

Taman nasional kerinci seblat
Fauna & flora international

PELESTARIAN HARIMAU SUMATERA KERINCI-SEBLAT

Kerinci-Seblat Tiger Protection

Report on activities conducted
2004-5 with the support of
21st Century Tiger

July 2005



Review of activities and outputs during the programme period

The Kerinci Seblat Tiger programme was established in May 2000 with two Tiger Protection and Conservation Unit teams formed to combat poaching and trafficking of Sumatran tiger in one of Asia's most important tiger reserves. The team's main focus of work was two districts in the central section of the national park in Jambi province.

Over the course of 2002 a third TPCU team was formed with the support of 21st Century Tiger. In the third quarter of 2003, preparations began for the establishment of a fourth Unit to operate in Bengkulu province. Receipt of additional grant aid subsequently allowed a fifth Unit to be established and, over the first six months of 2004, programme field capacity rose from three to five TPCU teams with a total of 20 rangers.

This allowed the project team to extend a degree of protection to at risk or critically important Tiger populations and key prey species in seven key districts and two provinces to the east and west of Kerinci-Seblat National Park.

While the programme composed only three TPCU teams operating mainly in Merangin and Kerinci districts of Jambi province, management and operational supervision and support was relatively simple.

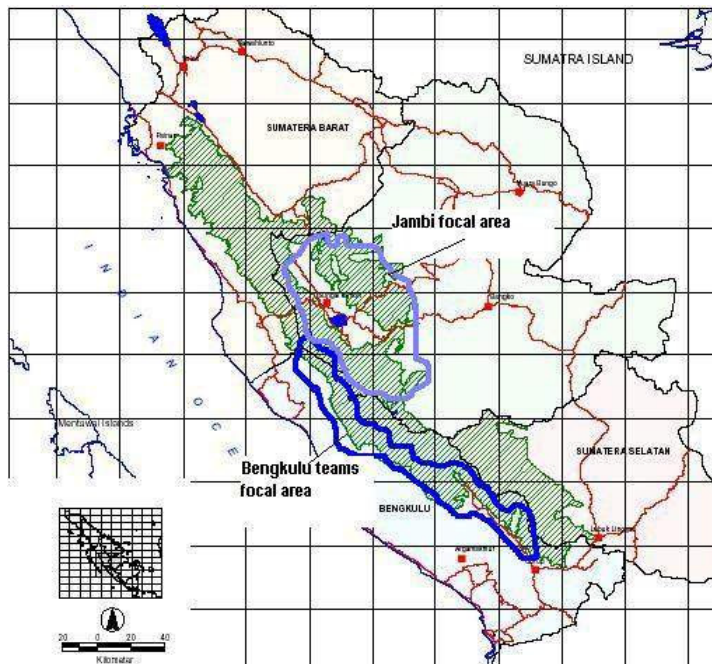
It was rapidly appreciated that extension of activities to Bengkulu required a new structure to allow effective management, of and support for teams at local level.

This was implemented with establishment of two provincial co-ordinator posts staffed by young and enthusiastic managers on secondment from the national park authority.

The programme's 2003-4 Field Manager Rudijanta Tjaha Nugraha who also implemented expansion of the programme to KSNP forests in Bengkulu, took academic study leave in October 2004 to undertake a Masters degree focused on human-wildlife conflict. It is hoped that the National Park authority will permit him to return to the programme in a supervisory capacity upon his return to Kerinci in October 2005.

The PHS programme continues to comprise four main activities - intelligence collection to identify wildlife criminals and vulnerable tiger populations; patrols to reduce threat and to protect important tiger populations; law enforcement against forest criminals; and human-tiger conflict mitigation

However as threat has reduced in the central areas of the national park so the programme has developed subsidiary activities facilitated through FFI but implemented by local park-edge NGOs. These included facilitation of research and monitoring of tiger and prey species and community awareness activities.



Map of Kerinci Seblat Park showing operational areas of responsibility in 2004-5

**SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES PROPOSED AND IMPLEMENTED WITH THE
SUPPORT OF 21ST CENTURY TIGER UNDER THE GRANT MADE FOR
YEAR 2004-5**

- *Request continued support for a four-man Tiger Protection and Conservation Unit based in Jambi province but with a brief to operate across the national park as required.*

TPCU III, which was formed in 2002 with the support of 21st Century Tiger, remained under the leadership of Kerinci Seblat National Park ranger Johan Simorangkir throughout the programme period. In line with the project proposal, the four-man team conducted forest patrols and other activities including law enforcement operations and conflict mitigation in Jambi, Bengkulu and West Sumatra provinces.

The unit was fully-staffed through until April 2005 when community ranger Suherman resigned for family reasons. This position will not be filled until future funding has been secured.

- *Assistance in maintaining the existing programme patrol and protection routine in Jambi province and supporting colleagues in Bengkulu as required.*

Field patrol and protection activities by this TPCU focused on the districts of Merangin, Kerinci and Muara Bungo in Jambi province. Additionally the experienced Jambi rangers also offered support to the two new Tiger Protection and Conservation Units which were established over the first six months of 2004 in Bengkulu province.



Kerinci Seblat PHS TPCU members photographed in Bangko in January 2005

Staff were regularly moved between Units during the last six months of 2004, however in 2005, unit personnel remained generally in one set TPCU team.

In addition to patrols in the target focal areas around KSNP in three districts of Jambi province, a limited number of patrols were conducted in forests on the Kerinci-Solok Selatan borders to the north of the Kerinci enclave.

The 21st Century Tiger-funded TPCU, in common with the other four TPCUs active at time of this report, has a target of a minimum 12 days per month in the field on patrol and active field conservation duties. During the first six months of the reporting period this target was achieved or exceeded.

However during the second six months of the programme period, monthly field patrol targets were not always reached due to teams being placed on stand-by to conduct law enforcement operations and so unable to conduct routine field activities.

During the reporting period, a total of more than 80 Sumatran tiger records were made by TPCU teams: these are likely to relate to 65 or more individuals.

Only one patrol was made in the tiger-rich forests of Sipurak in Merangin district of Jambi in 2005 since the presence of the DICE Tiger monitoring team who commenced work in this area in February 2005 was considered likely to prove a deterrent to wildlife criminals.

Deliberate or 'targeted' poaching of Sumatran tiger through snares continued the downward trend first observed in 2002 in areas where patrol effort has been maintained since the programme's establishment in May 2000. Deer poaching also continued to reduce in areas where rangers have maintained a patrol schedule and where law enforcement activities against poachers have been conducted.

During the programme period a total of 23 active Tiger snares were found and destroyed by TPCU rangers in the course of patrols covering a total of just over 1900 kms in tiger habitat. Of these snares, nine may have been placed as a result of human-tiger conflict incidents in nearby villages or by poachers seeking to exploit human-tiger problems. Five of these snares were placed by a self-confessed deer hunter, allegedly the request of local villagers, in village rubber gardens and fragment forests far from national park borders in Muara Bungo district.

A further seven snares were found in the Rejang district area of Bengkulu where very low tiger densities recorded are likely to be a result of long-term hunting pressure on Sumatran tiger. Five of these snares were placed by a poaching syndicate – whose members have now been identified – who killed a minimum of two tigers in the first six months of 2004.

Three snares were destroyed in Sungai Manau sub district in Merangin, Jambi and destroyed after villagers from Birun contacted the PHS team to warn that suspected hunters from a nearby village had entered the area.

Deer poaching using snares in long-established patrol areas and in areas where a presence is now being established has continued to show a downward trend. However in Kerinci and in a number of other areas around the park, there are indications that some hunters – especially those with access to members of the police and armed forces – are moving to use of firearms for deer poaching in farmland.

This *modus operandi* may be one reason why ranger teams in northern Bengkulu are recording tiger poaching and trafficking through intelligence collection but not finding snares on forest patrols. Increasing usage of guns by poachers has serious implications for team safety and operations since the national park has still been unable to renew rangers' gun licences.

In September 2004, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono was announced the winner of Indonesia's first ever direct Presidential election and a new Government was formed in late October 2004. The President and his new Cabinet announced that combating illegal logging and institutionalised corruption would form a cornerstone of his government's policy.

In November 2004, all illegal sawmills in Merangin and Muara Bungo districts and in most areas of Bengkulu were closed down and this sharply reduced illegal logging in and around KSNP with the exception of West Sumatra province. This prompted hope that TPCU teams would be able to resume patrols in some areas of the national park that had become effective no-go zones since 2001-2.

Unfortunately many of these illegal sawmills have subsequently re-opened, in the case of Merangin and Muara Bungo districts with the clear connivance of local government and law enforcement personnel.

- *Continued support for collection of information on wildlife crime around Kerinci Seblat National Park.*

Intelligence collection to identify tiger poachers and traffickers and other wildlife and forest criminals and areas where tigers were at threat was conducted in ten districts and three provinces surrounding Kerinci-Seblat National Park. As in previous years, all law enforcement operations undertaken during the programme period were preceded by investigations, almost invariably conducted under-cover.

Extension of structured as opposed to opportunist intelligence collection in Bengkulu in 2004 allowed the programme to begin to identify groups of individuals travelling across provincial and district borders for poaching or trafficking purposes. The most mobile hunting gangs appear to be based in Lubuk Linggau in Musi Rawas district of South Sumatra, Sarolangun district of Jambi and Pesisir Selatan district of West Sumatra.

Investigations were conducted in the districts of Kerinci, Merangin, Muara Bungo and Sarolangun in Jambi province, in Rejang, Lebong, Muko-Muko and North Bengkulu districts of Bengkulu and Solok Selatan and Pesisir Selatan districts of West Sumatra.

Two of these districts – Pesisir Selatan and Solok Selatan in West Sumatra are a source of serious threat to Sumatran tiger and, with regard to Pesisir Selatan, Sumatran elephant. Active, well-organised and mobile professional poaching syndicates are based in both areas and travelling to other districts and provinces not only in KSNP but elsewhere in Sumatra.

These districts are also hotbeds of illegal logging and host many saw mills which appear to have been legalised by their respective local governments even though their timber source is from KSNP and other protected areas.

With genuine support for tiger and tiger habitat conservation unlikely at best at present and with police and other agencies apparently compromised, direct interventions in these two areas were not possible in 2004-5: strategies are being drafted to tackle the issue effectively.

Information was collected opportunistically from the notorious wildlife trafficking and illegal logging centre of Lubuk Linggau in Musi Rawas district of South Sumatra. Again, no law enforcement intervention could be mounted against major dealers in Lubuk Linggau area due to concerns that law enforcement personnel and judiciary in this area are compromised.

Although the programme's focal operational area is Kerinci-Seblat National Park and contiguous forest, team members also received and collated data on tiger poaching and trafficking well outside KSNP forests.

In one of these cases, where it was felt no other agency was likely to be able to respond effectively, an investigation was launched and a man was from Sipintun village in Pau sub-district of Sarolangun, Jambi was subsequently arrested in a joint operation with police in Merangin. In other instances, data on suspected tiger poachers and traffickers was passed on to other programmes for a response to be made.

All intelligence investigations were protection focused with the intention being to acquire evidence for a subsequent law enforcement operation or enough information to allow a patrol to be made for threat to be destroyed.

Obtaining evidence of crime and proceeding to enforcement continued to become more difficult in all areas in which the PHS team has been operating effectively. Those poachers, dealers and wildlife brokers still known or suspected to be active became increasingly cautious over the programme period, even in areas where enforcement activities have not occurred or yet started and the dangers posed by the PHS team were regularly cited to undercover rangers.

Involvement of the police in team arrest operations and ensuring that public credit for arrests goes to the police and national park further heightened poachers' and dealers' fears – proposing both police and national park officers as a growing risk to wildlife criminals.

Unfortunately, while PHS operations have caused damage to the wildlife trafficking networks, law enforcement activities have also driven tiger crime further underground and made it more difficult to secure arrests.

In January, team investigators saw the pelts of two Sumatran tigers and the bones of one animal in a village in Kerinci. The animals were being offered for sale by a very nervous intermediary who had previously loaned money to the two poachers who had subsequently defaulted on the loan. The pelts are believed to date from 2002-3 with the poachers too scared to openly offer them for sale in Kerinci or to transport them out of the area to wholesalers in Jambi city. At close of this programme period, a stalemate continues with regard to this case.

- *Maintain operational and intelligence co-ordination with other conservation organisations now operating around KSNP and elsewhere in Jambi and Bengkulu provinces*

The programme maintains friendly informal relations, and information exchange as relevant, with the WWF wildlife trafficking monitor in Bengkulu province, Traffic SE Asia and with the Sumatran Tiger Conservation team in Bukit Tigapuluh National Park. Additionally, the programme has cordial relations with KSDA (Conservation of Natural Resources) in Jambi and Bengkulu provinces.

In October 2004, just days before the new Government of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono took office, the outgoing government of President Megawati Sukarnoputri approved repatriation of 14,000 hectares of forest to KSNP bordering the critically important tiger habitat of Sipurak in Jambi province.

In March 2005 a programme to improve protection of buffer zone forests bordering the critically important tiger habitats of the Sipurak area of Merangin in



Tiger poacher from Sarolangun district arrested after PHS investigation: May 05

Jambi province was launched with support and guidance from the PHS team and FFI. This programme was facilitated by FFI IP with the aid of a grant from IUCN Netherlands and is being implemented by the Jambi chapter of the Indonesian NGO WALHI.

A key task of the Walhi team is to identify individuals, including local government officers, suspected to be selling state forest and national park forest land to incoming settlers and identify individuals in possession of illegal firearms. Subsequently, this data will be passed to trusted police officers at provincial level for enforcement action.

Once the individuals orchestrating land clearance have been apprehended and illegal firearms ownership in this area reduced, the Tiger team will be able to start working with Walhi on developing a community patrol routine to support ongoing Tiger protection activities in Sipurak.

Local NGOs around Kerinci Seblat National Park are becoming increasingly pro-active and vocal in support of species and habitat conservation and, in addition to the Walhi project in Sipurak, two other local NGO projects were launched during the programme period, both supporting aspects of the PHS programme's work to protect and conserve wild Sumatran tigers.

- *Continue to identify suitable KSNP forest rangers and give practical support, training and encouragement to these individuals, including in intelligence and conflict handling.*

This aspect of the project's activities has been most successful in the Bengkulu area. Suitable TNKS rangers continue to be invited on patrols and to join in conflict handling as appropriate although, unfortunately, a common problem encountered is lack of physical fitness.

An investigation training workshop which has been repeatedly delayed for a variety of reasons, including local and national elections, will enhance rangers' abilities to collect and measure data on threat and forest crime. This should reduce the problem of enthusiastic park rangers passing on reports which must be investigated but which subsequently cannot be validated.

A training programme launched in 2003 in conjunction with Zoological Society of London to introduce TPCU and park rangers to the basic principles of wildlife emergency responses, including anaesthesia continued in 2004-5 with two 3-day workshops in Curup, Bengkulu and in Sungaipenuh, Kerinci. At both workshops, a lecturer from Australia Zoo gave basic training in the principles of wildlife anaesthesia and correct and safe responses to wildlife emergencies and a field handbook is now being produced.

At the Kerinci workshop, which was held in April, four young NGO activists who are working on tiger-related programmes facilitated by FFI also attended and the NGO trainees and a group of national park rangers have now formed an informal wildlife emergency working group.

- *Provide logistical support for selected, trained national park rangers and/or members of local NGOs to conduct preliminary investigation into human-tiger conflict in areas remote from team base(s) or where TPCU teams are not available (in field etc): this is a contingency item dependent on incidents occurring.*

Local NGOs and park rangers received support on a number of occasions in 2004-5 to monitor and respond to human-wildlife conflict reports either alone or with TPCU ranger supervision.

In particular the programme began to delegate human-bear conflict monitoring to KSNP rangers and local NGOs who have been working with the Tiger team. The team is now in contact with a member of the IUCN Bear Specialist Group and discussing possible training for park rangers and others regarding ways to mitigate human-bear conflict.

In Batang Merangin sub-district of Kerinci, FFI obtained a small grant for Perak, a small local NGO, to examine human-wild pig conflict in forest-edge farmland and the issue of protected carnivores caught accidentally in wild pig snares set in forest-edge farmland. Perak is establishing information and village monitoring networks in its target project area so that all by-take from pig snares is reported and, where still alive, can be rescued.

In the long term, this data should be of real value in assessing the scale of by-take from human-wild pig conflict around KSNP and elsewhere and, likely impact on protected carnivore populations, including Sumatran tigers.

- *Provide continued support for combined law enforcement activities and processing of cases through the legal process.*

In line with established programme and national park policy, enforcement actions ranged from arrests and formal legal cautions in minor breaches of protected areas law through to prosecution through the courts.

Support for police and prosecutors included specialist advice and guidance, background legal materials and precedents and, support for specific Police operational and Prosecution costs in line with Forestry Department guidelines.

PHS rangers took part in or conducted three successful or partially successful law enforcement operations relating to the poaching and/or trafficking of four Sumatran tigers. These cases resulted in the arrests of and on-going prosecution of three men – two traffickers and one poacher.

Two other individuals arrested in one of these operations in November 2004 remain on police bail and the legal case against them cannot be proceeded with until the principal suspect – who managed to escape during the operation – is arrested. This man has been placed on the national police 'Wanted' register and is currently believed to be hiding out in Batam Island off the coast of Singapore.

More than 48 arrests for relatively minor offences which resulted in formal legal cautions and release 'on parole' were made in six districts around the national park.

Cases subject to the full judicial process were proceeded with or are in the process of proceeding through the court system in four districts and two provinces around the national park. Cases in 2004-5 ranged from trafficking and poaching of Sumatran tiger and other protected species, poaching within the national park, illegal logging, assault on park rangers, collection of non-timber forest products within the protected area, possession of illegal firearms and illegal land clearance.

Team members in Kerinci also provided operational support (manpower) to police detectives looking for the sites of marijuana plantations within the national park. This latter activity was not only a response to habitat destruction (forest clearance) but because a number of individuals connected to marijuana trafficking and cultivation have also been identified as actively involved in poaching and trafficking of Sumatran tigers.

The Minister of Forestry personally intervened to ensure that a mob attack on, and kidnapping of, a TPCU team in Merangin district in December 2004 that was co-ordinated by an illegal sawmill owner proceeded to a court hearing.

Unfortunately the principal in this attack has fled to Batam Island (near Singapore) and in spite of being placed on the national police Wanted register has, at this date, not yet been arrested.

- *Replacement and additional equipment as required.*

A variety of equipment was purchased with the support of 21st Century Tiger including camping, specialist and personal field equipment, uniforms and rucksacks, radio antennae and radio units and a second-hand laptop which, unfortunately, became inoperable after eight months.

- *Support, with other donors, for FFI support costs of the PHS programme*
- *Support for drivers.*

One full time driver is employed by the programme: four of the programme's five TPCU leaders now hold valid driving licences as do two Community rangers. Two more community rangers are competent drivers but not licensed on public highways. A second driver was in the process of being recruited at the end of the programme period; this has become a priority since two serious jeep crashes occurred in 2004-5 in two different provinces in the same month when teams were going on or coming back from patrols in project vehicles driven by non-programme staff on logging roads.

- *Provide support for an administration assistant and additional support for the organisation of two workshops to be run in 2004 if funds are disbursed by the donor organisation*

Presidential elections in the third quarter of 2004 and the run-up to provincial Gubernatorial elections in the second quarter of 2005 caused delays in the running of an investigation and wildlife law training workshop due to public order demands on police time. This workshop was scheduled to be held shortly after the end of the programme period and funds were carried over for this purpose.

In September 2004, PHS Field Manager Rudi(janta) took academic leave to undertake a Masters scholarship programme in Holland with a focus on mitigation of human-wildlife conflict. The programme's management structure was then altered to provide two provincial co-ordinator posts, one in Bengkulu and one in Jambi to maintain hands-on and active management and support of teams. Funds which had been intended for an administrative assistant were diverted to this purpose to meet the shortfall in local team management costs.

- *Support for direct support costs incurred by the national park relating to the Tiger programme.*

Funding for the national park's operations and activities continues to be reduced and in 2005 the national park was allocated a patrol and operations budget of Rp70 million (just under USD 8,000) for a national park that covers almost 1.4 million hectares or more than 3 million acres.

The programme contributed to national park costs specifically relating to tiger protection and conservation whenever possible including support for exhibitions and meetings in Jakarta and provincial capitals.

- *Continue to assist the national park management in development of an integrated anti-poaching and monitoring strategy and in particular, to involve motivated national park rangers in protection of Sumatran tiger, prey species and habitat and to increase their capacity by practical training.*

For the third year running, field operational budgets to the national park were reduced. Budgets for field activities have now been reached a point where the park is now unable to conduct any routine field patrols - essential in the development of an effective habitat and species protection programme - or respond swiftly and effectively to illegal logging and forest clearance.

Under such circumstances, integrated anti-poaching and monitoring strategies can only be developed as an ideal but cannot be implemented by the national park as a whole. In spite of this, the project continued to liaise closely with the national park and key KSNP staff so that integrated responses could be made where possible and involves key park personnel in strategic decision-making.

- *Educate local communities in the course of general duties on the protected status of tiger and the species' role in the forest ecology.*

Ranger teams enjoy friendly relations with many forest-edge communities on patrol routes around the national park and informal discussions at the beginning or end of patrols is valuable. Rangers continued to cite the benefit of Tiger conservation as a means of controlling wild pig populations and stressing the role of Tigers as 'friend of the farmer' is invariably well-received.

However it has long been observed that teams whose primary tasks is law enforcement are not always the ideal personnel to implement education and awareness and more formal awareness activities are now passed to local NGOs.

Therefore, in 2004, a Tiger Awareness programme was launched in Kerinci, facilitated by FFI and implemented by local NGO Lembaga Tumbuh Alami with the purpose of working to revive traditional beliefs and respect for Sumatran tiger. The NGO has been particularly effective in obtaining support for tiger conservation initiatives from local customary law leaders and local government officers who appear to have been quite unaware of the scale and scope of threats facing a species which plays a key role in local culture and beliefs.

LTA also began to work with pig hunting clubs in the Kerinci enclave area to seek greater control over hunters' activities and began to establish links with NGOs outside of the Kerinci area to encourage other young environmental activists to raise the issue of tiger conservation in other areas around the national park.

- *Educate park-edge police forces and others in Indonesian wildlife law and to support and motivate key police officers to work with TNKS and other organisations to develop a co-ordinated approach to wildlife trafficking crimes.*

The programme built on and reinforced existing linkages with senior police officers in four key districts around the national park. As a result of successful jointly-implemented law enforcement operations in these areas, the national park and PHS team has won respect from professional police officers and police in neighbouring districts are showing an interest in becoming involved.

It was found that many police officers are keen to work with other agencies where they are seen as professional and effective operational partners.

- *Encourage forest edge communities to report poaching activities and possible conflict situations and so reduce incidence of serious human-tiger conflict for the future welfare and protection of local communities and conservation of Sumatran tiger.*

Although village-level supporters and informants of the programme provided information on suspected poachers and actual or potential human-tiger conflict, it remains difficult, in many areas to encourage villagers to report human-tiger conflict issues at an early stage. The reasons for this reluctance to report on human-tiger conflict are complex and on occasion relate to distant settlements and travel costs however it is essential that solutions are found.

The whole issue of human-tiger conflict in and around Kerinci Seblat National Park forms the focus of PHS Field Manager Rudijanta Tjaha Nugraha's Masters degree thesis. The PHS programme is grateful to 21st Century Tiger for providing grant aid to Rudijanta for his field work in Kerinci.

Reports on poaching activities made to the programme by villagers continued to be an important source of information for TPCU teams, as in previous years, however, villagers are still more likely to report on illegal activities by individuals from outside of their communities.

- *Monitor tiger and other large mammal populations through field surveys and to encourage local universities and researchers, national and international, to conduct research in KSNP.*

Presence of Sumatran tiger and other key large mammals were recorded by patrol units using GPS units and identified – usually – by secondary sign (scrapes, footmarks, faeces or other indicator). Patrol monitoring cannot be undertaken with the same degree of scientific clarity as by researchers and the priorities of a tiger protection unit differ from those of a research team.

However, following the same system over a period of years and having key patrol routes and areas and collecting simple data systematically, has allowed the programme to amass a valuable picture of trend.

In 2004, a tiger monitoring programme led by Dr Matt Linkie of the University of Kent's Durrell Institute of Conservation Ecology (DICE) was established in KSNP with facilitation by FFI:IP. This programme works closely with the PHS team and national park although it operates as an independent scientific entity.

The DICE team is operating an intensive camera trapping programme in areas selected in discussion with the PHS team: results to date suggest that PHS ranger estimates of tiger numbers in a patrol area are surprisingly accurate given that they are made on the basis of secondary sign only – but that rangers may *under*-estimate tiger numbers.

If these results are repeated elsewhere in the park, it is possible that the importance of KSNP for conservation of wild tigers may be even greater than previously thought.

DJM

Sungaipenuh, Kerinci
June 2005