

# **Pelestarian Harimau Sumatera Kerinci-Seblat**

## **Kerinci Seblat Tiger Protection & Conservation**

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

**September 2011-August 2012  
by**

**Fauna & Flora International**



## **Project Results In Brief**

Tiger Protection & Conservation Units conducted a total of 75 forest patrols covering a walking distance of just under 1250Km in seven districts of three of the four provinces in and bordering Kerinci Seblat National Park.

A total of 57 individual records of Sumatran tiger were made and Frequency of encounter with Sumatran tiger on patrols improved to 1 tiger per 21.06 patrol kilometres walked compared with 1-22.54 Km in the period 2010-2011..

Patrol units detected and destroyed 17 active snares set by hunters for Sumatran tiger with more than 80 per cent of these snares found as a result of information secured by TPCU rangers. TPCU rangers also used their community information networks to identify sites where deer poachers were active and launch intelligence driven patrols and more than half the active deer snares destroyed were found as a result of information secured.

The number of forest patrols conducted was lower than planned in part due to an unprecedented number of serious human-tiger conflicts and emergencies including actions to rescue four Sumatran tigers and one Sumatran clouded leopard from snares or from serious human-tiger conflict incidents.

However the number of patrols conducted was also impacted by the resignation of four TPCU rangers, including two National Park Authority seconded ranger leaders in the first five months of the project period so requiring units to merge on occasion while new ranger personnel were recruited and trained up.

Only one tiger-related law enforcement operation was conducted during the project period and this resulted in the arrest of three men on tiger poaching and trade charges and confiscation of the pelt of a recently killed sub-adult tiger in late April 2012..

These men, two of whom were Village headmen and so important rural leaders of two park-edge communities and the tiger poacher, were subsequently sentenced to two-year custodial terms and additional fines by Kerinci district court.

Smart Patrol training in Thailand through the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and Global Tiger Initiative was facilitated for the team's Bengkulu team leader and two young NPA managers and SMART patrol data collection and analysis is now being soft-launched by the program and will be extended to national park sections in 2013 .

The program also maintained close links with local and national NGO partners to conduct campaigning and advocacy to secure rejection, by the Minister of Forestry, for proposals to build a network of roads through core areas of the national park.

One of these proposals – for a road through the northern section of the national park in West Sumatra province – was rejected by the Minister of Forestry in April 2012. The remaining proposals remain under consideration of the Minister and no public statement has been made although it is known that the Independent Team appointed to assess the proposals strongly recommended rejection.

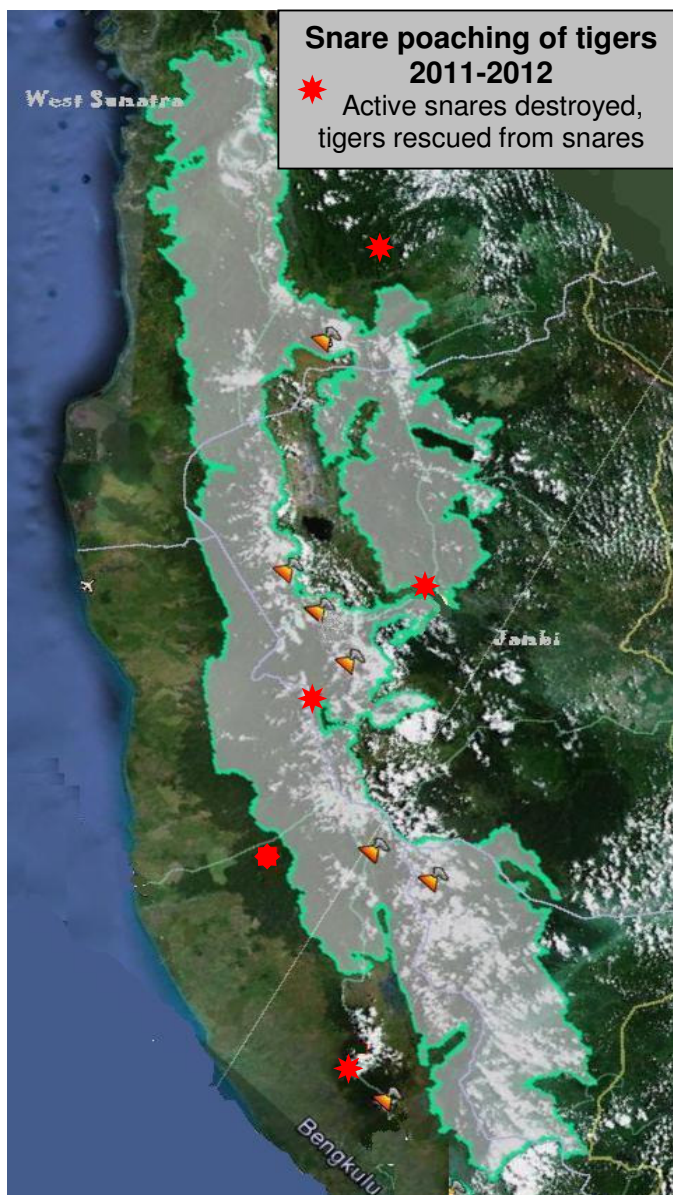
## **Activities and Results**

### **Forest Patrols**

Tiger Protection & Conservation Units conducted a total of 75 field patrols in seven park-edge districts of three of the four provinces bordering Kerinci Seblat National Park covering a total walking distance, by GPS way point, of just under 1250Km.

The number of patrols conducted and so total distance walked was lower than planned in part due to the need to amalgamate units to allow new rangers to be trained up following resignations in the first five months of the project period.

However patrol routines were also affected by the unprecedented number of serious human-tiger conflicts and tiger emergencies which occurred during the project period (see *Human Tiger Conflict and Wildlife Emergencies*).



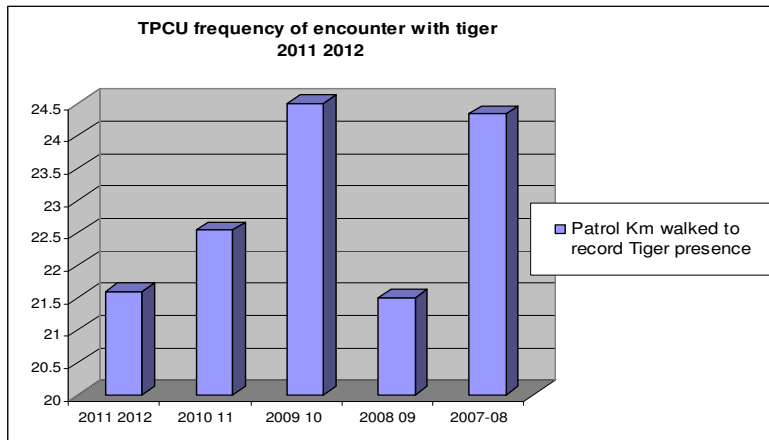
Forest patrols recorded the presence of not fewer than 57 individual Sumatran tiger over the project period with frequency of encounter (FoE), park-wide, at 1 tiger per 21.06 patrol kilometres walked – a fractional improvement on the period 2010-2011 when FoE was 1-22.54Km.

Attempted poaching of Sumatran tiger using snares was recorded on 5.33% of forest patrols with a total of 17 active tiger snares detected and destroyed by TPCU rangers.

Of these, 15 active snares were found and made safe on two patrols launched specifically as a result of information secured by TPCU personnel.

One of these patrols, which destroyed seven active tiger snares in mid August 2012, was

conducted outside the team's normal operational area in a watershed protection forest to the north-east of KSNP where three hunters from the Pesisir Selatan

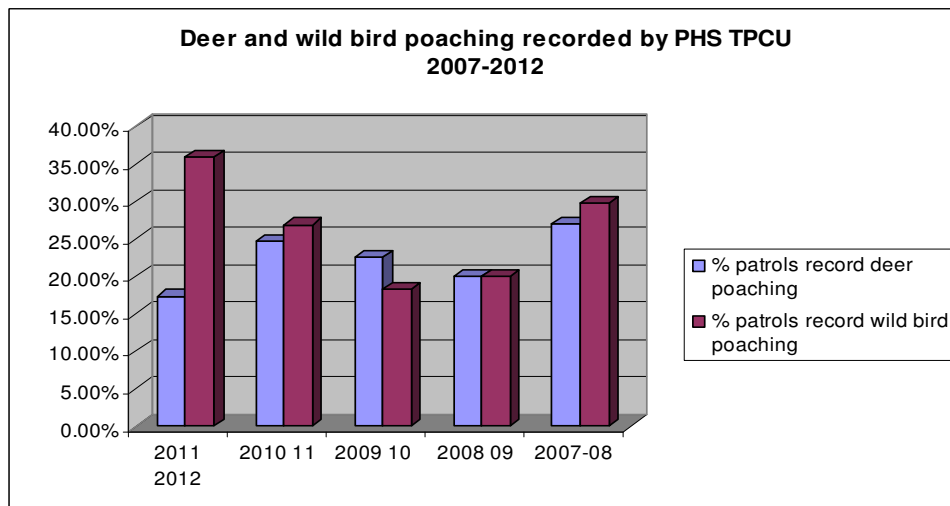


district in western Sumatra were operating on the assumption that it was "safe" from TPCU attention.

Although the number of active tiger snares found and destroyed

during the project period was the highest since 2008, the percentage of patrols recording tiger poaching (5.33%) was among the lowest since the program was established in 2000 with only 2010-2011 showing lower confirmed active threat to wild tigers.

Poaching of tiger prey species, in particular sambar deer, poses indirect threat to tigers through prey base depletion and direct threat because some sambar deer snares are strong enough to 'hold' a tiger.



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Deer poaching also continued to reduce both in number and intensity of poaching with TPCUs reporting active snare poaching for deer on just over 17% of patrols conducted and with 'only' 136 active sambar deer snares destroyed. The majority of these snares were also found and destroyed as a result of information secured from community informants

TPCU patrols reported increasing difficulty in encountering active deer snares in former problem areas, in particular in sites where patrol focus has been maintained and where hunters have been arrested and issued with formal warnings or expelled from the forest.

However while snare poaching for deer has sharply reduced in patrol focus areas, pressure on wild bird populations, and in particular song birds for the cage bird trade, has continued to rise, after recovering from the 'Bird Flu' 'scare of 2008-9, as the above chart shows.

It is likely that some habitual deer hunters have moved from snaring deer to bird trapping as both lucrative and perceived as safer than hunting deer and a number of formerly common song bird species are becoming increasingly uncommon in even remote areas of the national park.

This activity will continue to pose a serious threat to avian diversity in this and other protected areas of Sumatra for so long as no action is taken by forestry agencies with jurisdiction outside protected areas to control, using existing legislation, the wild bird trade in Sumatra which is driving this threat.

Patrol units also recorded threat to tiger habitat within and adjoining the national park on more than 25% of patrols with threats including conversion of protected forests for small-holder agriculture and plantations, illegal logging focused to high-grade export timber, open-cast mining for iron ore and exploration for gold by national and multi national companies occurring, illegally, within the national park.

In forests where park border markers are no longer clear, patrol units frequently placed border markers on trees so that illegal loggers or encroachers could not claim ignorance, subsequently, of forest status.



Encroachment into protected forests in two areas appeared linked to proposals by Kerinci and Mukomuko district governments for construction of inter-provincial or inter-district highways through the national park. Meanwhile in two other sites, TPCU rangers concluded that illegal forest conversion was

being driven by highly-organised syndicates selling national park and state forest lands to farmers and land speculators backed, in one area, by rogue NGOs who have threatened the national park and local NGOs with legal action under human rights legislation.

A TPCU patrol unit confirmed that state-owned mining company, PT Aneka Tambang, was conducting illegal exploration for gold within the national park close to the Jambi-Bengkulu provincial borders in Merangin district and the company had



established its operating 'forward' base camp and built a helipad within the national park.

This case was reported directly to forestry department headquarters in Jakarta by the program's field manager and the case remains under investigation by the Ministry of Forestry and the Corruption Eradication Commission or KPK however no action has been taken against the company.

TPCU patrols also collected field data on the operations of an industrial timber plantation company, Pt Mugitriman International, which has been granted an operating permit for an important forest block directly adjoining the eastern edges of the national park in Bungo district of Jambi province, including an area of forest recommended, since 2002, for repatriation to the national park on grounds of its high biodiversity and tiger densities and important watershed values.

Based on TPCU patrol observations, this company is widely in breach of its operating permits and environmental impact assessment licences while disturbance from its operations is likely to have been an important factor in a number of serious human-tiger and human-elephant conflicts occurring in surrounding areas during the project period.

TPCU patrol teams responded to minor offences encountered in the field with counselling regarding the status of the national park and permissible activities and the issue of formal warning letters where relevant and with confiscations of equipment used.

Full law enforcement action – arrest of individuals and surrender to police or other agencies - was not launched during forest patrols during the project period primarily as a result of policy instructions cascaded down by the former director of the national park but additionally due to the resignation of two KSNP-seconded TPCU ranger leaders who were not replaced due to lack of any suitable available national park ranger personnel.

In the second quarter of 2013, it is expected that six highly experienced, long-serving TPCU community rangers will join a three-months long Forestry department training program before returning to the program with formal Ranger status.

This enhanced legal status, together with a now much more supportive national park management, will restore full direct law enforcement capacity to patrol units in the field but is dependent upon the national Indonesian parliament approving 2013 Forestry department budgets.

For the second year running, the programme conducted the Great Kerinci Seblat Snare Sweep in the six weeks leading up to the festival of *Hari Raya* or Idul Fitri which marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan and which sees a surge in deer poaching pressure in some areas around the national park.

During this period, TPCU units rather than their coordinator or field manager were encouraged to make their own selection of patrol sites and routes and awards were made to the patrol teams successfully detecting and destroying the greatest number of snares and there is intense inter-unit competition to secure results.

A total of eight active tiger snares and more than 90 active deer snares and 120 bird snares were found and destroyed over a period of four weeks while one TPCU – unarmed – had a tense stand off with two hunters armed with home-made shotguns.

The scheme offers an incentive to already committed rangers, the great majority of whom, as Muslims, are fasting from dawn to dusk while conducting patrols in the very frequently arduous conditions encountered in Kerinci Seblat National Park and also encouraged teams to step-up information collection on areas at possible risk for a patrol response to be made.

**Investigations:** *to detect wildlife crime and identify suspects, secure evidence for law enforcement and direct patrols to areas where poaching is suspected active*

Investigations into suspected tiger poaching and trade incidents and to secure information on active threats for a field response were conducted in eight districts of the four provinces bordering Kerinci Seblat National Park and opportunistically in two provincial capitals.

For the first seven months of the project period, greater emphasis was placed on securing information on the individual components of trade syndicates, methods used and final destination (in Indonesia) rather than, as in the past, to a focus to securing evidence to support a law enforcement response.

PHS personnel also identified a number of individuals the program believes responsible for reduced tiger presence in areas of three sub-districts of the national park in Bengkulu and Jambi provinces, including the men who snared a tigress rescued in February 2012.

Senior management changes at the national park authority in March 2012 allowed the program to proceed to law enforcement in one of these cases with the successful arrest of three men (see *Law enforcement*) from the Jangkat area of Merangin district of Jambi in late April.

Two of these individuals were Headmen of their villages and so important leaders of their communities and the national park had previously considered both as ‘friends’ of the park although one of these two men had been identified since mid 2011 as a suspected trader in Sumatran tiger.

Program personnel also routinely logged information on the activities of suspect individuals and reported trends in the wildlife black market including prices allegedly secured for wildlife products and changes in market demand.

Sharp falls in prices allegedly secured or offered for tiger pelts in the first months of 2012 were reported park-wide so that prices now allegedly paid by district level traders are little higher than in mid 2010. It is likely that this latest upheaval in the

black market is related to events on the south east Asian mainland and is not domestic in origin.

With increased threat to wild songbird populations in even remote areas of the national park, information was also collected, opportunistically, on the wild bird trade and the immediate destination of birds traded outside of park-edge districts and results of investigations will be passed to local NGO partners for use in campaigning and advocacy. No linkage between the song bird trade and trade in Sumatran tiger was identified but may exist at individual trader level

In mid October 2011 evidence of the poaching of an adult female tiger was secured during an investigation into suspected tiger poaching in park-edge forests on the borders of Bungo and Merangin districts of Jambi province.

However, as planning for subsequent law enforcement action was prepared, a serious human-tiger conflict (see *Human Wildlife Conflict and Emergencies*) occurred in the border area between Bungo and Merangin borders area and the evidence was lost to trade while TPCUs worked to resolve the conflict. It is extremely likely that the poaching of this tigress, which is believed to have occurred in late September 2011 was the trigger to not one but two subsequent serious human-tiger conflict incidents involving one serious and one fatal attack on people which occurred in this area over the next four months.

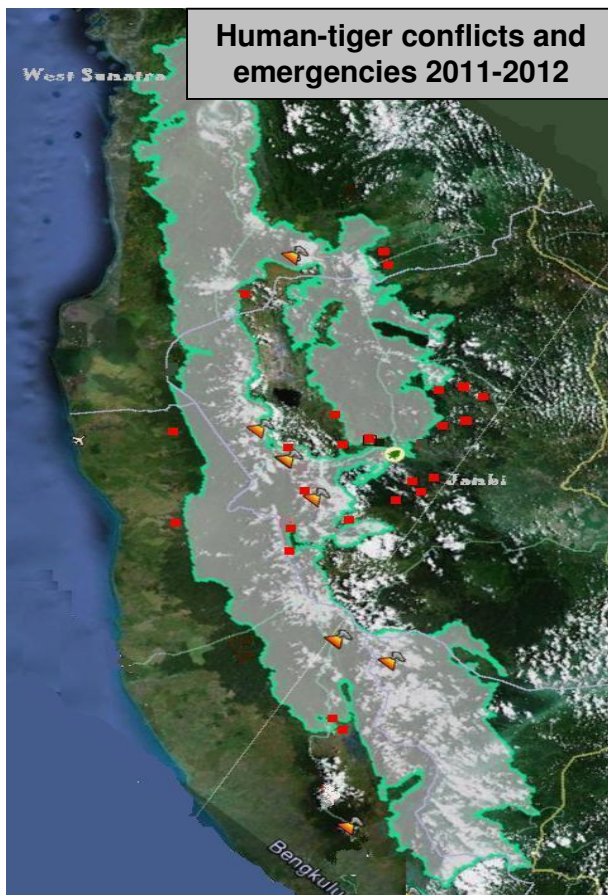


## Conflict Mitigation and Wildlife Emergencies

Since the programme was established in mid 2000 a swift response to human-wildlife conflicts so that mitigation can be launched, ideally before livestock predation has occurred, has been an important, albeit unpredictable, component of field activities.

The majority of human-tiger conflicts attended and mitigated by the team during the project period were, as in previous years, relatively minor and mainly related to tigers straying into or moving through forest-edge farmland and village rubber gardens although incidents of livestock predation (goats and dogs) did occur.

Unfortunately this project period also saw two very serious human-tiger conflict incidents which involved serious injuries to one man and the death of a second and an unprecedented number of serious wildlife emergencies involving Sumatran tiger.



Three of these tiger emergencies were poaching-related while it is extremely possible that the two serious human-tiger conflicts were linked to an incident in state forests bordering the east of the national park in September 2011 in which a tigress is believed to have been poached.

The first serious incident occurred in late September 2011 when informants from a village in a narrow farmland corridor between the eastern and western sections of the national park reported a tiger moving in farmland close to the village.

Noisemaking cannons and fireworks were deployed to disperse the tiger back into the national park forests but this was unsuccessful and when the animal moved into the village and preyed on two goats and dogs, a decision was taken to catch and

relocate the animal.

Box traps were placed at strategic locations around the village and just under a week later an adult male Sumatran tiger was caught. The animal was in very poor

physical condition and had suffered a catastrophic snare injury to one forefoot resulting in the severing of four of its toes.

It is not clear whether the snare injury provoked the conflict or whether one of three hunters known in this area sought to exploit the conflict by placing snares when the animal began moving in village farmland..

Urgent veterinary support was secured and the animal evacuated to a national park guard post in the Kerinci valley for emergency treatment as it was in such poor condition

However despite all efforts, this tiger died early on the fourth day after its rescue from the village. A *post mortem* and subsequent forensic tests conducted at the Bukitinggi animal health laboratories confirmed the animal was suffering a massive parasite infestation which had already caused extensive and chronic damage to the heart and lungs and that pneumonia was the final cause of death.

Just over a month later, in late October 2011, the PHS team was advised of an attack on a village rubber tapper in farmland approximately 14km to the east of the national park in the Tabir river valley area on the borders of Merangin and Bungo districts of Jambi.

The incident occurred in daylight hours in an area of mixed natural forest and old rubber gardens where there is escalating pressure on habitat from iron ore mining companies and, to the immediate north, large-scale forest clearance by an industrial timber plantation company, PT Mugitriman International.

The victim was seriously injured but survived because the force of the attack drove him down a steep hillside and the attacking animal - which he repeatedly described as a tiger – was forced to release him.

Meanwhile, within a day of this incident, the victim's community and a neighbouring village began reporting predation of goats from within their villages by an animal they believed to be a tiger.

Tiger sign was present in the mixed landscape of natural forest and old rubber gardens where the rubber tapper was attacked but TPCUs could find no evidence of a tiger predating goats in the two neighbouring villages and advised the animal was more likely to be either an Asiatic golden cat or Sumatran clouded leopard.

The team discussed this case with KSDA Jambi, the agency holding jurisdiction for nature conservation outside protected areas and it was agreed, given the high level of community anxiety, that catch boxes should be placed at key sites in the two villages where goats had been attacked.

Four nights later an adult male Sumatran Clouded leopard entered one of the box traps and, because it was suffering a shoulder injury was evacuated to the Taman Rimba Zoo in Jambi city for temporary veterinary treatment before relocation. Unfortunately this animal shortly afterwards died, with vets suggesting that feline distemper, may have been the cause of death.

Although it was widely proposed that it was this animal that was also responsible for the attack on the rubber tapper, long-standing members of the team were very dubious, not least since wild Sumatran clouded leopard are not generally known to pose a threat to adult humans.

Just over 10 weeks later, in late January 2012 a 32 year-old man, an illegal logger from the Sungai Manau area of Merangin, was killed and partly dismembered by one or more Sumatran tigers in state forests approximately 14Km south of the site where the October 2011 incident occurred.

It is believed the animal which attacked the illegal logger was not an adult tiger.

PHS TPCU personnel spent the next week working closely with the traditional forest-edge villagers bordering the site where the incident occurred, providing advice on personal safety and monitoring the situation, including the safety of the resident male. The teams concluded there was a strong probability that this attack was linked to the October 2011 attack on the rubber tapper and so to the suspected poaching of an adult female tiger in late September 2011.

The traditional local community in this area was supportive and helpful, not least since the victim came from another area and had broken customary law by not requesting permission to log forests in this area.

However this incident caused serious problems for both the national park and the PHS team as this is an area where tigers frequently move in old rubber gardens at the forest-farmland interface so that communities across a wide area were deeply frightened. Frightened people can often become very angry people and a KSDA ranger who attended the victim's village was temporarily held hostage. Two members of the PHS team, including the FFI team leader, who have long acquaintance with this village were able to defuse this situation and restore some calm in this area at least.

Meanwhile some local politicians, not least individuals linked with local illegal logging syndicates hostile to the national park, sought to exploit this case to their own benefit, openly accusing the PHS team of deliberately releasing 'problem' tigers and demanding closure of the team and abolition of the national park itself.

These rumours were intensified by claims that the tiger(s) responsible for the fatal attack had had white tags hanging from their ears – a common claim in conflicts in this area of Sumatra and which relates to the white 'flash' present at the back of the ear of some tigers.

Tensions in park-edge communities in Merangin district revived three weeks later when another rubber tapper claimed he had been attacked by a tiger and had only survived by climbing a tree.

Medical examination subsequently advised that the man had, in fact, been bitten by a wild boar and not a tiger but had claimed to be the victim of a tiger attack in the hope of securing compensation for his injuries. However his fraudulent claims and the wide publicity they were accorded by local media and politicians caused near panic in many park and forest-edge communities in Merangin district and numerous problems for both PHS and colleagues from KSDA Jambi.

These cases further highlight the need for full practical implementation of the Ministerial ruling on Human-Wildlife Conflict (*PerMen. 48*) which, in addition to establishing clear guidelines for management of human-wildlife conflict and multi-stakeholder actions in the event of conflicts, also established a framework for compensation and medical payments to victims of serious conflicts.

Practical implementation of the PerMen 48 edict in full, not least provision of compensation for victims of serious human-tiger conflicts by government, would also reduce local hostility to conservation agencies and species conservation NGOs when serious human-wildlife conflicts do occur

From foundation of the program in May 2000 through until 2010 TPCUs conducted 'only' two rescues of snared Sumatran tiger - an adult female rescued from a snare in North Bengkulu district, Bengkulu in 2006 and a male, caught in a gin trap after predating water buffalo in a forest fragment in Sawah Lunto district of West Sumatra in mid-2007.

However in the first five months of 2012 the program either led or supported actions to rescue three Sumatran tigers snared accidentally or intentionally in park edge forests or farmland.

The first incident occurred in late January 2012, in a protected watershed forest to the south-west of the national park when staff of Bengkulu Unit for Conservation of Natural Resources (KSDA) were told a tiger had been snared, by poachers, in forest bordering an area where illegal conversion of watershed forests for coffee plantations is occurring.

A rescue party was organised and TPCU rangers, trained in emergency wildlife veterinary responses, drove through the night to join the KSDA-led rescue and dart the tiger so it could be released from the snare and evacuated. The adult male was evacuated to Taman Safari in Bogor, Java for treatment to spear wounds inflicted by a group of wild pig hunters but died soon afterwards from internal injuries.

A month later, in February 2012, two TPCU teams entered forests bordering



the national park in north Bengkulu district to 'sweep' for tiger snares after a TPCU investigation advised a known tiger poacher was frequently entering the area..

One team conducted its six-day patrol without incident, found no signs of suspicious activities and recorded tiger presence in two locations along their patrol route.



The second TPCU patrol, led by Geovril Seven X and accompanied by the team's newly-appointed Jambi coordinator who was receiving on-the-job patrol training, found signs of recent human presence on their fifth day in the forest and followed the trail to find eight active tiger snares and a ninth snare which had caught an adult female tiger who was alive but badly injured.

Contact was made with the team's Bengkulu coordinator, Nurhamidi who then worked with KSDA Bengkulu wildlife vet DrH Yanti to put together a first-response emergency team and then walked for almost two days to the location where they were able to dart the tigress which was then moved to a temporary emergency camp site prepared by the TPCU while awaiting the vet team's arrival.

Meanwhile other TPCUs who were on patrol in other areas of the national park made their way to the location to help prepare for the subsequent evacuation and to ferry veterinary and other supplies needed through the forest to the site.



After attempts to secure the loan of a helicopter to support evacuation of the tigress from the forest failed, teams commenced opening a trail from the rescue team's emergency camp to the nearest (dirt) road head and the evacuation was conducted, on foot, carrying the sedated tigress through more than 12 km of dense and hilly tropical forest to the nearest dirt road head.

Although the animal survived, the severe injuries caused by the cable snare meant that she

could not be safely returned to the wild and she has now been placed in permanent ex-situ care with Taman Safari Indonesia in Bogor, Java.

Finally, in late May 2012, the programme led the rescue of a young adult female tiger caught accidentally in a wild pig snare in farmland in the far south of the Kerinci valley.

This was arguably the most difficult rescue the team has ever conducted since, while the location was not remote, as had been the case in February, the tigress had been snared in dense 'kerinyu' (*Eupatorium odorata*) thickets at farmland edge.

This meant that the darting the animal with a blow pipe was extremely difficult while the situation was made more hazardous still because the farmer who placed the pig snare had constructed it using a long cable so the animal had considerable freedom of manoeuvre.

After numerous attempts to get close enough to the tigress to secure a clear view to safely dart her, the animal moved abruptly and broke the cable anchoring her to an

old coffee tree and retreated deep into the undergrowth and the team evacuated from the area as dusk was falling.

A decision was taken to request support from KSDA Jambi, whose gun licences, including for dart guns were active unlike those of Kerinci Seblat National Park Authority at the time. Additionally the program requested and received armed support from Kerinci district military command which is now highly supportive of the national park and species conservation as our unarmed rangers had to be protected during this very dangerous rescue.

The following morning, rescue actions re-commenced with TPCU rangers searching the dense *kerinyu* scrub for an injured but now free-ranging wild tiger. Visibility averaged less than 2m so that the search was potentially extremely dangerous and so a farmer's dog was used to scout out the tiger's current location. This was identified by the dog's abrupt evacuation from the site. Just under two hours later the tigress was successfully anaesthetised, given sub-cutaneous rehydration therapy and evacuated to Taman Rimba zoo.

Here veterinary examination confirmed that two middle toes of one forefoot had been badly damaged but it was concluded the tigress could subsequently be released if a safe location could be identified.

The PHS team has advised that no site presently exists in KSNP forests in Jambi province for relocation where there is four-wheel access and resident tigers are not already present while two sites that would have been recommended and where old logging roads gave access to forest far from village farmland are no longer feasible due to the activities of PT Mugitriman International.

**Capacity raising** *to build practical abilities of park staff and others including police and local NGOs..*

The programme's Bengkulu teams' leader and two other young and enthusiastic national park officers, including the leader of the national park's tiger monitoring team were facilitated to join Smart Patrol training in Thailand in January 2012 under the Global Tiger Initiative.

Subsequently the team began preparing to implement this standardised system of field patrol reporting and analysis initially through introducing amended field patrol reporting sheets for TPCU patrols

However implementation of this system proved more complex and time-consuming than expected, not least due to problems with the software which seems to have been designed for much smaller protected areas than Kerinci Seblat

At the very end of the project period, the programme started work with colleagues at national park headquarters to develop a pilot SMART data base for use by the PHS team and, subsequently, over 2013, phased in for national park rangers and field technicians .

Training was also provided to TPCU rangers and unit leaders in GIS and entry of patrol data and SMART-based reporting will be piloted over the final four months of 2012 to go fully live in early 2013.

Initial assessment of the SMART system advises it poses no problems for implementation at patrol level given that TPCUs already collect extensive data and GPS way points along

their patrol routes however the database entry requirements for successful operation of the SMART system is likely to prove very time-consuming and a part-time database entry position may have to be created.

In previous years the program has routinely offered on-the-job training to national park rangers through involving them in a range of field activities in particular forest patrols and conflict mitigation. During this period this activity was only occasionally conducted due to grotesque understaffing of the national park's ranger division.

This problem also meant that no suitable national park ranger staff were identified to join the PHS TPCU team as Unit leaders to replace national park ranger secondees resigning, for personal or health reasons.

Three long-serving TPCU community rangers who have already passed all the selection criteria for formal recruitment into the national park service in early-mid 2013 as full rather than honorary rangers were therefore appointed as TPCU leaders on a rolling basis so they could acquire operational command skills prior to their absorption into the park and taking on formal leadership roles within the program structure.

The team leader also worked with local NGO partners who are members of the AKAR Network to give advice on tiger conservation issues and, in particular, on mitigation of low grade human-tiger conflicts and collection of information on threat to tiger and habitat.

### **Stakeholder liaison and working with partners**

The programme worked closely with local NGO partners on a variety of issues, most importantly pressure from certain local governments and the mining industry for the Minister of Forestry to give permission for a network of roads through core tiger habitat in Kerinci Seblat National Park.

FFI UK secured urgently needed operational support to our local NGO partners in the AKAR Network to lobby against the roads proposals and fund travel costs to meet with national government institutions including public works and spatial planning agencies.

Meanwhile this programme provided extensive data on tiger populations and likely impacts on tiger conservation in KSNP if the roads were approved to the 'Independent Team appointed by the Ministry of Forestry to evaluate the roads proposals and, with local NGO colleagues, identified alternatives to construction of roads through core tiger habitat.

In late March 2012 the proposed cross-park road between Solok Selatan and Pesisir Selatan districts of West Sumatra in the northern section of the national park was formally rejected by the Minister of Forestry and the proposing districts advised to instead upgrade existing infrastructure.

However the Minister has still not issued a public statement on three other trans-park roads proposed to run through key tiger habitats and core areas of the park by local governments even though it is known that the Independent team formally recommended rejection of these routes in April.

The program continued to liaise with two palm oil plantation companies in Solok Selatan district, West Sumatra to the north-east of the national park and in Mukomuko district to the southwest of the park over plans to provide support to tiger and species conservation.

In the case of the Bengkulu plantation company which is owned by the Belgian-based SIPEF group, it is understood support-in-kind will be given to KSDA Bengkulu for



construction of veterinary and temporary holding facilities in North Bengkulu in the Seblat elephant sanctuary.

Meanwhile similar veterinary and temporary holding facilities for injured or conflict tigers awaiting relocation are proposed to be provided by PT Tegal Kerinci Agung who have become supportive and helpful partners to the national park in an area where significant problems are encountered.

The program has never actively sought press or other media focus, not least given the often sensitive nature of activities however some media visits were facilitated during 2012 with reporters from two local newspaper groups joining forest patrols and filming by Kompas TV's popular 'CS' current affairs program for a 'special' report on poaching and trade in Sumatran tiger.

**DJM**  
**September 2012**