

Range-wide Wildlife Health

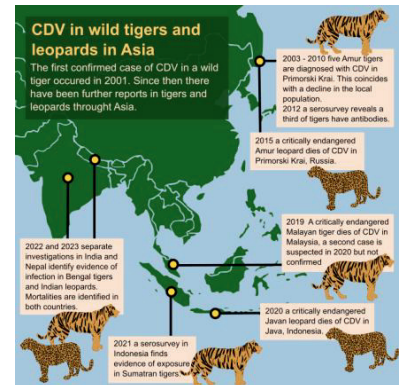


AMUR LEOPARD HEALTH CHECK CONDUCTED BY WCS

OVERVIEW

Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) is a virus that affects not just dogs but nearly all carnivores, including big cats. Its ability to spread easily among different species makes it particularly dangerous. The first case of CDV in wild big cats was recorded in the early 1990s when an outbreak was identified in Tanzanian and Kenyan lion populations. Since then, there have been confirmed cases in various tiger populations with a mortality rate of 30%. Additionally, CDV has been linked to the deaths of Amur leopards.

To effectively combat CDV, it's important to know how much and where these animals are being exposed to the virus. While there is a test for CDV, it is costly and requires a specialised laboratory, so only 4 of the 10 tiger range countries have the facilities to perform the test.



PROJECT

Wildlife Vets International (WVI) has a long history of investigating the threat of Canine Distemper Virus.

With infections now confirmed in multiple big cat populations, WVI is focusing on developing affordable, easily deployable tests that can be conducted in local laboratories within tiger range states.

The new test won't be limited to just tigers and leopards; it can also check for the virus in other carnivores that live in the same areas, which may carry the virus without showing symptoms.

This will enable researchers and conservationists to determine the source of the infection and prevent it spilling over into the big cat population.

Having easy access to these tests could help track the spread of CDV globally and improve our understanding of how it affects tigers and other wild carnivores. This information will help conservationists create strategies to protect vulnerable tiger and leopard populations from disease outbreaks and lower the risk of extinction.

The test is currently being developed at the University of Kent and validation will be undertaken at a range of different locations including zoos.

