

MYCAT INTERIM REPORT TO 21ST CENTURY TIGER

Project Information

Project Title: Citizen Action for Tigers (CAT)

Project Description: Supporting anti-poaching efforts together with citizen volunteers in the Yu River Wildlife Corridor and Taman Negara National Park, Malaysia

Organisation: Malaysian Conservation Alliance for Tigers (MYCAT)

Project period: 1 March – 31 August 2013

Prepared by: MYCAT Secretariat's Office



The Malaysian Conservation Alliance for Tigers (MYCAT) is an alliance of the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS), TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, Wildlife Conservation Society-Malaysia Programme and WWF-Malaysia, supported by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia for joint implementation of the National Tiger Conservation Action Plan for Malaysia.

Executive Summary

The Malayan tiger is on the verge of extinction. The most important cause is the poaching of tigers and their main prey species such as the sambar deer and wild boar. The tiger population will recover if poaching is stopped or effectively suppressed. This is the ultimate goal of this project.

The project area is in a priority wildlife corridor, which is the last linkage connecting the two largest tiger landscapes in Malaysia. Despite being a priority area for tiger conservation, park rangers cannot patrol the area regularly enough to protect wildlife due to a lack of manpower and capacity gaps.

The Citizen Action for Tigers (CAT) programme involves citizen conservationists in the protection of this tiger habitat. The volunteers deter poaching by placing more boots-on-the-ground, save wildlife by deactivating snares, and support law enforcement by becoming the eyes and ears of the authorities.

The immediate objectives of this project are to: 1) deter poaching activity at Yu River Wildlife Corridor and encroachment into Taman Negara National Park; 2) elicit reliable information on crimes against wildlife from the public to aid law enforcement; and 3) cultivate wildlife stewardship among the Malaysian public.

The first objective puts volunteers into critical areas for periods ranging from one to seven days during which they walk the Taman Negara border, forest reserve areas and stateland forest seeking to find access routes used by poachers and snares or traps placed by them. Twenty two CAT trips were conducted during the six-month reporting period. This presence has been shown to be an effective deterrent and the number of snares found now compared to previously is lower, despite the greater CAT effort per month (more trips conducted).

The second objective is the provision of timely information on crime against wildlife to the authorities and this is done via MYCAT's 24-hour Wildlife Crime Hotline. Twelve incidents were reported by CAT volunteers. These included information on snares, illegal logging, illegal campsites or animal carcasses discovered, possible gun shots heard, suspicious men and vehicles seen near the forest, etc. Among others, the reports assisted the authorities in removal of snares and identifying an illegal logger.

The third objective is long-term and involves the cultivation of the younger generation and a consciousness raising among adults. This is done through providing an avenue for the public to participate in conservation, for example CAT and other MYCAT volunteer programmes. Of a cumulative total of 815 volunteers with MYCAT, 280 volunteers have participated in CAT.

Among the local communities, outreach activities are conducted with adults and children by trained MYCAT volunteers. In conjunction with this we are aiming, together with like-minded organisations, to promote the livelihood of the indigenous Batek people over the longer term through sustainable eco-tourism activities which are grounded in their expertise – ethno botany, guiding, and traditional skills.

Through the support of 21st Century Tiger, CAT Walks have been continued for a further six months and we have seen the first signs of a significant decrease in poaching activity in the main hotspot within the corridor. This justifies the premise that citizen conservationists do make a difference.

Introduction

Like wild tiger populations elsewhere in Asia, the Malayan tiger (*Panthera tigris jacksoni*) is on the verge of extinction. In the second half of the 20th century, the population has declined from 3,000 to 500. The nationwide estimate is lacking, but all signs indicate that we have much fewer than 500 wild tigers now.

Approximately 45% of West Malaysia remains under forest cover. The majority of the lowland tropical moist forest, the habitat type most preferred by wildlife, has already been converted to monoculture plantations and what remain are mostly hill-mountain tropical forests. However, even these have been hollowed out, and some of the most charismatic inhabitants such as Sumatran rhinos (*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*), elephants (*Elephas maximus*), and tigers are absent in many forest patches, including in protected areas where any form of resource extraction is prohibited by law.

While tigers are threatened by habitat loss and fragmentation, depletion of prey, and retaliation killing due to conflicts with human interests, the prime reason pushing the Malayan tiger to extinction is poaching for commercial trade and profit.

Taman Negara National Park is the largest protected area in Malaysia and West Malaysia's greatest expanse of lowland forest is found in the western part of the park. A benchmark research completed in 2001 showed that Taman Negara was then host to the largest single tiger population in Southeast Asia (Kawanishi and Sunquist 2004).

A decade later, MYCAT research indicates that the tiger population has drastically declined in western Taman Negara, which used to support the highest tiger density among three study sites. Supported by evidence from other research, it is feared that the population decline is probably similar elsewhere in the park. The study also reveals the disturbing absence of tigers and primary prey species such as the sambar deer (*Rusa unicolor*) in the Yu River Wildlife Corridor that connects the 4,343 km² park to the 20,000 km² Main Range, a much greater forest landscape to the west (Fig. 1).

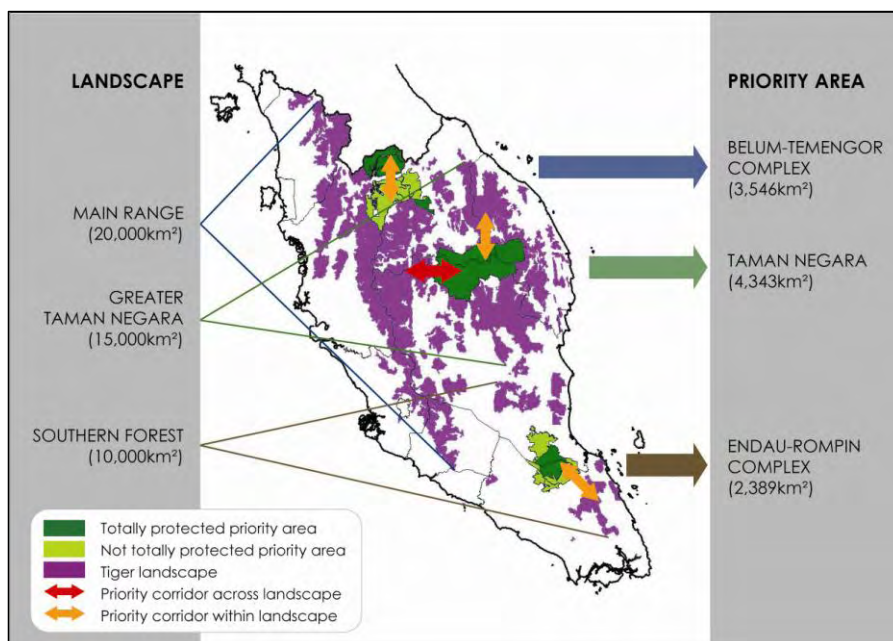


Fig. 1. The location of the project site, Yu River Wildlife Corridor (red arrow) and Taman Negara in respect to the three tiger landscapes and priority areas identified in the National Tiger Conservation Action Plan (DWNP 2008).

Taman Negara is nested in the second largest tiger landscape in Malaysia, the 15,000 km² Greater Taman Negara. The Yu River corridor is important because it is the only linkage left between the two largest tiger landscapes (Main Range and Greater Taman Negara). In order for Taman Negara to function as a source of wildlife populations that disperse into the surrounding forests, the park and the Yu River corridor must be kept inviolate through the suppression of poaching and effective law enforcement.

MYCAT recently completed a capacity building project for the park rangers to improve Taman Negara anti-poaching patrols using Management Information System (MIST), where trainers from the Wildlife Conservation Society-Malaysia Programme conducted workshops on MIST. But despite efforts to improve enforcement efforts, the authorities cannot be everywhere in the park at once.

To further enhance the protection of the Yu River corridor and Taman Negara, the CAT programme engages concerned members of the public to take proactive measures by providing much needed boots-on-the-ground and becoming the eyes and ears of the authorities. By providing an avenue for the public to get involved, this project enables Malaysian citizens to share the responsibility of saving Malaysia's tigers.

The immediate objectives of this project are to:

1. Deter poaching activity at Yu River Wildlife Corridor and encroachment into Taman Negara National Park;
2. Elicit reliable information on crimes against wildlife from the public to aid law enforcement; and
3. Cultivate wildlife stewardship among the Malaysian public.

The ultimate goal of the CAT programme in the area is to protect and recover the tiger population in the Yu River Wildlife Corridor and Taman Negara National Park.

Activities and Outputs

Objective 1: Deter poaching activity at Yu River Wildlife Corridor and encroachment into Taman Negara

The simple presence of volunteers at poaching hotspots and the Taman Negara border, especially on weekends and public holidays when enforcement staff are not on duty, has served to deter poaching activity. Recreational activities or border maintenance works are carried out via three categories of volunteer engagement, which caters to volunteers of various fitness levels and preferences. These categories are:

- a) CAT WALK – moderate walk lasting for several hours while enjoying trekking, bird watching and other outdoor recreational activities in the state land forests within the wildlife corridor. The specific routes have been determined by MYCAT researchers or the park authorities as poaching hotspots or common poacher access routes into core protected forests. This is suitable for weekend volunteers. We conduct a minimum of two CAT WALKS every month. Some CAT WALKS are led by trained volunteers.
- b) CAT BORDER WALK – moderate trekking involving two or more days along the border of Taman Negara specifically focusing on identifying poaching hotspots and routes into the park and the deactivation of snares and traps when necessary. These are 'eyes and ears' surveillance walks. We usually conduct BORDER WALKS monthly.

c) CAT TRAILBLAZER - hardcore bushwhacking along the Taman Negara border with Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) park rangers to maintain the border trail and signs. The participants are dropped off at a starting point, hike for four to five days and are picked up at the end point. This is for experienced jungle trekkers due to the terrain and duration. If conditions permit, we conduct CAT TRAILBLAZERS a few times a year or whenever qualified candidates are identified and DWNP staff are available.

Thanks to the support from 21st Century Tiger in 2013, MYCAT was able to continue to build on the momentum generated in 2012, when CAT officially got off the ground. It is worth noting that the 'presence' in terms of the monthly man-day effort by CAT volunteers in the corridor achieved in these six months surpassed that of the previous year by 64% (Table 1).

Table 1. Comparison of efforts by three different types of Citizen Action for Tigers (CAT) in Yu River Wildlife Corridor in Malaysia during the previous 13-month period and this 6-month reporting period.

Activity	Previous Project Period (March 2012 - March 2013)	21 st Century Tiger Project Period (March - August 2013)
CAT WALK	415 man-day; 26 trips	360 man-day; 19 trips
CAT BORDER WALK	85 man-day; 7 trips	72 man-day; 3 trips
CAT TRAILBLAZER	78 man-day; 3 trips	0 man-day; 0 trips
Total	578 man-day; 36 trips	432 man-day; 22 trips
Monthly Average	44 man-day; 2.8 trips	72 man-day; 3.7 trips

The public response to CAT Walks showed that there is a strong level of interest in participating in conservation. We got off to a good start with CAT Walks being held almost every week, and have sustained a high frequency throughout the year including the Muslim fasting month (Ramadan) and subsequent festivities. CAT Walks are able to cater to the majority of volunteers, both seasoned hikers and first-timers, as the length and level of difficulty of a Walk is flexible. Nineteen trips were conducted within six months, averaging out into about three trips a month.

Meanwhile, Border Walks, which often include camping overnight in the forest, require volunteers to have their own camping equipment and is logistically slightly more challenging. Three Border Walks were conducted, but the additional number of CAT Walks held was able to maintain a persistent and continuous presence of volunteers at the corridor. Figure 2 shows the trails commonly taken by CAT and Border Walk volunteers.

No CAT Trailblazers have yet been conducted, as trips are dependent on the availability of DWNP rangers. A new Superintendent who was recently assigned to Taman Negara is supportive of the CAT programme, but the park is currently short-handed in terms of manpower. CAT Trailblazer trips may be conducted in future when park rangers make plans to conduct a border maintenance exercise in the project site.

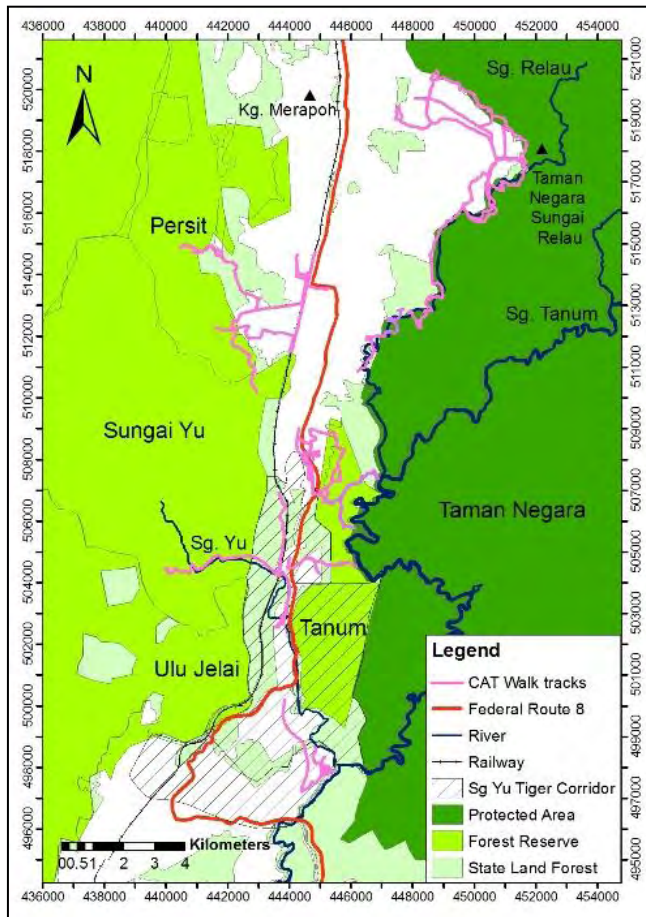


Fig. 2. Trails walked by CAT Walk and Border Walk volunteers between 1 March and 31 August 2013 in the Yu River Wildlife Corridor.

dropped from 11 to zero since the start of this project period. Encounters with poachers took place both at park border areas as well as within the corridor. A damaged camera trap near a village known for its history of poaching and for harbouring a wildlife trader (who has since moved out of the area) suggests the measure of disruption to poaching activity that poachers are experiencing.

The only new sign of hunting in this period has been the skeleton of a young wild boar in another part of the corridor which appeared to have been killed with a shotgun.

Objective 2: Elicit reliable information on crimes against wildlife from the public to aid law enforcement

The Wildlife Crime Hotline is the channel through which CAT volunteers report any sign of illegal activity in the area. A standard operating procedure (SOP) between DWNP and MYCAT outlines MYCAT's role as a third party in between informants and the authorities. The identity of informants is confidential. As MYCAT notifies informants on the actions taken by DWNP, this provides for transparency and accountability in enforcement actions resulting from reports to the hotline.

The hotline is publicised at all Tiger Roadshows (MYCAT outreach programme) conducted by MYCAT and trained volunteers, and through various efforts by MYCAT partners. Around the Sungai Yu area, the hotline was publicised during Tiger Roadshows conducted in 2009, 2010 and 2013.

In the previous 13-month period when the CAT programme got underway, CAT volunteers discovered and removed, or were instrumental in providing information that led to the removal of, a total of 96 snares or traps. We also discovered six poaching camps or illegal logging sites, whereby forestry-related crimes were reported to the local Forestry Department.

In the first six months of this project, two snares and six poaching camps or logging sites were discovered. The fewer number of snares found despite the greater CAT effort per month (Table 1) indicates that poaching in the most critical part of the corridor, a hotspot that was identified by a previous research project by MYCAT, has been suppressed and poachers have been deterred from setting snares in the area.

MYCAT targeted the most poacher-convenient part of the corridor which provides access to the National Park and vice versa, and conducted regular day walks and overnight camps at places where poachers could ford the river.

The number of poachers encountered has

Besides incidents reported by CAT volunteers, reports to the Wildlife Crime Hotline come in from all over Malaysia. Between March and August 2013, the hotline received reports from CAT volunteers almost every month with 12 incidents reported in total. These included information on snares, illegal logging, illegal campsites or animal carcasses discovered, possible gun shots heard, suspicious men and vehicles seen near the forest, etc. The reports were channelled to DWNP or the local Forestry Department who acted on 11 reports.

Among others, the reports resulted in the removal of snares in the Yu River corridor. It is virtually impossible to track down those who set snares, but in one case, the authorities successfully identified an individual from a nearby village who was felling trees illegally based on a report of illegal logging in the project area. The case is still under further investigation, and MYCAT will continue to follow up on the outcomes of the reports.

Objective 3: Cultivate wildlife stewardship among the Malaysian public

As of 1 March 2013, the number of MYCAT volunteers was 730 individuals (out of which 188 were CAT volunteers) and the number of people reached through outreach programmes was 38,482. As of August 2013, the total number of volunteers stand at 815, with 280 being those who have participated in CAT. The number of people reached is 39,474, an increase of 992 people.

The response to CAT has been phenomenal, and there has also been a crossover effect where volunteers acquainted with MYCAT through CAT also helped facilitate outreach programmes and vice versa. Some were repeat volunteers, which showed that they find fulfillment or simply have fun on MYCAT programmes, and are returning to share their time and energy with us.

In April 2013, volunteers who conducted the most recent outreach programme in the area were first led on a CAT Walk for them to experience first-hand the forests that they are there to save. A pictorial report of the programme can be found in Appendix 1.

Despite often walking in degraded stateland forests instead of the lush greenery of the national park nearby, many volunteers have expressed satisfaction in participating in CAT Walks as it provides them with the opportunity to protect wildlife on the ground. Very often when concerned members of the public read about threats to wildlife in the media, they feel helpless and detached from the issues, but CAT empowers them to become part of the solution.

Volunteers learn much about the wildlife conservation efforts and poaching threats in Malaysia by participating in MYCAT programmes. They then serve as 'ambassadors' of wildlife to their friends and family, where word-of-mouth serves as a powerful tool to increase awareness on CAT and conservation in general, thus increasing the number of volunteer sign-ups. Volunteers have produced videos, written in various magazines and featured in documentaries. One has donated money collected during her wedding for the purchase of camera traps to monitor wildlife in the project area.

As part of efforts to increase our presence in the corridor, volunteers are being trained to lead groups on CAT Walks. We currently have five trained volunteer trip leaders and a second training workshop was conducted for potential leaders on 17 August 2013. Six volunteers participated in the workshop. Out of those already trained, two volunteers have emerged as strong CAT Walk leaders. Brief profiles of both volunteers follow:

Helen binti Johnny



Helen is a Sino-Kadazan from Sabah. As a child she followed her policeman father into the Borneo forests, often spending the night there. Later her thirst for adventure led her to qualify as a Combat Medic in the Royal Malay Regiment, one of very few women to do so. She is full of ethno-botanical knowledge and is very comfortable in the forest, so she is a reassuring influence on the young university students she often leads. After five years as a soldier she joined the Education ministry's videography department and works on educational videos. She is also a canoe instructor and amateur caver.

Maimunah Mohd Noor



Muna is the Corporate Communications Director of a listed media conglomerate. Once or twice a month, she leaves her cat and husband and drives her 4x4 to the corridor to lead CAT Walks. When she is in the city all she can think about is the jungle. In her words: "I just keep thinking that every week, if I don't do it, there could be poachers out there. Every time we go into the forest, we make a difference. What we do, it really counts."

We have also sought active involvement from the private sector. Royal Selangor, the leading homegrown pewter manufacturer and retailer, has been supporting the participation of their staff on CAT Walks since 2012. In June 2013, Royal Selangor staff completed a series of four CAT Walks



over the past year and they have since signed on to joining another four Walks in the next year. The company is also subsidising their staff's participation in the upcoming Maybank Wild Tiger Run in November 2013, which is the first awareness and fund-raising run for tigers organised by MYCAT.

This support by 21st Century Tiger has enabled us to secure further financial support of CAT by the Malaysian Building Society Berhad (MBSB), a local financial services provider. A strong believer in employee volunteerism, MBSB staff are participating in a series of CAT Walks. They will also be conducting various community outreach programmes to benefit the rural community in the area.

Additionally, we have leveraged on congruent interests with other organisations such as gap year or overseas community service organisations like [Ecoteer Responsible Travel](#) (Fig. 3). While 'voluntourists' are in the corridor to conduct community-based improvement programmes, they also participate in CAT Walks. Their presence provides alternative income streams to poaching for local inhabitants, while their

Fig. 3. Ecoteer promotional flyer.

participation in CAT provides more boots-on-the-ground.

During the MYCAT outreach programme in April, we extended an invitation to local residents to join us on conservation walks, and discovered that many did not realise how important the Sungai Yu forests are and were keen to join. Another CAT Walk has been conducted for locals since then, and more engagement with the local community is planned.

In the case of the aboriginal community living in the corridor (outside the park), we found that the CAT programme was well received. Engaging them through an anthropologist who spoke their language, we learnt that the tiger and several other large mammals played an important part of their religious mythology and they are very much against the killing of these species. Poaching is a matter of concern to them and they saw the act of poaching these species and destroying their habitat as bringing calamity upon the world. We are working with them to better identify poaching areas and to learn poacher behavior through their tracking skills and knowledge of the forests (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Batek aboriginal (in pink and green) and volunteer tracking tiger pugmarks on stream bed during a Border Walk.

Outcomes and Conclusion

Tiger population recovery as the ultimate goal.



Over the past 12 years, the estimated population of 7 adults (Kawanishi and Sunquist 2004) had declined to only one animal in a 200km² study area in the western part of the park (MYCAT 2012). We named this tiger in the area *Bujang* (meaning 'bachelor' in Malay). After appearing regularly for many months in 2012, *Bujang* stopped appearing in the pictures taken at the usual camera-traps locations and we feared the worst.

However, this could be due to various factors such as old malfunctioning camera traps and disturbance caused by a construction project nearby. In March

2013, a park ranger reported seeing tiger tracks in the forest north of the construction site. And at the end of August 2013, we were delighted to learn that a tiger had been seen by two senior DWNP officers very close to our camera site, where *Bujang* had often been seen and photographed on camera previously. We are very hopeful that his image will show up in our cameras. Outside these areas that were previously frequented by *Bujang* in 2010-2012 and his predecessors in 1998-2000, CAT volunteers have recently documented the welcome signs of a tiger and sambar deer along the park border.

Furthermore, we have been successful in raising the profile of the Yu River corridor. Coinciding with the CAT project, DWNP has increased the patrol efforts inside the park since mid-2012 and at the corridor outside the park since mid-2013.

These efforts are beginning to show a decline in poaching in the main poaching hotspot astride the corridor where we have not found any new snares and only two old deactivated ones during this project period. This suggests that citizens acting as wildlife watch can effectively deter illegal activity and make a difference.



In terms of the prey populations, although the large prey species such as sambar, serow and gaur continue to be rare, the MYCAT research found that medium-sized prey such as barking deer and wild boar are relatively abundant and remained stable at 100% occupancy over the past 12 years (MYCAT unpublished data).

The western park area is the most threatened site in the entire park due to easy access to the park via the highway and the absence of aboriginal residents (Kawanishi et al. 2006). It is vital to protect this sink area because it provides the last connectivity to a greater tiger landscape through the Yu River corridor. Surplus tigers from other parts of the 4,343km² park, where DWNP is finding tigers at higher densities, can colonise this area once it is well protected.

All these factors fuel our hope for a population recovery and the optimism, supported by information gathered, continues to motivate the volunteers and MYCAT.

Media Outputs

- [Article](#) in *Nanyang Siang Pau*, a national Chinese daily newspaper
- Feature article in *Let's Travel*, a Chinese travel magazine (Appendix 2)
- Feature article in the Jetstar inflight magazine (Appendix 3)
- [Article](#) written by MYCAT volunteer in the New Straits Times, a national English daily newspaper
- Interview with MYCAT volunteer in the New Straits Times (Appendix 4)
- Article written by MYCAT volunteer, published in the Association of British Women in Malaysia newsletter and Senses of Malaysia, a bi-monthly travel magazine (Appendix 5)
- [Documentary](#) by NTV7 (local TV channel) on tiger conservation featuring MYCAT volunteers and the CAT programme
- [Interview](#) on NTV7 featuring MYCAT volunteer leader and MYCAT Coordinator, can be viewed upon free registration
- Radio interview on Ai FM, a Chinese radio station, featuring a reporter who participated in a CAT Walk (not available)

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List of Appendices

1. Pictorial report on a community outreach programme conducted near the Yu River Wildlife Corridor in 2013.
2. Feature article in *Let's Travel*, a Chinese travel magazine
3. Feature article in the Jetstar inflight magazine
4. Interview with MYCAT volunteer in the New Straits Times
5. Article written by MYCAT volunteer, published in the Association of British Women in Malaysia newsletter and Senses of Malaysia, a bi-monthly travel magazine

Harimau Untuk Selamanya



Working with the local community to protect the
Sungai Yu Tiger Corridor, Pahang.

MYCAT Tiger Roadshow, 7th to 11th April 2013



Text by Wong Pui May. Layout by Suzalinur Manja Bidin.



2013 marked MYCAT's third programme with the local community in the Sungai Yu area (Sg. Yu). First in 2009, MYCAT and the Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia (DWNP) reached out to the villagers at Sg. Yu and in 2010, we returned to reinforce the conservation messages and to raise awareness among the school children. This time, both adults and children were targeted.

Tiger Roadshow Counter

Number of people reached:

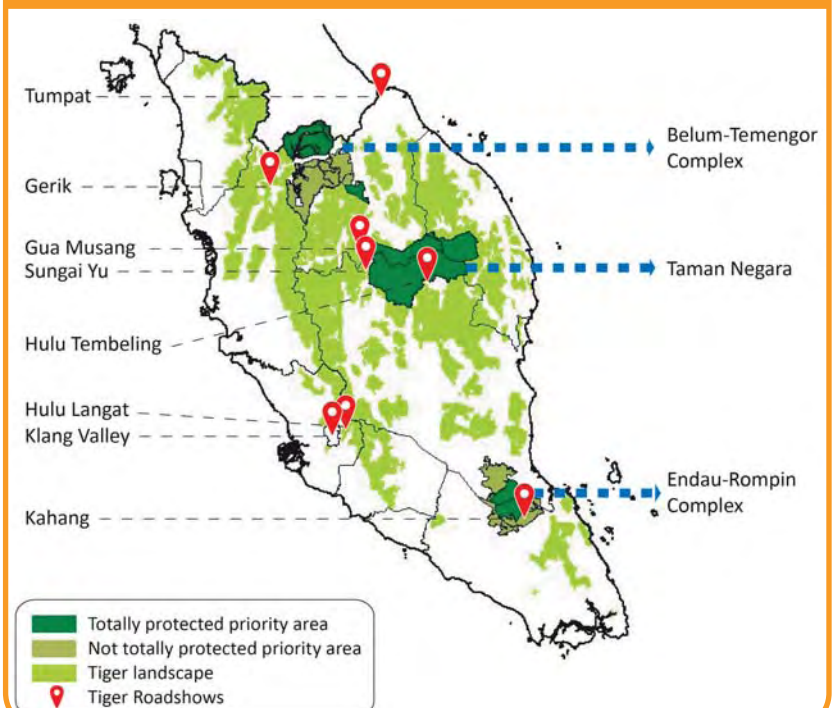
- at Sungai Yu

00656

- since 2005

39138

Locations of MYCAT Tiger Roadshows in Peninsular Malaysia since 2005



What's so special about Sungai Yu?

At Sg. Yu, an 11km stretch of forest links the forested Main Range (*Banjaran Titiwangsa*) and Taman Negara to form a huge forest complex – the fifth largest tiger landscape in the world. This is the Sg. Yu Tiger Corridor, the most important tiger corridor in Malaysia.

However, this link would have been permanently severed by the upgrading of Federal Route 8 (the stretch from Kuala Lipis to Kota Bharu) from a two-lane road to a four-lane highway with guard rails and dividers, had it not been for a model conservation partnership.



DWNP, the Malaysian Public Works Department and MYCAT have worked closely since the onset of the earthwork for the new road. This led to the incorporation of three special crossings for wildlife including a 1km-long flyover, at the total additional cost of RM80,000,000 (approx. USD26 million) to the Malaysian Government.

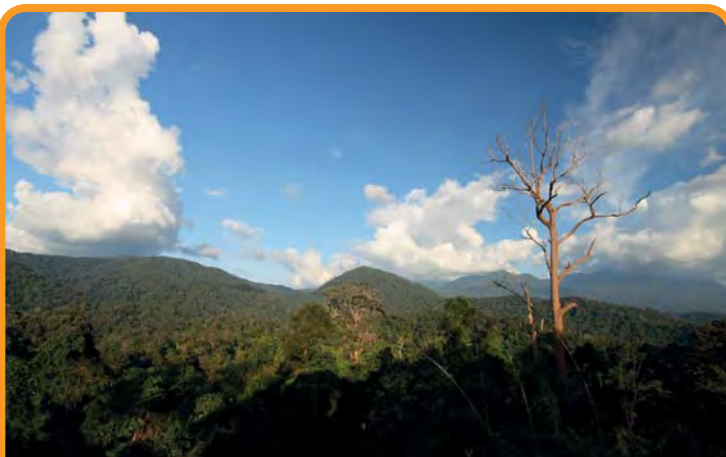
In 2009, the first phase of the Sg. Yu Tiger Corridor Project which included wildlife research and community outreach began. The ultimate goal of the project is to secure the Corridor for wildlife.

While the research component has ended in 2011, we have continued to work towards the goal by supporting DWNP in enforcement efforts and engaging the local community and Malaysian public to protect wildlife at the Corridor. Knowledge gleaned from the research project has been instrumental in guiding the focus of MYCAT projects in Sg. Yu.

To know is to love

The Citizen Action for Tigers (CAT) programme was developed at the end of 2010 to directly involve members of the public in conservation on the ground. As volunteers trek in and around the Sg. Yu Tiger Corridor enjoying the great outdoors, they also keep an eye out for snares and other illegal activities.

The volunteers have saved many animals by deactivating 24 snares and currently, CAT Walks are conducted almost every weekend. The team of volunteers for this outreach programme went on a CAT Walk to experience first-hand the Sg. Yu forests that we are working to save.





Selling a notion

The outreach programme began with the setting up of a booth at the weekly night market in Kampung Merapoh. The wave of yellow swept across the market as volunteers spread out, talking to vendors and visitors about how poaching threatens our wildlife, and encouraging locals to report poaching incidences and illegal wildlife trade to MYCAT's 24-hour Wildlife Crime Hotline (019 356 4194 / report@malayantiger.net).

Some 56% of the people spoken to saved the hotline number into their mobile phones and received a free MYCAT reusable shopping bag in return. Compared to previous Tiger Roadshows in the same market where many villagers seemed frightened by the thought of providing information on illegal on-goings in the community, this time round saw less hostility towards our conservation messages.

Perhaps over the years they have become accustomed to MYCAT's presence and the conservation mindset. Some remembered us from the previous programmes, and a good number signed up to join future CAT Walks. One even joined a CAT Walk that very weekend.

Take action!

- **Report crimes involving tigers and tiger prey to the Wildlife Crime Hotline at 019.356.4194 / report@malayantiger.net**
- **Learn about tigers and tiger prey from reliable sources and share about it**
- **Request legal herbal alternatives to traditional medicines which can contain endangered species**
- **Do not eat the meat of tigers, other endangered species and tiger prey**
- **Voice your opinion on issues like indiscriminate development, illegal logging and poaching**
- **Do not support zoos or theme parks with illegally acquired wildlife**
- **Boycott all wildmeat restaurants**
- **Pay more for wildlife-friendly products**
- **Support conservation organisations**



Investing in the future

We visited two primary schools and one secondary school – SK Merapoh, SK Teluk Gunung and SMK Merapoh, reaching out to 456 schoolchildren. Children from SK Merapoh who happened to be at the night market were clearly excited about the school programme the next day, which was definitely contagious!

The school programme began with an introductory talk in the school hall on the threats faced by tigers. The students were also shown a video on the poaching crisis at Belum-Temengor Forest Complex in Perak, a threat faced by wildlife all over Malaysia, and the trailer of WWF-Malaysia's "Wira Rimba", a documentary on the work of Malaysian wildlife rangers.

The excitement was raised a notch once the students returned to their respective classrooms. Led by trained facilitators, through games and activities, the children learnt about the natural wonders right in their backyard and how special the Sg. Yu area is. The focus of the activities was on the basic needs of wildlife, the importance of sharing resources and the inter-connectedness of the web of life.

At SMK Merapoh, students who participated in our programme three years ago are now 16-year-old teenagers. Although their memory of the exact programme might be vague, the few that we spoke to did remember the key conservation messages, which was extremely encouraging.



Pledges for wildlife that will decorate the classrooms for the rest of the year. Some children pledged to stop setting snares, some wanted to become wildlife rangers, and others wanted to take up similar career paths as their facilitators.



Personal messages for Taman Negara rangers. The cards will serve to motivate and encourage wildlife rangers in their line of duty, and to remind them that their efforts are much appreciated by the little ones.*

**Inspired by the WWF Cards4Tigers initiative.*

Keeping the faith

Through interactions with locals, including children, it was painfully apparent that poaching is still very much a way of life for the local community, from children setting snares in the nearby forests to adults hunting protected species on special occasions and even immigrant plantation workers turning into opportunistic poachers.

Attitudes and habits cannot be changed overnight and community outreach programmes, especially with school children are a long-term effort. It must be continued and for now, the smiles and enthusiasm of the children make it worth our while.

It is important that outreach and awareness be coupled with strong enforcement of wildlife laws by the authorities, and MYCAT will continue to support DWNP in this arena. With our persistent presence and reinforced messages, when action has to be taken against the local poachers, at least they cannot say that they didn't know and they will have to face their children who know better.

Bravehearts

Volunteers are the driving force and unsung heroes of MYCAT outreach programmes. And this was our largest team ever. As much as our programmes seek to impart awareness and knowledge to both children and adults in the communities, it is also a great learning experience for our volunteers, many of whom did not know much about wildlife conservation before the training provided by MYCAT.

Additionally, we were pleased to welcome three volunteers from within the community, namely Kampung Kubang Rusa, a village with a long history of bush-meat consumption. It was heartening to see young Malaysians being part of the change needed in their own community. They were warmly received at the schools by their juniors with grinning faces as they could speak the local dialect and knew some of the children personally.



The Tiger Roadshow forces them out of their comfort zones to approach and speak to strangers, as well as to facilitate programmes for a classroom full of excited children. We are encouraged that there are many Malaysians game for the challenge and are humbled by those who sacrifice their time, their jobs, university assignments etc. to join us in spreading the word. We also greatly appreciate our corporate partner, Maybank, for promoting volunteerism among its employees.

Thank you!

This MYCAT joint project was financially supported by the Maybank Foundation and the Association for British Women in Malaysia.



Additional thanks to Maybank for providing activity books for the students; Japan Tiger and Elephant Fund for sponsoring the Wildlife Crime Hotline flyers; 21st Century Tiger for sponsoring the CAT Walk; the Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia for providing the use of a training hall and other in-kind support; and SK Merapoh, SK Teluk Gunung, SMK Merapoh for their participation.

Credits for the photographs used in this report are due to Abraham Mathew, Chris R. Shepherd, Nazarull Ariffin Mohamad, Satria Putra Kamarudzaman, Suzalinur Manja Bidin and Wong Pui May.

"Recently, Maybank's President, asked MYCAT if we could measure the direct impact of Maybank-sponsored outreach programmes on the tiger population. Unfortunately, the answer is no. Not all that count in our lives are countable in a conventional manner. Nevertheless, with our conviction of its importance, reinforced by the growing number of Malaysian volunteers and the shine on children's faces, MYCAT will continue our roadshows for a more sustainable Malaysia, shared by her people, forest, and wildlife."

— Kae Kawanishi, MYCAT General Manager.



The programme could not have been possible without the sweat and tears of our dedicated team of volunteers, half of whom braved a bout of food poisoning to successfully run the first school programme. Three cheers for Arina Mahirah Zulkifli, Hafeaza Harun, Haniza Jais, Lavaniadevi G., Lim Mei Yi, Mohammad Noor Hakimi Hatimurrudzi, Nor Hajaratul Hidayah Saari, Nurul Atikah Mohd Nazir, S. Darmaraja, Satria Putra Kamarudzaman, Siti Munirah Juri, Siti Muniza Juri and Siti Safiah

Mohammad, and also WWF-Malaysia Communications Officer Chong Ai Lyn. Special mention is due to Maybank, which in true spirit of Corporate Social Responsibility, enabled nine staff members to join in and facilitate this programme during the workweek. The merry bunch includes Adli Hadi Sabaruddin, Asiyah Wahidah Razali, Hamzah Mohd Ali, Md Shahri Md Alwi, Najat Nasiha Hairul Anuar, Nazarull Ariffin Mohamad, Nik Hasnah Syara Nik Anuar, Siti Rahmah Asri and Zainal Abidin Abdul Aziz.

Green
Travel

环保旅行，除了脚印，什么也别留下。

撰文 / 摄影：农晓诚

部分照片提供：大马老虎保育联盟 (MYCAT)

我们的 马来亚虎， 苟活着……

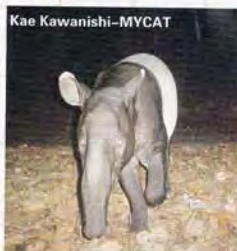
你知道吗？在马来西亚，马来亚虎是我国的国家象征之一，它象征了马来西亚人民的勇敢与毅力，不过却可悲的在大马热带雨林内苟活着。

记者获得大马老虎保育联盟 (MYCAT) 邀请，进森林了解老虎快被灭绝的原因。威猛的马来亚虎，到底敌不过谁？



有多少生命已因人类而去，有多少生命因人类而挣扎在生死边缘？野生动物处于濒危的阶段，只因人类对环境的破坏，对自然资源自私的过度索取，造成了生态的不平衡。这不但对地球的生物造成了很大的影响，其实也加速了我们自身的灭亡。

马来亚虎（学名：Panthera tigris jacksoni），是2004年新确认的老虎品种，分布在马来西亚半岛森林，50年前估计有3000只野生马来亚虎，目前根据官方的资料，只剩下约500只。由于野生老虎是极为神秘且罕见，所以要准确无误地估计老虎的数量几乎是不可能的，说不定数量更少。除了森林的过度开发导致栖息地被严重分割，非法盗猎的问题以及猎物匮乏等，都是马来亚虎受威胁的原因之一。



珍贵的马来豹。



野象也成了猎杀重点。



森林里隐藏相机所拍摄到的黑豹。

一个动作救地球

如果你在宠物店、商店或餐厅发现有野生动物的踪影，可以拨打24小时的“野生动物罪案热线”019-356 4194。

提供店铺的名字、地址、简单的指标及时间地点。

任何投报也可电邮至 report@malayantiger.net。

他们不会要求报案者的详细资料，有关单位在接获投报后会接着调查。你就可以帮助打击及防止野生动物的罪案活动了！加入大马老虎保育联盟 (MYCAT) 的

Facebook：www.facebook.com/themalayantiger

以获得更多资讯与活动详情。

另外你也可以拨打“PERHILITAN 热线”

1-800-88-5151 以举报野生动物罪案。

可耻的盗猎与买卖



传统的捕猎陷阱。



中了陷阱而被枪杀的太阳熊。



太阳熊的颅骨。



掉入圈套陷阱的羌鹿。



中了圈套的老虎，被救时已经奄奄一息了。



鼓励社会各阶层的大众参与有意义的CAT WALK行。

参与 CAT WALK 保护动物

眼看马来亚虎数量渐少，MYCAT 在马来西亚半岛野生动物保护及国家公园局（PERHILITAN）的支持和合作下推出公民老虎行动（Citizen Action for Tigers）保育计划，呼吁公众及企业一起参与，此计划目前由 Save Our Species (SOS) 基金提供资助。保护马来亚虎已不再只是动物保育人士的责任，而是需要广大社会加入这项行动。你可以成为一个协助保护老虎的人，也可以成为消灭它们的人。而 CAT WALK 则是这个有意义的活动之一。

CAT WALK 主要的宗旨是让民众对保育老虎及野生动物的醒觉运动，不但鼓励大众多参与到森林内的活动，也提倡生态旅游，让偷猎者警惕我们的存在，不敢胡作非为。而 CAT WALK 的主要活动是到偷猎者经常出没的森林内徒步，顺道寻找并摧毁偷猎者设下的陷阱与捕猎夹。

马来西亚是一个世界知名的非法买卖野生动物的贸易中心，如果不制止野生动物的非法交易，几十年后，东南亚物种类大部分将面临绝种的命运。

你知道吗？



任何售卖保育野生动物制成品和猎捕野生动物都违反‘2010年保护野生动物法令’。野生动物罪案包括：

- 盗猎、设陷阱、走私野生动物
- 售卖野生动物制传统药物，如虎骨油。
- 售卖野味，如熊掌汤。
- 售卖野生动物纪念品，如虎牙、象牙。
- 无执照贩卖或饲养野生动物，如大壁虎（Gekko gekko）、星龟（Indian Star Tortoise）。

加入 CAT WALK

帮动物避开陷阱

很多人对 CAT WALK (猫步志愿行) 都不甚了解。自从 2010 年开始, 猫步志愿行就受到志愿者的热烈反应, 无论是大马的民众, 还是远道而来的德国、意大利、英国、纽西兰、伊朗、澳洲、新加坡等等, 关心老虎, 关心生态保育的人士参与。CAT WALK 是完全免费的向导和义游行, 志愿者只需要自备到国家公园的交通和住宿, 每个月都有至少几次的森林徒步及寻找陷阱的活动, 主要是在盗猎常出没的热点, 森林保护区生态走廊 (Sungai Yu Tiger Corridor) 内进行。一路上向导都会给予许多森林内的知识, 以及盗猎者及野生动物的思维与习性, 获益不浅。



8:00am

早上集合了所有队员后, MYCAT 资深的官员会给予所有志愿者一些简报, 我们的目标是 Sungai Yu Tiger Corridor。在国家公园附近的摊贩吃了早餐和打包午餐过后, 我们分成两批各自出发至不同的目的地。

10:00am

从公路驶入曲折的黄泥小路, 我们整装待发的进入了森林开始了徒步。



10:17am

小象是遭枪杀而死的, 因为它的颅骨上有三颗子弹孔。



12:46pm

怀疑这是盗猎者做的记号或标志。



12:21pm

看似普通的陷阱其实对野生动物来说是致命的武器!



简易的装备就能捕杀许多猎物了。解除陷阱后不要把这些器材带出去, 因为这样会让人误会你是设下陷阱的人而惹上官非。



1:27pm

这是野象群走过的痕迹, 估计在香蕉树林内找食物。



大象的粪便没有味道而且充满纤维。



伍起均 22岁
马意大利系学生

志愿者怎么说？

这是我第一次与同学参与这个 CAT Walk 活动，过程很好玩不过很累。本身对生态保育及做义工很有兴趣，而且这次是大学里意大利籍的教授介绍的。连外国人都重视我们的生态和老虎，而且马来亚虎是大马仅有的品种，我们应该更加学会珍惜和保护。



周盛远 36岁
新加坡人 银行家

我是通过社交网站知道这个活动，本身对大自然生态的旅程比较有兴趣，曾经来过这个国家公园，看见许多野生动物，所以很喜欢，参与 CAT WALK 则是第一次。虽然没有看见野生动物而感到有点失望，不过第一次看见这些陷阱也获益不浅，这些路线如果没有人带领是没可能会徒步进去的，是难得的经验。

若想更了解 MYCAT 与马来亚虎的现状，
请浏览 www.malayantiger.net
有兴趣当自愿者，请联络 MYCAT 于
mycat.so@malayantiger.net
03-7880 3940



10:38am

发现马来虎的爪痕。



10:47am

看见这个被踩断成两节的树枝说明这里有人出入过，因为动物踩过只会断一节不会是两节。



只要细心一看，经常有人踩踏过的路径，树根上的青苔通常会不见一段。



11:14am

发觉掉入陷阱的野猫尸骨，由于盗猎者认为没有价值，通常就会让动物自生自灭，非常的残忍！



12:09pm

我们又发现了一个已经被解除的陷阱。



11:33am

在原始树林内徒步可见许多高入云霄的古树。



11:30am

另外一个中了埋伏陷阱的刺猬尸骨。



2:15pm

这是非法伐木区留下来的痕迹。

2:30pm

千辛万苦找到了河流休息一下，遇见在另一头山区徒步的大学生。



Ashleigh Kivilaakso Seow
MYCAT 高级项目主任

1. MYCAT 成立的主要目的？

MYCAT 成立的主要宗旨是保育野生老虎及提高老虎的数量。野生老虎保育活动所面临的挑战是多层面的，要寻找野生虎所面对的问题就必须采取综合的保育策略。这就是大马老虎保育联盟成立于 2003 年 9 月的基础。目标计划是在 2020 年提升马来亚老虎的数量至 1000 只。

大马老虎保育联盟 (MYCAT) 是由马来西亚自然协会 (MNS)、国际野生生物贸易研究组织 (TRAFFIC) 东南亚、国际野生生物保护学会 - 马来西亚项目 (WCS) 和世界自然基金会 - 马来西亚 (WWF) 所共同策划，联合马来西亚半岛野生动物保护及国家公园局 (PERHILITAN) 来实行马来西亚国家老虎保育行动计划。

2. 什么是 CAT WALK？

试着想像在马来西亚半岛上有一个 H 字体，左边是中央山脉森林保护区，右边是国家公园森林保育区，衔接这两座森林的，只有区区约 4 公里阔乘 11 公里长的森林保护区生态走廊 (Sungai Yu Tiger Corridor)。很久以前野生动物都是这样横跨两地，但蓬勃的发展已对自然栖息地的连接性造成威胁。

偷猎者经常在此处猎捕老虎等野生动物，你可知道鹿其实在国家公园以外已经不能生存了！CAT WALK 就是要帮助有关当局充当森林内的耳目，拆除及找出这些陷阱，以及鼓励普罗大众多参与这些有益身心，接触大自然的户外活动，如露营、攀爬、观鸟等等，不但能预防盗猎者毫无顾忌的放肆捕杀，还能欣赏美丽的大自然恩物。

3. 志愿参与者会有危险吗？

其实要看见老虎不容易，老虎是猫科，就好象家猫，早上都会休息，晚上才会出来活动。看见老虎的机会很小，不过我们设下的隐蔽相机的确拍摄到老虎。就算你看见老虎，他们看见人类也会走开。

如果遇见偷猎者，他们看到我们都会很快的就转头走开，因为他们都是做些见不得光的事情，根本不想让人发现。

4. CAT WALK 志愿参与者需要什么特别的训练和经验吗？

不需要任何经验，不过需要基本的健康体魄。

5. 有没有年龄限制？

只要你 18 岁以上就可以参与了，曾经有过 70 岁以上的人参加过 CAT WALK，只要有心和健康的体魄都无任欢迎。世界各地的公众都能参加，也欢迎企业的加入。

6. 如果下雨或天气恶劣活动还会继续进行吗？

这里的天气通常很晴朗，下雨也只是阵雨，依然会成行，如果是连续的倾盆大雨就取消活动。

7. 野生老虎天天都受到威胁吗？

是的，野生动物的市场很庞大，中国方面的需求量也很大，这导致野生老虎天天都面对被猎杀的威胁。

8. 森林内还剩几只老虎？

根据统计，野生老虎不超过 500 只。

9. 身为普通民众，我们能做什么去帮忙或防止野生动物受伤害？

不要买任何野生动物的产品或药品，不要迷信野生动物能有什么奇效。植物药材才能有效，动物的奇效是不存在的。你未必能参与在森林内的 CAT WALK 活动，但如果你在宠物店、商店或餐厅发现有野生动物的踪影，也可以拨打“野生生物罪案热线”019-356 4194，提供店铺的名字、地址、简单的指标及时间地点。他们不会要求报案者的详细资料，有关单位在接获投报后会接着调查。你就能帮助打击及防止野生动物的罪案活动了！

Appendix 3

goodwill hunting to save tigers

Head to Pahang's dense rainforests to take part in tiger conservation

» Tumbling unceremoniously down steep slopes, being bitten by leeches, getting stuck in clusters of trees covered with thorns and accidentally stepping on wildlife poo are not exactly fun times in the Malaysian rainforests. But add tiger conservation into the equation and it takes on a new level of excitement.

I put my hand up for a CAT Walk in the Sungai Yu Tiger Corridor in Pahang state, located 275km from Kuala Lumpur. Organised by MYCAT (Malaysian Conservation Alliance for Tigers) and supported by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia, the CAT Walk trip is highly

recommended for wildlife fans who want to make a direct impact on tiger conservation. It's part of the Citizen Action for Tigers (CAT) programme.

Sungai Yu is the last forest corridor linking the 20,000km mountainous Main Range and the 130-million-year-old Taman Negara National Park; it's vital for wildlife,

how you can help

The wildlife authorities can't be everywhere at once, but you can be their "eyes and ears" by reporting the poaching and illegal trading of endangered animals to the relevant authorities via a hotline (+60 (19) 356 4194).



Sungai Yu Tiger Corridor is a six-hour drive from Kuala Lumpur; tel: +60 (3) 7880 3940 (bookings line); mycat.so@malayantiger.net



Sungai Yu Tiger Corridor

Pahang



WONG PUI MAY, COORDINATOR, MYCAT

Taman Negara Sungai Relau is also a great spot for bird-watching. Keep an eye out for hornbills while you're there

including highly endangered tigers. It's also where six visitors, including this scribe, embarked on the CAT Walk trip.

Before entering the forest, two MYCAT volunteer guides brief us on what to do should we encounter wild animals; the importance of ensuring that the person behind us is visible at all times while trekking; and how tasks such as data recording is vital to monitoring tiger presence and illegal human activities.

We're also told that Sungai Yu attracts few visitors, making it easy

for poachers to enter the forest from here to set up snares. Even barely halfway through our journey, we spot several metal wire snares used to trap large animals, and nylon snares for small mammals and birds. We assist our guides in taking notes and photographic evidence of the traps before dismantling them.

Along the way, we spot several large spiders, animal scratch marks on trees and wildlife droppings. Our guides instruct us to gather data to identify the wildlife in these parts.

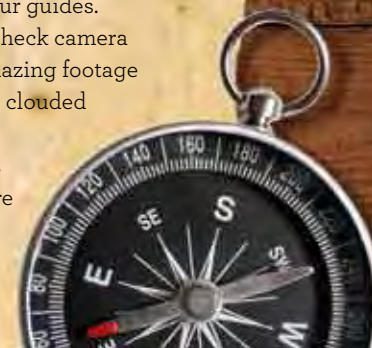
Our guides also reveal that tiger pugmarks are rather difficult to spot, and sightings of tigers extremely rare. "However, several visitors and locals have previously sighted tigers roaming freely here. When coming across a tiger, do not turn your back on it but slowly walk backwards. Move quicker only when it's crouching and ready to attack you," says Man, one of our guides.

Visitors get to check camera traps, and view amazing footage of tigers, panthers, clouded leopards, marbled cats and elephants roaming wild where they belong. ◀

discover how to earn your tiger stripes

Stay at the chalets, dormitories or camp sites located at Taman Negara Sungai Relau and participate in CAT Walks to learn about wildlife conservation, illegal poaching and other threats to tigers as well as discovering the steps you can take in your everyday life to help save tigers and other wildlife.

Also check out malayantiger.net.



GRACE CHEN
REPORTING
news@cbt.com.my
www.cbt.com.my



Walking on the wild side

WHEN CAT Walk volunteer leader Muna Noor was eight and studying in Scotland, representatives from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) came to her school. In her then young impressionable mind, Muna made the connection that humans were largely responsible for their environment. That was also the day she decided to become a vegetarian.

As she was too young, positive encouragement only came from her parents when she turned 13. Today, Muna, 40, who is Catcha Group's director of public communications, is a pescetarian, one who abstains from red meat but allows exceptions for fish.

Describing her childhood years in Singapore's Woodlands and Kuala Lumpur's Kampung Datuk Keramat, Muna recalls the environment then was a stark contrast to the present landscape of concrete jungles. Surroundings were still well forested and the house where she lived in was just a stone's throw away from a soursop orchard.

"Co-existing within this scenery was a close knit community. As children, we climbed trees and chased chickens. Once in a while, we'd come across snakes and really horrible spiders," remembers Muna.

But all this eventually made way for progress.

The gradual erosion of nature finally dawned when a landslide wiped out a whole row of houses right in front of her rented apartment in Ampang in 2008. She and husband Matt Armitage eventually moved to Putrajaya. There was plenty of greenery there but the landscaped effect never did come close to the lush, verdant forests of her childhood.

Coming from an editorial background, Muna's first step was to help with conservation awareness drives by posting relevant links and articles on social media. But at the back of her mind was the constant desire to do more, to move beyond awareness.

Her chance came last year when she volunteered with MYCAT (Malaysian Conservation Alliance For Tigers).

"The act of conservation is never



an easy topic because it involves major issues like housing development and agriculture, but I wanted to play my part. As an animal lover, I decided to volunteer in the area of animal conservation, thus I signed up for CAT Walks, where I can participate in conservation work on the ground to deter illegal hunting," says Muna.

CAT, which stands for Citizen Action for Tigers, brings volunteers into the forests of Sungai Yu, Merapoh, Pahang to keep an eye out for traps set by poachers. The

programme observes a strict non-confrontational approach; any trap found is deactivated and all suspected illegal activities are reported to the Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia (Perhilitan), via the Wildlife Crime Hotline. The weekend trips to this remote area are also a way to get close to Mother Nature.

The programme comes under MYCAT, which is an alliance of the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS), TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, Wildlife Conservation Society-Malaysia Pro-

gramme and WWF-Malaysia. Perhilitan, being the authority on wildlife, is the primary government partner in the CAT programme.

While on walks, the group has come across gruesome discoveries such as skeletons with wire snares still wound around an animal's leg.

Muna deduced the poacher may have forgotten about the trap, leaving the animal to die a slow, painful death from hunger and thirst. On another occasion, she even discovered a man-made salt lick, nearby a hole which had been dug

out and concealed.

Since May last year, Muna and other CAT volunteers have seen remarkable improvement in the Sungai Yu area, a corridor used by animals to cross between the Main Range and Taman Negara. This is in contrast to a past occasion where her group found some 19 illegal traps in the area alone. Today, there are hardly any to be found.

"You must understand that traps are indiscriminate. As an example, a poacher may want to entrap a deer for its meat but he may end up snaring a tiger cub instead. As it is, tigers are already listed as an endangered species and there are very few of them left," explains Muna.

For this gutsy character, her iron steed would be none other than a three-year-old Triton which takes its mistress no less than twice a month into the jungles of Merapoh.

As an animal conservationist, Muna analogises that a car engine is very much like the delicate ecosystem of a forest. Just like an engine that will not function well if any one of its parts is removed, the same applies to a forest.

In this case, she explains that poaching, one of the main reasons contributing to animal extinction, may not be seen as harmful, but in the long run, humans will suffer the consequences as animals are part of a food chain which also contributes to an ecosystem. One example is the presence of wild boars attacking vegetable plots in remote villages, which is caused by the diminishing presence of apex predators like tigers, for instance.

□ To find out more about CAT Walks, visit www.malayantiger.net or www.facebook.com/themalayantiger. If you suspect illegal on-goings involving endangered wildlife in your area, call the Wildlife Crime Hotline at 019-356 4194. This is a 24-hour confidential hotline where you can report wildlife crimes like poaching, presence of snares or traps, sale of exotic meat, sale of wildlife for the pet trade, endangered wildlife kept as pets, and sale of traditional medicines using animal parts as jewellery or ornaments. All reports will be channelled to the relevant authorities.

Tiger Trails and Tales

EVER WANTED TO TAKE A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE? **JENNIFER CANTLAY** EXPLORES THE MYSTERIOUS WORLD OF TIGER TRAILS AND SHARES HER EXPERIENCE AS PART OF A CONSERVATION EFFORT FOR THESE MAGNIFICENT CREATURES.

The trampled vegetation and fresh dung were a clear sign that elephants had recently passed along this forest trail. Some of our group of volunteers were looking more than a little nervous at the thought of a sudden elephant encounter. Our guides had given us instructions on what to do if we met any during our walk, so we knew in theory that instead of running away, we should scatter in all directions into the jungle. We did not however, relish the prospect of a practical opportunity to test out this advice. The elephant footprints continued for some distance before finally moving off into the dense protection of the forest undergrowth.

Suddenly, a fellow volunteer noticed claw marks some way up a steep bank. Our guides examined the tracks and concluded that a Malayan sun bear had most likely scrambled up there. This is the smallest bear in the world and is recognisable by its cream-coloured face and the white U-shaped mark on the chest of its otherwise black body. They are most active during the night, often sleeping in trees during the day. Further on we found deep scratch marks on the smooth bark of a tree and we marvelled at the strength this small bear must have had to scale it.

We headed off the trail and ventured further into the forest. The canopy shaded us from the fierce morning sun, but offered no respite from the intense humidity. All around, the air hummed with the sound of cicadas screeching, birds calling and the territorial hooting of Siamang, the largest of the gibbons. This idyllic picture soon changed when we encountered a poacher's snare. Wild venison is a popular choice on local menus despite it being illegal to hunt deer in Peninsular Malaysia. Unfortunately, the illegal snares in Malaysia are indiscriminate killers, often catching other mammals the hunters do not want to eat or sell, leaving these victims to slowly die as they usually cannot break free. This area had several snares and pits dug into the earth to trap small mammals, and it was evidently regularly visited due to the rubbish discarded here. The findings were a harsh reminder that, more than anything else, humans are in fact the most dangerous predators on the planet.

These jungle experiences were some of the highlights from my recent visit to the Sungai Yu Tiger Corridor in Pahang with the Malaysian Conservation Alliance for Tigers (MYCAT). My friend and I participated in one of the weekend Citizen Action for Tigers (CAT) Walks, joining other volunteers and trained guides to walk through this wildlife corridor. This route connects the Main Range and the Greater Taman Negara area to provide an important pathway for tigers and other animals moving through the forests.







Unfortunately, the corridor is located close to the main road and allows easy access for poachers and illegal loggers to extract both wildlife and timber. It is hoped that the presence of volunteer groups on CAT Walks will deter these activities from occurring and also enable MYCAT to look for any evidence of tigers in the corridor, such as tracks, scat, and claw marks on trees. It also allows for the detection and deactivation of poachers' snares and traps which are reported to the Department of Wildlife and National Parks with exact GPS coordinates to facilitate their removal.

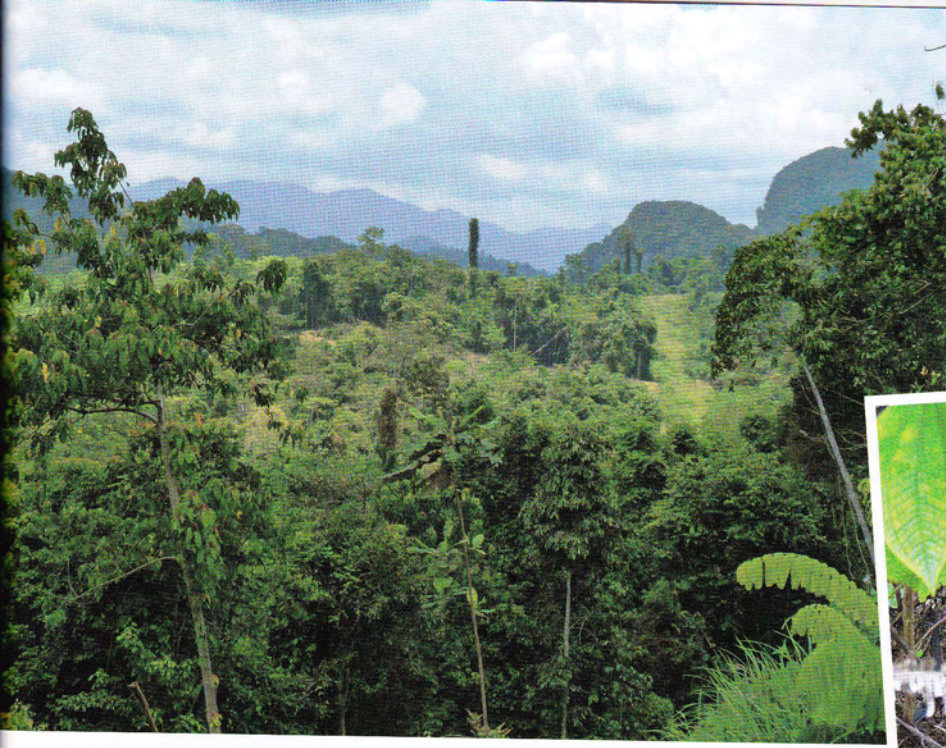
Anyone above 18 can volunteer for a weekend CAT Walk and it is a great way to experience the sights and sounds of the Malaysian rainforest whilst supporting a conservation initiative. To get the most out of it, volunteers should be reasonably fit and prepared to trek through some sections of challenging jungle terrain, so sturdy walking shoes or boots are advisable and are best worn with trousers

tucked into socks, or with leech socks. It is also essential to have plenty of drinking water and high-energy snacks, as hiking in the jungle humidity can be very tiring.

MYCAT is an alliance of four conservation organisations (WWF-Malaysia, TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, Malaysian Nature Society [MNS] and Wildlife Conservation Society-Malaysia Programme) which works to protect the endangered Malayan tiger from extinction. It is thought that as few as 500 Malayan tigers may remain in the Malay Peninsula, but it is difficult to know the exact population.

One cause of the decline in the tiger population is habitat loss, with forests being felled to make way for plantations, housing developments and road construction. A male tiger requires a home range of at least a hundred square kilometres to allow enough space for hunting and breeding, and the ongoing habitat destruction reduces the





availability of prey and makes finding a potential mate difficult. Favoured prey in Malaysia includes barking deer, sambar deer, and wild pigs; however, poachers also like catching these mammals for human consumption. This extensive poaching means that tigers are losing out on their food sources and are forced to eat smaller mammals.

A more urgent threat to tiger populations is the hunting and trapping of tigers themselves to supply the consumer demand for exotic meat, bones used in traditional medicine and skin, teeth, and claws for symbols of status or wealth. The illegal trade of whole tigers, their parts

and products through and within Asia is a massive problem for the survival of the species. The demand for tiger parts far outstrips the supply in this region. A recent analysis has shown that parts of at least 1,425 tigers have been seized by enforcement agencies across Asia between 2000 and 2012.

As a result of these threats, the Malaysian Government, with input from MYCAT, has developed a National Tiger Conservation Action Plan to safeguard the future of these magnificent creatures with the aim of trying to increase the population to 1,000 by 2020 through conservation actions and policies. Although an

ambitious objective, work is already underway to achieve this goal. It is important that this is supported as widely as possible and there are a number of ways in which we all can help:

- Volunteer to join a CAT Walk or a community outreach programme with MYCAT.
- Do not eat wild meat and boycott all wild meat restaurants.
- Do not purchase traditional medicines that are suspected to contain threatened species.
- Avoid purchasing wildlife parts, such as teeth, bones, claws, or products fashioned from them, because the source may support the illegal trade of endangered species.
- Report any suspected wildlife crime to the Wildlife Crime Hotline, telephone number: 019 356 4194 or email: report@malayantiger.net.
- Learn more about Malaysia's amazing diversity of species and the landscapes they inhabit from reliable sources of information, and pay it forward to your family and friends as well.
- Support conservation organisations working in this region to protect tigers and their habitat.

For more detailed information about the CAT Walks visit MYCAT's website at www.malayantiger.net/v4/tiger-action-plan/191-cat-walks