

TENTATIVE LIST

STATE PARTY: Russian Federation

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NAME OF PROPERTY	Bikin River Valley (Extension of the «Central Sikhote-Alin» World Heritage Property (766rev)
State, Province or Region	Pozharski District, Primorski Region.
Latitude and Longitude, or UTM coordinates	Nominated as extension of the «Central Sikhote-Alin» World Heritage Property, the territory is situated within the following coordinates: the northernmost point - 47° 18'N, 137° 06'E; the southernmost point - 46° 10'N, 137° 02'E; the westernmost point - 46° 45'N, 135° 30'E; the easternmost point - 46° 40'N, 137° 54'E.

DESCRIPTION:

The nominated territory is situated 80-100 km to the north from the «Central Sikhote-Alin» World Heritage Property. As the main cluster (the Sikhote-Alin State Reserve), it belongs to Amur- Coastal physiographic region. However while the Sikhote-Alin State Reserve covers mainly the eastern macro slope of Central Sikhote-Alin, the nominated territory occupies its western macro slope, adding a consonant feature to recognized outstanding universal value of the World Natural Heritage Property. The nominated Special Protected Natural Areas represent the landscape preserve “Verkhnebikinsky” and the Territory of traditional nature use of the indigenous small people – they adjoin each other and occupy the upper and middle parts of the Bikin river valley, situated at the North of Primorski Region.

In the natural landscapes classification the Central Sikhote-Alin it is possible to count as the complex of different taiga and unmoral (broad-leaved) ecosystems. The golets and Middle Mountains with the fragments of mountain tundra, overgrows of spread and alpine meadows change by dark coniferous taiga and larch forests on the mountain slopes and plateau. The Korean cedar appears in the lower part of the strip of fir-spruce forests and then transition strip of the cedar-spruce and spruce-cedar forest forms. The participation of unmoral elements is increased in the formation of the plant groupings. Specific combination of the natural factors has determined the contact of the typical fir-spruce forests with the boreal appearance, the broad-leaved cedar and the valley mixed forests with the considerable participation of unmoral elements in all the layers of the forest phytocenosis in this region.

Fauna of the Central Sikhote-Alin is rather rich and specific. The existences of a number of habitats that ensure the needs as of the widely spread as of endemic species are explained by the specific of the

vegetation cover and landscape combination. The total number of species from the Mammals which representatives can be found in the region including *Chiroptera* and those species that were registered compile till 65.

31 species of mammals are concentrated in the cedar-broad-leaved forest belt. The main hunting lands of Amur tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*), settled by this predator with a high density, are also there. In the river Bikin Valley 30-35 heads of tiger are preserved. There exist the ecological corridors for the predator and its potential victim's migrations to the basins of the neighbor rivers Khora, Bolshaya Ussurka (Iman) and to the Japanese Sea coast. As the Sikhote-Alin Reserve area, the Bikin river valley territory is the habitat of Amur tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*) of vital importance as reproductive centre.

The valley of Bikin and inundable vegetation complexes contain the considerable number of species. There are observed the maximum densities of the habitats for many of them. The natural phenomenon, high mountain (golets) landscape with the accompanying complex of narrow area and "Northern" animal species, that is typical for its height belt, is expressed good on the watersheds of the ranges.

Among species which inhabit the territory, the top urgent for conservation is Amur tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*) – its subpopulation within the Central Sikhote-Alin maintains the integrity of habitats. Far East forest cat (*Felis euptylura*) and mogera mole (*Mogera wogura*) inhabit the peripheries of habitats and it defines their inconstant number and dispersion. Himalayan black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*) inhabits cedar-broadleaf forests with the density around 1 animal per 10 square km. Brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) with the highest density inhabits the cedar-broadleaf and cedar forests.

The following species are common for this territory: sable (*Martes zibellina*), otter (*Lutra lutra*), Siberian striped weasel (*Mustela sibiricus*), mink (*Mustela vison*), Indian marten (*Martes flavigula*), ermine (*Mustela erminea*), lynx (*Lynx lynx*), elk (*Alces alces*), maral (*Cervus elaphus*), wild hog (*Sus scrofa*), roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus*), musk deer (*Moschus sibiricus*), blue hare (*Lepus timidus*), coney (*Ochotona alpina*), squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*), chipmunk (*Eutamias sibiricus*), flying squirrel (*Pteromys volans*) and some murine rodents.

Insectivore order (*Insektivora*) is represented by Ussuri hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus ussuriensis*), Far East mogera (*Mogera robusta*), some species of common shrews.

Avifauna of this territory by its species composition and ecological structure is very unusual. There is known 241 species of birds belonging to 17 orders in the basin of the Bikin River. Among them nearly 72% were marked as really nestling, the other are met during seasonal migrations on the wintering or appear as summer staying or flowed accidentally. The main ornithological associations are distributed in the next way: in the cedar-broad-leaved forest complex there are 40-45 nestling species, in the cedar-spruce forest complex - nearly 40 species, in the fir-spruce forest complex - 35-30 species. In golets, where bird fauna was studied insufficiently completely, there should settle about 15 species of the nestling birds. *Mergus sguamatus* and *Ketupa blakistoni* are included into the red Book of the IUCN.

JUSTIFICATION FOR OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE:

Outstanding Universal Value of the Bikin river valley as an integrated part of the Central Sikhote-Alin natural complex (meets criteria x) is already confirmed by IUCN experts and is fixed in the decision of 25-th Session of World Heritage Committee (Helsinki, 2001).

One of the principal reasons of Central Sikhote-Alin serial nomination preparation is the requirement for protection of endangered population of Amur tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*). Activity of the Sikhote-Alin Reserve and protected territories in the Bikin river valley, designing of new Special Protected Natural Areas within the Central Sikhote-Alin are targeted mostly to conservation of the key habitats of Amur tiger.

Moreover, cedar-broadleaf complex of the upper and middle stream of the Bikin river is actually globally unique and exclusive preserved entire massif of formerly wide-spread Ussuri taiga. Besides its apparent

nature protection value, this massif is essential for maintaining the animal habitats in their natural conditions which directly affects the well-being of the Bikin river valley indigenous people belonging to the bikin group of the Udege.

Criteria met:

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Criteria x

The nominated territory along with the already inscribed Sikhote-Alin Reserve are the key habitats of Amur tiger. Extension of the World Heritage Property by this new additional habitat would apparently contribute to successful recovery and conservation of population.

River Bikin valley, which represents globally unique and exclusive preserved entire massif of Ussuri taiga (total square more then 1 million ha), differs by a high concentration of rare and relic plant species. Only in its upper part there was registered the growing of more than 20 species included into the Red Book of the RF. 34 species of the vascular plants are on the verge of their area, such as *Rhododendron Redowskianum Maxim*, *Microbiota dicussata*, *Ilex rugosa*, *Bergenia pacifica*, *Rhodiola rosea* and that is not full their enumeration. The very favourable biotops for the inhabitancy of tiger, *Ursus thibetanus* and *Felis euphilura* arose in accordance with the splendid collection of the plant associations that settle the territory practically everywhere. It is very important for the support of the state of their populations on the Far East.

The landscape diversity defines the biocenotic ties with the 38 rare bird species that find here favourable conditions. In the lower flow of the river they are *Grus japonensis* and *Grus monacha*, *Ciconia boyciana* and *Ciconia nigra*, *Turnix tanki*, *Numenius madagascariensis*, *Butastur indicus*. The valley forests consisted of *Ulmus sp.*, *Fraxinus sp.*, *Tilia sp.*, *Chosenia sp.* on the banks of the middle flow of the river provide excellent nesting and stern conditions for *Pandion haliaetus*, *Aix galericulata*, *Mergus squamatus*, *Ketupa blakistoni*, *Ninox scutulata*. The upper reaches of the river covered by larch, dark coniferous and stone birch forests are the settlements of *Tetrao urallogoides* and *Falcapennis falcipennis*.

The following species inhabit the nominated territory and are in the IUCN Red Data Book: Amur tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*), scaly-sided merganser (*Mergus squamatus*) and blakiston’s fish-owl (*Ketupa blakistoni*).

Statements of authenticity and/or integrity:

The nominated area is the only territory on the western slope of the Sikhote-Alin mountain system that has not suffered much from destructive human activities. The largest entire massif of natural cedar-broadleaf is preserved here, being the habitat of many endemic, rare and endangered species of plants and animals.

The River Bikin basin represents the integrated natural macro complex which main components are closely connected by common origin, history of development and evolutionary dynamics as well as specifics of ecology. Its integrity and high level of conservation are protected by the landscape preserve status, Territory of traditional nature use of the indigenous small people status and nut-fruited crop value.

The nominated territory is remote from large industrial centers and regions of heavy cropping. The high level of its landscapes and ecosystems conservation is the result not only of its legal status, but also of its geographical location, remoteness and large sizes (more then 1 million ha).

Comparison with other similar properties:

The Central Sikhote-Alin is one of the key biosphere areas where the outstanding wealth of its bioinformatics resources concentrate on the genetic, population and ecosystem level. The natural

complex of this region has no direct analogues in the World under the species composition and diversity, the speciality of natural ecosystems organization.

The Southern Appalachians in North America formed one of the wealth floristic provinces on the Earth — the most similar region towards Central Sikhote-Alin according to the characteristics of geographical location, history of nature development and species wealth. However, despite the smaller area of the Central Sikhote-Alin, its floristic and faunistic diversity is equal to “Appalachian forest.” The disparately lower level of human impact is tremendous advantage of Central Sikhote-Alin in comparison with the Appalachian.

Maximum species diversity, ecosystems and landscapes observed in a vast transition zone of the Manchu and Okhotsko-Kamchatkaya floristic provinces transfusion concentrated at a relatively small area of the Central Sikhote-Alin that is a part of the Sikhote-Alin mountain structure and its branches. The decrease of the flora wealth both in taxonomic diversity and the number of species observed to the north and south of it.

The outstanding spatial contrast of landscapes and its internal structure makes the Ussuri taiga unique and exclusive. It is supplemented by the same high-contrast modes of ecosystem function caused by a pronounced monsoon climate and the high amplitude of oscillation of the abiotic environment features (air temperature and humidity, precipitation, etc.).

The cedar-broadleaf forest in upper and middle streams of the River Bikin is globally unique and exclusive large natural massif of Ussuri taiga. The nominated territory is the key habitat of Amur tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*).