

# **Pelestarian Harimau Sumatera Kerinci-Seblat**

## **Kerinci Seblat Sumatran Tiger Protection & Conservation**

**Report on activities conducted with the  
support of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Tiger and Dreamworld  
Conservation Funding**

**February-July 2017**

**by**

**Fauna & Flora International**



## **Summary of activities and results to date**

The project purpose is to secure the effective protection and conservation of Sumatran tiger through reduced threat in a national park that forms the protected core (1.38 million hectares) of the globally important Kerinci Tiger Conservation Landscape .

Six Tiger Protection & Conservation Units were active and conducted a total of 62 SMART forest patrols in national park and buffer-zone forests of three park-edge provinces across a total walking distance of 1067Km (663 miles) by GPS Waypoint.

Patrols made a total of 53 Sumatran tiger records with frequency of encounter, park-wide, improving fractionally to 1 tiger per 20.1 patrol kilometres walked compared with 1-20.8Km in the same months of 2016.

Active threat to tigers recorded on TPCU patrols reduced dramatically with only seven active tiger snares recorded on three TPCU patrols during this six months period compared with 32 active snares in the same months of 2016

This reduction in active snare poaching threat to tigers came in spite of a continuing strong focus to use of forest-edge community networks to secure information on possible active poaching threat for a patrol response.

An eighth active tiger snare was recorded and destroyed on a law enforcement monitoring transect by the tiger monitoring team (MHS) which was launched using information from a TPCU informant

Investigations were conducted in park-edge districts of the four provinces which overlay the national park and three provincial capitals and, with support of other donors, extended to Batam Island, a freeport off the coast of Singapore now known to form a significant exit point from Indonesia for smuggled wildlife and to Jakarta.

These investigations supported four successful tiger law enforcement actions resulting in the arrest of 10 tiger poachers or traders including individuals active at a trans-provincial level. Two wildlife law enforcement actions conducted in December 2016 and January 2017 and so before this reporting period, proceeded through the judicial system and concluded in custodial sentences.

Three human-tiger conflicts, one involving a tigress and two cubs, were mitigated during this reporting period, all before livestock predation had occurred and, on the basis of post-conflict monitoring, were safely resolved.

The project team also facilitated revision of an MoU between the national park authority and the police authorities of the four provinces which overlay the protected area to strengthen collaborations to address the illegal wildlife trade and forest crime more widely. This MoU was signed off at a meeting at the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in April and the project subsequently supported meetings between park managers and their local police counterparts to commence planning activities to be conducted under the MoU from 2018.

Technical support was also provided to local NGO partners, in particular to Lingkar Institut in Bengkulu who are conducting a range of tiger conservation actions, including SMART patrols, in the far south-west of the national park in an area TPCUs do not have capacity to maintain a focused presence.

DJM

Kerinci, August 2017

## SMART forest patrols by Tiger Protection & Conservation Units (TPCU)

A total of 62 SMART forest patrols (see SMART map of TPCU patrol routes, below) were conducted by TPCUs in national park and park-edge forests with 326 unit days spent on forest patrols covering a walking distance of 1067Km (663 miles) by GPS Waypoint.

Patrols made a total of 53 separate tiger presence records, (See SMART map, below) including two breeding records, with frequency of encounter with tiger, park-wide, improving, to 1-20.1 patrol kilometres (12.48 miles) walked compared with the 1-20.8Km recorded in the same months of 2016. Frequency of encounter with tiger on TPCU patrols in the Core area increased to 11.5Km compared with 16.1Km in 2016.

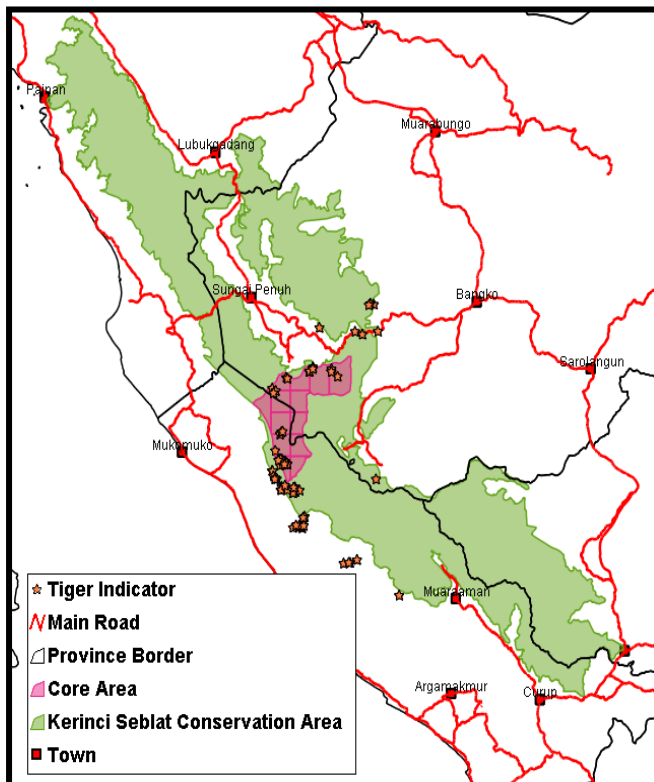
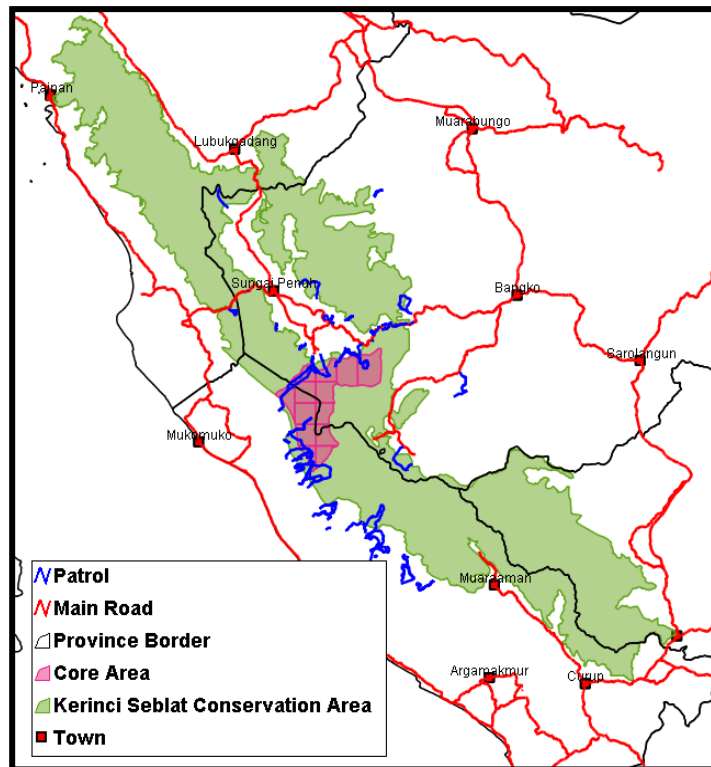
TPCU Effort (forest patrol days) to record tiger presence increased, fractionally, park-wide, to 1- 6.1 unit patrol days from 1-5.8 days in the same months of 2016 but was stable or better on patrols in the Core area at 1-3.5 patrol days.

A further 12 monitoring and law enforcement monitoring transects were conducted by the tiger monitoring team (MHS) in the 'Core area' and in the course of camera trapping in the north-eastern block of the national park on the Kerinci-Bungo district borders which has received a low TPCU patrol focus since 2013.

These transects made a total of 15 tiger records with frequency of encounter at 1-27.6Km with low tiger presence recorded in the monitoring area in the north-east of the national park, likely a consequence of widespread illegal forest clearance for coffee plantations by smallholders, not all local.

TPCUs also reported low tiger presence in park-edge forests in the North Bengkulu area in the south-west of the national park. This was ascribed by the patrol teams to numerous encounters with elephant herds and no active or recently active snares were recorded on patrols in this area.

Direct threat to tiger from poaching reduced dramatically during this six months period with fewer than 5% of



patrols reporting active tiger snares compared with 12% of patrols in the same period of 2016 and 26% of patrols in 2015 in spite of continuing use of forest-edge information networks to deploy patrols to address suspected active poaching threat.

A total of only seven active tiger snares were recorded and destroyed in the course of three TPCU patrols. Three of these snares had been placed by a poacher already in police custody and were recorded on an information-led patrol in forests in the Merangin river valley on the Kerinci-Merangin borders of Jambi province.

An eighth active tiger snare was recorded and destroyed by the tiger monitoring team on a law enforcement

monitoring transect launched using information provided by a TPCU community informant to which TPCUs could not respond as all units were already in the field.

Effort by TPCUs to record active tiger snares increased from 1-9.9 Unit patrol days in the period February-July 2016 to 1-46 unit patrol days and so to levels last

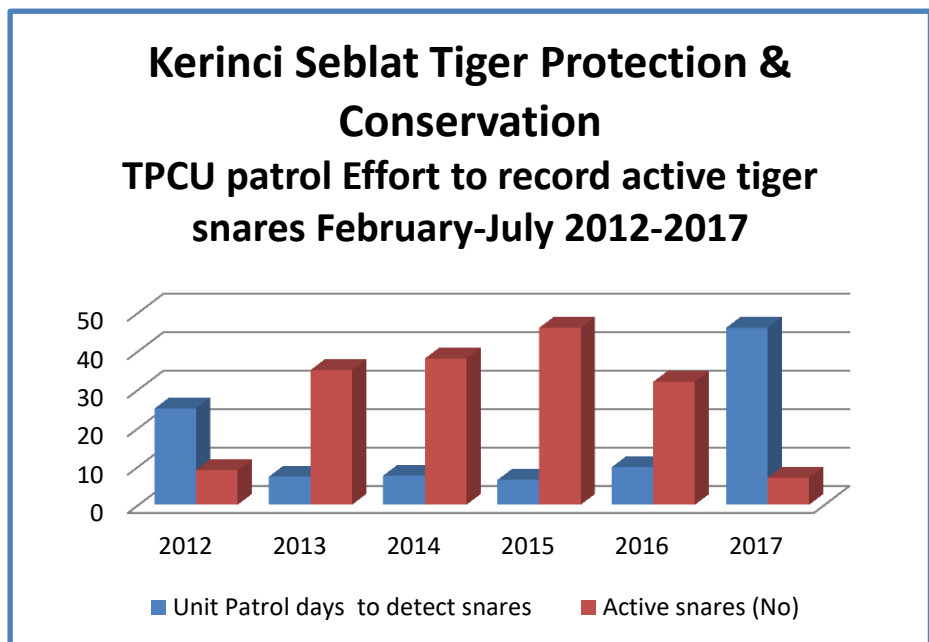
recorded in 2011 (1-43 patrol days) before organised trade-driven poaching threat commenced to surge while Effort to record tiger presence (1-6.1 patrol days) was lower than in 2011 (1-6.8 days).

Low levels of active or recently active poaching threat to tiger were recorded not only in routinely patrolled areas of the national park but extended to areas of the national park which do not receive a strong field protection presence.

This strongly suggests that poaching threat to tiger has fallen at a landscape level and not only in areas routinely patrolled by TPCUs while reducing threat recorded on patrols since 2016 strongly correlates with law enforcement actions by this project team and others in central Sumatra.

However four tigers are known to have been lost from national park buffer-zone forests since January 2017 on the basis of seizures made during intelligence-led law enforcement and confirmed through subsequent follow-up patrols.

Unlike threat to tiger, there was no escalation in deer poaching recorded on TPCU patrols between 2012-2015. A total of 61 active deer snares were recorded and destroyed on eight patrols during this six months period with 41 of these snares recorded on a patrol in the foothills of Mt Kerinci in an area which has not receive a routine patrol focus since 2013.



The Great Kerinci Snare Sweep competition - which offers prizes to the TPCUs detecting the most active snares during the fasting month of Ramadan, a period when poaching threat to deer

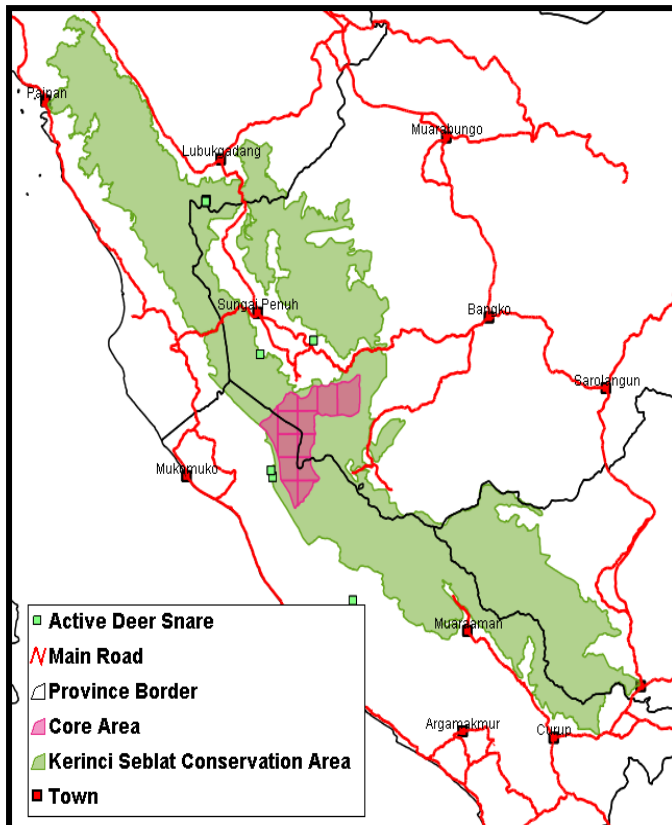
frequently spikes - was disrupted by tiger law enforcement and by the low levels of threat recorded.

Consequently, for the first time since 2012, no GKSS prizes were awarded as no TPCU reached the qualifying minimum number of points for an award to be made.

However while direct threat to tiger and tiger prey species declined, patrols by both TPCU and the tiger monitoring team continued to recorded serious threat to tiger habitat from illegal forest conversion by smallholders, for coffee in highland areas of the park and, in the west and south-west of the national park, for palm oil.

In three of these areas it is very probable that encroachment relates to ongoing political pressure, to date resisted by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, for trans-park roads developments.

Unfortunately no substantial responses have been made, to date, to forest crime recorded in the course of patrols due to a reorganisation of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry under which national parks in Indonesia now have no routine budget with which to conduct law enforcement responses to forest crime and to a lack of political will at national level.





## **Investigations**

More than 80 wildlife crime and illegal wildlife trade investigation reports were logged by TPCU personnel during this six months period with additional reports by a 'retained' informant working part-time under project direction.

Investigations were mainly conducted in park-edge districts and two park-edge provincial capitals but, with the support of another programme donor, extended to Jakarta and to Batam island as the project worked to map syndicates from poacher through to national level sources of trade-driven threat.

Between 2012-2015 investigations were hampered by the very 'closed' nature of the illegal wildlife trade syndicates driving threat to tigers while unprecedented levels of poaching pressure meant the project team prioritised actions to address and contain poaching threat to tigers in the field

Falling poaching threat recorded on patrols allowed the team to strengthen investigations, in particular to identify and secure evidence against the organised gangs posing threat to tiger and their kingpin traders and syndicate leaders.

Three illegal wildlife trade syndicates, two trading tigers and Helmeted hornbill (*Rhinoplax vigil*) and a third trading tigers and pangolin were mapped from local poacher to exporter level trader during the project period with the same two foreign nationals cited –but not named – in two of these three cases. These particular investigations continue.

Investigations in 2017 to date advise that black market prices for tiger have reduced since late 2015 with the exception of tiger canines which, in the case of an adult male tiger, may now account for as much as half of the total price of one animal (skin, bones, claws etc). Continuing strong illegal wildlife trade demand for tiger canines appears to be international in origin and may reflect traders' perception that canines may be easily transported without detection and risk of law enforcement

The deterrent impacts of law enforcement on both traders and poachers combined with lower blackmarket prices appears to have substantially disrupted the activities of poaching and trade syndicates locally, caused 'logjams' in the illegal wildlife trade in park-edge districts, in particular in Bengkulu and Jambi provinces and contributed substantially to the reduced threat recorded on patrols in 2017 to date.

## **Law enforcement actions to uphold Indonesia conservation law:**

Investigations supported four successful tiger law enforcement actions during this six months period resulting in the arrest of six tiger poachers and four illegal wildlife traders and seizure of body parts of five Sumatran tiger.

In February a TPCU investigation launched in 2016 supported law enforcement against a tiger and helmeted hornbill trader operating out of East Pasaman district of northern West Sumatra province and two tiger poachers, one a poaching syndicate kingpin, active in and adjoining national park forests in Kerinci and Merangin districts of Jambi province

Law enforcement was conducted in the Solok area of West Sumatra by a specialist team from KSDA Jambi with project support and resulted in seizure of the skin of a freshly killed tiger and bones of a second tiger believed killed in November 2016. All three men were subsequently sentenced to two-year custodial sentences by Padang City magistrates with additional fines of £1800 each or an additional two months gaol term.

Two months later, in April, following an investigation into trade-driven threat to tigers in the north-east of the national park in park-edge districts of West Sumatra province, law enforcement was conducted in Bungo district of Jambi in partnership with district police.

This resulted in the arrest of two illegal wildlife traders, one from Solok district of West Sumatra and a second trader from the Duri area of Riau province of eastern Sumatra (*see right*) and seizure of the skin of a sub-adult tiger, believed poached from the Bukit Tigapuluh landscape to the north-east of Kerinci Seblat National Park on the Riau-Jambi provincial borders.

This case proceeded smoothly through the post law-enforcement case development to P21 certification and handover from police to court prosecutors.

Unfortunately one of the two Suspects, although under the supervision of a district court officer, subsequently absconded from custody while receiving treatment in the local district general hospital and his whereabouts have not yet been traced.



A month later, in May, intelligence-led law enforcement was again conducted, this time in partnership with North Bengkulu district police and resulting in the arrest of two tiger poachers and



seizure of the skin and bones of a large adult male Sumatran tiger

This tiger had been poached from a former logging concession adjoining the south-west of the national park by two men, one also suspected to have poached

tigers in the nearby Seblat elephant sanctuary. This case has now advanced to P21 certification and moved to into the judicial phase .

Finally, in July, tiger law enforcement was conducted in partnership with Mukomuko district police of Bengkulu resulting in the arrest of two poachers and their trader 'boss' – a village headman from the adjoining province of West Sumatra and seizure of the skins and complete skeletons of two sub-adult tigers

These tigers had been poached early in 2017 in park-edge forests on the Bengkulu-West Sumatra provincial borders but attempts to sell these animals had stalled as the poachers and their 'boss' were unwilling to leave the perceived safety of their home area while illegal wildlife traders were unwilling to buy the tigers in Mukomuko district due to past law enforcement actions in this area.



**Picture:** Bengkulu TPCU coordinator (second from left) with TPCU leaders Endi Mistanto and Jhonisman following law enforcement at Mukomuko district police headquarters

Two law enforcement actions, one conducted in December 2016 and a second in January 2017 proceeded through the judicial process to sentencing,

In the first case, a taxidermist and illegal wildlife trader operating out of the park-edge municipality of Lubuklinggau in South Sumatra province on the south-eastern edges of the national park who was arrested in December 2016 was sentenced to a six months custodial sentence. The light nature of the verdict delivered was based on the fact that this individual was selling the evidence on behalf of a third party.

In the second case, three men arrested in January 2017 on pangolin trade charges in a partnership law enforcement action with Merangin district police were all sentenced to eight months custodial sentences and fines. The primary suspect in this case ran a mobile sales team, selling fish and other household products to park-edge communities and purchasing or brokering the sale of pangolin and Sumatran tiger from village hunters for onward sale



## **Human-Tiger Conflict Mitigation and wildlife emergencies -**

Five human-wildlife conflicts, three relating to Sumatran tiger, one to an Asiatic golden cat misidentified as a tiger by villagers and two to Malay sunbear were recorded and mitigated either directly by TPCUs or through facilitating national park partners.

Three of these incidents related to Sumatran tiger moving through forest-edge farmland, in one case a tigress and two cubs, in farmland in the far south of the Kerinci valley in an area where a man was bitten by a tiger cub in 2016. No livestock predation was recorded in the incidents involving Sumatran tiger or Asiatic golden cat and in the case of a tigress and her cubs, TPCUs were asked to provide on site support by the local village headman to avoid any risk of poachers seeking to exploit tiger presence.

The project team trialled use of ammoniac in the form of household bleach and toilet cleaner in one of the two human-Malay sunbear conflicts reported to establish if this would prove a deterrent to two or more bears which had repeatedly raided villagers' hen houses and the initial results were very promising and will be further explored.

## **Community/Government/Stakeholder Engagement:**

The program team maintained informal contact with colleagues in other tiger conservation programs in Sumatra, in particular sharing information on changes in detected threat to tigers and other protected wildlife

Wildlife crime law enforcement strategy development:- An MoU between four provincial police departments and Kerinci Seblat National Park establishing a wildlife and forestry crime law enforcement network ratified in late 2014 was revised in the first months of 2017 and subsequently signed off for a three years period with project support.

Subsequently the project team facilitated three planning meetings between local (district) level police agencies and national park officers in four provinces to develop an outline workplan for 2018 and to collaboratively identify key needs, including training.

Police attendees showed particular interest in learning the basics of GIS and/or SMART patrol methods which they advised would be helpful for their own reporting purposes in rural Sumatran police divisions which cover large areas. An additional informal planning meeting with key park-edge detectives is planned by the TPCU team for later in 2017.

The project advisor also attended a planning workshop in Padang managed by the Sumatran tiger conservation forum Harimaukita to discuss proposed revisions to the Ministerial Instruction No 48/08 regarding procedures to manage and mitigate human-tiger conflict.

Among the recommendations agreed was that measures are urgently required to establish a system under which farmers suffering human-tiger conflict-related livestock predation are eligible for compensation.

In April, a Strategic Environmental Assessment, funded by UNESCO, to examine the environmental impact of roads proposed, by various interests, to run through Kerinci Seblat National Park was finally published with all but two routes rejected outright by the consultants on the grounds that the environmental impacts would outweigh the economic benefits

However two trans-park routes were identified as potentially necessary in the event of a tsunami striking the west coast of Sumatra with the proviso that the routes would be dirt roads only and only opened in the case of major emergency.

This finding was contested both by the project, local conservation NGOs and IUCN specialists and informal discussions were held, by email and other means, to establish a clear strategy so that these two routes would also be rejected

A public meeting was subsequently held in Jakarta in May and narrowly agreed that these routes too should not be approved and at the World Heritage Commission meeting in June in Poland, the Indonesia delegation pledged that no trans-park infrastructure would be approved..

### **Monitoring of Sumatran tiger**

Camera trapping by the tiger Monitoring team(MHS) to assess tiger populations and densities was conducted in a 320Km<sup>2</sup> area in the north-eastern block of Kerinci Seblat National Park between April and July 2017 with support through an IUCN Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation project

This is the first tiger monitoring exercise in this area since 2012 and once results are analysed will provide valuable comparative data on tiger presence in an area of the national park which has received a very low patrol focus by TPCUs since 2013.

Camera trap placement transects in the north of the monitoring area recorded low tiger densities and extensive encroachment into the interior zone of the national park by smallholders, some from other areas of Sumatra, clearing national park forests for coffee plantations. Higher tiger presence was reported to the east and south of the camera trapping area with one breeding record made (a tigress and three juveniles).

Detailed analysis of camera trapping results in this area will commence in August while camera trapping in the Core Area with the support of Panthera Tigers Forever and UNDP has now commenced and will continue through to November 2017 and results will be advised to 21st Century Tiger.

DJM  
Sungaipenuh, Kerinci  
August 2017