

# PROGRESS REPORT

## WILDCATS CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

Strengthening a consensus for  
protection of Sumatran tiger in Bengkulu  
area of Kerinci Seblat National Park, Sumatra

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by

Lingkar Institut



## SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

The project aims to reduce poaching and the threat of illegal wildlife trade to Sumatran tiger through effective collaboration between government, religious leaders and the forest edge people and to build conservation awareness by using the Islamic perspectives and values.

The project team worked closely with the Lebong Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) partner of the Lebong branch to strengthen awareness of MUI's fatwa No. 4/2014 which forbids Muslims in Indonesia from hunting or trading endangered wildlife such as the Sumatran tiger.

These activities had a strong focus on the main villages in the Lebong District which were identified by the project team in 2017 as a source of illegal hunting threats of Sumatran tigers in the National Park forests in Lebong and beyond.

The Lingkar Team also worked with the Islamic Scholars Council in the neighboring district of North Bengkulu and leaders and preachers of the mosque in this district are now routinely socializing MUI's *Fatwa* during religious and other community events.

The MUI's Fatwa socialization in this district is mainly focused on forest-edge villages and market towns where previous investigations by Lingkar Institute and project partners have identified tiger hunters or traders.

The project team also worked closely with the stakeholders at Junior High Schools in Lebong District to integrate conservation education into the education curriculum for junior high schools in Lebong district.

The district government decision-makers have enthusiastically accepted this planning, and now it is expected that Lebong District will be the first in Indonesia to incorporate conservation within the junior high school syllabus.

Six SMART patrols were conducted by a collaborative Rapid Response patrol team that composes rangers from Kerinci Seblat national Park, the local forestry service (for patrols outside the national park) and forest-edge communities.

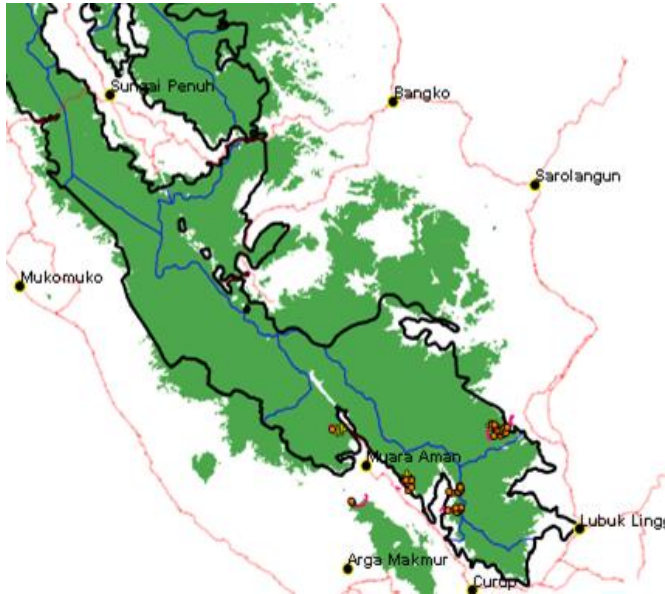
Patrols were conducted routinely or using information from forest edge people and mosque congregants and reported at minimum of five tigers present on five patrols. One recently-active tiger snare was recorded - in a protected watershed forest or *hutan Lindung* bordering the national park on the Lebong-North Bengkulu district border.

By using this activity, the project team continued to work for building broad-based support for the conservation of tigers and the other wildlife while also conducting forest activities to decrease the threat of crime against wildlife and illegal wildlife trade.

## Activities and Interim Results

### 1 SMART Forest Patrols by a collaborative Rapid Response patrol unit..

Through WCCA support from February to August 2019, the RRU team had conduct six Smart Patrols in the Kerinci Seblat National Park and other buffer zones. The patrol team consists of Lingkar personnel, local communities around TNKS, and TNKS rangers.

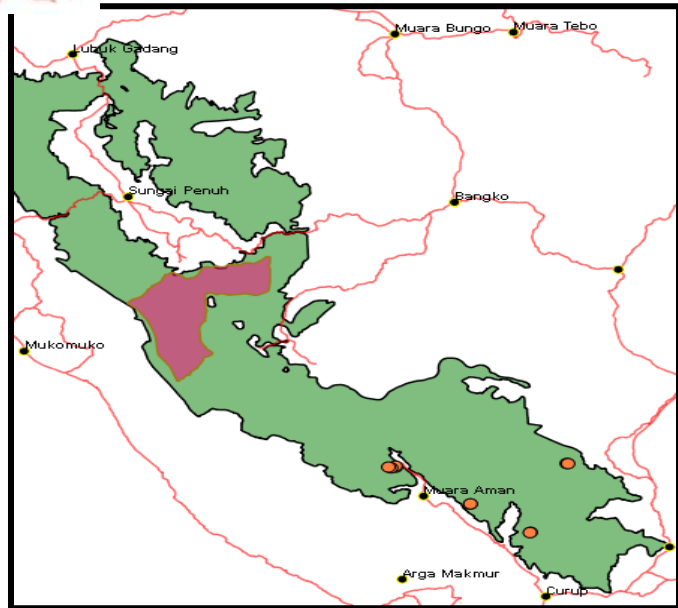


Generally, the terrain of the patrol area is very hilly or mountainous. A total of 39 patrol days were spent on SMART patrols and covered a total distance of 143.35 KM using GPS Waypoint; this is so that results can be cross-reference with TPCU patrols who also use the GPS Waypoint distance measurement system. Five of the six patrols conducted reported tigers present on patrol routes. Tiger signs were recorded using territorial scratches, scrapes, and footprints.

Illegal hunting threats to Sumatran tigers and their prey animals until August 2019 decreased slightly compared to the previous year.

The patrol team found one recently (about four months) tiger snare and 17 active nylon snares used by the hunters to snare prey or ground birds, a second wire cable snare of the type used to trap tigers was also found in an encroachers' shack in the national park

The tiger snares were reported on two patrols in the national park.



A fourth RRU patrol was conducted based on the information from people, where the team succeeded in finding 11 prey snares in the form of nylon ropes. Besides prey snares, the team also found a former hunter's pole for hanging/skinning prey animals. This information was obtained when the team



conducted socialization of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI)'s fatwa in Pelabai Village. In this patrol, the RRU team destroyed one of the squatters' huts that had been deep inside the Kerinci Seblat National Park area.

As of August 2019, no active tiger snares were found by the patrol team, nor did the patrol team find any new holes used to set tiger snares.

Before patrolling, the RRU Team always coordinates the Kerinci Seblat National Park to discuss planned patrol activities, whether there is new information or findings that need to be followed upon. In addition to discussions with TNKS, the patrol team also coordinated with the FFI Tiger Occupancy Study Team so that there was no overlap between the Occupancy survey and RRU patrols. From the information of the Occupancy Study team conducted by FFI, it turned out that the FFI occupancy study team also did not find any active or recently active snares that could threaten Sumatran tigers in the Lebong district.



The Lingkar Institute patrol team was involved in an occupancy study conducted by WCS in the Bukit Balai Rejang Selatan area, whereby August two studies had been conducted.

## 2. Investigations and Information collection

Investigations were conducted throughout the project area and its surroundings to identify hunters and their networks. Investigations were also conducted to secure information about the alleged threat of active hunting of tigers and their prey to be followed up by the patrol team.



Investigations were conducted 12 times with each investigation lasting 1-4 days and were conducted in the project area but also surrounding areas where the preliminary information comes from the project area.

From the results of the investigation, it was found that the number of active hunters in the Project area is decreasing compared to the previous year and there were several names found by investigators to no longer be active in hunting on the grounds because they are scared of the law enforcement officers and also have no capital to hunt tigers. Some hunters still active who were encountered by the investigator also stated that they no longer hunt tigers by setting snares, but that they still hunt tiger prey animals by using a 5.5 mm caliber rifle.

The Lingkar Investigation Team also worked with the TPCU Investigation team in the northern Musi Rawas district on the east of KSNP but which directly adjoins Lebong District. From the investigations conducted by the team where they met with the critical hunter who has been active since the 1970s when he sold 1 Sumatran tiger for Rp 15,000 (now less than £ 1 (one pound) at current exchange rates. According to the perpetrator, he had killed many Sumatran tigers, more than one hundred. Currently, the Lingkar team and TPCU team is conducting monitoring of this man through routine communications because he is a crucial target of law enforcement.

The conducted investigation with the TPCU Team also obtained many names of suspected illegal wildlife traders, at both local and national levels.

### 3. Working with Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) in the context of the MUI's Fatwa Socialization No 04 of 2014

Cooperation with the Indonesian Ulema Council of Lebong and North Bengkulu Districts had continued well, where until August 2019 there had been three sessions of the MUI's Fatwa socialization to prominent villages where it was believed there were many hunters.



The best results of socialization were found during the socialization in Pelabai village in Lebong District, where, during the socialization, the community said that in the Pelabai village there had been hunting since the 1950s and since that time routinely conflicts between humans and tigers occurred. From the 25 participants, it was known there are five hunters of prey animals, the hunter has stated that he did not know that so far what he had done is forbidden by religion. The hunter promised he would not repeat the hunting activities.

From the results of the MUI's fatwa socialization, it is also known that since the 1970s there had been three human victims killed in conflicts and we concluded that tiger victims were more than the number of human victims.



The next socialization was conducted in Gunung Alam village, where in this village often appeared the Sumatran tiger. According to the information of socialization participants in Gunung Alam village, there were no tiger hunters, but on the other hand, there were prey hunters who usually hunted by using dogs, rifles, and snares. Hunters usually hunt before the Eid Mubarak day or during Ramadhan.

Gunung Alam Village was also known as a village where there was a recidivist named Mr. W who was caught red-handed by the TPCU team. The role of Mr. W at that time was only as an intermediary not as a hunter. This case was also revealed by one of the inhabitants, and he stated that nowadays, Mr. W has no brave enough to sell Sumatran tigers anymore. He also often reminded the other inhabitants to do not hunt Sumatran tigers.

#### 4. School Visiting

This activity was aimed to provide students with a good understanding of conservation education material for junior high school students in the Lebong District.

The first activity was conducted in August 2019 at SMP Lebong Selatan. This activity was attended by 50 students by the representatives of each extracurricular activity at this school. This activity was also attended by three teachers, including the deputy headmaster of the curriculum, the deputy headmaster of student affairs and biology teacher.





The Junior high school is very concerned about environmental education and the school has a rule which against buying food and beverage packaging that caused the rubbish. All students and teachers were required to bring drink bottles from their homes. Each student and teacher is also required to plant a tree to be planted in the school environment or outside the school environment.

Before this regulation compliance, every activity in the school would cause much rubbish, but nowadays, because of the students' and teachers' awareness, there is no longer any visible rubbish in the school environment.

The school visiting activity was conducted with 2 TNKS officers, the MUI Lebong officer, and a person from the Lingkar Institute. The TNKS officers give students an understanding of the importance of protecting the forest along with the plants and animals inside, especially those in TNKS, an explanation of the laws and regulations which was focusing on the forest, the animals and plants inside. The MUI officer explained that there was already MUI's Fatwa No. 04 of 2014 which forbade the hunting of endangered animals. The Lingkar Institute explained that it is crucial for conservation education to be integrated into the education curriculum where junior high school students are the next generation who are expected to maintain the balance of the existing ecosystems on Earth.



In this activity, through WCCA's support, the Lingkar Institute distributed the lists poster of animals which was protected by the law and forbidden by the Indonesian Ulema Council towards the students and school parties.



## 5. The Mitigation of Human-tiger Conflict

During this period, there were two reports on human-tiger conflicts in the project area. The conflict occurs in 2019 of June and July.

The conflict report in June was submitted by the MUI religious officers in Pelabai village who also reported through the phone to Lingkar Institute, and it was also reported to the KSNP section office in Lebong district. The Lingkar members, along with community rangers of KSNP, conducted an inspection of the area where the conflict was reported. When the team reached the location of the conflict, it turned out that it was only 500 m from the village and in a Pelabai villager's 'garden' or small-holding which was located not far from the hillside forest area. This conflict did not result in any victims to human or livestock but farmers in that area were afraid to go to their fields. The team explained that the hillside forest area was indeed the habitat of the Sumatran tigers and hoped villagers immediately report to the village head, police or KSNP officers if the tiger seen again.

The second conflict report occurred in July in the village of Kota Baru Santan, and the team also went to the location of the conflict. A witness statement from a villager reported he directly saw a tiger about 1.5 m long cross the road which is used by the people to go to their fields. When the team arrived at the location, the team found indications of the Sumatran tigers' presence in the form of footprints although these were not very clear. From the footprint it looks as if the tiger was going to the Resam hill forest. Kota baru Santun village borders directly with the village of Pelabai and the Resam hill forest. The team estimated that this passing tiger was a tiger that previously also passed through Pelabai village.

## 6. The Other Activities

In addition to the main activities above, Lingkar has made posters about the list of animals protected by the Indonesian Law and also forbidden by the Indonesian Ulema Council to be owned or traded. The posters will gradually be distributed to the students along with teachers at schools, MUI administrators and also the community when we conduct MUI's Fatwa socialization.

The Lingkar Institute is also currently in the process of making the books, which are currently 50% and it is hoped that WCCA representatives will be able to give an Introduction. I will send a draft of this book when the process has reached 90%. Besides from WCCA, we also hope that the Head of KSNP will also provide an introduction to this book.

Lingkar Institut routinely conducts coordination with KSNP, BKSDA Bengkulu and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry and the police to synergize the activities conducted by the Lingkar and also actions planned to be done by the Lingkar Institute.

Routinely communicating with the other local Non Governmental Organization (LSM) in Bengkulu - Friends of the Earth International (WALHI), AMAN, Genesis etc. - to discuss wildlife and forest conservation including threats to forests from mining (gold, coal) and with local police divisions to discuss patrol results and less sensitive investigations .



Lingkar also always actively join in activities by a team formed by the governor of Bengkulu who has suggested that forests bordering KSNP in North Bengkulu and Mukomuko districts are scheduled as an Essential Ecosystem Area or Vital Ecosystem Area to protect the habitat and natural forest of Sumatran elephant and tigers.

We also joined with discussions with national and international NGOs for meetings held in Jambi, to give input in developing and approving the new 10-year Sumatran tiger Conservation Strategy and Action Plan.