

Pelestarian Harimau Sumatera Kerinci-Seblat

Kerinci Seblat Sumatran Tiger Protection & Conservation

**Report on activities conducted with the
support of 21st Century Tiger 2009-2010
by**

Fauna & Flora International



Summary

Program Objective

To secure the long-term conservation of wild Sumatran tiger in and around a World Heritage Site National Park which forms part of a globally important Tiger Conservation Landscape primarily through controlling the poaching of Sumatran tiger and prey species and loss of habitat and through effective mitigation of human-tiger conflict. Additionally through raising the ability of the forestry department and others to tackle tiger and other serious wildlife crime and winning the support of forest-edge communities and local governments for conservation of Sumatran tiger and tiger habitat.

Summary of Activities

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

A total of 62 Sumatran tiger records – including first-hand observations- were made by programme staff, *excluding* numerous records made between October 2009- May 2010 during actions to mitigate a complex human-tiger conflict in the far south of the Kerinci valley.

Frequency of encounter, park-wide, with tiger was stable at one tiger per 21.7 Kms walked although the number of patrols conducted and distance walked was lower than planned due to human-tiger conflict mitigation demands and so frequency of encounter is not easily compared with previous years.

A total of 18 tiger snares and 372 ungulate snares – some strong enough to hold a tiger – were detected and destroyed by TPCU rangers while the skeleton of a tiger was found in a snare on a new patrol route in remote forests on the South Sumatra-Bengkulu provincial borders.

Three tiger-related law enforcement actions were conducted following investigations by TPCU rangers and resulted in the arrest and successful prosecution of five individuals and the seizure of skins and other body parts of not less than four Sumatran tigers. All individuals arrested were subsequently sentenced to custodial terms although one case is now the subject of an Appeal by prosecutors demanding a stiffer sentence than the one year term proposed by the district court.

A total of 24 individual incidents of human-tiger and other human-wildlife conflict were responded to by TPCU teams in seven districts of three provinces bordering Kerinci Seblat National Park. These included a long-running episode in the far south of the Kerinci valley where a new district highway has been built through abandoned farmland and fragment forest resulting in a conflict involving a total of five Sumatran tigers in an area totaling approximately 75 sq km.

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 provided training and data Input to a wildlife crime investigation training program operated through the US Embassy in Jakarta and provided initial advice

on field method to our colleagues from the Jambi Tiger Project which has established a species protection and conservation team working in and around Berbak National Park in eastern Jambi province.

The program manager also attended the Kathmandu Global Tiger Workshop in Nepal in October 2009 and the pre-summit meeting in Bali in July 2010 and was 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 NGO mentor secured funding for a three year Darwin Initiative focused to securing Village Forest or *Hutan Desa* status for more than 20,000ha of forests which will form a permanent forest buffer zone to a key tiger habitat in Merangin district of Jambi.

Meanwhile the FFI team leader secured some funding for another local NGO to develop campaigning and field activities to secure a key tiger movement corridor in Solok Selatan district of West Sumatra which links Kerinci Seblat National Park and a watershed protection forest to the north which is known to protect up to 30 tigers.

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 Leader in August 2000 while Johann Simorangkir joined the PHS team as TPCU III (21st Century Tiger) Unit Leader in late 2002 and have delivered huge service to the cause of Sumatran tiger conservation.

Eko Supriyatno is currently posted to the Jambi SPORC rapid response forestry unit based out of Jambi City while Johann Simorangkir has returned to general national park duties and is currently acting as National Park section leader for three districts of Jambi province.

Both remain in close contact with the PHS team and we hope that in 2010-2011 Johann will be able to develop a specialized additional role working with the TPCUs and NPA to develop improved conflict mitigation capacity both among forestry agencies and local communities in key areas, in particular locations difficult to access.

Activities

Forest patrols: 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 (79) conducted was lower and distance walked (a little over 1350Km) much shorter than planned due to the impact of a long running human-tiger conflict in the far south of the Kerinci valley which badly disrupted patrol schedules.

The percentage of patrols recording Sumatran tiger fell slightly from 61.5% to 59.47% almost certainly due to three patrols being aborted shortly after the patrol commenced due to law enforcement action against illegal logging or encroachment.

One patrol was aborted on Day Three due to the curiosity of a sub-adult Sumatran tiger which repeatedly approached the TPCU and circled the team's camp overnight so causing some alarm to a young national park ranger trainee who was making her first-ever visit to KSNP forests.

Frequency of encounter with Sumatran tiger (not including tiger records made during conflict mitigation actions in Kerinci) was stable, park-wide, at 1 tiger record per 21.7 patrol kilometres walked.

Patrols destroyed a total of 18 tiger snares, three of which were placed by poachers seeking to exploit human-tiger conflicts and a total of 372 snares placed for ungulates.

More than 40 per cent of the ungulate snares found and destroyed were detected during and immediately before the holy month of Ramadhan when demand for meat and for cash rises sharply. No such seasonal bias is observable in tiger poaching records.

As in recent years, low or zero direct threat to tiger was recorded in regularly patrolled (three patrols or more per year) areas and threat was highest on new or only occasionally (<1) patrolled routes. 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 protected watershed forest identified as having a significant tiger population.

The poachers in this case came from a different park-edge district and one had been known to the PHS team since 2002 as a reputed poacher of deer and tigers. Information was secured advising that the poachers had selected the TTC area on the basis of tiger presence and the fact that it was not patrolled by TPCUs.

Investigations: Three or more investigations were launched or active each month during the reporting period, this total does not include routine information collection relating to the identity or activities of suspect individuals or changes in the wildlife black market.

PHS investigations were conducted in all four provinces bordering Kerinci Seblat National Park and resulted in the arrest 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. High prices currently being secured for some song bird species – in particular shamas – may be reducing threat to other species.

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 arrests resulted in custodial terms although prosecutors are currently appealing the 12 month sentence made against two men arrested in Muko Muko district of Bengkulu province in May 2010 in an operation led by PHS team, one of whom (see *photograph, Left*) had admitted poaching more than 100 tigers during a 30 year poaching career while discussing the illegal trade in tigers with an undercover TPCU investigator.

Two men from the notorious poaching community of Tapan in Pesisir Selatan district of West Sumatra province were arrested in November 2009 while seeking to sell the skin and bones of a tiger to an unknown buyer in Sungaipenuh, Kerinci.

Subsequent examination of the seizure showed that the skin was from one tiger, a young adult female relatively recently killed (<one month) but that the majority – but not all - of the bones came from a juvenile tiger which had, on basis of bone weight loss, died some months earlier.

This incident again highlights the crucial need for careful examination of evidence where the seizure comprises both skin and bone since, in a substantial minority of seizures made by this programme we

observe that the skin and bone are frequently from different individuals and it is essential for proper post arrest investigation and the subsequent legal process for prosecutors to be aware that a seizure is of from more than one individual tiger and so constitutes trafficking.

Both individuals in this case were subsequently sentenced to 18 months custodial terms at Kerinci district court and the arrests and subsequent legal process is known, from team surveillance reports, to have had a salutary effect in the Tapan area.

Meanwhile, in December 2009, PHS worked with Merangin district police to lead an action resulting in the arrest of a Kerincinese cattle trader who had transported the skin of an adult Sumatran tiger to Bangko, capital of Merangin, where he proposed to sell the skin to an unidentified individual. Sinar *aka* Bedil was subsequently sentenced to two years and eight months in prison. This is the heaviest sentence made in the program's history by courts of park-edge districts for a tiger trafficking offence.

TPCU rangers provided support to National Park officers in Kerinci district to arrest nine encroachers clearing forests in the foothills of Mt Tujuh and escorted the suspects to Sungai Penuh to pass them into police custody. The Kerinci district leader or *Bupati* then intervened to order these men's release. Subsequently, the *Bupati*, a man not sympathetic to this national park, 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.

Two hunters from the Siulak area of northern Kerinci were arrested by a TPCU patrol unit in mid 2009 on suspicion of deer poaching and escorted out of the park but released under a legal caution as it was concluded evidence was not strong enough to bring the men to court. One of these men is now (September 2010) under surveillance as it is suspected that he is again poaching deer and birds.

Two chainsaws were seized by patrol teams, in one seizure made in the south of the Kerinci valley the two chainsaw operators managed to escape, in the second case the illegal logger and his chainsaw were seized and the case is now proceeding through the court system in Merangin district.

Two men arrested 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 but in protected state forests adjoining the park.

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.

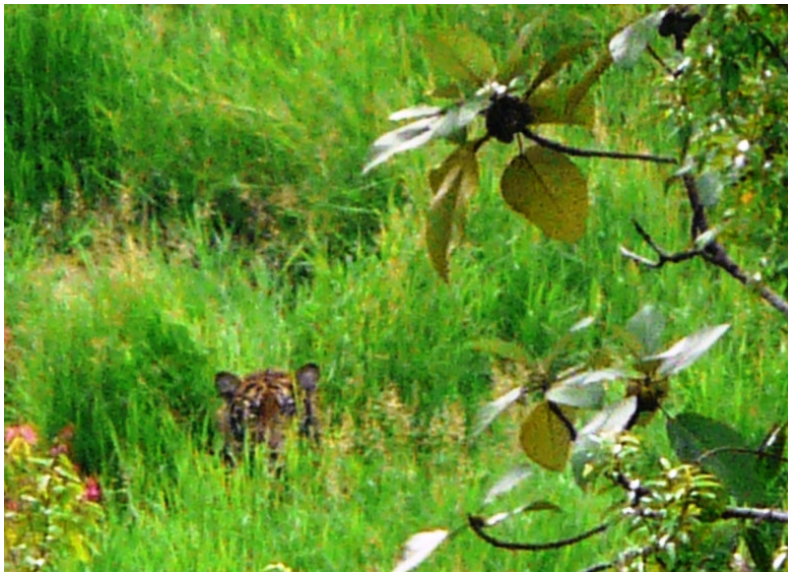
The great majority of cases handled related to conflicts involving Sumatran tiger but incidents involving other species including Asiatic golden cat (two cases), Island clouded leopard (one) and Sumatran elephant (one) were also handled. As in previous years, conflicts and wildlife emergencies reported 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 young male was also frequently seen crossing the 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.



A decision was finally taken to attempt to catch the adult female and her cubs 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 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. 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 the footmarks of a 'strange' tiger.

This tiger was evacuated to a national park guard post at Bukit Tapan above Sungaienuh for initial medical treatment and evaluation 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 expert veterinary treatment 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.



Above: TPCU rangers and FZS vet Dr Wenny checking the injuries of the male tiger under anaesthesia at the Bukit Tapan national park guard post in Kerinci

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 damage to a rear leg which now bears no weight.

At date of this report the adult female continues to be occasionally seen in this area but has apparently become much more cautious, Her cubs are entering the dispersal phase and 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 airgun injuries to the belly. In spite of emergency veterinary treatment this animal died very shortly after rescue.

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.

Demands for human-tiger conflict mitigation support have begun to impact quite heavily on routine field duties in recent years and this is unlikely to change as villagers and local government become increasingly aware that a swift response to conflict can prevent problems developing.

We have therefore developed 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.

If supported, the Conflict Hotline system will be developed in conjunction with Johann Simorangkir, TPCU team leaders and local NGOs and we hope it may begin to form the basis for a much more comprehensive approach to conflict.

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 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.

Stakeholder liaison and community awareness: 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.

The team leader attended the Kathmandu Global Tiger Workshop in October 2009 and the Pre Tiger Summit meeting in Bali in July 2010 and provided detailed technical input 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.

The NGO Mentor (formerly NGO Organiser) post formed in 2008-2009 to provide focused practical support to our local NGO partners in the AKAR Network became self-supporting with the NGO Mentor securing a Darwin Initiative grant to support development of community-protected Village Forests or *Hutan Desa* to form a permanent buffer zone to the national park in one key area for tiger conservation.

Meanwhile the FFI team leader secured funding, through the generosity of the Panthera Foundation, for a local NGO partner in Solok Selatan district to start to develop field actions to conserve and protect 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.

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. What was planned as a 30 minute documentary became a two-part 'Special' which has been repeated at least three times in the last 12 months and which secured among the highest ratings ever recorded by TV One for a documentary.

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 remain in contact with this organization.

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 of the longest serving TPCU 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.