

Pelestarian Harimau Sumatera Kerinci-Seblat

Kerinci Seblat Sumatran Tiger Protection & Conservation

**Report on activities conducted with the
support of 21st Century Tiger and Dreamworld
Conservation Fund**

January-June 2015

by

Fauna & Flora International



Summary of activities and results during this interim reporting period

The project purpose is to secure the effective protection and conservation of Sumatran through practical field-focused actions to reduce direct and indirect threat to tigers in a national park that forms the core (1.38 million hectares) of a globally important (Level 1) Tiger Conservation Landscape

A total of 66 SMART supported forest patrols were conducted by TPCUs park-wide during this Interim reporting period with not fewer than 61 tiger presence records made in the course of patrols covering 1088Km and with frequency of encounter at 1 tiger per 17.83 patrol kilometres.

Active threat to tigers from organised poaching syndicates seeking to supply illegal wildlife trade demand remained very high with a total of 46 active tiger snares detected and destroyed on TPCU patrols park wide.

However the number of recently (<1 month) dismantled tiger snares recorded on TPCU patrols dropped when compared with the same period of 2014 indicating timely responses to threat while initial results of camera trap monitoring in two sites in the national park advised tiger densities were stable.

In addition to securing information from forest-edge community information networks to drive anti-poaching patrols, more than 60 investigation reports were logged by TPCU personnel during the reporting period.

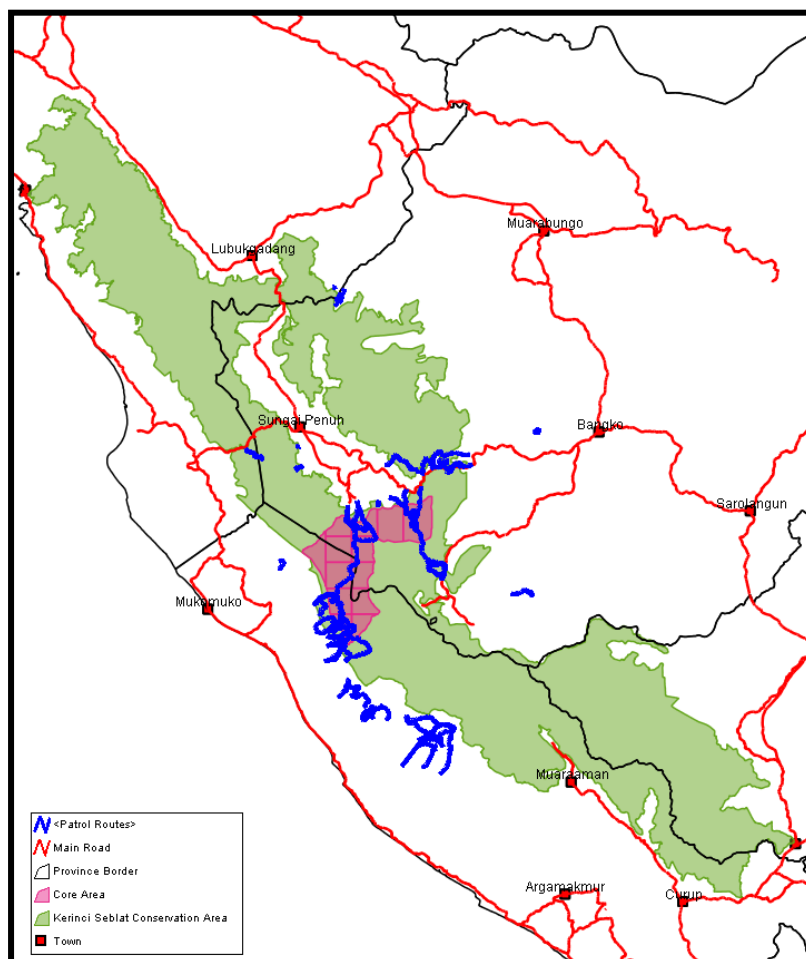
These investigations resulted in two tiger law enforcement actions led by the programme in partnership with park-edge police divisions and resulted in the arrest and prosecution of a total of five individuals on tiger poaching and trade charges and the seizure of the skins and bones of two Sumatran tigers. Both cases have proceeded through the legal process to court hearings and Sentencing is awaited.

A multi-stakeholder human-wildlife conflict mitigation taskforce, formation of which was facilitated by this program in 2014, became active in Bengkulu province in the south-west t of the national park in 2015 with funding through central government and progress was monitored by Bengkulu-based members of the project team.

Meanwhile, in June, the now merged Ministry of Environment and Forestry, announced that the wildlife crime law enforcement network formed under an MoU between Kerinci Seblat National Park Authority and four provincial police authorities In late October 2014 with support from FFI will form the pilot for a national strategy platform for actions against the illegal wildlife trade more widely.

Forest patrols by Tiger Protection & Conservation Units (TPCU)

A total of 63 SMART-supported TPCU patrols were conducted in national park and bordering forests in three of the four provinces overlaying the protected area during this six months period covering a total distance of 1088Km (676 miles).



Patrols (See SMART Map, left) made a total of not fewer than 61 separate tiger records with Frequency of Encounter (FoE) with tiger at 1-17.93Km, slightly lower than in the same period of 2014, with 65% of patrols recording tigers present on the patrol route.

A further 11 law enforcement monitoring patrols were conducted by our partners in the Kerinci Seblat Tiger Monitoring team and these recorded the presence of not fewer than 19 tigers deeper within the national park and with a 100% presence record. These monitoring transects focused to areas deep within the national park's Interior Zone which

are less routinely patrolled by TPCUs who are highly focused to addressing and reducing active threat which is generally highest within 7km of forest edge.

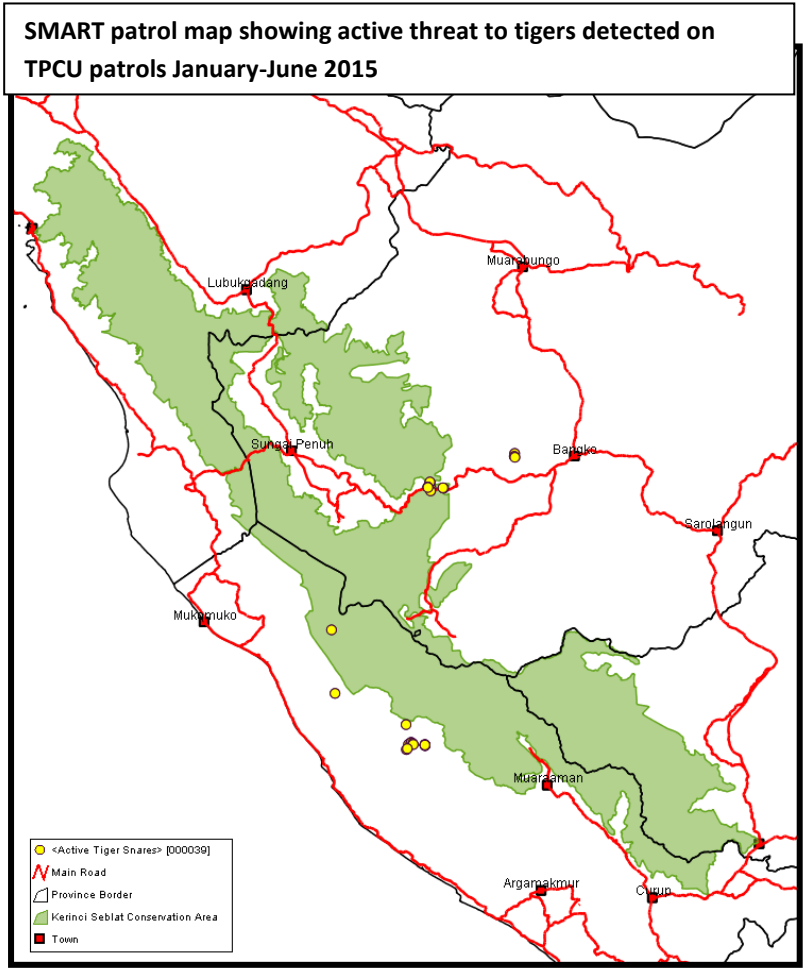
Active snare poaching threat to tigers detected remained close to the historic highs recorded by patrols since 2013 with a total of 44 active tiger snares destroyed by TPCUs in the course of 16 patrols compared with 41 in the first six months of 2014 and a total of 50 active tiger snares in the first six months of 2013.

The overwhelming majority of active tiger snares recorded and destroyed during this six months period were reported on TPCU patrols launched on the basis of information secured from local community information networks and investigations by TPCU personnel.

However the number of recently active (<1 month) tiger snare placements recorded on these and two other TPCU patrols showed a sharp reduction.

Patrols reported a total of 25 sites where tiger snares had recently been active but subsequently dismantled compared with a total of 36 recently-active tiger snare placements recorded in the course of patrols in the first six months of 2014.

This is likely to indicate that a strong emphasis on use of community information networks and investigations to guide patrols has supported TPCUs in making timely responses to suspected poaching threat .



As a consequence, frequency of encounter with both Active and Recently Active tiger snare placements reduced from 1-7.8 patrol kilometres walked in 2014 to 1-15.8Km in the first six months of 2015 and to 1-24.7Km for only Active snares (1-20Km in 2014). This is however still far above the historic norm for recorded threat to tigers during this program's 15 year history.

In direct contrast to the situation in the first six months of 2014, recorded threat to tigers was higher in the south-west of the national park than in the north-east.

This may be a consequence of the deterrent impact of program-led tiger law enforcement actions in park-edge districts in the east of the

national park and by ZSL and KSDA Jambi in eastern Jambi

TPCU personnel routinely engaged with forest-edge farmers in the course of patrols, giving input on the role of tigers in protection of crops from species such as wild boar which are seen as crop-raiders and the importance of forest conservation in protecting watersheds key to down-stream communities' well-being. The strong relationships developed in many areas between TPCUs and forest-edge farmers is key to the effective operation of community information networks although threats to traditional communities by organised forest encroachment networks clearing forests for coffee plantations has reduced community information network effectiveness in one area adjoining the national park

Investigations: A total of 60 investigation reports were logged by TPCU and other programme personnel during this six months period, ranging from information on the identities or activities of suspected hunters or traders, changes recorded in the wildlife black market including alleged prices secured by hunters or touted by traders and destinations of illegally traded wildlife and suspected poaching and trade incidents.

Six of these investigations secured first-hand visual evidence of wildlife crime at poacher or illegal wildlife trader level with two investigations, one launched in 2014 and a second in late 2013 advancing to formal law enforcement action.

Law enforcement was not launched in the remaining four cases either because the offence was relatively minor and so would have been unlikely to proceed smoothly through the judicial process or because full law enforcement action would have compromised ongoing investigations into poaching and illegal wildlife trade in tigers and other endangered species

It continued to be difficult to advance higher-level trade investigations to a point where evidence is observed which is the crucial precursor to mounting law enforcement. Surveillance training was provided to selected members of the team by another programme donor in May and this may be helpful in addressing this issue but will be time consuming to implement in full and will not be a 'magic bullet' in addressing the growing levels of sophistication exhibited by illegal wildlife trade networks.

Additionally, intensive use was made of community information networks to secure information on suspected active poaching threat with *batu akik* – semi precious stone collectors – proving a new and useful source of information and with the great majority of active and recently active tiger snares recorded by patrols recorded on intelligence-driven patrols.

Species and forest law enforcement actions to uphold Indonesia conservation law:

Two tiger law enforcement actions were launched and successfully completed in partnership with park-edge district police authorities during the reporting period resulting in the arrest of five suspects and seizure of the skins and bones of two Sumatran tigers.

The first law enforcement action was launched in February 2015 in Sarolangun district on the eastern edges of the national park in Jambi province following an investigation into suspected tiger poaching in forests in two local government districts adjoining the national park which commenced in mid 2014.

Three men, two poachers and their broker or facilitator, were arrested along with the skin and complete skeleton of a young adult male Sumatran tiger, so marking the first seizure of both tiger skin *and* tiger bones made in Sumatra, to our knowledge, in almost three years. Two young officers of KSDA Jambi (Unit for Conservation of Natural Resources) joined this action and, on the basis of the enthusiasm and professionalism displayed, the programme team agreed they would hope to work with these officers again in the future.

Just over a month later, tiger law enforcement was again launched, this time in Kerinci district which forms a large enclave in the central area of the national park and resulted in the arrest of two Kerinci men and the seizure of the skin and skeleton of a very recently killed adult tigress.

This arrest followed a long-running investigation into suspected tiger poaching in national park forests in the north-east of Kerinci district by an habitual tiger poacher who purchased information on tiger presence from forest-edge farmers and, unusually, used poison not snares.

Both cases proceeded from law enforcement through to the judicial process and Court hearings however Sentencing has not yet been pronounced, the programme will advise when sentencing is pronounced but light sentences are likely given that all men were arrested and prosecuted in their home districts.

A third action was launched on the basis of a local community tip-off, however, while the three suspects reported to be seeking to poach tigers using electric batteries and cables were apprehended at forest edge, they were not in possession of any item which would have allowed formal law enforcement to proceed.

Numerous formal warning letters were issued to minor offenders against forest and species law encountered in the course of patrols and two *kecepek* muzzle-loader shotguns confiscated however public security issues meant actions against encroachment in one area in the east of the national park were restricted to formal warnings and law enforcement, although warranted, could not be launched.

Human-Tiger Conflict Mitigation and wildlife emergencies - Only four minor human-tiger conflict incidents were recorded during the period December-June 2015, a level far below the historic project average.

All these incidents related to so-called 'stray tigers' moving through forest-edge farmland with a fifth report relating to a tiger frequently seen crossing the Bukit Tapan road which crosses through the national park from Kerinci to coastal west Sumatra requiring monitoring to ensure poachers did not exploit this animal's frequent presence at road edge.

In one of these cases, the programme formed an emergency rescue team including a local vet on the basis of initial distance assessments which suggested the tiger in question was sick and might have to be captured for medical treatment, however the animal subsequently commenced to behave normally and then moved back into national park forests.

This is the third year in which this team and others in Sumatra have recorded a lower than average number of human-tiger conflict reports and is a matter of some considerable concern as it is strongly suspected poachers are paying substantial financial incentives to forest-edge farmers to report tiger presence for their own purposes.

Community/Government/Stakeholder Engagement:

The program team maintained close informal contact with colleagues in other tiger conservation programs in Sumatra, in particular sharing information on changes in detected threat to tigers and other protected wildlife.

Close links were also maintained with local NGO partners and the Merangin Village Forest team to monitor threat to the national park from political pressure for infrastructure development, illegal gold mining and the potential threat of geothermal development in two areas of the national park, one of which is a key tiger habitat.

The program was also invited to make a presentation at a national level meeting organised by UNESCO regarding strategies to address and reduce encroachment in the Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra which includes Kerinci Seblat National Park.

Plans to conduct a series of formal wildlife crime law enforcement strategy meetings following signing of an MoU between Kerinci Seblat National Park Authority and four provincial police authorities did not proceed due to financial constraints.

However informal briefing meetings were held with key police divisions to discuss actions required to fully activate the Wildlife Crime Law Enforcement Network across four provinces of Sumatra and we anticipate that support for Network activation will become available in the third or fourth quarter of 2015 with support from the UNDP 'Transforming Effectiveness of Biodiversity Conservation' project.

District police authorities briefed on the MoU content and purpose were enthusiastic and supportive, in particular regarding planning to facilitate swifter and more effective inter-agency responses to trans-border (domestic) wildlife crime.

Meanwhile routine informal liaison and coordination was maintained by program personnel operating out of Bengkulu province with KSDA Bengkulu which is the forestry agency responsible for species conservation outside protected areas and with Bengkulu provincial government following activation of a multi-stakeholder human-wildlife conflict mitigation taskforce in 2015 and which has received funding of just under \$60,000 from central government funds for first year operations. The taskforce primarily focused to overseeing conflict mitigation actions in forests adjoining Bukit Barisan Selatan national park during this period.

Other related tiger conservation activities

Monitoring tiger populations in selected sites within a Core area of the national park in partnership with Panthera Tigers Forever

Camera trapping by the Kerinci Seblat Tiger Monitoring team (MHS) monitoring team supported by Panthera Tigers Forever was conducted and completed in two of three focus sites between January-June 2015 while intensive camera trapping was conducted or is ongoing through another project partner researching Sumatran clouded leopard. Camera trapping data will commence to be rigorously analysed in late September 2015 and include results gathered by the Sumatran clouded leopard project however initial results from two camera trapping sites advised tiger densities were unchanged from 2014 results in these two sites which are also subject to an intensive patrol focus. However camera trapping more widely across the national park by the Sumatran clouded leopard project appears to show increasingly sharp differences in tiger occupancy between areas where there is a routine TPCU law enforcement patrol presence and other sites in the national park.

DJM
Sungaipenuh, Kerinci
July 2015