

# **Pelestarian Harimau Sumatera Kerinci-Seblat**

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

**Interim Report on activities conducted with the  
support of Wildcats Conservation Alliance and  
Dreamworld Conservation Funding**

**February-July 2018**

**by**

**Fauna & Flora International**



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

The project purpose is to secure the effective 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 57 SMART patrols across a total walking distance of 878Km (546 miles) using GPS Waypoint. Distance walked and the number of patrols was lower than planned, primarily due to an increase in human-tiger conflicts recorded and habitat law enforcement actions with three patrols aborted due to (5) chainsaw seizures.

Patrol deployment and coverage in the east of the national park was also impacted by management capacity with the Jambi TPCU coordinator on Academic Leave taking a Master's degree with no suitable 'stand-in' identified.

A total of 46 individual Sumatran tiger presence records were made with Frequency of Encounter improving, park-wide, for the second year running, to 1 tiger per 19Km (11.8 miles) walked compared with 1 tiger per 20.1Km (12.5 miles) in the same months of 2017 and 1-20.8Km (12.9 miles) in 2016.

Active poaching threat to tiger reduced for the second year running with just one active tiger snare recorded on an information-led TPCU patrol compared with five in the same months of 2017 and 35 in the same six months of 2016.

Investigations were conducted in park-edge districts and key market towns of the four provinces overlaying the national park and extended to two provincial capitals. These recorded a further fall in illegal wildlife trade demand for tiger with formerly organised illegal wildlife trade syndicates now very fragmented and with traders blaming law enforcement since 2016 as a major factor.

Investigations during this six months period supported two successful tiger law enforcement actions, both conducted after this Interim reporting period, while data from a third (ongoing) investigation contributed to tiger law enforcement action in July 2018 by partners from KSDA Jambi.

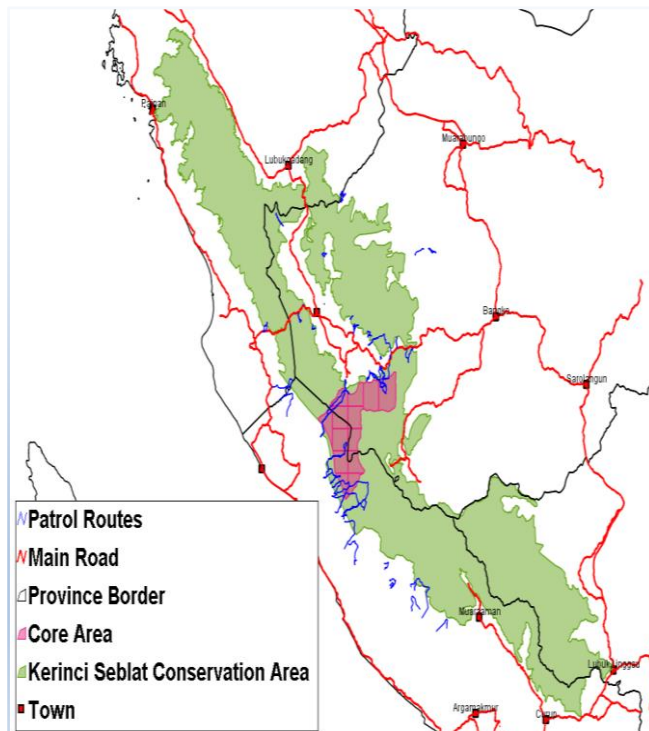
A tiger poacher and his trader accomplice arrested in a joint law enforcement action with Merangin district police in October 2017 were sentenced to custodial terms and very substantial fines in a judgment delivered in early February 2018 while two illegal logging law enforcement actions advanced to court hearings with all four suspects receiving custodial sentences.

Eight human-tiger conflicts were recorded, the majority relating to tigers moving through forest-edge farmland but with one serious incident involving a (non-fatal) daylight attack on a farmer and a second case, far from the national park, involving an attack on a cow tethered in an old cinnamon plantation.

Following formal and informal meetings and coordination, the Governor of West Sumatra province issued an Edict instructing formation of a multi-stakeholder taskforce to address and mitigate human-tiger conflicts so that three of the four provinces overlaying the national park are now formally committed to collaborative human-tiger conflict mitigation actions using an approved national protocol.

**SMART forest patrols by Tiger Protection & Conservation Units (TPCU)** consolidate gains made in reducing threat to tiger and tiger prey and prevent any significant resurgence in poaching threat to tiger and conduct focused patrols during the fasting month of Ramadan to contain a traditional spike in market-driven threat to tiger prey

A total of 57 SMART forest patrols (see map, below) were conducted in national park and park edge forests during this six months period.



Patrols covered a total walking distance (by GPS Waypoint) of 878Km (546 miles) with 289 Unit days spent on forest patrols.

The number of patrols conducted and distance walked was lower than planned, primarily due to forest law enforcement and an upswing in human-tiger conflicts reported.

Patrol coverage in the north-east of the national park was impacted by the absence of the Jambi teams' coordinator who is taking a Master's degree focusing to identifying ways in which to prevent or reduce wildlife crime through mobilizing forest edge communities' support.

Patrols made a total of not fewer than 46 individual Sumatran tiger presence records (See SMART map, below) with Frequency of Encounter with tiger improving to 1 per 19Km (11.8 miles) walked compared with 1-21 Km

(13 miles) in 2017 and 19.9Km (12.4 miles) in the same months of 2016.

Frequency of encounter with tiger on TPCU patrols in the Core area was significantly higher than in the wider landscape at 1 tiger per 14.7Km (9.1 miles).

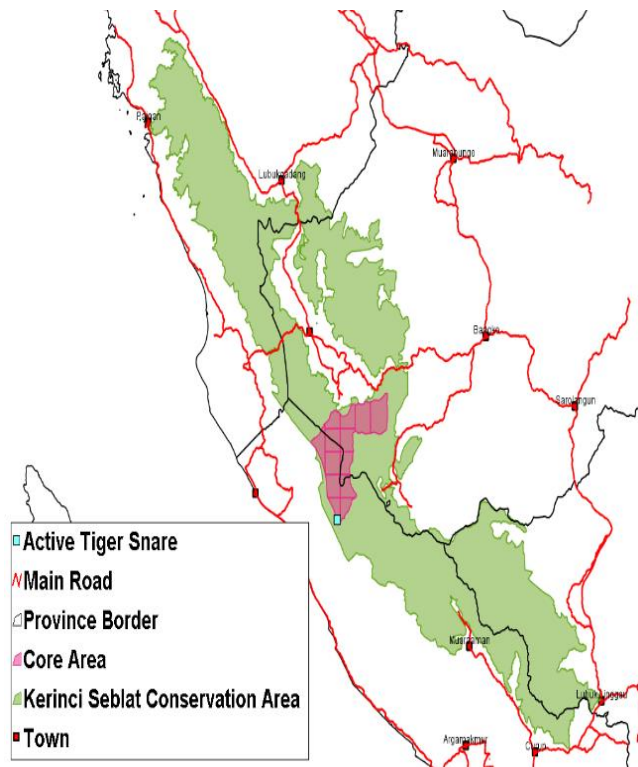
TPCU Effort (forest patrol days) to record tiger presence park-wide was stable or improved fractionally on the same period of 2017 at 1 tiger per 6.1 Unit patrol days compared with 1-6.3 days in the same period of 2017 while just under 60% of all TPCU patrols reported tiger present.

Direct (active) snare poaching threat to tiger detected reduced for the third year running with just one active tiger snare recorded by TPCUs on an information-led patrol in the south-west of the national park.

The individual likely responsible for placing this snare, a man long known to the project team and under distance surveillance by a TPCU investigator was encountered in the course of this patrol. He was subsequently arrested in early September 2018.

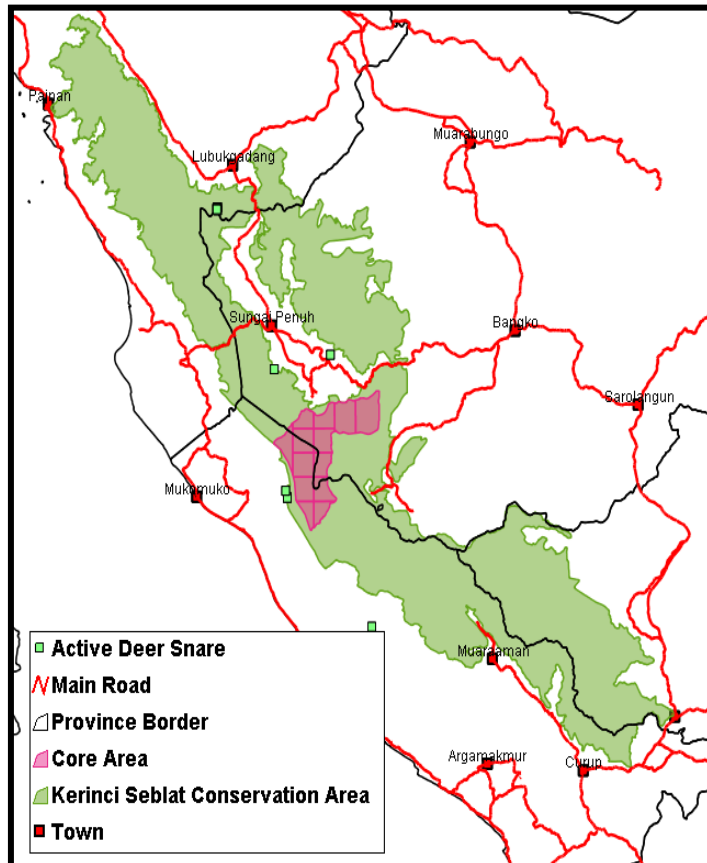
Three 'recently active' (<6 weeks or less) snare placements were recorded on two information-led TPCU patrols compared with 11 in the same period of 2017 and 42 recently deactivated or sprung snares in the period February-July 2016.

This reduced level of threat was recorded not only in TPCU patrol focus areas but also in areas of the national park which do not receive a routine TPCU presence with transects by the FFI/Panthera/KSNP tiger monitoring team in the north-eastern block of the national park also reporting no active or recently active tiger snares.



It appears that reduced threat to tiger is therefore primarily a consequence of reduced illegal wildlife trade demand as a result of law enforcement by this team and others in central Sumatra since 2016

However the programme team is concerned that threat detected has fallen to unrealistically low levels.



Therefore team investigators have been tasked to seek to establish if hunters have changed methodology in an attempt to reduce likelihood of detection. Active threat to key tiger prey species – primarily sambar deer and muntjak - was recorded on six (10.5%) of the 57 SMART TPCU patrols conducted with a total of 139 active deer snares detected and destroyed.

More than half of these active snares were recorded on one information-led patrol in Kerinci in early May just before the fasting month of Ramadan commenced.

Only three long snare lines (>10 snares or more) for deer were recorded with just over 70% of all deer snares recorded in the six weeks leading up to the festival of Eid which marks the end of Ramadan and threat to key tiger prey species was stable or better on the basis of percentage of patrols reporting and effort (patrol days) to record.

However while poaching pressure on tiger reduced, patrols continued to record serious threat to tiger habitat in a number of areas around the national park.

Alluvial illegal gold mining using heavy plant was recorded in park-edge and national park forests in the north of the Merangin river valley on the borders of Kerinci and Merangin districts (See *Law Enforcement*) posing serious threat to a key tiger corridor with a dirt road constructed which entered the edge of the national park.

Patrols also continued to record encroachment into the north of the Core area in a location where local political elites continue to press for a road to be built through the park to the Renah Kemumu enclave although this proposal was rejected by government in 2017. In both cases, illegal activities were conducted with the support of certain rogue traditional law or *Adat* leaders with investigations advising these individuals were profiting from forest clearances through selling forest lands to smallholders or taking fees from the gold miners.

Patrols responded where possible to threat to tiger habitat with three patrols aborted due to chainsaw seizures however both patrol units and the national park were constrained from making a law enforcement response to illegal forest clearance due to lack of political support at the highest levels of government.



**Picture:** TPCU rangers crossing the Lumayan river on a patrol in the Core area of the park in Kerinci



**Investigations** - *identify and monitor individuals posing threat to tigers in the landscape, their networks and trade routes and secure evidence for law enforcement as appropriate, monitor the illegal wildlife blackmarket to identify and counter any resurgence in trade-driven threat to tigers*

More than 70 investigation and 'for information' reports were logged by TPCU personnel during this six months period with additional reports by a retained, daily-paid informant currently based in the national capital, Jakarta.

Investigations were conducted mainly in park-edge districts and market towns of four provinces but extended to two provincial capitals and to Jakarta as the programme continued to map illegal wildlife trade routes from the national park with the purpose of identifying national and sub-national sources of illegal wildlife trade threat to tigers.

Two of these investigations proceeded to law enforcement after this Interim reporting period with the arrest of three tiger poachers or traders in two law enforcement actions in park-edge districts of Bengkulu and Jambi provinces.

A third investigation in a park-edge district in the north-east of the national park was suspended and data passed to a specialist unit of KSDA Jambi who then conducted tiger law enforcement in Jambi city. This investigation has subsequently been reactivated.

A fourth investigation, focused on a remote area bordering the east of the national park in Jambi province, was unable to proceed to law enforcement after evidence was traded on twice in the space of three days, first to a market town bordering the park in South Sumatra and then to a neighbouring district in Bengkulu. The ultimate buyer was subsequently identified as an illegal logging 'boss' also implicated in trade in Malay pangolin and this individual is now under distance surveillance.

Investigations advised that illegal wildlife trade demand for tiger, based on blackmarket prices touted or secured, further reduced during this reporting period with prices falling by >50% or greater compared with early 2016 although strong demand for tiger canines continued to be reported.

Traders and poachers across the landscape repeatedly raised the risk of law enforcement in the course of covert interviews and this, combined with substantially lower prices for tiger body parts, is likely to have resulted in a change in the 'Risk-Reward' ratio as calculated by poachers and to have been a major contributor to the low level of threat recorded on TPCU patrols

Investigations also recorded 'log-jams' in the illegal wildlife trade in tigers in park-edge provinces with hunters unwilling to transport tiger body parts and other protected wildlife to towns or cities where traders are based and buyers unwilling to visit villages to conduct transactions with poachers.

These IWT log jams were primarily recorded in park-edge districts where tiger law enforcement was conducted since 2016 by the programme or partners but was also reported in surrounding districts.

Investigations also reported reduced illegal wildlife trade demand for Malay pangolin, a species frequently traded in tandem with Sumatran tiger with blackmarket prices falling by 60% or greater since December 2017 following law enforcement by Riau provincial police against exporter level traders, one based in a park-edge district of South Sumatra.

Investigations also recorded links with trade in Asian elephant ivory and Sumatran tiger canines at a national level with an ethnic Chinese businessman from South Sumatra province now living in Jakarta reported as a major national level trader in tiger canines and ivory. This investigation continues.

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

No tiger law enforcement actions were conducted during this six months Interim reporting period although investigations during this period subsequently supported two tiger law enforcement actions by the team in partnership with park-edge police divisions.

A third investigation in a park-edge district in the north-east of the national park was suspended and data passed to a specialist unit of KSDA Jambi who conducted law enforcement in Jambi city resulting in the arrest of two men, one known to the team as a broker of tiger body parts, and seizure of the skin and bones of a juvenile tiger.

Tiger Law enforcement by the team in partnership with Merangin district police in October 2017 proceeded through the legal process to a court hearing with the suspects, Firdaus and Sutrimo, subsequently both sentenced to one year, four months custodial terms. The defendants were also fined the maximum Rp100 million (£5,000) allowable under current conservation law or additional gaol time

Reduced poaching and trade threat to tiger during this period allowed the programme team to strengthen forest crime law enforcement focus.

Two illegal logging law enforcement actions were conducted, one by a TPCU patrol team in Mukomuko district of Bengkulu and a second in partnership with the Kerinci section of the national park which is now under the leadership of the TPCU field manager.

These resulted in the arrest of four illegal loggers with both cases proceeding through the post-law enforcement case development process to court hearings with one man sentenced to a two year custodial term by North Bengkulu magistrates and three men sentenced to two years, six months sentences by Kerinci magistrates.

In February, Jambi TPCUs joined with Kerinci district police to conduct law enforcement against



illegal gold miners active in national park forests in a key tiger corridor on the Kerinci-Merangin district borders.

Six men were arrested during this action and an excavator (See *photograph, left*) used to conduct alluvial gold mining disabled and a police 'line' established and the suspects escorted out of the national park to Kerinci police headquarters in Sungaipenuh.

Subsequently illegal gold mining syndicates active in the west of Merangin district mobilized

supporters and blockaded the district highway between Kerinci and Merangin for three days with a senior official of Sungaipenuh municipal government held hostage.

This impasse was subsequently resolved by an instruction from the provincial chief of police that the suspects be released under the legal guarantee of their respective village headmen following which the blockade of the district highway was lifted. Illegal gold mining has subsequently resumed and the

programme team and national park await law enforcement led by national agencies in Jakarta to resolve this serious threat to tiger habitat and a key tiger corridor between the eastern and western blocks of the national park.

TPCU patrols responded to breaches of protected area law as possible with five chainsaws seized from illegal loggers' camps and with formal legal warnings or counselling to minor offenders against conservation law, primarily wild songbird catchers.

One of these latter offenders was an individual known to the team as a suspected tiger poacher and one active tiger snare and a second, recently active snare placement were later recorded on this patrol. This individual was subsequently (outside this Interim reporting period) arrested in an intelligence-led joint tiger law enforcement action with Mukomuko district police.

### **Human-Tiger Conflict Mitigation -**

A total of nine human-tiger conflicts were responded to during this six months period, the highest number of incidents recorded in a six months period since 2012 and compares with three human-tiger conflicts recorded in the same months of 2017 and four each in the first six months of 2015 and 2016.

This increase in human-tiger conflict is likely to be closely-related to reduced poaching threat to tiger recorded with hunters less likely to seek to exploit tiger presence but, in two incidents was clearly linked to encroachment into the national park by small-holder farmers.

Six of the incidents reported were categorized as minor or 'low-grade' conflicts and related to tigers moving through forest-edge farmland for a short period of time and posing no direct threat to either people or livestock.

One of these conflicts was categorised as 'serious' due to the long-standing nature of the problem with a tiger in a mixed farmland and forest habitat far from the national park frequently seen by villagers and with the problem heightened by harvesting of mature cinnamon 'gardens' and replanting with annual crops and coffee so that interactions with people were very frequent albeit fleeting.

A seventh conflict, in April, almost certainly a precursor to a serious incident in late May, saw two semi-feral farmland guard dogs predated by a tiger, likely a sub-adult transient, in the Renah Pemetik enclave area to the east of the Kerinci valley, an area where serious large-scale encroachment into the national park is recorded.

This was responded by the team through counselling anxious farmers, who agreed that the incident had likely been caused by encroachment into the park by a neighbouring community, while a TPCU conducted a forest patrol in adjoining forests to ensure the incident was not exploited by poachers.

Six weeks later, during the fasting month of Ramadan, a second and more serious conflict occurred in this area, approximately 8Km (5 miles) from the April conflict location.

In this incident a farmer was attacked and badly bitten by a tiger while she was planting crops in her farm close to the edge of the national park. This was the first recorded attack on a person by a tiger in the Kerinci landscape since 2014 and was made more unusual by the fact that the incident occurred in the middle of the day.

The farmer's husband managed to scare off the tiger and the victim was transported to hospital in Sungaipenuh for medical treatment for serious bites and claw injuries to her neck and mid back with



the programme meeting her hospital costs and with an additional donation from KSDA (Unit for Conservation of Natural Resources) Jambi.

In early 2018, the Governor of Jambi province issued an Edict instructing formation of a multi-stakeholder human-tiger conflict mitigation taskforce in Jambi province and the programme concluded that this serious incident would be best mitigated by a multi-agency team and not, as usual, by TPCUs and national park officers.

A team composing officers from KSDA Jambi's Merangin Section, Kerinci Forest Management Unit (formerly Kerinci district forest service) and Kerinci district police was formed under the command of a KSNP ranger and former TPCU leader and spent the following 10 days on site, providing counselling and advice on personal safety to farmers in the area while seeking to monitor the tiger's movements.

Camera traps were also placed in key locations in the area in the hope of securing an image of this animal to establish if it had been previously photographed during camera trapping supported through the IUCN ITCHP project however no photographs were secured.

The multi-stakeholder conflict mitigation team finally withdrew from the area three days before the festival of Eid which marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan, returning to the location for one night after reports, by farmers returning to their villages for the festival, of a tiger seen at the side of the dirt road leading from the enclave to the Kerinci valley.

Following the Eid festival, TPCU community rangers and members of the tiger monitoring team conducted an informal appraisal of the situation in the Renah Pemetik area and were advised by farmers there were no further problems. TPCU investigators are continuing to seek to confirm a strong suspicion that this animal was shot by a poacher shortly after the Eid festival on the instructions of a local community leader.

A month later, in early July, a third serious human-tiger conflict occurred in farmland close to Lake Kerinci when a tiger attacked a cow tethered overnight in a mature cinnamon plantation. Conflict mitigation was again conducted collaboratively with other members of the multi-stakeholder human-wildlife conflict mitigation team. This incident identified a number of management issues related to personnel from different agencies working to mitigate a human-wildlife conflict, in particular the need for field actions to be under a single commander.

Additionally TPCUs worked to mitigate two incidents of human-bear conflict – one involving predation of goats and chickens while a third incident, relating to a report of a tiger moving through rice padis in the north of the Kerinci valley was found to relate to an Asiatic golden cat and not a tiger

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

Following coordination, formal and informal, in 2017 and early 2018, in May 2018 the Governor of West Sumatra province issued an Edict ordering formation of a multi-stakeholder human-wildlife mitigation Taskforce.

This means that three of the four provinces adjoining Kerinci Seblat National Park are now formally committed to supporting collaborative actions by local and national government agencies and other stakeholders to mitigate human-wildlife conflict.

The programme team is now preparing to join informal meetings with partners in West Sumatra to develop an effective standard operating procedures based on local capacity and to ensure that medical and other compensation measures are in place for victims of serious conflicts.

Routine informal coordination was conducted with key park-edge police divisions while members of the programme team provided input to Jambi provincial police following law enforcement resulting in the arrest of members of a militant farmers' rights group responsible for supporting large-scale conversion of national park and adjoining forests for coffee plantations in Merangin district of Jambi. This case has now proceeded to a judicial hearing.

The program team also maintained informal contact with colleagues in other tiger conservation programs in Sumatra, in particular sharing information on the changes in threat to tigers and other protected wildlife, in particular Helmeted hornbill and pangolin detected on patrols and in the course of investigations.

The team advisor also provided technical support and guidance to a small local NGO based in the west of the national park in West Sumatra province which successfully leveraged law enforcement against large scale illegal logging in national park forests in Pesisir Selatan district.

The programme also provided technical advice to local NGO partner Lingkar Institut regarding patrol and investigation strategies in the national park in Lebong district of Bengkulu, an area of the park where TPCUs do not have capacity to maintain a routine field presence.

### **Monitoring of Sumatran tiger**

Camera trapping by the FFI/KSNP/Panthera tiger monitoring team (MHS) was conducted in a 320Km<sup>2</sup> area in the north-eastern block of Kerinci Seblat National Park in the first quarter of 2018 with support under an IUCN Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation project.

This is an area of the national park which has been rarely patrolled by TPCUs since 2013 when patrol focus was tightened to key tiger populations in the face of escalating poaching threat and camera trapping in 2017 reported tiger densities sharply lower than in the Core Area.

Only three clearly identifiable adult tiger images were made during camera trapping, one an adult previously identified in 2017, with images of two further adult tigers not clear enough to support a clear identification. Transects in the IUCN monitoring area reported no active or recently active poaching threat to tiger.

Camera trapping in the Core Area with support from Panthera Tigers Forever was planned to commence in late September 2018 but has now been delayed until late October to allow for an intensive biodiversity survey in national park forests between Kerinci and Pesisir Selatan district of West Sumatra to assess impacts of upgrading a road running through the national park and make recommendations to government to reduce impacts on biodiversity.



Picture: An adult tiger photographed during camera trapping park by the FFI/KSNP tiger monitoring team in early 2018 in a study area in the north-east of the national park with support from the IUCN ITCHP project.

DJM  
September 2018





Picture 1: 'Making camp' on a TPCU patrol in the Pelapat river area on the borders of Merangin and Bungo districts in the east of the national park



Picture 2: TPCU Leader Jefri Yulius disarms one of more than 77 active deer snares recorded on an information-led patrol in Kerinci in the run-up to the fasting month of Ramadan





Picture 3: - Members of the Tiger Protection and Conservation Unit team and Tiger Monitoring team (MHS) at Kerinci Seblat National Park) headquarters with new national park director *pak Tamen Sitorus MSc (centre)* after receiving their annual Letters of Assignment.



Picture 4 – Members of TPCU Bengkulu with a gigantic *ficus* encountered on a forest patrol





**Picture 5** – Illegal logging recorded by a TPCU on a patrol in Mukomuko district Bengkulu. In this particular case no suspects were present but a chainsaw was seized from the loggers’ camp



**Picture 6** – Bengkulu TPCU coordinator Geovril Seven X (back left) and TPCU members on a trans-park patrol from Kerinci to Mukomuko district, Bengkulu at the border of Jambi and Bengkulu province on Mt Gareka deep in the core of the national park.