

Kerinci Seblat Tiger Protection & Conservation and Lingkar Institut

Extending Tiger Protection to Lebong district, Bengkulu

Interim Report to Auckland Zoo Conservation

January - August 2017



21ST CENTURY TIGER
giving wild tigers a future



Summary

Operating in a long-standing partnership with Kerinci Seblat National Park, the programme purpose is to secure and strengthen protection and conservation of Sumatran tiger in and adjoining a national park which protects Sumatra's single most important tiger population.

Activities supported by Auckland Zoo Conservation Fund are focused to Lebong district of Bengkulu province in the south-west of the national park, an area identified as in need of focused tiger protection and conservation interventions, with field actions conducted by FFI partner, Lingkar Institut.

Activities in the Lebong focus area by Lingkar Institut commenced in February with the signing off of a formal MoU between Lingkar Institut and the Lebong chapter of the Islamic Scholars Council of Indonesia or *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (MUI) setting priorities and a workplan for the year ahead.

This was followed by training in key local wildlife conservation issues, including detailed briefings on the threat posed to tiger conservation by poaching and the illegal wildlife trade, for 10 key local leaders of MUI who are now leading actions to socialise the 2014 national *Fatwa* or religious prohibition issued by the Indonesia Islamic Scholars Council regarding poaching or trading in endangered wildlife.

A training workshop was then held for 40 forest-edge village mosque leaders and preachers to socialise both the 2014 national MUI *Fatwa* and national conservation laws regarding tiger and other wildlife conservation with trainers from local forestry agencies, police and religious leaders.

These preachers and mosque leaders are now routinely socialising the 2014 *Fatwa* to their congregations, including in Friday prayer sermons, with results monitored, informally, by the Lebong MUI leaders and Lingkar team members and discussed, at routine informal meetings.

These evaluation meetings concluded that suspected poachers are not always the most religious members of their village communities and frequently do not attend Friday Prayers and so small focused village meetings have been held in some communities.

Following signing-off of an MoU between Lingkar and the National Park, Bengkulu TPCU rangers provided training for RRU rangers in SMART patrol techniques, including ensuring that RRU patrols employ reporting methods that can be entered into the national park and TPCU SMART database for analysis.

Four Rapid Response Unit SMART patrols were conducted between February and July in the project area, with rangers drawn from the park-edge community under the leadership of national park rangers and with a total of five tigers reported present on the basis of footmarks, scrapes and faeces. RRU patrols recorded a total of 16 tiger snares, three active and 13 in a poachers' shack

at forest-edge and also destroyed 13 active deer snares, some of which had been abandoned and had snared animals which had been left to die a slow and lingering death.

In July, Lingkar was supported by the Forum Harimaukita (Sumatran Tiger Conservation Forum) – a national group representing tiger conservation practitioners across Sumatra, to conduct two ‘Snare Sweep’ patrols in an area to the south of Kerinci Seblat National Park to mark Global Tiger Day and raise awareness of the threat posed to tigers by poaching.

These ‘snare sweeps’ were conducted in a protected forest block (Bukit Balai Rejang) which connects Bukit Barisan Selatan and Kerinci Seblat national parks but which receives no routine patrol presence by either NGOs or government agencies. These patrols reported two tigers present and dismantled three active tiger snares.

Investigations and information collection to date by Lingkar team members have not secured evidence for follow-up wildlife crime law enforcement by TPCUs but secured valuable information both on poaching and illegal wildlife trade routes from the focus area.

Investigations also identified one man, previously arrested in a TPCU law enforcement action in a neighbouring district of Bengkulu, who returned to tiger poaching upon his release from prison. This is the second case known to the programme where a tiger poacher is known or strongly suspected to have re-offended and highlights the issue that there is presently no mechanism in place for post-release monitoring of wildlife crime offenders.

Lingkar investigations also identified five park-edge villages in the project focus area which appear to be centres for tiger and other wildlife poaching not only in Lebong but in national park forests in adjoining districts and, with MUI partners, the project team is preparing to launch focused socialisation actions in these communities.

Park-wide, patrols by the FFI/KSNP Tiger Protection & Conservation Units (TPCU) reported a further sharp fall in threat to tigers following four years of very serious levels of illegal wildlife trade-driven poaching.

In the course of 74 TPCU patrols covering a walking distance of more than 1250Km, a total of ‘only’ 10 active tiger snares were recorded in the period January-August 2017 compared with 35 in the same months of 2016 and 63 in the first eight months of 2015.

Active threat to Sumatran tiger, park-wide, reduced to 1 snare per 38 TPCU patrol days compared with 1-11 forest patrol days in 2016 and 1-7 patrol days in 2015. Meanwhile frequency-of-encounter with tiger on TPCU patrols, park-wide, improved fractionally, from 1 tiger -20.6Km in the first eight months of 2016 to 1-19.8Km, the first such increase in three years.

Reducing levels of snare poaching threat detected allowed the TPCUs to intensify wildlife crime investigations and between January-August 2017 investigations supported four tiger law enforcement actions in park-edge districts of three provinces.

These resulted in the arrest and prosecution of 10 tiger poachers or traders with a fifth action resulting in the arrest and prosecution of two pangolin traders. Two tiger poachers and a trader arrested in February 2017 were subsequently each sentenced to two years custodial sentences while two tiger traders arrested in April were sentenced to one year and one year and six months prison terms. Two tiger poachers arrested in May 2017 in North Bengkulu district to the immediate north of the project focus area received prison sentences of three years and three

years six months respectively. Meanwhile the pangolin traders – one of whom was known to also broker the sale of tigers poached from national park forests in the north-east of the national park each received eight months custodial terms.

Poaching threat to tiger detected in the project focus area in Lebong was lower than had been feared at the launch of the project although the presence of many old snare placements advises that there were, indeed, very serious levels of threat in this area in previous years.

This suggests that tiger law enforcement actions conducted since early 2016 have had a landscape-level deterrent impact on tiger poachers and traders.

Meanwhile records of five tigers present made in the course of four RRU patrols in national park forests in Lebong district confirms the area’s strategic importance for tiger conservation in the Kerinci landscape.

PROGRESS

Objective 1:

Leverage and Support Activation of the National Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) Fatwa prohibiting Poaching and Trade in Endangered Species in Lebong District of Bengkulu Province to build support for and awareness of wildlife conservation using Islamic values

Objective 2:

Leverage Formation of a collaborative multi-stakeholder Wildlife Crime Rapid Reaction Unit (URC) to respond to suspected poaching threat to tigers and tiger prey to strengthen wildlife protection capacity and develop trans-agency support for wildlife conservation

Activity 1: Training for key ‘Ulama’ or Local Religious Leaders Regarding Wildlife Crime and in Particular threat to Tigers in Lebong from Poaching and Illegal Wildlife Trade	
Result	: This activity was followed by 10 member of the Muslim Leader Indonesia (MUI) Lebong District, with the result of the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Executive Board Muslim Leader Indonesia (MUI) understands the threats to wildlife and particularly Sumatran Tiger specifically from illegal wildlife trade and poaching; - Material about the prohibition on the poaching and trading of Tiger under Islam provided to khatib/priests to be presented to the congregations of the mosque; - The signing of a MoU between Chairman of Muslim Leader Indonesia (MUI) and Lingkar Institute agreeing to work to socialise MUI fatwa No 04/2014.
Activity 2: Socialization to the forest edge community of the MUI Fatwa and National conservation laws regarding Tiger and Tiger habitat more widely	
Result	: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 40 people ‘Khatib’ or mosque preachers in Lebong District agreed and ready to deliver Friday sermon material and teachings about the ‘Fatwa’ MUI to the faithful; - Preachers also conduct socialisation through village meetings as it has become clear that some hunters are not religious and dont attend Friday prayers
	: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is an input to the knowledge about conservation to be submitted to the students to be embedded early awareness about the importance of the safety of wildlife, especially protected animals.

Activity 3: Routine informal meetings with Leaders of MUI in Lebong and key community leaders regarding progress and issues encountered	
Result	: coordination with the Board of Muslim Leader Indonesia (MUI) is routinely implemented, until July 2017 the team has carried out 5 times regular coordination, with the result: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of good communication between Muslim Leader Indonesia(MUI) Lebong board with Lingkar institute; - There is a mutual understanding about the importance of collaboration to implement or socialize MUI fatwa No 04/2014; - Joint planning of activities and identifying actions needed - The existence of agreement on follow-up by conducting socialization directly in each village bordering with forest area and vulnerable to the threat of poaching; - Lingkar Institute and MUI agree to give each other information about threats to protected animals either trade threat or poaching.
Activity 4: Formation of a Collaborative Rapid Reaction Unit (URC) drawn from Local Police and Forestry Service, KSDA, KSNP, Traditional Community	
Result	: The Lingkar Institute held focus group discussions with Lebong Police, Kerinci Seblat national park, Bengkulu Unit for Conservation of Natural Resources (KSDA) and forestry departments of Lebong district and Bengkulu province with results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director of Lingkar Institute and head of the national park of Kerinci Seblat signed a cooperation agreement on conserving ecosystem of Kerinci Seblat - because BKSDA does not directly manage any forest areas in Lebong, BKSDA agreed to support the activities undertaken by Lingkar institute but to focus to supporting and giving input to the socialization of MUI fatwa No 04/2014; - The Lebong division police were very supportive and agreed to follow up any findings from patrols and investigations. The Lebong police also advised they currently have a target to conduct operations against Sumatran tiger hunters and agreed to always share information on trading and poaching of Sumatran tigers; - The Bengkulu forestry office explained that as the district forestry service is now directly under the provincial forestry service, the provincial forest agency they will directly provide any data required by the Lingkar Institute and agreed that rapid reaction unit teams should also patrol forest areas falling under management of the provincial forestry service.
Activity 5: Work Plan Development, Investigation and Rapid Response Procedures	
Result	: Lingkar Institute every month exchanged information to the FFI/KSNP Tiger Protection & Conservation program and national park partners to plan patrol and investigation activities as well as to evaluate patrol and investigation results.
Activity 6: Training for Rapid Reaction Unit in use of SMART Forest Patrol Reporting Procedure	
Result	: This activity was conducted by TPCU Bengkulu personnel for 7 days, training materials covering the operation of GPS, compass, map reading, waypoint plot to map, patrol tally sheet, reporting and SMART data input
Activity 7: Rapid Reaction Unit SMART patrols	
Result	: Rapid reaction unit has carried out patrol four times, with the result: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The distance traveled that has been done for four times patrol is 60.38 km; - The URC team found 29 snares consisting of 16 tiger traps and 13 prey snares, of the 16 tiger snares recorded, three were 'active' while the remaining 13 were recorded in a poachers' shack at forest edge on a patrol led by a community tip-off.

	<p>- From four patrols conducted by Rapid Response Unit, the team found evidence of 5 individual tigers in the patrol areas, indication of Sumatran tiger presence found in the form of pugmark, scrape, faeces.</p> <p>Lingkar Institute team was also actively involved in planning and executing Snare Sweeping activities to commemorate Global Tiger Day in Bengkulu Province with HarimauKita (Sumatran Tiger Conservation Forum) to highlight the threat to tigers from poaching.</p> <p>These Snare Sweep patrols were conducted in forests to the south of Kerinci Seblat National Park in a protected forest area where there is no routine patrol presence from NGOs or forestry agencies and the Lingkar Institute team managed to dismantle 3 active tiger traps and 10 active prey snares in two snare sweeps. Two tigers were present on these Global Tiger Day Snare Sweep patrols.</p>
<p>Activity 8: Strengthen and extend Lingkar's forest-edge Community Information networks and conduct Poaching and Illegal Wildlife Trade Investigations to support wildlife law enforcement actions by TPCUs or other government agencies</p>	
Result	<p>: - Habitual tiger, deer and other wildlife poachers and traders identified; - Information sharing with TPCUs advised that some of the individuals identified were already known to the TPCU; - Information on areas vulnerable to poaching provided by local communities and five villages identified as centres for poaching of tiger and other wildlife in Lebong and neighbouring districts; - Investigations identified one tiger poacher as a recidivist previously arrested and sentenced to a prison term following law enforcement by TPCUs. This is possibly due to light sentencing and no mechanism for monitoring post release.</p>
<p>Activity 9: Routine coordination and Meetings with Lebong Forestry Agencies, Police and with TPCUs</p>	
Result	<p>: - The Lingkar Institute has coordinated with the health office, the Lebong police and TPCU. The Lingkar Institute provides information based on the patrol results conducted by the Rapid Reaction Unit team; - Lingkar Institute also provided patrol and investigation data on threat to habitat to the Forest Service; - The Lingkar Institute has regularly submitted patrol and investigation results conducted by the URC and the Lingkar Institute investigator to request feedback on</p>
<p>Activity 10: Provide Wildlife Crime Investigation result to Bengkulu TPCU Commander or Other partners as appropriate so that Investigations may be advanced to Law Enforcement where there is Evidence of crime</p>	
Result	<p>: From the investigations conducted by Lingkar institute, until now there has been no findings that can be followed up through law enforcement by TPCU or Lebong district police.</p>

MEDIA COVERAGE

As a campaign effort to disseminate information that hunting and trading of tiger is prohibited in the Islamic religion through the 'Fatwa' Muslim Leaders Indonesia (MUI), activities in this project also received media attention from both national and local media. This following we report a list of media coverage links:

1. <http://regional.kompas.com/read/2017/03/29/12495171/mui.lebong.lawan.perburuan.harimau.sumatera.dengan.fatwa>
2. <https://tirto.id/mui-bengkulu-minta-khatib-serukan-larangan-berburu-harimau-cjYH>
3. <http://riauaktual.com/news/detail/22592/khatib-di-bengkulu-diminta-serukan-larangan-berburu-harimau.html#.WOetl1XyjIU>
4. <http://www.sigerindo.com/2017/02/mui-keluarkan-fatwa-haram-perburuan.html>
5. <http://regional.liputan6.com/read/2846490/mui-fatwakan-haram-berburu-harimau-sumatera-karena-hampir-punah>

6. <http://www.satuharapan.com/read-detail/read/mui-larang-perburuan-dan-perdagangan-satwa-liar>
7. <http://rimanews.com/nasional/peristiwa/read/20170330/321528/Khatib-di-Bengkulu-diminta-serukan-larangan-berburu-harimau>
8. <https://m.tempo.co/read/news/2017/02/03/206842753/terobosan-lsm-gandeng-mui-berantas-perburuan-harimau>
9. <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/news/2017/03/29/058860649/mui-bengkulu-bekali-para-khatib-upaya-penyelamatan-satwa-langka>
10. <http://bengkulu.antaranews.com/berita/41901/mui-bengkulu-ajak-masyarakat-berantas-perburuan-harimau>
11. <http://regional.liputan6.com/read/2902961/mui-minta-ulama-syiarkan-perang-lawan-pemburu-harimau-sumatera>
12. <http://leuserconservation.org/khatib-di-bengkulu-dibekali-ilmu-penyelamatan-harimau-sesuai-dengan-fatwa-mui/>
13. <http://news.okezone.com/read/2017/03/29/340/1653749/populasi-harimau-sumatera-terancam-mui-turun-tangan-ikut-keluarkan-fatwa>
14. <http://khazanah.republika.co.id/berita/dunia-islam/islam-nusantara/17/03/29/onkfrj396-mui-bekali-khatib-lebong-ilmu-penyelamatan-harimau-sumatra>
15. http://www.kompasiana.com/amp/achmadsiddikthoha/perlunya-mengawal-fatwa-mui-tentang-haramnya-berburu-harimau_58b4fec8c723bdfe038b456a
16. <https://aktaku.wordpress.com/2017/02/16/harimau-sumatera-di-bengkulu-populasi-perburuan-dan-konflik/>
17. <https://www.islampos.com/khatib-kabupaten-lebong-selamatkan-harimau-sumatera-lewat-khotbah-jumat-16117/>
18. <http://regional.kompas.com/read/2017/06/08/13252091/mereka.yang.bergandengan.tanngan.selamatkan.harimau.sumatera>