

Pelestarian Harimau Sumatera Kerinci-Seblat

Kerinci Seblat Sumatran Tiger Protection & Conservation

**Report on activities conducted with the
support of Dreamworld Conservation
Funding in 2009-2010**



Summary

Program Objective

To secure the long-term conservation of wild Sumatran tiger, in particular through controlling poaching and trafficking of Sumatran tiger and tiger prey species, and habitat loss; through effective mitigation of human-wildlife conflict; raising the ability of forestry officers and others to tackle tiger and other serious wildlife and forest crime; and through winning the support of forest-edge communities and local governments for conservation of Sumatran tiger, tiger prey species and tiger habitat

Summary of Activities

Five Tiger Protection & Conservation Units were active during the reporting period conducting a range of field activities in nine districts and three provinces of Kerinci Seblat National Park (TNKS).

A total of 73 Sumatran tiger records – including first-hand observations- were made, not including numerous repeat records made during a long-running human-tiger conflict in the south of the Kerinci valley. Frequency of Encounter with tigers during routine forest patrols reduced slightly to one tiger per 24.5 patrol kilometres walked but, over the year as a whole, frequency of encounter with tigers improved.

All program activities were seriously affected by the need to maintain a constant ranger presence in the New Road human-tiger conflict site in the Kerinci valley for more than four months and so only just over 80 routine field actions were conducted with a walking distance of 1397 kilometres, far below that planned.

A total of 12 active tiger snares and 359 ungulate snares – some strong enough to hold a tiger were detected and destroyed by TPCU rangers. The skeleton of a young female Sumatran tiger was found in a snare on a new patrol route high in the mountains on the Bengkulu-South Sumatra provincial border.

Undercover investigations by TPCU rangers resulted in the arrest of five men and the seizure of skins and body parts of not fewer than four Sumatran tigers. All individuals arrested were subsequently sentenced to custodial sentences although the case of two men is now under Appeal by the District prosecutor who is demanding a heavier sentence than the one year term proposed

The program responded to 25 individual incidents of human-wildlife conflict or wildlife emergencies, the majority relating to human-tiger conflicts. Most of the conflicts required one week or less to resolve however construction of a new district highway through abandoned farmland and fragment forest in the south of the Kerinci valley triggered a conflict involving a total of five Sumatran tigers which developed in October 2009 and continues, albeit at low level, to date of this report.

Four young rangers newly-posted to KSNP were seconded to the PHS team for practical induction training and one of these has now been seconded to the TPCUs as a Unit leader to replace a long-serving TPCU Leader. The program also provided practical advice on field methods, including investigations, to our colleagues from the Jambi tiger project which has established a species protection and conservation unit working in and around Berbak national park. A planned wildlife crime investigation training workshop was not conducted.

With the generous support of Dreamworld Conservation Funding the FFI team leader was able to attend the Kathmandu Global Tiger Workshop in Nepal in October 2009 and subsequently also attended the pre-tiger summit meeting in Bali in July 2010. The FFI team leader was also appointed a member of the Indonesia Support team tasked with helping to draft a detailed practical plan to secure and increase wild tiger populations.

The national tiger recovery plan proposes establishing 30 new Tiger Protection and Conservation Units in five key tiger habitats around Sumatra and the structure developed by this program is proposed to form the basis of tiger conservation and protection in the field for the next decade.

Five years of surveys and tiger field research by our partners in the FFI/DICE Sumatran Tiger Monitoring (MHS) team concluded in late 2009 and analysis of the data secured advises that Kerinci Seblat National Park forest have the highest levels of tiger occupancy (78 per cent) of any protected area in Sumatra.

Two TNKS ranger members of this team, Eko Supriyatno and Johann Simorangkir, resigned from the PHS team in 2010: Eko Supriyatno joined the program as a TPCU II Leader in August 2000 while Johann Simorangkir became Leader of TPCU III in late 2002. Eko has now been posted full-time to the SPORC forestry rapid response unit in Jambi city while Johann has returned to general duties within KSNP and is currently leading a national park section responsible for management of national park forests in three districts of Jambi provinces.

We thank them, both, for their untiring service and dedication to the cause of conservation of Sumatran tigers and biodiversity in general and we look forward to continuing to work closely with them in the future.

Activities

- **Investigations to identify threat so that an effective response can be made either by law enforcement or through forest patrols**

An average of three or more active investigations were launched each month during the reporting period not including routine information collection activities relating to the identities or activities of suspect individuals or collection of information on trends and changes in demand in the wildlife black market.

PHS investigations were conducted in all four provinces bordering Kerinci Seblat National Park and resulted in the arrest and subsequent prosecution of a total of five individuals from three different districts of three park edge provinces on tiger poaching and trafficking charges.

All of these individuals had been known to the PHS team for six months or more before law enforcement was launched and two men from Pesisir Selatan district of West Sumatra, arrested in Kerinci district in November, had been known to the PHS team since 2004 as suspected poachers of tiger and Sumatran rhinoceros with links to a Malay Chinese trader operating out of Riau province in eastern Sumatera.

Another man, a Kerinci trader arrested in Merangin district in December 2009, *pak Sinar/Bedul*, had been the subject of an active PHS investigation in 2008 which was aborted when armed men were seen in the vicinity of the suspect's house apparently waiting for the PHS investigator.

In addition to law enforcement against poachers and traders, investigations and information collection also steered TPCUs to areas of forest where it was suspected threat was active. As a result, of information received, TPCUs were able to disarm a total of 12 tiger snares and more than 170 ungulate snares.

Analysis of investigation results advises that the black market price for tiger bone around KSNP is little changed on 2008-9 with prices averaging \$44 per kg but that prices for tiger pelts increased from the second half of 2009 for unknown reasons.

The most common wildlife crime encountered in and bordering KSNP on the basis of percentage of patrols recording threat was bird trapping/liming for the cage bird trade and TPCU patrols report that some birds common even 10 years ago are now rarely recorded.

- **Forest patrols: to prevent threat emerging, or to act against an active threat.**

The five TPCUs active conducted patrols in national park and park buffer zone forests in three of the four provinces and eight districts bordering Kerinci Seblat National Park. The number of forest patrols conducted was lower (80) than planned and distance walked (1397 Km) shorter due to the impact of a complex human-tiger conflict in the far south of the Kerinci valley which badly disrupted all patrol schedules between October and May 2010.

Conflict mitigation demands also meant that plans to conduct survey patrols in areas not previously covered by PHS ranger teams could not generally be implemented although some new patrol routes were developed.

Patrols recorded not fewer than 73 individual and distinctive encounters with Sumatran tiger during the period *not including* multiple records of encounters with five

Sumatran tigers (three adults, two cubs) in the New Road conflict area (see *Conflict*). Tigers were reported present on the majority (62 per cent) of patrols conducted by TPCUs during the reporting period and one patrol had to be aborted on Day Three due to the overly bold behaviour of a young Sumatran tiger which repeatedly approached the TPCU team.

Frequency of encounter with Sumatran tiger (not including tiger records made during conflict mitigation actions in the New Road conflict area in Kerinci) was slightly lower than in 2008-9 at one tiger per 24.5 patrol kilometres walked. This is likely to be a consequence of disruption to patrol routines due to demands for conflict mitigation and three patrols being cut short due to law enforcement against illegal loggers or encroachers.

Patrols destroyed a total of 12 tiger snares, three of which were placed by poachers seeking to exploit human-tiger conflicts and a total of 359 deer and other ungulate snares during the programme period. Almost half of the deer snares detected and destroyed were found in the weeks leading up to the festival of Hari Raya Idul Fitri which marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. No obvious seasonal influence was observed in either tiger poaching detected or information received relating to tiger poaching or trade.

Low or no threat was detected to Sumatran tiger through snare poaching in regularly patrolled areas and all tiger snares destroyed were found on new routes or on routes which had not been patrolled for one year or more.

An additional nine active tiger snares were destroyed by a local NGO partner facilitated through FFI Kerinci to develop actions to conserve and protect a forest corridor linking the national park to a nearby protected watershed protection forest which has been identified as having a significant tiger population.

The poachers in this case have now been identified and came from a different park-edge district; information advises that they had specifically selected the Tandai forest area in which to poach because it was not patrolled by TPCU teams.

Law enforcement: Five traders or poachers of Sumatran tiger from three different districts and three of the four provinces bordering Kerinci Seblat National Park were arrested in law enforcement actions led by PHS rangers working in co-ordination with district police. All these arrests resulted in custodial sentences being imposed and park-edge judiciary are becoming increasingly aware of the serious nature of wildlife crime. All the men arrested in the PHS-led operations had been the focus of previous investigations.

The first tiger-related law enforcement operation to be conducted during this program period was in November 2009 when the team led a joint operation with Kerinci district police to arrest two men from the notorious poaching community of Tapan in Pesisir Selatan district of West Sumatra province. The pair were preparing to sell the skin and bones of a Sumatran tiger to a buyer in Sungaipenuh, Kerinci.

One of the two men, Darwis, had been known to this programme since 2002 as a suspected professional tiger and rhino poacher with connections to a Malay Chinese working out of Pekanbaru in Riau province of eastern Sumatra. He was arrested with a second Tapan man, 'Kules', known since 2007 as having an involvement in the trade in elephant ivory and tiger and whose father and older brother are both also recorded as suspected dealers in protected wildlife..

Subsequent examination of the seizure showed that while the skin was from one tiger, a young adult, the majority but not all of the bones were from a much younger juvenile tiger which had, on the basis of bone weight and condition, been dead for at last three months. It is suspected this smaller animal is an individual TPCU investigators tried but failed to find in April 2009. The two men in this case were subsequently sentenced to eighteen months custodial sentences by Kerinci district court and this is known to have had a strong impact on people in the Tapan area. A police officer who was acting as the men's body guard on the trip to Kerinci and to ensure the safety of the planned transaction was not prosecuted but vigorously interviewed by Kerinci police officers and subject to police internal disciplinary procedures.

Just over a month later, in December 2009, the PHS team led a combined law enforcement action with Merangin police officers in Bangko, capital of Merangin district of Jambi, securing the arrest of *pak Sinar aka Bedul* a Kerinci trader who was proposing to sell the pelt of an adult Sumatran tiger to an unknown individual.

Pak Sinar (see photograph below) had been identified as a suspected trader of tigers and serow from around the Kerinci valley area since 2007 and in late 2008 a planned law enforcement operation to secure his arrest in Kerinci was aborted at the last minute when armed individuals were spotted in the vicinity of his house apparently waiting for the arrival of an undercover TPCU ranger.

In the two years before he was finally arrested in Bangko in possession of a tiger skin he had carried from Kerinci information secured by the PHS team suggests he traded two or more Sumatran tigers, in both cases acting as a broker on commission for the poachers.

Merangin district court subsequently sentenced him to a two years eight months custodial sentence, this is the heaviest sentence made against tiger poachers or traders in the program's history and illustrates how the judiciary in many areas of Sumatra is becoming increasingly aware of the serious nature of wildlife crime.

In May 2010 after a two months long investigation by an undercover TPCU ranger, two men from Tunggang village in Muko Muko district of northern Bengkulu province were arrested in Bengkulu city in a joint operation with Bengkulu city police led by PHS.

The two men, a father and son, were in possession of the pelt and skeleton of a young adult Sumatran tiger which they proposed to sell to an unidentified individual in Bengkulu city.



During the investigation phase of this action, *pak* Tarikat (see *photograph, below*) admitted poaching more than 100 Sumatran tigers during a 30 year poaching career in



the forests of northern Bengkulu and southern West Sumatra provinces. Tarikat and his son were subsequently both sentenced to one year custodial sentences by Bengkulu City district court.

This sentence is now under Appeal by prosecutors who advise it is too light given the serious nature of the offence.

Two Kerinci deer poachers were arrested by TPCUs in the national park in mid 2009 and escorted out of the forest but subsequently released under a formal legal caution as it was considered evidence was not strong enough to take the case to court. One of these men is now under surveillance by TPCU investigators who believe he is again poaching in the national park in spite of pledging he would never again enter the park

to hunt wildlife.

TPCU rangers leaders initiated and led an operation to confiscate a young adult female Sumatran clouded leopard held as a pet by a garage owner in Bungo district. The case was subsequently taken over by our colleagues from the Frankfurt Zoological Society who work in Bukit Tigapuluh National Park to the east of Kerinci Seblat National Park in Jambi.

TPCU rangers provided support to National Park officers in Kerinci district to arrest nine encroachers clearing national park forests in the foothills of Mt Tujuh and escorted the suspects to Sungai Penuh. The Kerinci district leader or *Bupati*, a man not known for his sympathy for the national park, then instructed they should be released. Subsequently *Bupati* Murrasman issued an Edict advising that farmers arrested inside the park would no longer receive protection or legal aid from the district and warned residents to leave the National Park in Kerinci by the beginning of December 2010.

TPCU patrols seized two chainsaws active in the national park, in one case the chainsaw operator escaped by jumping down a cliff (he is known to have survived) in the second case the illegal logger was apprehended and his case is now proceeding through the judicial process in Bangko. Two men arrested by a TPCU patrol unit while clearing forest in Bungo district of Jambi were escorted out of the forest and issued with legal warnings not to return to the area after GIS analysis indicated the site was not inside Kerinci Seblat National Park forests.

Human-wildlife conflict mitigation and wildlife emergencies: PHS teams responded to a total of 24 specific human-wildlife conflicts over the period 2009-2010 excluding incidents where brief assessments confirmed a full field response was not required.

The great majority of cases handled related to conflicts involving Sumatran tiger but incidents involving other species including Asiatic golden cat (two cases), Island clouded leopard (one) and Sumatran elephant (one) were also handled. As in previous years, conflicts and wildlife emergencies reported to involve Sumatran tiger were often found to relate to other species.

Of the 20 conflicts confirmed to involve Sumatran tiger, six incidents saw livestock predation occurring with the remaining cases relating to tigers moving in and through farmland and so causing anxiety.

The most complex and long-lasting conflict encountered resulted from construction (2008-2009) of a new, inter-district, highway through abandoned farmland and fragment forest in the far south of the Kerinci valley.

The 'New Road' sparked a human-tiger conflict that caused massive disruption to program activities from October 2009 through to May 2010 with almost no routine patrol activities conducted by the three Jambi-based TPCUs in October 2009 and February, March and May 2010. By March 2010 rangers monitoring the situation in the New Road area which covers approximately 75 sq kilometres had identified a total of four tigers – an adult female, a young adult male (possibly a sibling of the adult female) and two cubs.

The tigress (see below) and her cubs were frequently observed sitting at the side of the new inter-district highway at night while the resident male, believed to be relatively young, was also frequently seen crossing the new road. Problems were heightened because the new road improved access to farmland abandoned in the early nineties so that land holders were encouraged to re-open long abandoned farmland only to find they had large felid neighbours.



A decision was finally taken to attempt to catch the adult female (see left) and hopefully her cubs at the same time so they could be relocated for their own safety and box traps were placed in key locations. A visit to the site by John Goodrich of WCS Siberia

and Harry 'Beebach' Wibisono, chairman of the Harimaukita Sumatran tiger conservation forum was very valuable in developing strategies to deal with the issues

inherent in seeking to catch an adult and her cubs at the same time while ensuring that the young resident male was not caught.

In April 2010 the adult female was caught in a box trap but shortly after managed to escape through a minuscule 5cmx5cm hatch which had not been padlocked because it was thought to be too small to pose a problem and she escaped and joined her cubs who had been calling to her from a nearby hill top.

Three weeks later, in mid May 2010, one of the remaining Box Traps left active caught an adult male Sumatran tiger. This animal was a mature animal aged five years old or more on the basis of dentition, very thin, infested with parasites and suffering from bullet wounds to the stomach and the base of the spine immediately above the tail.

His condition was very poor and it was clear that before any decision could be taken on his future that urgent veterinary treatment would need to be given.

The animal had not been previously recorded in the New Road area although TPCU patrols had advised, a week before the capture, that they had seen the footmarks of a 'strange' tiger.

This tiger was evacuated to a national park guard post at Bukit Tapan above Sungaipenuh for initial medical treatment and evaluation (see *right*) and we thank Dr Wenny from Frankfurt Zoological Society in Jambi for her enthusiasm and help in these first days. Subsequently Dr Yanti from the Conservation Response Unit in Bengkulu took over veterinary care. By the end of the first week it became clear that this tiger required longer term veterinary treatment and X-rays before any decision could be taken on release – a decision complicated by old and extensive damage to one canine and more recent damage to a second canine.



Wildlife vets at Taman Safari Indonesia offered to take over the role of care for this tiger and he was flown, by TSI, from Padang to Jakarta for further intensive treatment. He remains in the care of TSI vets and while the stomach injuries are now healed and he has gained weight and condition it is unclear whether the spinal injury will allow his release to the wild as it appears to have caused nerve damage to a rear leg.

At date of this report the adult female continues to be occasionally seen in this area but has apparently become much more cautious and, since her 24 hours in a capture box, she seems to have stopped sitting on the side of the road. Her cubs are entering the dispersal phase (we estimate they are now approximately 15 months old) and also now much more rarely seen and so their presence is less disruptive and local farmers are becoming much more tolerant. As a result TPCU presence in the area has been reduced to monitoring at a distance primarily through use of village informants. The young resident male is also still intermittently seen in the area.

A tiger reportedly trapped in a room in an abandoned building on the Kerinci-Merangin district borders in November 2009 was found to be a severely emaciated and dehydrated adult Asiatic golden cat suffering from air gun injuries to the belly. In spite of emergency veterinary treatment this animal died very shortly after rescue. Meanwhile a tiger cub rescued from a village in Pesisir Selatan transpired to be a healthy and very hostile young Leopard cat who was subsequently released. An emergency dash to a very remote settlement in the extreme west of Merangin district which involved a nine hour drive followed by two hours walk revealed that a tiger caught in a wild pig snare, badly injured and possibly already dead was in fact a dead pig which had been caught in a pig snare and then partly eaten by a tiger. Farmers had seen tiger footprints approaching the snare, noticed an unpleasant smell and had assumed that a tiger had been caught and not checked to find out what had happened but preferred to instead report the incident to the PHS team.

Revenge killings as a result of conflict continue to pose a threat to tigers where a swift response is not made and a tiger which predated livestock in a remote forest enclave in Sarolangun district of Jambi and outside the area where PHS has capacity to operate is strongly suspected to have been killed by poachers exploiting the situation. A young male tiger that repeatedly predated livestock in an enclave area to the north of KSNP near Padang city was subsequently poisoned.

Demands for human-tiger conflict mitigation support now impact quite heavily on routine field duties and this is unlikely to change for as long as there are Sumatran tigers in Kerinci Seblat National Park and there are interactions between human and tiger in areas bordering the national park. We have therefore started to develop planning for a 'Conflict Hotline' system in some remote and difficult to access national park forest-edge areas where we hope to provide training to selected villagers and local government and forestry officers in the first stages of human-tiger conflict assessment and mitigation and reporting procedures.

The Conflict Hotline system will be developed and trialled in conjunction with Johann Simorangkir who has developed great expertise in human-tiger conflict mitigation in his eight years with the PHS team and if it can be established, it may offer potential as a method for getting a more comprehensive approach to conflict mitigation while reducing pressure on the PHS team.

- **Other activities**

Training: plans to hold two training workshops to build increased awareness of the scale and scope of wildlife crime among park-edge police divisions and key local government officers in West Sumatra and South Sumatra provinces were cancelled for reasons relating to funding.

However the program provided input and data for a wildlife crime investigation training program run through the American Embassy in Jakarta in May which provided essentially the same training to park-edge districts and a young Kerinci district police officer was seconded to the program for a period of more than three months in early 2010.

Four new young national park ranger officers were posted to PHS for practical induction training upon being posted to Kerinci Seblat National Park and this is the third year running in which the program has been asked to conduct induction training for new rangers. One of these young rangers has since been invited to join the PHS team as a TPCU Leader. Ranger members of the new species protection and conservation team established by ZSL to cover Berbak National Park and surrounding forests in eastern Jambi also worked with the PHS team for a month to develop key field methodologies including investigation techniques

Stakeholder liaison: The program maintained a close and friendly relationship with other species protection and conservation teams in Sumatra, in particular with WCS IP, Frankfurt Zoological Society who work in the neighbouring Bukit Tigapuluh National Park in Jambi and the ZSL Jambi Tiger team whose new species protection and conservation unit is led by a former KSNP officer who worked closely with the PHS team in Bengkulu before his transfer to Jambi KSDA. We were also able to maintain contact with the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (WEN) team at Indonesia National Police headquarters in Jakarta and regularly exchanged information with our friends from TRAFFIC South East Asia.

Thanks to the generous support of Dreamworld Conservation Funding the FFI team leader was able to attend the Kathmandu Global Tiger Workshop in October 2009 and subsequently the pre Tiger Summit meeting in Bali in July 2010. She also provided detailed technical input on practical actions needed to the series of meetings held to develop Indonesia's National Tiger Recovery Program. Among actions proposed in this document is development of 30 new Tiger Protection & Conservation Units in five protected areas of Sumatra based on the model pioneered in Kerinci Seblat NP over the past decade.

Working with local NGOs for tiger and tiger habitat conservation:

The NGO Mentor post formed in 2008-2009 to provide focused practical support to our local NGO partners in the AKAR Network became self-funded in late 2009 after the NGO mentor secured a Darwin Initiative grant to help our local NGO partner secure Village Forest conservation status for more than 20,000 ha of lowland forests bordering KSNP in Merangin district. At least three tigers are resident or frequently present in this forest block which forms a corridor between KSNP in Merangin district and a large area of protected water shed forest in Sarolangun district to the immediate south. It is expected that the total area of protected Village Forest in this area will reach approximately 50,000ha forming important tiger habitat and a critically important buffer to Kerinci Seblat National Park

Meanwhile the FFI team leader secured initial funding, through the generosity of the Panthera Foundation, for a local NGO partner in Solok Selatan district of West

Sumatra province to develop field actions to secure a critically threatened forest corridor between Kerinci Seblat National Park and the Batang Hari Protected Forest. Among early successes of the ICS team has been securing a halt to an illegal open-cast iron ore mine in a protected forest and the disarming of nine active tiger snares as a result of information secured from a community information network.

Networking: Plans to work with a Bengkulu-based plantation company to develop effective management of some 20,000ha of important tiger habitat in lowland and lowland hill forest bordering the national park in Muko Muko and North Bengkulu districts unfortunately did not progress as the company did not secure the forestry department permits needed.. We did provide advice to a West Sumatra plantation company who were and remain very keen for forest on their plantation to be used as a relocation site for Sumatran tigers. Unfortunately the site is not presently suitable for large carnivore relocations but this company remains anxious to be involved in practical actions to conserve tigers and we hope that a partnership can be developed, ideally between this plantation and our local NGO partner in this area.

The program also assisted national broadcaster TV One in their plans to make a 'News Special' on tiger poaching and trafficking and the actions being undertaken to thwart the wildlife trade. After the crew's visit to Kerinci, what was planned as a 30 minute documentary became a two-part 'Special' which has been repeated at least three times in the last nine months and which secured among the highest ratings ever recorded by TV One for a documentary.

After more than six years of wonderful support and help for this program we finally received a visit from Dreamworld and a member of the Tiger Island team. We do so hope that such visits might become a routine.

Finally, in mid 2010, National Park officers asked the FFI team leader permission for initial steps to be taken which may result in 10 or more PHS community team members becoming fully-recognised staff of Kerinci Seblat National Park. This step is proposed to be taken in recognition of the contribution to tiger and tiger habitat conservation made by community members of the PHS team with the support of our loyal donors.