



Pelestarian Harimau Sumatera Kerinci Seblat



Jeremy Holden/FI

KERINCI SEBLAT SUMATRAN TIGER PROTECTION & CONSERVATION

Interim report on activities conducted with the support of WildCats Conservation Alliance and Dreamworld Conservation Funding

February – July 2019



SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

The project purpose is to secure the effective conservation of Sumatran tiger through reducing direct and indirect threats in, and adjoining, a national park which forms the protected heart (1.38 million hectares/5,300 miles²) of the globally important Kerinci Tiger Conservation Landscape.



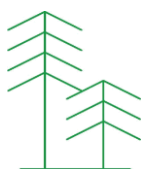
Six Tiger Protection & Conservation Units (TPCUs) were active and conducted a total of 60 SMART foot patrols in national park and park-edge forests, across a walking distance of 554 miles (891km) using GPS Waypoint.



Active detected threat to tiger increased, with a total of six active tiger snares recorded on four TPCU patrols - three information-led - compared with only one active snare in the same period of 2018. However, snare poaching threat to tiger recorded on patrols remained far below the long-term programme average. Meanwhile seasonal patrols to contain and address seasonal increases in poaching pressure on deer during and immediately before the fasting month of Ramadan destroyed a total of 94 active snares - 83% of all deer snares recorded during this six months period.



Patrols made a total of 45 individual Sumatran tiger records with Frequency of Encounter stable at one tiger per 12.3 miles (19.8km) park-wide in patrols in national park and park-edge forests of three provinces.



Reduced threat in the central area of the national park allowed TPCU investigators to extend data collection to park-edge districts in the far south-east of the national park in South Sumatra, where investigations indicated threat to tiger is significantly higher than in the central region of the national park where activities are primarily focused.



Investigations were conducted in 12 park-edge districts and market towns of the four provinces which overlay the national park. These noted that the illegal wildlife trade (IWT) syndicates, which were the primary drivers of threat to tiger between 2012 and 2016, remain fragmented and more opportunist, but with continuing demand for tiger body parts primarily from (intermediary) traders operating in West Sumatra and South Sumatra provinces. Park-wide investigations also reported that poaching threat to tiger in the landscape is now primarily from older, habitual hunters and younger members of their immediate families and that some of these individuals present a significant risk of reoffending.



One intelligence-led tiger law enforcement action was conducted and resulted in the arrest of two poachers and a local trader, and seizure of the skin and skeleton of a juvenile tiger shot in park-edge forests in Bungo district of Jambi.



Four human-tiger conflicts were recorded and mitigated by TPCUs while a multi-stakeholder human-wildlife conflict unit conducted human-tiger conflict mitigation in three other minor cases. All but one of these cases related to tigers moving through forest-edge farmland with no livestock predation or direct threat to people.



The programme also managed a wildlife law and wildlife crime prosecution training workshop for prosecutors from across Bengkulu province in response to light sentencing of a habitual tiger poacher arrested in September 2018.

1: SMART PATROLS BY TPCUs

Consolidate gains made and contain any significant resurgence in poaching threat to tiger while conducting focused patrols during the fasting month of Ramadan to contain a spike in local market-driven threat to tiger prey species.

A total of 60 SMART forest patrols were conducted on foot in national park and park-edge forests in three provinces covering a total walking distance of 554 miles (891km) by GPS Waypoint, and with a total of 319 Unit days spent on patrol duties.

Distance walked by TPCUs in the east of the national park was significantly lower than planned. This was primarily a consequence of the team being on stand-by for pre-planned tiger law enforcement and conflict mitigation on two occasions.

Jambi-based TPCUs also monitored the field activities of two suspected tiger poachers, one an habitual tiger poacher released from prison in mid-2018 following a prison sentence for tiger poaching and trade offences. This man is strongly suspected to have returned to poaching of tigers upon release from prison.

TPCU SMART patrols recorded the presence of 45 individual tigers, with one breeding record (on the basis of pugmarks of a juvenile tiger and adult) and with frequency of encounter during patrols, stable at one tiger per 12.3 miles (19.8km) walked. Just over 55% of patrols reported tiger present.

In February, the tiger monitoring team (MHS) commenced Occupancy surveys under the Sumatra-Wide Tiger Survey¹ (SWTS) - the first park-wide survey for tiger occupancy since 2007-2008. These will provide a scientifically-robust assessment of tiger occupancy in the central and southern sections of Kerinci Seblat using randomly selected 17x17km² grid cells for field surveys to assess current or very recent (<3 months) tiger occupancy.

Four teams have been formed for the SWTS, with each unit led by a highly experienced member of the tiger monitoring team and already providing valuable background data to the TPCU team on areas not, or very rarely, patrolled.

A total of 30 Grid cells were surveyed for tiger occupancy between February and June 2019, mainly in the central area of the national park. Tigers were recorded present in just over 83% of the survey locations and so at, or better, than in 2007-2008 with the Occupancy team reporting frequency of encounter with tiger at one per 15.8 miles (25.4km).

Active (snare) poaching threat to Sumatran tiger detected on TPCU patrols increased from the record low documented in 2018.

A total of six active tiger snares were reported on four TPCU patrols, during this six months period compared with just one active snare in the same months of 2018. Three of these patrols were launched using information from informant networks. One of these snares, had been set at least two months earlier and abandoned by the poacher(s) in an active condition, a tiger was present at a location not far from the abandoned active snare.

A further five active tiger snares were recorded on three TPCU patrols in the west of the national park in Bengkulu province, all of which were recorded during the holy month of Ramadan, which fell in late April and May this year. One of these patrols also recorded 24 active deer snares.

Ramadan is normally a period when direct threat to tiger falls as hunters turn their focus to deer to meet local market demand for meat to break the daily fast. It is possible that this unusual rise in threat relates to hunters planning to raise funds for annual school fees which, in Indonesia, are due in June.

A further three 'recently-active' (<2 months) tiger snare placements were recorded on TPCU patrols tracking the movements of two suspected poachers in national park and park-edge forests on the borders of Kerinci and Merangin districts of Jambi.

None of these had been sprung but had been dismantled by the poacher(s) and it is far from certain that the snare placements related to the individuals under surveillance. One or more tigers were present on two of these patrol routes.

Over this reporting period patrol effort to detect active poaching threat to tiger reduced to one snare per 53 Unit patrol days from one per 286 days in the same months of 2018. But this also reflects the increase in number of snares detected compared to 2018.

Patrol detection of threat to tiger still remained far above the long-term average of one snare per 28 patrol days; and the one snare per 7.95 patrols days recorded at the height of IWT demand-driven poaching threat in 2015. Therefore, this slight increase in threat is unlikely to be an indicator of resurgent snare poaching threat.

¹ <https://sumatrantiger.id/en/tag/swts/>

No active or 'recently-active' tiger snares were recorded on the 30 MHS Tiger Occupancy surveys conducted in the national park, to date, under the Sumatra-Wide Tiger Survey.

This second year of substantially lower than average threat to tiger has been a matter of discussion between TPCUs and the tiger monitoring team, not least as to whether it indicates that tiger poachers are changing their methodology to one less easily detected.

Active (snare) poaching threat to key tiger prey, primarily rusa sambar and muntjak deer was recorded on 11 (18%) of the 60 patrols conducted, with a total of 113 active deer snares recorded and destroyed.

A further 56 deer snares were confiscated directly from two poachers encountered on a TPCU patrol in the east of the national park in Merangin district. This particular patrol during Ramadan also recorded 452 snares set for rare endemic forest pheasant and partridge. Of the 'active' deer snares recorded by TPCUs, 83% were reported in the course of five patrols during Ramadan.

Seasonal poaching pressure on deer is usually encountered in areas in the east and north-east of the national park with only a minor increase in threat within forest in the west of the national park.

However during this Ramadan period, more than half (63%) of all active deer snares recorded were on TPCU patrols in national park and park-edge forests in the Bengkulu area. This may indicate that deer poachers in some areas in the east of the national park have become deterred by the risk that their snares will be detected and destroyed.

Current or recent poaching of wild birds, in particular wild songbirds was the wildlife crime offence most commonly reported by TPCU patrols with more than 20 patrols reporting indications of recent or current wild songbird hunting using both mist nets and 'glue' or 'bird lime'.

Illegal logging, primarily local in nature, was recorded on five patrols in the national park or its 'protected' buffer zone. Recent or active illegal or illicit forest clearance, for palm oil in the lowland forests to the west of the national park and for coffee in the east of the park, was recorded on 11 patrols.

TPCUs responded as and where possible to illegal activities encountered when suspects were present, while one chainsaw and three illegal firearms were confiscated by patrol teams (see *Section 3. Law Enforcement, below*).



2: POACHING AND ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE INVESTIGATIONS

Identify and monitor individuals posing threat to tigers, including their methods, networks and trade routes; secure evidence for law enforcement as appropriate; and identify and counter any resurgence in illegal wildlife trade-driven threat to tigers.

More than 70 investigations and ‘for information’ reports were logged by TPCU personnel in the course of investigations and information-collection in 12 park-edge districts and municipalities of the four provinces which overlay the national park.

One of these investigations proceeded to A1 status and then to tiger law enforcement, conducted in partnership with Bungo district police in late March (See *Law Enforcement* below).

Investigations reported that trans-provincial trade networks which drove increased threat to tiger between 2012 and 2015 appear to remain fragmented locally but with key ‘players’ in IWT apparently still active but extremely cautious.

Investigations in park-edge districts of both Jambi and Bengkulu provinces advised that a trade route from West Sumatra, in the north of the national park, to Jakarta has now reactivated while interviews with suspected traders continued to advise of ongoing demand from exporter-level traders, frequently also trading in gaharu (*Aquilaria sp.*), based in Riau province in eastern Sumatra and, for pangolin, from exporter level traders in North Sumatra and Riau province.

In the course of a covert interview, only one poacher claimed to receive funds from a trader (unnamed) to meet his field costs unlike the period 2012-2015 when a ‘poach-to-order’ system was widely in place with traders giving cash advances to hunters. However, investigations widely reported that wild songbird hunters in some areas of the national park are now being facilitated by their trader buyers.

In the east of the national park, a semi-organised group of hunters suspected to pose threat to tigers in national park and park-edge forests where TPCUs do not have a field presence was identified. At the time of writing this investigation is active and ongoing.

Investigations also extended to park-edge districts of South Sumatra province in the extreme south-east of the national park where levels of threat to tiger appear to be significantly higher than in the central and northern area of Kerinci Seblat.

These investigations reported a number of poachers hunting tigers with large calibre (>5.5mm) firearms sourced from a named, but, as yet, unidentified trader based in West Sumatra province, with (named) traders in a municipality in

South Sumatra and an individual, previously identified, from a town on the South-Sumatra-Jambi provincial borders, among those cited as buyers of tiger body parts.

A second investigation in the final weeks of this reporting period identified a second individual trading modified ‘Airsoft’ guns of illegal calibre from a park-edge town in Bengkulu, sourced from a city in Java, to individuals in Jambi and South Sumatra provinces.

These reports, together with information from a normally reliable informant regarding two suspected tiger poaching incidents where firearms as opposed to snares, were allegedly used, and two further ‘A3’ (unverified but possibly valid) reports of tiger poachers now using firearms to hunt tiger (and deer) are a matter of growing concern to the team, as patrol records of active or recently active snares are the primary measurement of actual levels of threat to tiger in the field.

Informal discussions with WCS Wildlife Crime Unit investigators in Gunung Leuser national park in north Sumatra advised they are receiving similar reports of a greater use of firearms in tiger poaching. This may be due to canines and bone being the most ‘in-demand’ body parts so that bullet wound injuries to the pelt are less of an issue than in the past and eased by widespread albeit illegal availability of modified 5.5mm ‘Airsoft’ guns with ‘sniper scopes’. However this possible shift in method may also be a response, in some areas, by poachers to loss of their snares - and so a substantial investment in time and money - to law enforcement patrols.

A total of 39 suspected tiger poachers were either monitored or identified by TPCU investigators in park-edge districts of four provinces with 27 of these individuals categorised as ‘habitual’ poachers of tiger or deer, and with 13 of these hunters not previously ‘known’ to the team. The overwhelming majority of individuals identified as ‘habitual’ poachers were over the age of 45 or were (younger) members of the immediate family of known or suspected poachers. These investigations also strongly suggested that three poachers previously arrested and sentenced to custodial terms have subsequently resumed tiger poaching upon release from prison.

3: SPECIES & FOREST LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS:

Conduct law enforcement appropriate to the offence; support and advance the subsequent legal process with the purpose of securing an appropriate legal judgment.

One intelligence-led tiger law enforcement was conducted during this six months period and resulted in the arrest and prosecution of two hunters and a local IWT broker.

Law enforcement was conducted in March, in Bungo district of Jambi in the north-east of the national park in partnership with Bungo district police detectives following an investigation launched a month earlier with the skin and complete skeleton of a juvenile male tiger seized as evidence.

This young tiger had been shot, opportunistically, by deer poachers from a nearby village 'lamping' at night for rusa sambar (a protected species) in a former logging concession bordering the national park. The poaching incident occurred close to an area where a human-tiger conflict occurred but the two incidents appear not to be related.

This case proceeded smoothly through post law enforcement Case Development with Expert Witness support provided to police and prosecutors however sentencing has not yet been delivered due to internal local administration issues apparently unrelated to the Case. WCCA will be advised as soon as a formal judgment is delivered.

Following repeat advisories and warning letters delivered to a group of Kerinci farmers since July

2018 who have been clearing interior zone forests of the national park in Mukomuko, Bengkulu for coffee plantations, law enforcement was conducted in July 2019 by a TPCU team accompanied by two local police detectives.

Only one of the farmers, from a village in the south of the Kerinci valley, was present and this man was arrested and escorted out of the national park for the legal process to commence.

During post-law enforcement interviews it was learned he had recently harvested his mature cinnamon plantation in Kerinci, selling his crop for almost £60,000 and was proposing to build a luxury house in Mukomuko so he could manage his coffee venture within the national park more easily.

His fellow encroachers have been issued with formal summons by Mukomuko police but, at the time of writing, have not yet met these summons.

The driver behind encroachment in this particular area deep within the national park is likely to be ongoing political pressure for development of trans-park infrastructure between the south of the Kerinci valley and Mukomuko district in the west of the park, with the encroachers seeking to claim land that would be very valuable if connections were built.



TPCU & police at Bungo HQ with young tiger seized in law enforcement action, 2019. FFI/KSNP

Three illegal firearms were seized by TPCUs on two patrols in the east of the national park in Jambi and on a third patrol in park-edge forests in North Bengkulu while a heavy-duty chainsaw was recovered from an illegal logger, who escaped arrest, on a patrol in the forests to the west of Kerinci.

A TPCU patrol in Bengkulu also delivered verbal cautions to a group of wild boar hunters encountered at forest edge as the team came out of the forest. These individuals, from an area just across the provincial border with West Sumatra, were all armed, with some carrying modified 'Airsoft' guns, likely of an illegal calibre (>4.5mm). Law enforcement could not be conducted in this case, not least because the team was outnumbered, while the hunters were also encountered some distance from the park-edge. However the Bengkulu TPCU coordinator subsequently briefed detectives at local police headquarters on this encounter.

Additionally, TPCUs issued a total of 10 formal warning letters and 20 verbal warnings in the course of nine patrols to individuals for a range of offences, primarily wild song bird catching but including preparations to clear protected forest lands.

Trade-driven pressure on wild song birds is an issue of serious concern to the project team, not only from a wider biodiversity conservation perspective but because known or suspected tiger poachers are also 'collecting' wild songbirds and may be using this (illegal) activity as a 'masker' for scouting for tiger presence. The team has now been advised that, if bird hunters previously issued with a formal legal warning and 'order to quit' the protected area are encountered again, they may be arrested and prosecuted.



An enroacher arrested for clearing forests deep within KSNP. TPCU members (left) and Mukomuko division police officers (right). FFI/KSNP

4: HUMAN-TIGER CONFLICT MITIGATION

Respond swiftly to human-tiger conflicts using a nationally approved conflict mitigation protocol, where possible before livestock predation has occurred, to protect both tigers and forest-edge community livelihoods

Only four human-tiger conflicts were responded to and mitigated by TPCUs during this six month period with a fifth, low-grade conflict in the far south of the Kerinci valley, mitigated, following discussion with the team, directly by KSDA Jambi.

Three of the four conflicts responded to by TPCUs were minor incidents relating to tigers moving through forest-edge farmland, in one location, on several occasions and without livestock predation or any direct threat posed to the forest-edge community but requiring a TPCU presence and community counselling.

In the fourth case, a cow was killed by a tiger in newly-cleared farmland at the edge of the national park in Bungo district of Jambi. In this case, in

addition to counselling villagers, the TPCU team also conducted a patrol in adjoining forests, both to check whether the tiger was still in the area but also to ensure hunters were not seeking to exploit the incident.

This patrol found no new evidence of tiger presence in the immediate area where the heifer had been killed and no sign of threat to the tiger involved. A long-standing village supporter was facilitated to advise the team if there were any further problems or 'outsiders' entering the forest.

5: OTHER ACTIVITIES

Following three years in which post-law enforcement liaison and support for Case Development with police and judiciary saw wildlife crime sentencing steadily increase, a disappointing two years custodial sentence was delivered in the case of an habitual tiger poacher arrested in Bengkulu in September 2018.

To address this issue, with support from other donors, the programme facilitated a wildlife crime Sentencing and Case Development workshop for prosecutors from across Bengkulu province in March 2019.

A total of 20 prosecutors from districts of Bengkulu adjoining both Kerinci Seblat and Bukit Barisan Selatan national parks attended the workshop where training was delivered by national legal experts from the ministry of law in Jakarta and by Bengkulu provincial police. Workshop attendees were also briefed on benchmark sentencing and, by Bengkulu provincial police, on links between poaching and trade in tigers, and Organised Crime.

A training workshop in wildlife emergency responses, primarily for TPCU and tiger monitoring team members but with additional trainees drawn from the Merangin village forest patrol team and national park will be held in the second half of the project period.

A second workshop, funded through other donors, is planned for September 2019 and will provide training in managing and investigating a wildlife Scene of Crime with the purpose of securing evidence for follow-up investigation or law enforcement, where police forensic technicians are

able to identify individuals involved using national crime databases and the national on-line identity card system.

The programme team maintained informal contact with colleagues in other tiger conservation programs in Sumatra, in particular with the WCS wildlife crime unit in North Sumatra discussing possible changes in IWT routes identified and demand; and with the Rimba team in central Malaysia who have been addressing serious threat to tiger from foreign poaching syndicates.

The team advisor also discussed findings from blood test sampling of wild boar hunting dogs in a district in the north-east of the national park with experts of the International Zoo Veterinary Group and will be seeking to identify seed-funding to assess the extent of this potential threat more widely as a baseline to identify subsequent actions, if required.

Discussions were also held with colleagues in the Ministry of Environment and Forestry regarding development of a national database of camera-trapped tigers and a standard operating procedure whereby any tiger skin seizure where the 'point of origin' is unclear, should be checked against the national database.

The team advisor also discussed the issue of 'recidivism' or reoffending among tiger poachers with provincial and national police officers with whom the programme has established a close relationship, with the purpose of learning how police address this particular issue.

6: ADDITIONAL PROJECT IMAGES



TPCU ranger Amsar with one of five active tiger snares detected during patrols in the fasting month of Ramadan in the west of the national park. FFI/KSNP



Winners of the 2019 Great Kerinci Snare Sweep – an annual competition held for the TPCU detecting and destroying the greatest number of snares during the fasting month of Ramadan; Unit leader Goenawan (Right) and his team, (L to R) Pidy, Slamet, Sudirman). FFI/KSNP

THANK YOU

At Fauna & Flora International, we would like to thank you for your continued support to our programme to protect and conserve one of the world's most iconic species.

Further reports and updates on project progress will be sent over in due course.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or would like more information, please contact:

AMY WINTERBOURNE

Senior Trusts & Foundations
Account Manger

T. +44 (0) 1223 749026

E. amy.winterbourne@fauna-flora.org

The David Attenborough Building,
Pembroke Street, Cambridge,
CB2 3QZ, United Kingdom

T. +44 (0) 1223 571 000

E. info@fauna-flora.org

www.fauna-flora.org

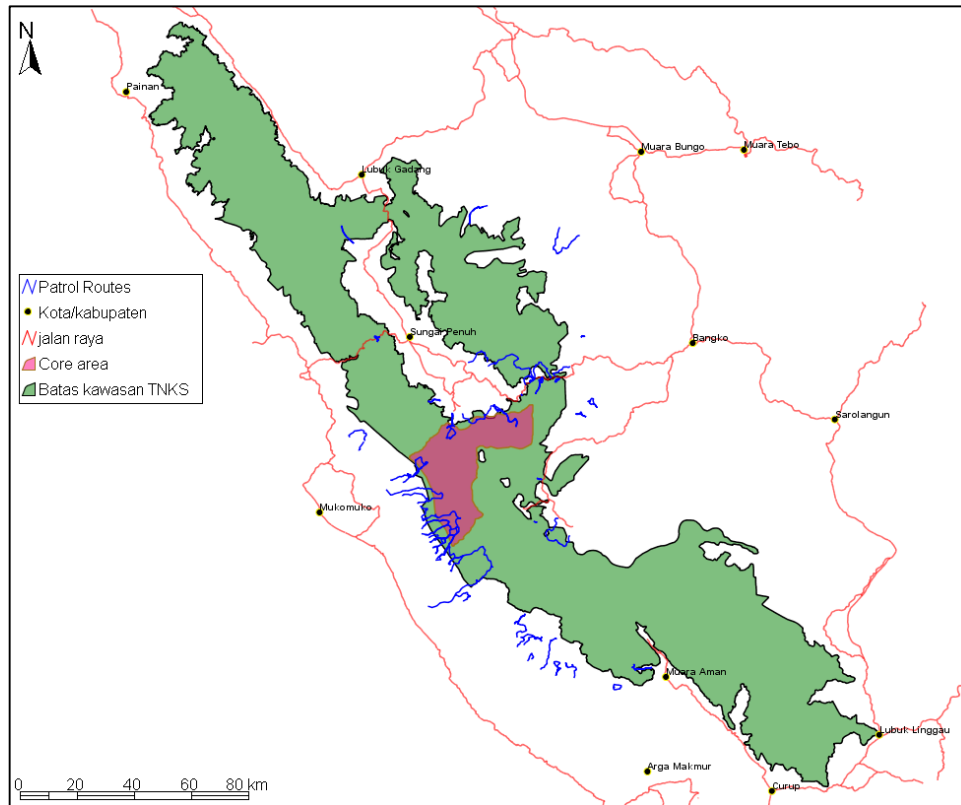


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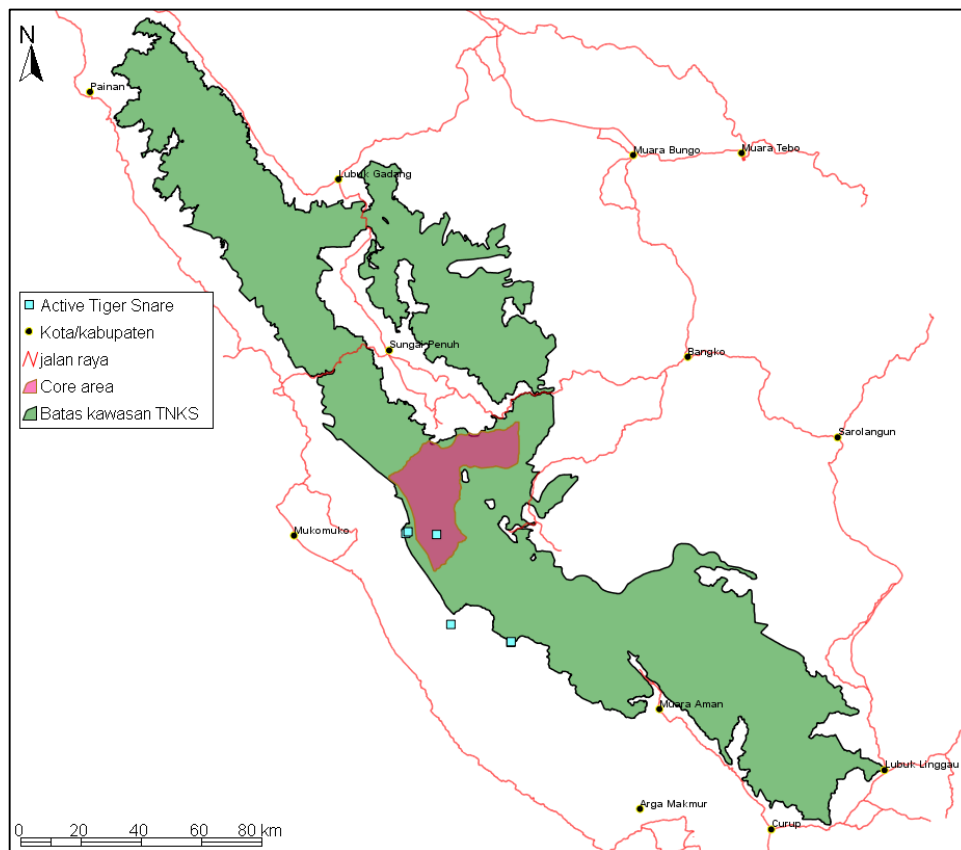


Tiger scent marking. Jeremy Holden, FFI

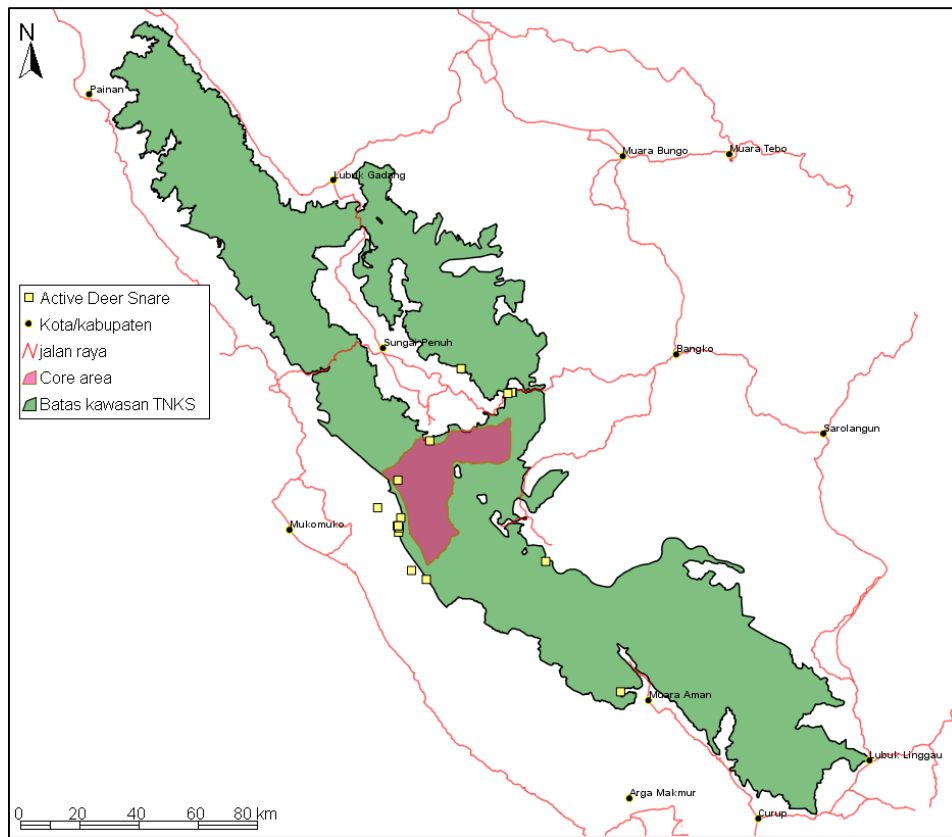
APPENDIX 1 - MAPS



SMART Map - patrols by TPCUs Feb – July 2019



SMART Map – Active (blue) tiger snares detected on TPCU patrols
Feb – July 2019



SMART Map – Active (yellow) deer snares detected on TPCU patrols
Feb – July 2019