

## Endangered Big Cat Gets a Checkup

**A female Far Eastern leopard is evaluated in Russia.**

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Alyona, a Far Eastern leopard, is examined by Clay Miller, left, of Wildlife Conservation Society and John Lewis, right, of Wildlife Vets International, who is listening for heart abnormalities. Photo by Andrew Harrington. A female leopard nicknamed Alyona by the researchers of the Wildlife Conservation Society who captured her has undergone a medical check-up in Russia and her physical condition appears to be good.

The analysis of the critically endangered Far Eastern leopard last week revealed that she is between 8 and 10 years old and weighs a healthy 85 pounds. The big cat has since been released unharmed, according to a WCS statement.

The animal was captured by a team of scientists from WCS and the Russian Academy Sciences Institute of Biology and Soils (IBS). The team hopes to learn more about the potential effects of inbreeding for this population, which experts estimate contains no more than 10-15 females.

The Far Eastern leopard is among the world's rarest big cat, with an estimated 25-40 inhabiting a narrow stretch of land in the far southeastern corner of Russia. If inbreeding or disease can be kept in check, WCS and its partners said there is potential for increased survival rates and habitat in Russia and Northeast China.