

## 'Family planning' for Siberian tigers in China



A breeder checks two Siberian tiger cubs in the Hengdaohezi Feline Breeding Center in northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, April 24, 2017. [Photo/Xinhua]

Chinese researchers are using artificial breeding to control the population of captive-bred Siberian Tigers and improve their genetic quality.

There are about 1,000 Siberian tigers at China Hengdaohezi Feline Breeding Center, the world's largest breeding center for tigers in captivity. Researchers control the number of newborn cubs to about 100 every year.

"Not all adult Siberian tigers are fit for reproducing. If we do not control reproduction, the quality of the offspring will be affected," said Liu Dan, chief engineer at the Siberian Tiger Park.

Researchers conduct DNA tests to select parents and to prevent inbreeding, he said.

Most Siberian tigers have more than one cub at a time. It is common for a mother tiger to give birth to three cubs at once, Liu said.

The oldest mother at the center is 15 years old. Some tigers can reproduce from the age of four until age 14, he said.

Researchers have also given the animals wildlife training.

“Wildlife training is an important way to maintain their quality. I hope one day we can release these captive-bred animals to the wild,” he said.

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## [Tibet bans crossing of nature reserve](#)

Southwest China’s Tibet Autonomous Region has banned visitors from passing through a state nature reserve to access other areas, as an environmental protection measure.

In a circular released Friday, the regional forestry bureau said that any crossing at the Changtang National Nature Reserve (CNNR) will be illegal. It specifically mentions that people should not pass through the CNNR to reach two other state nature reserves, one in Xinjiang and another in Qinghai.

The CNNR covers six counties in Tibet’s Nagqu Prefecture. With an area of 298,000 square km and an average altitude of 5,000 meters, it is China’s biggest and highest reserve. The area is a wildlife paradise, and home to a variety of wildlife species and numerous lakes.

The circular called on tourists, adventure enthusiasts and tourism agencies to comply with the reserve’s laws and regulations to “protect the last pure land on earth.”

Tibet has increased protection efforts at the CNNR. In 2015, the regional government established 73 management stations at the reserve and hired a total of 780 farmers and herdsmen to patrol, manage and protect the reserve at a cost of 300 million yuan (43 million dollars).

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## [Yunnan police bust drug trafficking case](#)

Police in southwest China’s Yunnan Province have busted a drug-trafficking case, with three suspects detained, authorities said Saturday.

More than 57 kg of methamphetamine and two vehicles were confiscated in a raid on Tuesday, according to the public security bureau of Zhenyuan County.

On Tuesday, police intercepted an SUV on a local highway in Zhenyuan and detained a suspect surnamed Xie. Later, another SUV carrying another two suspects was stopped.

Further investigation is under way.

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## [Ancient city ruins discovered in southwest China](#)

The ruins of an ancient city have been discovered in southwest China.

Archaeologists have found the remains of several walls in Yunnan's Midu County, believed to be part of Baiya City, and dating back to the early years of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) more than 1,000 years ago.

Accounts of the old town of Baiya City first appear in a history book written by military official Fan Chuo during the Tang Dynasty. Fan said that Baiya City had an old town and a new town, which were closely connected. A previously discovered "old town" was about two kilometers from the confirmed new town, contradictory to the book, according to historian and archeologist He Jinlong.

"From the location of these newly discovered ruins, much closer to the new town, we are pretty confident that it is the authentic old town," He said. "As excavation continues, we will know more details."

Domestic and foreign records about Baiya City are quite limited, and the new discovery will provide valuable evidence for research into the ancient civilization of west Yunnan, He added.

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## [Large number of wild Milu deer sighted in Hunan](#)

A large group of milu Deer have been spotted in central China's Hunan Province, authorities said.

Staff with Hunan Provincial Forestry Department found 62 wild milu deer during a drone inspection in a state nature reserve near Dongting Lake, the second-largest freshwater lake in China. It is the biggest group of wild milu deer ever seen in the area.

Staff with the department found the deer foraging during a survey on Thursday.

Last year, authorities found 41 of the deer in the reserve.

“The extra deer spotted this year must be the calves,” said Zhang Hong, an official with the administration of the nature reserve.

Milu, also known as Pere David’s deer, is a species endemic to China, but overhunting and loss of habitat led to its near extinction in the early 20th Century.

In 1986, the British government gifted 39 milu deer to Dafeng Milu National Nature Reserve in east China’s Jiangsu Province, starting a revival of the population in its homeland.