

Pelestarian Harimau Sumatera Kerinci-Seblat

Kerinci Seblat Tiger Protection & Conservation

**Report on activities conducted with
support of Dreamworld Conservation**

September –December 2012

by

Fauna & Flora International



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Summary

Tiger Protection & Conservation Units conducted a total of 23 forest patrols in and adjoining Kerinci Seblat National Park in five districts of two provinces during this four months project period.

Patrol Units recorded the presence of not fewer than 14 tigers in the course of these activities which saw teams walking a total distance of just over 330km.

No species focused law enforcement actions were conducted however TPCU either led or supported actions resulting in the arrest of 11 individuals on encroachment or illegal logging charges in national park forests in Jambi and Bengkulu provinces and conducted a field appraisal of the activities of a pulp and paper timber company operating to the immediate east of the national park.

The number of forest patrols conducted was lower than the program norm since the project period saw two training workshops conducted as well as the program's annual evaluation workshop in December when team members are encouraged to give input on planning activities for the year ahead and jointly evaluate program activities.

Patrols and investigations conducted during the project period advised that the resurgence in threat to tiger in and adjoining Kerinci Seblat National Park first advised in 2011 continues to be a cause of concern.

Two active and five recently-active snares were recorded on three intelligence-driven patrols in two park-edge districts in Jambi province and field observations and interviews confirmed that not fewer than two and possibly three tigers were lost to poaching between September and December 2012 in two districts of Jambi province.

These poaching incidents are strongly believed to have been conducted by two different groups conducting intensive poaching in areas of low or very low patrol intensity and two men responsible for one confirmed and a second suspected tiger fatality have been identified and are under surveillance with the purpose of securing evidence for subsequent prosecution.

This apparent increase in intensity of threat to tigers in and adjoining Kerinci Seblat National Park is unlikely to be domestic in origin.

No tiger-related law enforcement actions were conducted during this four months project period and discussions with TPCU investigators during the annual team evaluation meeting in December confirmed it is becoming increasingly difficult to secure evidence for law enforcement using previously successful methodologies.

To address this issue, the team commenced trialling alternative methods, including stepping up surveillance of key suspects, to support building a case for subsequent law enforcement where tiger crime has occurred.

At date of this report, FFI Indonesia is also seeking to facilitate a high level meeting in Jakarta in coordination with Interpol Indonesia to brief key provincial police chiefs on the ASEAN Wildlife (law) Enforcement Network treaty and Interpol-led actions to stem threat to tiger from organised crime. We hope the program will be permitted to raise this increase in threat at this meeting so that a more coordinated approach between agencies to tiger and other serious wildlife trade can be developed.

No serious human-tiger conflicts or wildlife emergencies were recorded during the project period although five human-tiger conflicts, one involving livestock (goat) predation were reported and responded to by TPCU teams.

Activities and Results September-December 2012

Patrols

A total of 23 forest patrols and related forest and species protection actions - were conducted during the project period in national park forests in five districts of Bengkulu and Jambi provinces.

This lower than norm patrol routine was a consequence of two back-to-back training workshops conducted in September and the program's annual evaluation meeting in December when TPCU personnel are encouraged to identify patrol priorities for the year ahead and join evaluation of the past year's activities

Patrols covered a total walking distance of just over 330Km and recorded the presence of 14 tigers and Frequency of Encounter with tiger recorded on patrol was 1 tiger record per 23.5 patrol Km, a fractional

improvement on the same four months period in 2011.



Active tiger poaching was recorded on one patrol in Bungo district in the eastern edges of the national park where two active tiger snares were found and destroyed by a TPCU patrol team.

The joint FFI-KSNP tiger monitoring team which had just launched

camera trapping in this area and is led, in the field, by a former TPCU ranger unit leader, also recorded and destroyed active tiger snares in the same area which has received a low patrol focus in the last two years due to capacity and transport issues.

Evidence of recent or relatively recent tiger poaching was also found in the course of three intelligence-driven patrols in park-edge forests and farmland on the Kerinci-Merangin district borders bordering the eastern edges of the park.

The same individuals were involved in three of the four cases recorded during the project period and the suspects are now under surveillance using trusted local informants working under direction of experienced TPCU community rangers

No active threat to tiger or deer was recorded in regular (three or more patrols per year) patrol sites and all active threat to tigers or evidence of tiger crime was recorded in areas of low or no routine patrol effort and in forest or mixed farmland adjoining the national park.

TPCUs also destroyed 18 deer snares in the course of two patrols in national park forest in the south of the Kerinci valley and in Mukomuko district of Bengkulu however the most frequently encountered threat to wildlife recorded was in the form of bird poaching, primarily for the increasingly lucrative wild song bird trade with a total of 153 liming or snaring points found and destroyed on four patrols.

This particular threat to biodiversity will not be addressed fully until Units for Conservation of Natural Resources (KSDA) act to control and manage the booming trade in wild song birds including through socialisation of trade permits to local government.

Active threat to habitat within and adjoining the national park from illegal logging – now resurgent in many areas around the national park – encroachment and illegal gold mining was recorded on seven of the 23 routine or information-led forest patrols launched.

Three illegal loggers were arrested by a TPCU patrol unit in Mukomuko district of Bengkulu to the west of the park while the



PHS team supported a national park-led law enforcement operation in Kerinci, launched following a patrol report by a TPCU team, which resulted in the arrest of eight individuals. However Patrol units primarily responded to encroachment by traditional local farmers with formal warning letters and counselling.

In Bungo district, a TPCU conducted an assessment of the activities of an industrial timber plantation company operating in an area recommended, since 2002, for repatriation to the national park and observed that extensive illegal logging by local people is now active in downstream forests adjoining the concession area apparently on the basis that if they do not log and convert these forests, the company will do so. Clear breaches of the company's environmental assessment impact licence also appear to have occurred.

Investigations

Investigations into suspected tiger poaching and trade and to secure information on active threat to tiger or tiger prey were conducted in six districts of three provinces bordering Kerinci Seblat National Park.

However team investigators advised it has become increasingly difficult to secure first-hand evidence of wildlife crime – required if subsequent law enforcement is to be launched - due to intense caution of poachers and dealers as a result of past tiger law enforcement actions.

To address this issue, in December the team commenced development of routine surveillance of two individuals who are believed to be significant traders in protected wildlife, primarily tiger and Malay pangolin and the program is seeking to trial alternative methods to secure evidence for subsequent law enforcement against wildlife criminals. Two men believed to have poached not fewer than three Sumatran tiger in the course of 2012 from park-edge forests in Jambi province were identified and are now under surveillance at date of this report.

Investigations also continued into two 'closed' syndicates where tigers are poached to the order of wholesalers operating out of cities in eastern Sumatra continued and it is likely that 'poaching to order' is a major factor in the increased intensity of poaching threat recorded

Discussion with supportive senior local police officers strongly advises that changes in the black market for tiger body parts first observed in early 2011 are indicative of an organised trade cartel moving into this area of Sumatra.

Law enforcement

TPCU personnel either led or provided field support for two forest protection law enforcement actions during the project period which resulted in the arrest and ongoing prosecution of 11 men.

In Kerinci district, following a TPCU field patrol which recorded extensive co-ordinated encroachment into national park forests, a joint operation led by the national park was launched and resulted in eight arrests.

Subsequent judicial proceedings have however been extremely slow following demonstrations backed by local politicians, including individuals implicated in the illegal clearances and the case has still not reached a court hearing.

In Mukomuko district of Bengkulu, three illegal loggers were arrested by a TPCU patrol team and surrendered into police custody. This case is presently passing smoothly through the judicial process and a judgment is expected shortly.

No tiger related law enforcement actions were conducted during the project period due to serious difficulties in securing first-hand evidence of crime – a precursor to law enforcement - and the reluctance of suspects to leave the safety of their villages.

FFI Indonesia is presently in discussion with Interpol Indonesia and Indonesia National Police Authority and planning to conduct a one-day meeting for Sumatran provincial police chiefs to brief them on the scale of tiger crime, its international context and the ASEAN WEN (Wildlife Enforcement Network) international agreement.

We anticipate that this will strengthen the already strong support received from local police divisions through developing coordination between provinces to counter the activities of syndicates now operating between provinces in Sumatra

Human Wildlife Conflict Mitigation

A total of four reported human-tiger conflict incidents were responded to by TPCU rangers during this four month period in four park-edge districts.

Two of these incidents saw livestock (goats and a pack pony) attacked by tigers in forest-edge farmland, the remaining cases related to tigers moving through farmland at forest edge or, in one case, seen by a farmer in hot pursuit of a sambar deer.

One of these incidents occurring in an enclave area in Lebong district of Bengkulu required repeated visits by TPCUs over the course of October following a series of incidents relating to predation of villagers' goats.

Three patrols were subsequently conducted in this area and strongly suggest that disturbance to habitat from illegal (traditional) gold mining is likely to have played a strong part in the incidents.

In January 2012 the programme will be providing training to key local NGO colleagues in the AKAR Network in the principles of human-tiger conflict mitigation and responses to reported conflicts with the intention that preliminary responses to low-grade (stray tiger) incidents may be managed by local NGO partners and their community partners

Capacity raising

Two training workshops for PHS team members and key national park and KSDA partners were conducted, back-to-back, in September at the team's Bangko base camp in Merangin district of Jambi province

The first workshop, led by KSDA (Unit for Conservation of Natural Resources) Bengkulu vet, Dr H Yanti focused on practical responses to wildlife emergencies for rangers including use of anaesthetics in a major emergency and veterinary protocols.



For long-standing members of the TPCUs, the workshop was a valuable 'refresher' course since the last formal training for the team in wildlife emergency veterinary responses was in 2006 although the teams have since gained extensive practical experience in managing major emergencies.

Meanwhile TPCU rangers and other PHS staffers who have joined the team since 2006 gained invaluable training, ranging from the principles of anaesthesia, use of dart guns, their role as veterinary auxiliaries in a wildlife emergency and the basic principles of wild animal welfare. Happily, in the subsequent three months, this training was not required in practice.

The second training workshop held, led by Field Manager Dian Risdianto, focused on the introduction of SMART/MIST patrol data collection and development of a data base for the

PHS team and for the national park.

TPCU rangers have been using the basic principles of SMART/MIST reporting on patrols since early 2012 and so the new patrol reporting system posed no problems for the team either during the formal training workshop or subsequently.

The team also worked, collaboratively with colleagues from the national park attending the workshop, to build the structure for a MIST/SMART patrol records database into which all PHS KS patrol and survey records and, subsequently, results of national park field activities will be input.

Colleagues from KSDA Bengkulu also took part in this second training activity and will be working to develop MIST/SMART patrol reporting procedures and a MIST/SMART database for KSDA in Bengkulu

Unfortunately, the data base component of the MIST/SMART patrol system has caused some problems for the programme due to the time required to correctly enter very detailed patrol records into the system. We are now seeking funds from other sources to fund a data entry and management position which we plan will be taken by long-serving Bangko base camp support staffer Budy Yulianto.

Recruitment for a new Tiger Protection & Conservation Unit to strengthen field actions in the tiger-rich forests in the west of the park in Bengkulu commenced in October with three community team rangers now 'on trial' and working, currently, with the existing two Bengkulu units.. In December a prospective national park ranger Unit leader was identified and will commence working with the new unit in February 2013 also 'on trial.'

Meanwhile three long-serving community team rangers took turns to act as Leaders of two Jambi TPCU which are currently without a National Park TPCU leader as no suitable potential national park ranger unit leaders have been identified, primarily as a consequence of gross under-staffing of the park's ranger division.

The programme still awaits a clear schedule from the Department of Forestry regarding when nine long-serving community team members of the PHS team will be formally inducted into the national park – ideally as forest police (POLHUT) - so restoring the team's ability to respond immediately to breaches of forest and species law.

Four long-serving TPCU members, two of whom are founding members of this team, visited Australia in December 2012 with the support of another programme donor and were able to visit Dreamworld and meet members of the Dreamworld tiger team.

We very much hope that our Dreamworld partners will be able to visit Kerinci in 2013 so we may try to repay some of the wonderful hospitality given to TPCU rangers on their visit.

DJM

January 2013