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# SUMATRAN TIGERS FACTS



## BIOLOGY

**Description:** The Sumatran tiger is the smallest and darkest tiger subspecies and tends to be more bearded and maned than the other subspecies. Male tigers can expect to reach around 120kg and 8ft from head to tail while females average 91kg and 7ft in length.

**Breeding:** Female tigers are sexually mature at about 3 or 4 years of age and males at about 4 to 5 years. Mating may occur any time during the year, but most frequently takes place from November to April. Females enter estrus every three to nine weeks and are receptive for three to six days. A male and female meet only during this brief time to mate; however, he may stay in the area. The female tiger is an induced ovulator, meaning that her ovaries do not release eggs until mating occurs. After a gestation period of 100-108 days, female tigers will seek out a secluded den to give birth in. Litters range from one to six cubs, although the average litter size is 2 to 3. The female usually rears the cubs alone.

**Longevity:** In the wild, a tiger can live 15-20 years, this can be even more for tigers in zoos.





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## THREATS

All tiger subspecies are threatened for several reasons, and all WildCats projects address all or a combination of these priority areas; poaching, habitat loss, prey base depletion, human-tiger conflict and disease.

**Poaching:** Investment in the intelligence-led patrols using SMART\* patrol software and robust wildlife crime investigations by the FFI Tiger Protection Team has resulted in the incidence of active tiger snares discovered in Kerinci Seblat National Park falling by 85% since 2015. Nevertheless, the threat of poaching, both of prey and tigers is ever present and the teams remain vigilant.

\*Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool

**Habitat loss:** Indonesia is the world's largest palm oil producer, having converted as much as half of its rainforest to agricultural land, predominantly for oil palm plantations. This isolates wild tiger populations, leaving them prone to poachers and increased inbreeding due to the reduced gene pool of possible mates.





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## DIET

**Prey:** As ambush predators tigers will eat whatever prey presents itself, however in Sumatra, tigers primarily eat wild pigs, sambar and barking deer, and primates such as macaques. All tigers are strict carnivores.

**Hunting habits:** Sumatran forests are generally abundant in prey, though problems arise when forest-dwelling communities lay snares to catch pigs and deer for food or to stop them from destroying crops. If the prey base declines a wild tiger is much more likely to stray into more populated areas to eat livestock, causing serious and potentially fatal conflict issues. Snares are indiscriminate, while they may have been laid for a prey species, they can harm or kill a tiger.

**Learning to hunt:** Unlike smaller cats tigers do not begin to hunt effectively until their permanent canines come through at around 18 months old, leaving them vulnerable and reliant on their mothers. Hunting skills are learned through predatory play and observations, which is why you often see young cubs “wrestling” with each other.





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## HABITAT

Habitat: The Sumatran tiger is the only remaining island subspecies, it inhabits a lush, dense landscape that ranges from sub-mountain and mountain forest to lowland forest and peat forest.

Location: The Sumatran tiger occurs in about 58,321 km<sup>2</sup> of forested habitat in 12 isolated Tiger Conservation Landscapes totalling 88,351 km<sup>2</sup> (Sanderson et al. 2006), with about 37,000 km<sup>2</sup> protected in ten national parks (Govt of Indonesia 2007). It is estimated that there are around 400 – 500 individual tigers wild in Sumatra in and around these isolated pockets of protected land. Three of the protected areas are classified as UNESCO World Heritage Sites but all are in danger of losing this status due to threats from poaching, illegal logging, agricultural encroachment and planned road building. In Kerinci Seblat, where we have been making grants to the FFI tiger team, serious threats continue to be recorded 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.

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