

Teaching material on biodiversity conversation

Title:	The Siberian Tiger
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Quality assessment:	Carsten Hobohm (UF)
Level:	secondary school
Type of material:	information in the form of short texts, followed by group work and quizzes, as well as additional information for the teacher
Aim:	meet an endangered species, idea of extinction, protection, survival

Information for the teacher (references)

http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sibirischer_Tiger

<http://www.geo.de/GEOLino/natur/tiere/rettet-den-sibirischen-tiger-2053.html>

Video to get started:

<http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:SibirischerTigerHagenbeck.ogg>

The Siberian Tiger

1. Description

The Siberian Tiger is a subspecies of tiger. It is the largest living felid. It has a shoulder height of up to 110 cm and a length of 190 up to 220 cm. A male Siberian tiger can weigh up to 360 kg. A female Siberian Tiger weighs about 100 to 160 kg. The fur of the Siberian tiger is lighter than that of its peers. In winter, the Siberian tiger has long, thick fur and a layer of fat, which protects it from the cold weather. In summer, the fur is shorter. The Siberian tiger is mainly active at night and lives up to 15- 20 years.



Pic. 1: Appaloosa (2010): Male *Panthera tigris altaica*, Leipzig Zoo/ Tomak (* 27. Mai 2004 in Leipzig). URL:

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:P.t.altaica_Tomak_Male.jpg (03.01.2014).

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2. Occurrence and habitat

The Siberian Tiger lives in cold areas, specifically along the Japanese coasts in the border areas of Russia, China and North Korea. In the past, the tigers were found in a much larger area.



Pic. 2: Gajmar (2012): Lebensraum des Sibirischen Tigers. URL:
http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Panthera_tigris_altaica_dark_world.png (03.01.2014).

The Siberian tiger inhabits deciduous and coniferous forests, as well as plains and low mountains. Here they live mostly as loners in large areas, which they mark with scratch marks and urine. Male Siberian tigers defend their territory against other males, but sometimes share it with one or two females.

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3. *Reproduction*

The mating season of the Siberian tiger extends through the whole year. When the female is ready to mate, she marks trees with urine or looks for a male tiger. There are only three to seven days a year when females are ready to mate. When the female has found a partner, the tigers stay together for a few days. During this period, they mate several times. After this, males and females separate again.



Pic. 3: Pape, D. (2008): *Panthera tigris altaica*. URL: http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Panthera_tigris_altaica_13_-_Buffalo_Zoo.jpg (04.01.2014).

The gestation period of the Siberian tiger is about 95 to 110 days. There are three to seven cubs in a litter. As they are blind in the first two weeks after their birth, they only leave their hiding places after about two months. When the young tigers are about one year old, they slowly begin to hunt for themselves. At the age of four years they are sexually mature and then leave their mother. Then they look for their own territory.

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4. Threats

The number of free-living Siberian tigers in the wild was shockingly low some years ago: There were only about 50 tigers living in the wild. Thanks to protective measures, the stock has increased over the years and now the number of wild tigers is estimated at about 500. However, the number of Siberian tigers living in zoos all over the world is many times higher than the wild population. The Siberian tiger is an endangered species. The hunting of tigers is banned in Russia, China and Korea. However, poaching is still a major problem, as tiger bones are used in some countries as medicine. Also, the tiger's fur is viewed as a trophy. Since there are also many poor people living in these countries, these people risk possible sanctions because they get so much money for one tiger that they can feed their families for a long time.



Pic. 4: Taheri, S.: Siberian Tiger. URL: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Siberischer_tiger_de_edit02.jpg (04.01.2014).

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5. Protection

There was an International Summit in 2010 to protect the Siberian tiger. This set down the goal of doubling the number of tigers by 2022, the next “Year of the Tiger”. Furthermore, hunting should be more strictly controlled.



Pic. 5: Kröcher, E. (2009): Sibirischer Tiger (*P. tigris altaica*) im Zoo Eberswalde. URL: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Zoo_Ebw_Sibirischer_Tiger_DSF5667.jpg (28.01.2014).

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Tasks

1. Work on your text together with your group. Summarize all the important things and tell each other about the content.
2. Write down key points so that you can tell your classmates who are not in your group everything important about the text.
3. Form new groups, so that there are at least 5 people with a different text.
4. Tell each other what you know about the Siberian tiger.

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Quiz

Test your knowledge:

1. In which countries is hunting of the Siberian Tiger not allowed?
2. How long does the pregnancy of a Siberian tiger last?
3. How much can a full-grown Siberian tiger weigh?
4. Why is the Siberian tiger in danger of extinction?
5. Where do Siberian tigers still live in the wild?
6. When does a Siberian tiger leave its mother to get its own territory?
7. What does the Siberian tiger prefer to feed on?
8. What is the aim of the International Summit to protect the Siberian Tiger?
9. Why is there only such a small number of wild-living tigers?
10. Why is the Siberian tiger hunted?