conditions/>) before booking any trips – email or paper copies of Terms & Conditions can be provided if needed**

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**Martin Royle – Vice President of UK / European Operations**

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