

# **Pelestarian Harimau Sumatera Kerinci-Seblat**

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

**Report on activities conducted with the  
support of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Tiger  
July-December 2012**

**by**

**Fauna & Flora International**



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## Summary

Tiger Protection & Conservation Units conducted a total of 40 forest patrols in tiger habitat in seven districts of three of the four provinces adjoining Kerinci Seblat National Park and recorded the presence of not fewer than 27 tigers in the course of patrols.

The number of routine forest patrols conducted was lower than the 12-month norm since the project period saw two training workshops conducted as well as the programme's annual evaluation workshop where team members are encouraged to give input on activities for the year ahead and jointly evaluate programme activities.

Patrol results and investigations conducted during the project period indicated that the resurgence in threat to tiger first tentatively proposed in 2011 appears to have escalated during the project period.

Nine active tiger snares were destroyed in the course of two intelligence-driven patrols in forests outside the national park while TPCUs also found evidence of recently active snares on a further four patrols, three of which were launched on the basis of information received.

Patrol records advise that at least three tigers died in the inactive snare placements found: the individuals responsible for one and possibly two of these cases have been identified but no evidence has yet been secured for a law enforcement response.

Active or recently active poaching of tiger was recorded only once in a routine patrol location while a strong emphasis on securing information for a patrol response during the project period may be in part responsible for the increase in threat to tigers that was recorded.

No tiger-related law enforcement actions were conducted during this six-month project period and discussions with TPCU investigators during the annual team evaluation meeting in December confirmed it has become very difficult to secure evidence for law enforcement using previously successful methodologies.

To address this issue, the team commenced trialling of routine surveillance of certain individuals suspected to pose a serious threat to Sumatran tiger.

At the date of this report, the FFI Indonesia Programme is also seeking to facilitate a high-level meeting in Jakarta to be held under the auspices of Interpol Indonesia to brief key provincial police chiefs on the ASEAN Wildlife (law) Enforcement Network and other Interpol-led initiatives to stem threat to tiger from international organised crime.

Meanwhile TPCU members either led or supported habitat protection law enforcement actions resulting in the arrest of a total of 11 individuals from two park-edge districts and issued numerous formal and informal legal cautions to individuals encountered in and adjoining the national park.

Programme personnel worked with forest-edge communities to mitigate a total of four human-tiger conflict incidents during the project period, two of which required repeated visits to the site.

Use of MIST patrol and data analysis was formally launched in September following a training workshop at the team's main base camp while recruitment for a sixth Tiger Protection & Conservation Unit intended to strengthen field actions in national park forests in the south-west of the national park in Bengkulu Province commenced in October.

Plans to secure a basis for practical implementation of the Forestry Ministry's P48 multi-stakeholder Human-Tiger Conflict Mitigation Protocol were not proceeded with for capacity reasons but planning commenced for a pilot initiative to this purpose in one park-edge province in 2013 subject to funds being secured from another donor.

## **Activities and Results**

### ▪ Investigations and information collection and suspect identification:

A total of 31 active investigations were conducted into suspected poaching and trade in Sumatran tiger and other highly protected species during the project period in eight districts and three provinces bordering Kerinci Seblat National Park.

Team members were strongly encouraged to source information on active threat to tiger and all active tiger snares and the majority (73) of the 111 active deer snares destroyed were found on patrols launched on the basis of information secured.

Investigations also directed TPCU patrols to three sites in two park-edge districts of Jambi Province where recently active snare placements were found that were responsible for the death of a minimum of two and possibly three tigers between September and December 2012.

Two of these tigers were killed by an individual from another park-edge district not previously known to this programme although from a park-edge community closely associated with poaching of tiger and, in the past, of rhino.

The activities of this individual and two men identified as working with him are now being closely monitored and in early January 2013, just after this project period closed, an additional two tiger snares placed by this gang were destroyed in an intelligence-led patrol.

It has become increasingly difficult to secure valid (proven) information on tiger poaching and trade incidents due to the extreme caution now being exhibited by those poachers and dealers still active around the national park.

Therefore, in addition to intensifying the collection of information on possible active threat to tiger and tiger prey for a patrol response, the programme also began to explore other methods to secure information and, subsequently evidence, on the activities of traders and poachers, including through routine covert surveillance.

The team continued to monitor and collect information, where possible, on the activities of two poaching and trade syndicates believed to be trading tigers from three park-edge provinces but no evidence for a law enforcement response was secured.

We hope that following a briefing meeting for Sumatran provincial police chiefs by Interpol Indonesia to be facilitated through an FFI donor and planned to be conducted in the first quarter of 2013 that the programme may be able to discuss new methodologies for investigations into serious organised tiger crime.

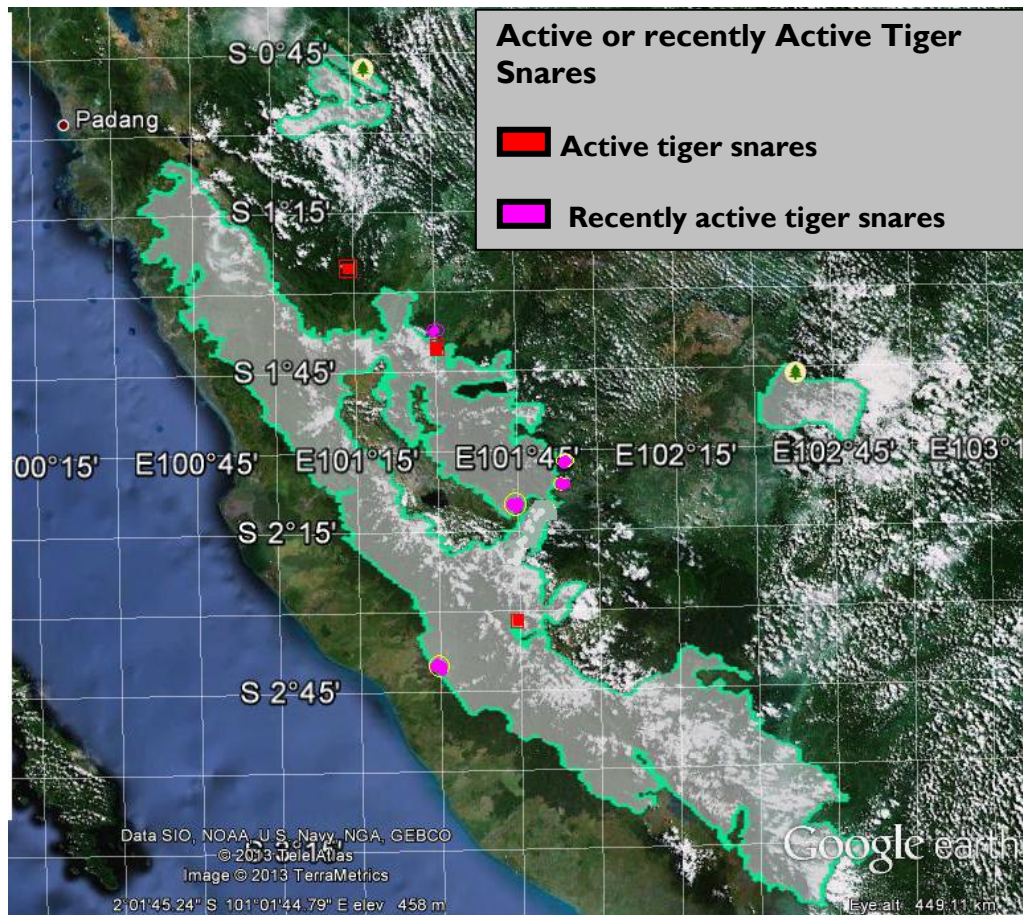
## Forest Patrols

A total of 40 routine or intelligence-driven forest patrols were conducted during the project period in seven districts of three of the four provinces bordering Kerinci Seblat National Park.

Patrols walked a total distance of just over 615 km by GPS way point and recorded the presence of not fewer than 27 tigers with a Frequency of Encounter of tigers at 1 tiger per 22.7 patrol kilometres walked and so almost identical with the same six-month periods in 2011 and 2010.

The percentage of patrols recording tiger presence reduced to just over 43%, primarily due to a number of field actions focused on tiger habitat protection (illegal logging, mining and encroachment) or patrols investigating suspected poaching incidents.

Distance walked and the number of patrols conducted were also impacted by the need to train up new rangers recruited into the team so requiring TPCUs to amalgamate for



some patrols and also by two training workshops in September (see below) and the team's annual evaluation and strategy discussion meeting in December.

Nine active tiger snares were found and destroyed on two intelligence-driven patrols during the project period – a matter of deep concern given that 'only' 10 active snares were recorded in the whole of 2010 and 'only' 11 active snares in 2011 – the year in which the programme first began to warn of a possible increase in threat to tigers.



The largest number of active snares (7) was destroyed in the Batang Hari watershed Protection Forest or *hutan lindung* to the north-east of the national park in Solok Selatan District of West Sumatra Province after an investigation led by a long-standing community team ranger.

This forest block does not fall within the programme area - although connected to the national park via a fragile and seriously degraded forest corridor - however the information secured was so compelling that a decision was taken to launch a field response.



Two men, both armed, and believed to be the individuals who set these snares, were encountered by the (unarmed) patrol unit but law enforcement action using Indonesian gun ownership laws could not be safely taken. These individuals were from a district to the west of the national park and had advised the team's informant they were setting tiger snares in this area on the basis that it was "safe".



Two active tiger snares – and the remains of a snare which had recently killed a tiger were also found by an information-driven patrol unit in forest immediately bordering the eastern edges of the national park in Bungo District of Jambi Province where serious illegal logging – possibly related to the activities of an industrial timber plantation - is now occurring.

In both cases, TPCUs reported that tigers were present in the immediate area where the active snares had been set.

Meanwhile three intelligence-driven patrols in park-edge forests on the Merangin-Kerinci District borders in the central area of the park found a total of four recently-active snare placements, one of which killed a tiger. The individuals who placed these snares were also identified as having been responsible for four inactive snare placements found by an

information-driven TPCU patrol, again in forests bordering the national park in a neighbouring sub-district some weeks later.

'Only' one tiger poaching incident was confirmed to have occurred inside the national park, this occurred in Mukomuko District of Bengkulu Province to the west of the park where the remains of a snare which had killed a tiger were found on a routine patrol in August.

The men responsible are suspected to be from a notorious poaching community in a park-edge district in the adjoining province of West Sumatra and to have exploited illegal clearances of state forest bordering the park which has made access to national park forests easier.

The number of deer snares detected and destroyed by TPCUs during the project period was substantially lower than in the same period in 2011 with 111 snares destroyed compared with 178 in the same period of 2011 and so continuing a recent trend of



reduced pressure on deer even though this project period included the fasting month of Ramadan when deer poaching traditionally increases sharply.

Threat to tiger habitat, within the national park but in particular in adjoining protected state forests, was recorded on almost 40% of all patrols conducted with illegal activities recorded including illegal logging, gold mining as well as conversion of state or national park forest.



## Human-tiger conflict mitigation

In sharp contrast to the series of major conflicts and wildlife emergencies recorded and responded to by the programme in the first six months of 2012, no major conflicts or wildlife emergencies requiring rescues or veterinary intervention occurred.

A total of seven reported human-tiger conflict incidents were responded to by TPCU rangers in four park-edge districts in Bengkulu and Jambi Provinces.

Information on an eight cases was reported to colleagues in KSDA West Sumatra since the site was far from the national park and more easily accessed from Padang than from Kerinci.

Livestock predation occurred in two of these cases, (goats and a pack pony) which occurred in park-edge farmland while the remaining cases related to tigers seen moving through forest-edge farmland or, in one case, by a farmer in hot pursuit of a sambar deer.

One of these incidents – in Lebong District of Bengkulu Province – required repeat visits by TPCU personnel, and patrols subsequently conducted in surrounding forest strongly suggest that serious disturbance to habitat from illegal albeit traditional gold mining may 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.

## Law enforcement to address wildlife and other forest crime

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 reported very extensive illegal forest clearance in an enclave area in the eastern edges of the district a joint operation led by the national park was launched and resulted in eight arrests.

Subsequent judicial proceedings in this case have been extremely slow



following demonstrations organised by local politicians and the case has still not reached a court hearing. These delays may be related to the upcoming district elections which are currently scheduled to be held in mid or late 2013.

In Mukomuko District of Bengkulu Province in the south-west quadrant of the national park, three illegal loggers were arrested by a TPCU patrol team and subsequently surrendered into police custody. This case is presently passing smoothly through the judicial process and a judgment is expected shortly.

TPCU patrols reported extensive illegal logging in park-edge forests in one area of Jambi and illegal gold mining within the national park in a district of Bengkulu but were unable to intervene due to number of offenders and the cases were reported to the national park for a co-ordinated multi-agency response.

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.

Three men – including two village headmen – who were arrested in late April 2012 following a lengthy PHS investigation into poaching and trade in the remote Jangkat area of Merangin District were sentenced to two-year, six-month custodial terms on tiger trade and poaching charges by Kerinci District court.

These cases received extensive coverage in local and national media and were twice cited by suspected poachers interviewed in the course of covert investigations as a reason to be very cautious.

Minor infringements of forest and species protection law including small-scale and on occasion unintentional encroachment by traditional forest edge communities at park-edge were dealt with through counselling and the issue of formal legal warnings.

FFI Indonesia is presently in discussion with Interpol Indonesia and Indonesia National Police Authority regarding a planned 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.

### **Capacity raising**

Two training workshops for PHS team members and key national park and KSDA (Unit for Conservation of Natural Resources) 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 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 wildlife 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 of the project period, this training was not required in practice.

The second training workshop held, led by Field Manager Dian Risdianto, focused on the introduction of MIST-based patrol data collection and development of a database for the PHS team and for the national park.



TPCU rangers have been using the basic principles of 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 patrol records database at National Park headquarters into which all PHS KS patrol and survey records and, subsequently, results of national park field activities will be input.

Unfortunately, the database component of the MIST patrol system has caused some problems for the programme due to the time required to correctly enter into the system very detailed records from patrols often lasting six days or more.

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 and may move, in 2013, to the SMART patrol record system which is reported to offer more user-friendly software.

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 Bengkulu unit in February 2013, also 'on trial.'

Meanwhile three long-serving community team rangers took turns to act as Leaders of two Jambi-based TPCUs which are currently without a National Park Unit 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). This will restore the team's ability to respond immediately to breaches of forest and species law

### **Coordination and liaison with other agencies and organisations**

In addition to routine liaison and technical advice to partners in local park-edge NGOs, the PHS team leader attended a national meeting organised by UNESCO to finalise planning for a range of actions intended to reduce threat to the national park and so secure its removal from the list of Natural World Heritage Sites In Danger.

The PHS team leader also attended meetings organised by BAPPENAS – the national strategic planning agency – regarding ongoing planning for KSNP to be formally assigned the status of a National Strategic Area, primarily for its watershed values.

This status is intended to guide local and provincial spatial and economic planning agencies so that economic and other development planning activities do not impact on the national park's integrity – including through road building through core areas of the national park.

PHS team members also routinely liaised with local and provincial police authorities including discussing increasing poaching threat and actions to counter.

DJM

Sungaipenuh Kerinci

January 2013