



**Pelestarian Harimau Sumatera
Kerinci Seblat**

**Kerinci Seblat Sumatran Tiger
Protection & Conservation**

Progress Report

**January-June
2007**

**Balai Taman National Kerinci Seblat
Fauna & Flora International – Indonesia Programme**

Summary

The primary purpose is to conduct an effective and sustainable species protection and conservation programme focused on Sumatran tigers in a World Heritage Site National Park.

Six Tiger Protection and Conservation Units were active during the reporting period, conducting field patrols, conflict resolution activities and investigations into suspected wildlife crime incidents in four provinces around Kerinci-Seblat National Park.

Ranger units walked a total patrol distance of 956 Km in the course of a total of 37 field patrols in and bordering Kerinci-Seblat National Park forests and made a total of 32 tiger presence records.

Park-wide, frequency of tiger encounter increased from one tiger record per 33.3Kms in 2006 to one tiger per 29.8 Km walked in the first six months of 2007. Not fewer than three breeding records were made.

Investigations into suspected poaching and trafficking incidents were conducted in three provinces around the national park although with the primary focus on trafficking in Jambi and Bengkulu provinces.

Two men – one a significant tiger dealer - arrested two separate law enforcement operations in late 2006 received custodial sentences. The prosecution case against an army officer and suspected elephant poacher arrested in a joint operation with police in Kerinci district in April is proceeding through the military courts system.

Teams conducted interventions in a total of 10 different cases of human-wildlife conflict involving, in addition to Sumatran tiger, Sumatran elephant, Sumatran clouded leopard, Asiatic golden cat, Malay sun bear and Sumatran leopard cat.

TPCU rangers also conducted or assisted in the rescue of a range of protected wildlife including Sumatran tiger, Sumatran clouded leopard (2), Sumatran leopard cats (5) and a fledgling Barred eagle owl (*Bubo sumatrensis*).

Although the program is primarily focused on protection of Sumatran tiger and tiger habitat and prey species, the program also provided technical support to and assisted in fund-raising for local NGOs

Our mobility was improved by the generous donation by Dreamworld – who are the sponsors of TPCU V – of funds to upgrade two vehicles and for new motorbikes.

On behalf of all my colleagues, I extend our grateful thanks to our kind donors and supporters: United States Fish & Wildlife Service, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation "Save the Tiger Fund", 21st Century Tiger, Dreamworld and the Australia Zoo in Australia.

In Indonesia we particularly thank the director of the national park, Ir Soewartono for his continued enthusiasm and support, Dr Sugardjito, who heads the Indonesia country program and his staff and our colleagues at FFI Asia Pacific and in Cambridge, UK for assistance and administrative support.

DJM
July 2007

Activities

Patrols

A total of 37 field patrols and surveys were conducted between January and June 2007 with the primary intention of protecting and conserving key tiger populations, prey species and tiger habitat.

TPCU rangers walked a total patrol distance of 956 kms by GPS waypoint during this six-month period and made a total of 32 Tiger records (prints, calls, scrapes etc): the prints of Sumatran tiger cubs were found on two patrols in Bungo and Kerinci districts of Jambi.

Patrol distance walked was substantially less than in the same period of 2006 (when 1299Km were walked). This reduction is primarily due to a time-consuming human-wildlife conflict incident in February and the rescue and treatment of a female Sumatran tiger and a Sumatran clouded leopard in Bengkulu in May during which month no routine patrols were conducted.

Additionally two TPCU team leaders had health problems (one as a result of a motor cycle accident) which meant that ranger units frequently had to combine for patrol purposes.

Park-wide, the rate of encounter with Sumatran tiger increased to 1 Tiger record per 29.33 Kms walked during January-June 2007 compared with 1-33.3Kms in the same period for 2006. It is however still lower than the 27.85Km – per tiger encounter recorded in Jan-June 2005.

The increase in the rate of tiger encounters made on patrol is likely to be a consequence of moving the main patrol focus in Bengkulu province from the districts of Lebong and Rejang Lebong to Muko-Muko and North Bengkulu districts and, in Jambi province, of giving a greater focus to Bungo district.



Above- The peat swamp forests of the remote Danau Kebut at the foot of Mt Sumbing in Sipurak area – the grasslands attract sambar deer and so Sumatran tiger...and

Patrol district(s)	Tiger presence records	Distance walked to meet Tiger sign	Active Tiger snare	Other active snares	Distance walked
Bengkulu Utara, Bengkulu	2	25	0	0	50
Sarolanggun, Jambi	0	0	0	6	30
Kerinci, Jambi	7	28.85	1	0	202
Muko Muko Bengkulu	6	29.83	3	6	179
Musi Rawas South Sumatra	1	30	0	0	30
Lebong, Bengkulu	1	64	0	0	64
Merangin, Jambi	8	26.33	1	12	316
Bungo, Jambi	6	7.5	3	0	45
Rejang Lebong, Bengkulu	1	40	0	0	40
	32	29.87	8	24	956

A total of eight active snares placed for Sumatran tiger were destroyed by TPCU teams during the reporting period (15 during the same period in 2006) and a further 8 tiger snare placements which had been constructed but not yet activated were found and destroyed after an investigation into the activities of a suspected tiger poacher operating in Bungo district of Jambi.

Deer poaching through the use of snares continued the on-going decline (outside of the fasting month of Ramadan) previously recorded since 2004 with only 24 active snares found and cleared compared with 109 in 2006.

However, investigations confirm that, in a number of areas, this reduction in snare poaching indicates a move to use of (illegal) firearms in forest-edge farmland as opposed to snares within the national park and the use of other hunting techniques including hunting with dogs and spears. There is reason to believe that this change in hunting patterns is a response to law enforcement and destruction of poachers' snares by TPCU ranger patrols

New or ongoing encroachment into the national park and particularly the semi-protected state forests (*hutan produksi terbatas*) which mainly form the national park buffer zone continued to be recorded in almost all districts around the

national park and poses a serious threat to both tiger and other species conservation as well as to some key habitats within the national park.

Investigations

A total of 49 investigations were logged and launched during the reporting period: a number of these remain on-going and are being actively pursued.

Investigations mainly related to reports of tiger poaching or trafficking incidents at both poacher and local broker level in four provinces around this national park and to tiger body parts reportedly being offered for sale.

Information was also collected on alleged elephant poaching and trafficking, deer poaching, pangolin trafficking and on illegal logging, the identities of suspected wildlife poachers or dealers and organized encroachment and other threats to the national park's integrity.

Initial analysis of these reports and investigation results indicates that in the great majority of cases where tiger body parts were reportedly being offered for sale, only the tiger skin was available and the tiger's bones had already been sold.

In May and June undercover team members were twice advised that prices of Rp900,000 (US\$100) or more were being paid for tiger bone by major dealers based in South Sumatra province (primarily Lubuklinggau and Palembang): if this is correct, the value of a tiger's skeleton on the wildlife black market may now be greater than its skin.

It is unlikely to be coincidental that this apparent escalation in demand for bone, and so in price, comes at a time when there is reportedly intense lobbying by Chinese tiger farmers for the trade in tiger bone to be legalized in China.

Conversely, demand for tiger skins in the domestic market – primarily senior army and police officers and politicians appears to have fallen.

A total of 11 active or partially constructed Tiger snares were destroyed by TPCU teams following search operations in the field as a direct result of investigations by team members.

A rogue army officer from the south of Bengkulu province who was planning to poach Sumatran elephant in forest on the Kerinci-Merangin district borders in Jambi was arrested upon entry to the forest as a result of a tip-off and subsequent investigation.

It is extremely likely that this attempt to poach elephants followed widespread media reporting of a human-elephant conflict incident in early February.

Law Enforcement and Judicial process

One major wildlife law enforcement operation was conducted during the reporting period.



Following information received and a subsequent surveillance operation, TPCU rangers joined with Kerinci Police officers to conduct the arrest of a rogue army officer and a second man, both from a

district of southern Bengkulu province

The two men had advised a PHS community informant and supporter that they were planning to hunt elephant in forests on the Kerinci-Merangin district borders of Jambi province.

The primary suspect in the case was armed at time of his arrest although his companion, who was not a member of the armed forces, was unarmed and subsequently released with a formal legal warning.

Subsequent discussions with colleagues in Rhino Protection Units from Bukit Barisan Selatan NP indicate that this individual has a long record of poaching of protected species and had previously been charged with elephant poaching.

The PHS team continues to investigate individuals connected with this man, including the driver of the vehicle which dropped him at the location where he was subsequently arrested.

Herman, the dealer arrested by the team in a joint operation with Merangin police in late December 2006 while in possession of the skins of two Sumatran tigers was successfully prosecuted at Merangin district court and sentenced to 18 months imprisonment.

Amris, a Kerinci deer poacher, small-time illegal logger, broker of protected wildlife and leader of the district government's sub-district forest conservation team (Wibawa Sakti) who was arrested in November by TPCU rangers while in possession of the carcass of a sambar deer and an illegal firearm was also sentenced to a custodial term after being prosecuted on firearms charges at Kerinci district court.

In addition to formal warning letters to individuals encountered on patrol in the forest relating to relatively minor breaches of forestry law including non-timber forest products collection (rattan, gaharu etc), bird liming and illegal fishing, a Bungo deer hunter was apprehended and his muzzle-loader gun confiscated.

The man was not escorted out of the forest to be handed over to police but instead issued with a formal legal warning because of concerns for safety of the ranger team since individuals from this hunter's community have a tendency to respond negatively to law enforcement.

Wildlife rescue and emergencies

In 2003, TPCU members took part in a training workshop in Jambi run with Zoological Society of London which set out to provide basic training to forestry rangers and local veterinarians in correct responses to wildlife emergencies including snared or injured animals.



Two further training workshops have since been run with the support of Australia Zoo, in Bengkulu in 2004 and in Kerinci in 2005: Australia Zoo also provided three comprehensive veterinary kits including blowpipes, anesthetics and other medicines.

Until April 2007, the training and medicines provided were mainly used to treat and care for young animals – in particular leopard cat kittens and an Asiatic Golden cat kitten - confiscated by TPCU rangers.

However over an eight week period in April and May 2007 the medicines and training provided was

of immense importance in responding to three major wildlife emergencies involving a Sumatran tiger and two Sumatran clouded leopards.

In mid April, PHS team members joined with KSDA Jambi to conduct the rescue of an adult male Sumatran clouded leopard which had been caught in a snare by a farmer in Bungo district in mixed forest and farmland some 17Km from national park forest edge.

In line with training received, the Sumatran Clouded leopard was brought back to the team's Bangko base camp and treated with wide-spectrum antibiotics for the infection resulting from loss of circulation to the animal's snared foot (front left). He made a full recovery and subsequently returned to its natural habitat.

Within less than 48 hours of this release, Bengkulu KSDA officers secured the safety of another badly-injured young male Sumatran Clouded leopard which had been caught, by the belly, in what was probably a pig snare, in a district bordering Bukit Barisan Selatan NP and then transported to Bengkulu city.



May 2007: North Bengkulu – the PHS/KSDA rescue team waits for the anaesthesia to take effect on the snared tigress

The program was able to send antibiotics and other veterinary supplies to Bengkulu KSDA vet DrH Yanti who commenced treatment of the animal which needed a total of 75 stitches for its snare injuries.



While the team discussed with KSDA where and when the clouded leopard should be released, a police officer in North Bengkulu district advised the leader of the KSDA/FFI Elephant Conflict Response Unit that he had just been told of a tiger caught and still alive in a "pig" snare in a chocolate plantation.

Bengkulu TPCU teams joined with the CRU team and Dr Yanti and, following the agreed procedures, the snared animal was darted, moved to a holding cage and transported to the PHS team's base camp in Seblat, North Bengkulu. Jambi-based PHS team members then moved to Bengkulu to provide support to their colleagues as the tigress required round-the-clock care and supervision.

Although at first sight, the snare injury suffered by the tigress appeared relatively minor with the skin hardly broken, it was learned that the animal may have been in the snare for up to four days before she could be rescued.

Snare injuries are recognized as among the most difficult to treat. This is due to the strong likelihood of infections resulting from loss of blood circulation, stress

and dehydration. And the longer the animal is alive in a snare, the more difficult to treat successfully.

In the case of this tigress, an adult female who had previously had cubs and was probably 4-5 years old, in spite of massive doses of antibiotics delivered both orally and intravenously, her condition began to deteriorate and gangrene set in.

The veterinarian in this case took a decision to operate and amputate the animal's foot even though this would mean there was no hope of her being returned to the wild, however the extent of infection could not be controlled and she died.

However the young male clouded leopard, nicknamed 'Neo', made a full recovery from his injuries after treatment at the PHS base camp and, after surveys by TPCU

rangers, was released in national park forests in Muko-Muko district once the team was satisfied that he was fit and healthy and able to return to the wild safely.

Right - TPCU rangers Tholipin and Subhan and veterinarian DrH Yanti with anaesthetized clouded leopard



'Neo' after his stitches had been removed prior to release back into the forest.

Human-wildlife Conflict

A total of 10 human-wildlife conflict incidents were logged and responded to by the team during the reporting period although, in one case, a Sumatran tiger caught in a pig snare, the animal quickly released itself and no field intervention was required although LSM Perak supported by providing counseling on pig snare placement so the incident would not reoccur.

As in previous years, TPCU field checks of reported human-tiger conflict incidents confirmed that farmers are liable to blame "tigers" for incidents of livestock predation when other species are responsible.

In January, the death of two goats in forest-edge farmland in central Kerinci was found to have been due to a large adult Asiatic golden cat and multiple goat predation in June in Muara Siau sub-district of Merangin was found to be due to attacks by a Sumatran clouded leopard.

In both these incidents, TPCU rangers stood by, providing counseling and support to local farmers and also offered advice on improving husbandry for livestock to prevent reoccurrence of these incidents

Perhaps the most unusual case during the reporting period involved a juvenile Sumatran Leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*) which strolled through a classroom in a junior high school in Sungai Penuh. The animal was caught by

students (a number of whom were bitten) and passed to the PHS team (a number of whom were also bitten) and after a two weeks quarantine period - to ensure the animal was not rabid - it was released into national park forest.

In January, TPCU rangers stood by in Birun village in Merangin district after a resident female gave birth to cubs in a rocky overhang approximately 300m from the village. The decision to place teams in the village and monitor the animal's safety was primarily to ensure that 3 men from neighboring villages who are known tiger poachers did not seek to profit from the tiger's choice of birthing den.

In March and April, team members repeatedly visited the Sungai Pinang area of Merangin district to provide support to villagers guarding a swiftlet cave who reported a "tame" tiger watching them while they bathed and cooked.

The animal appears, both from witness descriptions and from its footmarks to have been a juvenile, it was able to hunt and was not threatening people but the swiftlet cave guards and PHS team was concerned it would be easy pickings for a hunter. Subsequently, prints of an adult female tiger and this young tiger's prints were seen with the two animals moving as a pair and it is presumed that the youngster had somehow become separated from its dam and was then re-united.

In February TPCU teams monitoring a tiger moving in farmland on the Kerinci-Merangin district borders and which had killed three dogs, learned that a herd of Sumatran elephant had destroyed three farmhouses (two of which were inside the national park borders.)

After monitoring the elephants' movements and the destruction of more farmhouses by the elephants, we requested support from the FFI/DICE elephant conflict research team in Bengkulu so that we could seek to drive the elephants back across the Merangin river to the Sipurak area which is a more suitable habitat.

Unfortunately, securing the presence of all the government agencies required to accomplish this – including closing the main Kerinci-Merangin road so the elephants could cross, took time and the '*giring*' plan failed and the elephants moved back into the park.

Local and national media arrived, uninvited, to cover this incident and gave it wide publicity: it is very probable that it was this media coverage that alerted a hunter from southern Bengkulu who was subsequently arrested when he tried to enter the park to hunt these elephants.

This is one reason why the PHS team invariably request a press black out on human-tiger conflict since, in our experience is, that it only serves to highlight the presence of a tiger and poachers from other areas are liable to arrive and seek to profit from the incident.

Community Awareness

In addition to routine outreach and counseling by PHS ranger units during patrols and other field activities, including conflict mitigation, the program facilitated the activities of three local NGOs for most of the reporting period.

We also provided technical advice to the AKAR network which FFI Kerinci helped form in mid 2006 to campaign against plans to build roads through Kerinci-Seblat National Park.

Kerinci-based Lembaga Tumbuh Alami completed a three-year program mainly focused on poacher-outreach in the north of the Kerinci valley and maintained close liaison with senior Kerinci government politicians and officials to support building closer relations between the national park and government.

Meanwhile a second local NGO, Perak provided valuable support to the team and the national park in human-wildlife conflict resolution and worked to reduce the number of protected species being killed accidentally in wild pig snares set by farmers in forest edge farmland.

In Merangin district, young activists of Lembaga Tiga Beradik continued a program of community patrols launched in 2006 to stem forest loss in the national park buffer zone and to build village organizations able and willing to work with forestry officers to conserve both the national park and its buffer zone.

With support from PHKA and Jambi provincial police, members of the TMP2H team formed by LTB receiving training in forest law and environmental law and took part in a number of successful law enforcement operations in the field to stem encroachment and illegal forest clearance, in particular in buffer zone forests bordering the key tiger habitat of Sipurak.

In late April, it was learned that Merangin district government had granted permission for a 20,000 ha palm oil plantation – which included permission to clear crucial tiger habitats bordering KSNP in the Birun and Sungai Manau area.

The plan was strongly opposed by Birun and a number of other villagers in the area whose farmland was to be taken over by the plantation, without compensation, with villagers subsequently receiving an 80-20 per cent share of subsequent profits.

The program provided data to Jambi provincial government on tiger movements and presence in the proposed plantation area and secured a delay in the permit being implemented on biodiversity grounds.

Meanwhile our local NGO partner LTB provided support to Birun and other villages opposing the plantation plan while police – two of whom were badly beaten up – evicted a logging syndicate which was clearing primary forest bordering the park even before the plantation and forest clearance permit had been formally approved at provincial level.

A total of 3000 ha of forest bordering the national park has now been removed from the proposed plantation area and a full Environmental Assessment has been ordered. Other proposed palm oil plantations in Merangin district are now also being scrutinized by the department of Forestry as there appear to be substantial overlaps with protected forest in the areas granted for palm oil

In July 2006, the FFI team leader assisted in the formation of the AKAR (Akar means vine) network of local NGOs to campaign against proposals for construction of a network of inter-provincial and inter-district highways through core zones of KSNP and other threats.

In the second half of 2007, it is hoped that the AKAR network will receive follow-up funding from UNESCO to campaign against encroachment both within the national park and its protected buffer zones as well as maintaining ongoing actions against roads building plans.

Funding has also been secured, through IUCN Holland, for LTB to continue its program of community based collaborative protection and conservation patrols and the FFI team leader hopes to also secure support for Perak to maintain and extend – by working with other NGOs - conflict mitigation activities since this small NGO's activities are very helpful both to this program and to the national park in general.

Capacity Raising

Six Kerinci-Seblat National Park rangers worked on full-time secondment as Tiger Protection and Conservation Unit team leaders during the reporting period with four units active to the west of the national park and two to the west.

Jambi co-ordinator Dian Risdianto is now mid-way through his Masters program in Conservation Biology at University of Indonesia and it sincerely hoped he will be permitted to rejoin the team early in 2008.

The program continued to invite young and enthusiastic KSNP rangers to join patrols on a regular basis to build their experience of species management and protection and therefore TNKS and so the Department of Forestry now has a core team of young managers and rangers with immense practical experience of proactive species protection and conservation.

Stakeholder Co-ordination and Involvement

Operating as an embedded unit within the National Park - although outside the park's administrative hierarchy - the program continued to work closely with National Park and other Forestry department colleagues.

Through working with local NGOs Perak and Lembaga Tumbuh Alami in Kerinci, LTB in Merangin, Pro-Fauna in Padang and with other members of the AKAR network we continued to expand our links to local NGO activists around the park.

In Bengkulu and Jambi provinces the PHS team enjoyed a friendly and mutually supportive relationship with provincial departments of Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam (division of Natural Resources Conservation..

In April we joined with KSDA Jambi and Traffic SE Asia to discuss approaches to tackling wildlife crime at a two-day seminar in Jambi city and Dian Risdianto is taking an active role in the revision of the Sumatran Tiger Conservation Strategy plan.

Tiger Base Camp and Tiger Conservation Meeting Centre

Construction of this facility commenced in the autumn of 2006 unfortunately, in November 2006, two individuals came forward, both claiming to be the owners of the 2 ha site granted to the program by Merangin district government.

At time of this report, Merangin district government have requested that the program recommence building work and advise the situation is now 'safe'. We are awaiting a letter advising of the legal status of this land (protected forest owned by Merangin district government) so guaranteeing the long term security of the base camp before recommencing construction.

