



Sumatran Tiger Trade Project Progress Report, July 02

**Submitted to 21st Century Tiger by Chris R. Shepherd
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Introduction

The population of Sumatran Tiger *Panthera tigris sumatrae* has declined to as few as 400 animals, largely due to illegal hunting and trade. The trade in Tiger parts (particularly bones) and derivative products appears to have increased over the last decade. However, detailed knowledge of the trade dynamics in Sumatra remains scarce, making enforcement of current laws and conservation strategies considerably more difficult. Official government enforcement agencies therefore benefit from any information collected by non-government organisations to increase their efforts and their effectiveness in combating this trade. To accomplish a long-term goal of eliminating the trade in tigers and tiger parts, a thorough examination of the workings of the trade itself is needed to map out a series of integrated responses in an informed manner. TRAFFIC Southeast Asia (T-SEA), with funding from 21st Century Tiger, has set out to examine this trade and to accomplish the following objectives:

Objectives

1. To collect and compile information on the dynamics of the trade in tigers in Sumatra, Indonesia.
2. To build upon the current information regarding the status of existing Sumatran tiger populations and to identify priority areas for increased enforcement efforts.
3. To publish a report of the findings of this study.
4. To compile intelligence on the trade to assist enforcement agencies in their efforts to halt the trade in tigers and tiger parts.

Progress

With the exception of a few constraints, progress towards accomplishing the objectives of this project has been positive. Key partner organizations working on tigers or related issues in Sumatra have been identified and contacted as

sources of information and collaboration. A number of individuals from within these organizations have offered to share their information with T-SEA, thus enabling wider assessment of the current situation. Literature research has also been conducted by T-SEA, and this information is being compiled along with data collected from primary field surveys being carried out by T-SEA.

Surveys have been carried out in the province of North Sumatra, which appears to be the hub of the trade, as it has a large population of consumers of wildlife and is also the main entry and exit point for Sumatra. Interviews have been conducted with people involved in the trade, from hunters to dealers and a large volume of information has been collected for subsequent analysis. Surveys have also been carried out in parts of Riau and Aceh provinces, as well as, by partner organizations, in South Sumatra and West Sumatra.

A strong connection between the human-tiger conflict issues in Sumatra and the illegal trade in tigers has become apparent. In addition, with the massive scale of logging and other forms of habitat loss in Sumatra, it is not surprising that these factors also appear to have a strong impact on the trade. Efforts are being taken to gather more information on these aspects.

A consultant from the northern province of Aceh has been contracted and surveys on the eastern side of this province are to commence in August 2002. The remainder of this province still remains of limits (see constraints).

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the government agencies responsible for protecting tigers and compiling information on tigers in Sumatra have been very cooperative and have assisted in gathering much information for this project.

Constraints

A number of constraints have arisen in regards to meeting the objectives of this study. The most significant of these are:

1. Hiring of Key Consultant: The consultant originally identified has not, for extraneous reasons, been able to get into the field yet. This has delayed surveys in a few key areas. There has been difficulty in finding replacement consultants to carry out the required work that would fit into the allotted budget. As a result, more money than originally budgeted has been spent on consultants, leaving less for complete coverage of the areas earmarked for surveying, and rendering the overall budget somewhat inadequate.
2. Political unrest: Due to continuing political unrest throughout much of

the province of Aceh, surveys have not yet been undertaken there. This is unfortunate, as Aceh is one of the Sumatran Tiger's last strongholds and one of the main sources for tigers entering the trade.

Actions taken to overcome constraints

The following actions have been undertaken to overcome the above-listed constraints:

1. Many of the surveys already carried out have been done so by T-SEA staff, rather than by a consultant. Other consultants have been contracted from partner organizations to carry out area-specific surveys. Contact is still maintained with the original consultant, who may yet be of assistance in the province of Riau. Additionally, partner organizations have been contacted and have agreed to share all information regarding tiger trade gathered from their own field studies and networks. This has already provided much very useful information and increased the coverage of this study considerably. Unfortunately, budgetary shortfalls mean that less area can be covered in total than was originally desired.
2. Due to the above-mentioned political unrest, T-SEA staff are unable to travel to Aceh. To overcome this problem, an indigenous Achehnese, working for a partner organization, has been contracted to carry out surveys there. However, at present, this individual is only able to conduct surveys in the eastern portions of this highly volatile province.

Additional Funding

Due to budgetary and logistical challenges outlined above, the number of surveyed locations has been reduced in order not to exceed the limits of the 21st Century Tiger grant. We feel that these locations are crucial to ensuring that the final outcome of this study and the subsequent analysis of information reflects the full depth of the current situation pertaining to the Sumatran tiger trade. However, in order to carry out the work at the remaining locations, additional funds would be required.

As the funds received in FY02 from 21st Century Tiger were actually approximately USD1000 less than originally applied for (admittedly due to an error by TRAFFIC administration staff), T-SEA would appreciate advice on whether this amount, and perhaps some additional funds on top of that, would be available to bridge the shortfall? Your guidance on how to approach this would be much appreciated.