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FAR EASTERN BANK OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIALS AS AN IMPROVEMENT TOOL FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIG CATS (*PANTHERINAE*)

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The Federal Law «On Introducing Changes to Some Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation» of July 2, 2013 № 150 enacted Art. 258.1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation «Illegal Hunting and Trade of Especially Valuable Wild Animals...» and introduced changes in Art. 226.1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation «Smuggling... of especially valuable wild animals...». Unlike the earlier Art. 258 of Criminal Code of Russian Federation that determined criminal liability for the fact of illegal hunting, which is difficult to prove, Art. 258.1 introduces a new law norm criminalizing even «purchase, storage, transportation, posting and trade of especially valuable wild animals... their parts and derivatives...» (Part 1). A statement was added to Art. 226.1, which determines criminal liability for «illegal transportation across a customs border... of especially valuable wild animals and water biological resources belonging to the list of species included in the Red Book of the Russian Federation and protected by international agreements of the Russian Federation, their parts and derivatives» (Part 1). This significantly increases the effectiveness of nature protection activities. At the same time, the introduction of Art. 258.1 and amendments to Art. 226.1 requires the development of instruments for their implementation in the work of research institutions connected with the examination of bioprobes from especially valuable animals included in the list of the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of October 31, 2013 № 978, particularly, big cats living in the Far East – Amur tiger and Far Eastern leopard. The paper discusses four approaches to the legalization of derivatives of big cats kept in research institutions. The authors conclude that the conflict-free enforcement of Art. 226.1 and 258.1 in the process of research work is ensured by a concept of the Far Eastern Bank of Biological Materials developed by stake-

holder institutions. They enumerate the key organizational and legal principles of its functioning that ensure not only the observance of legal norms, but also the transparency, repeatability and reliability of obtained research results and expert conclusions in the interests of protecting big cats in the Far East.