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# TIGER UPDATE

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Issue 2, February 2005

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## Vision

A world in which tigers thrive in natural habitats across their range and benefit humanity as a result

## Long-term Goal

To conserve demographically viable populations of tigers and their prey, across their range, in large, well-managed networks of protected areas, buffer zones and connecting tiger-friendly landscapes

## Programme Goal

To improve the protection and management of key tiger populations and their habitat in top priority conservation landscapes through measures that can be sustained and supported over the long-term by governments, local communities and other stakeholders

## Tigers in the Snow

### 2005 Amur Tiger Survey

February marks the beginning of a major effort to determine the number of Amur tigers remaining in the Russian Far East by five organizations: Primorye and Khabarovsk Natural Resources Authorities, Primorye and Khabarovsk Hunting Departments, Russian Academy of Sciences, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), and WWF. Since the first snows of December, biologists, hunters, and fieldworkers have been gathering data on the location of tiger tracks across Primorski and southern Khabarovsk Krai.

Fieldworkers recently traversed about 1,000 routes, totalling approximately 10,000 km, to report the exact location of tiger tracks. Measurements of those tracks will allow biologists to estimate the total number of animals remaining in the Ussuriski taiga. Since tigers often travel 10 km or more in a single day, it is possible for one tiger to traverse any number of transects that will be covered by fieldworkers. By conducting the survey simultaneously, biologists hope to reduce the chances of one tiger being counted multiple times by various fieldworkers. The prey base will also be assessed.

"For 10 years, WWF has been involved in Amur tiger conservation," explained Pavel Fomenko, WWF RFE program coordinator on biodiversity conservation. "This census is an opportunity to plan future measures for tiger conservation and is very important to WWF as a summary result of our activities."

The last full range survey of Amur tigers was conducted in 1995-1996, when biologists estimated a total 330-371 adult tigers, and 85-105 cubs. Monitoring of the population since then suggests that the population has declined, but details are uncertain. Preliminary results will be released in late spring or early summer.

For more information: Yulia Fomenko, Deputy Director on Public Relations, WWF RFE YFomenko@wwfrfe.ru



WWF-supported anti-poaching unit 'Leopard' surveyed south-west Primorye.



■ Tshewang Wangchuk

*The response since the last Update has been very encouraging, and we have been flooded with field stories for this issue.*




In fact the response has been so positively overwhelming that we have decided to make this a quarterly. There is so much happening in the tiger world! Indeed, it has become important and necessary to share our efforts in the field, lessons and successes with our colleagues.

The Indian Ocean tsunami disaster in December 2004 affected all of us, but more so our colleagues in India, Indonesia, Thailand and Sri Lanka. It was a human tragedy of immense proportions—almost 300,000 lives have been lost, and millions more were affected. In addition to the challenges of reconstruction, our colleagues in WWF Indonesia are now involved in ensuring that this unforeseen necessity does not undermine the conservation achievements in Sumatra so far.

After a decade, the first comprehensive tiger survey in the Russian Far East is currently underway. This task reflects cooperation among many partners in conservation, with the Russian government in the lead. It is the result of many years of hard work and the outcome of the survey will give a better indication of the results of tiger conservation work in the Russian Far East.

In recent months there have been several seizures of tiger skins and parts by Indian authorities. WWF was instrumental in aiding some of these seizures. However, at the same time, we learn from news reports that two important Tiger Reserves in India, Sariska and Ranthambore, have lost most of their tigers.

In this issue, we have reports from WWF Thailand and WWF Malaysia highlighting what they have been doing for tiger conservation. WWF Lao and WWF Vietnam reported on a transboundary initiative to tackle wildlife trade.

We try to keep you abreast of what is happening, but the Tiger Update is primarily dependent upon your inputs. Again, thank you for your comments, and keep them coming. 



## Battling Illegal Tiger Trade



A critical threat to the survival of tigers in the wild is its illegal trade. Nearly every part of the tiger has a value. Tiger bone powder, gelatin, wine, pills adhesive plasters and poultices are used in traditional Asian medicine to treat a variety of ailments ranging from rheumatism to fever and epilepsy. Some Asian cultures consider tiger meat healthy and sexual tonics often contain the animal's penis. There is demand for tiger skins for trophies and display purposes. The skin, as well as teeth and claws, are made into 'magical' amulets, charms and novelties.

Up to the 1990s, the use of tiger parts and derivatives in traditional medicines was the most severe driving force behind poaching and international trade. Increased enforcement of trade bans and co-operation with traditional medicine communities since then has helped reduce retail sale and use of tiger-bone medicines. Surveys by TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network of WWF and IUCN, revealed that in the early part of the 1990s, made-to-order raw bone preparations were available at 59 percent of pharmacies surveyed in Taiwan. The figure was less than 1 percent later in the same decade. Despite a marked fall in the consumption of tiger-bone medicines, there is little indication of a major reduction in poaching of some tiger populations. The use of tiger parts in traditional Asian medicine continues to be a threat to wild tigers. Leopards and other big cats are increasingly being illegally hunted to provide an alternative to tiger bone.

The trade in tiger skins and has also become sizeable with seizures in some countries spiking in the 1990s. In October 2003, the largest illegal cache of 32 tiger skins was confiscated in Tibet. The TRAFFIC report "Nowhere to Hide" in 2004 revealed a substantial domestic market in Indonesia for tiger

\* 'Namaste' means 'Greetings' in Nepal, one of 14 tiger range countries.





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Display of skins and ivory for sale (leopard, clouded leopard, tiger and python skins plus elephant tusks) at a stall in Rachilek market. Across the border from Maesai in Thailand/Burma.

skins and other parts for trophies, charms and souvenirs. With only between 400 and 500 tigers left in the wild in Sumatra, the report found at least 50 tigers were poached per year between 1998 and 2002.

Tigers are listed in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), banning any international trade in their parts or derivatives. Tigers are also protected from hunting and domestic trade by laws in their range states. However, with poaching of tigers still widespread and their products widely available in many markets, countries need to strictly enforce

trade bans, improve anti-poaching capacity and develop specialized wildlife trade enforcement units.

TRAFFIC assists key range states and consumer countries meet the challenge of addressing the tiger trade through ongoing monitoring, assessment and analysis of trade dynamics and trends. Based on recommendations from CITES, TRAFFIC is analysing recent progress by Asian countries on strengthening the enforcement of laws regarding tiger trade and prioritising key interventions needed.

Improved legislation is necessary to enable policing of the continuing availability in many countries of medicinal preparations claiming to contain tiger products. Strengthened law enforcement assistance will also be a focus of TRAFFIC's work, including the provision of intelligence information, encouraging international co-operation between enforcement agencies, capacity building and the provision of law enforcement tools. Recent enforcement tools include a Chinese-language manual to identify tiger parts in trade to aid customs officials in their investigations. 🐾

For further information:

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Armed Forest Guard shows a confiscated tiger skin in Chitwan, Nepal.

© WWF Nepal Program / Neelima SHRESTHA

## Nabbing the Traders

**In the past few months, many important seizures of illegal wildlife products were made in India.**

Regular patrolling, anti-poaching operations and the daring enforcement staff paid dividends with the seizure of wildlife products near Corbett Tiger Reserve recently. Acting on information received from an active informers' network, the raiding party of the Corbett Tiger Reserve nabbed two people involved in illegal wildlife trade. Corbett Tiger Reserve is a priority protected area supported by WWF-India.

The Delhi police raided the basement of a warehouse in Patel Nagar on 1 February 2005 and discovered a huge stock of wildlife products. The haul consisted of 39 leopard skins (including one snow leopard), two tiger skins, 42 otter skins, 3 kg of tiger claws, 14 tiger canines, 10 tiger jaw bones, about 135 kg of porcupine quills, 60 kg of tiger and leopard paws, and 20 small pieces of bone that appear to be tiger and leopard 'floating' clavicle bones. Four people were arrested, including the niece and another relative of the notorious wildlife trader Sansar Chand, and two employees at the warehouse.

Two women carrying a tiger skin and approximately 18 kg of tiger bones were apprehended on 19 February 2005 by Ramesh Kumar Pandey, DFO Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary, along with other members of his staff. The seizure was made on board a train near Bichia Railway Station within the sanctuary while the contraband was being transported to Palia, a small town near the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve. WWF-India TAL Field Office at Pilibhit played a very important supporting role in making this seizure possible.

For further information :

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## Conservation Biology Unit - Thailand

Since 1999, the Conservation Biology Unit (CBU) at WWF-Thailand has been conducting research and management activities relevant to tiger conservation, concentrating in Thung Yai Naresuan Wildlife Sanctuary (3,622 km<sup>2</sup>) in western Thailand. This region is crucial for the future of tigers because of its large size and remoteness, unbroken diversity of forest types, and the persistence of an intact large mammal community that is increasingly rare elsewhere.

Applied research is aimed at understanding ecological processes that determine the conservation status of the large mammal community. The results are used to inform collaborative actions within the sanctuary; for example, establishing and maintaining wildlife recovery zones (30 km<sup>2</sup>) with local villagers to revive the prey base for large carnivores, while increasing the sustainability of subsistence hunting.

At a larger scale (1000 km<sup>2</sup>), the CBU is building a monitoring and patrolling system together with rangers and local people. As a team, they have been trained to measure tracks, read maps, establish sign transects, and record data. Results are coarse, but starting to clarify where tigers are in relation to poaching hotspots and prey abundance. After two years, reports of commercial poaching in some parts of the sanctuary have declined.

By incorporating local people and their ecological knowledge into problem diagnosis (in 'wildlife workshops'), the CBU is able to (a) link extant patterns (of wildlife distribution and abundance) with historical processes, and (b) build a local constituency more aware of their role (positive and negative) in the sanctuary. These outcomes have resulted in a more accurate problem definition that is shared by all stakeholders, and unlocks opportunities for collaboration that large mammals here need.

*For more information: Rob Steinmetz, CBU, WWF-Thailand. rob@wwfthai.org*

## Tiger Monitoring

### in Terai Arc Landscape, Nepal

Self-activated camera traps are being used to monitor tigers at Royal Shuklaphanta Wildlife Reserve (RSWR) in the far western part of the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) in Nepal from December 2004. The presence and status of tigers in this landscape is a measure of conservation success brought about through activities implemented by the Government of Nepal with support from WWF Nepal Program and other partners. The main objective of this study is to assess the abundance of tigers in the 155 km<sup>2</sup> core area of the reserve, which has been divided into five blocks. Ten reserve staff were trained to use camera trapping equipment and received hands-on training to set up and operate cameras at strategic locations. Sixteen tigers have been 'trapped' till date. Detailed analyses will be conducted after the survey is completed.

*For more information: Kanchan Thapa, Research Officer, WWF Nepal Program. kanchan.thapa@wwfnepal.org*

### in Bukit Tigapuluh-Tesso Nilo Landscape, Indonesia

Ten sets of DeerCams were donated to WWF's Tiger Project in Indonesia's Riau in December 2004 to be used in Bukit Tigapuluh-Tesso Nilo Landscape. They will be used to identify tiger presence and estimate population. The Tiger Patrol Unit/TPU in the area surveyed target areas to deploy the cameras through community interviews and are documenting the coordinates of tiger tracks. The TPU personnel assigned to conduct camera trap surveys will install a camera for every grid of 3x3 km<sup>2</sup>. The tiger photos obtained will enhance the accuracy of tiger data and improve the quality of campaign materials to promote the protection of the tiger. The other benefit is the monitoring of illegal logging and encroachment in the Tesso Nilo National Park buffer areas by companies and communities.

*For more information: Nur Anam, Campaign Officer, Tiger Project Tesso Nilo/Sumatra. aragati@yahoo.com*





## Vietnam and Lao PDR work together to fight wildlife trade

The third transboundary meeting between Vietnam and Lao PDR to discuss issues to do with wildlife trade was conducted in Ha Tinh province of Vietnam from 1-5 November 2004. The main concern was the illegal trade in wildlife products coming out of the Nakai Nam Theun National Protected Area (NNT) into Vietnam. Over 350,000 Ha in Bolikhamxai and Khammouane provinces was identified as vitally important for biodiversity conservation both in Laos and throughout Southeast Asia. It harbours a rich diversity of flora and fauna, with high numbers of endangered and endemic species like the Douc langur, clouded leopard, tiger and Asian elephant. NNT has come under intense pressure from a number of externally driven factors, not the least of which is the transboundary wildlife trade in threatened and endangered species moving out of the NNT area and into Ha Tinh and Quang Binh with Vietnam. In particular, trade in pangolins, tigers, turtles and gibbons have been extensively documented. The meeting included forestry staff from Bolikhamxay, Khammouane, Ha Tinh and Quang Binh Provinces, central level officials from the two countries, and representatives from WWF and WCS in Lao PDR. Results included a 5-year Action Plan for direct district to district cooperation between officials in the two countries that was presented at the IUCN World Conservation Forum at Bangkok in November 2004.

*For more information: Pauline Gerrard, [pauline.gerrard@wwflaos.org](mailto:pauline.gerrard@wwflaos.org)*

## Tigers in Trouble

After reports on a drastically reduced tiger population in Ranthambore National Park and a virtual crash of the tiger population in Sariska Tiger Reserve, WWF India made important recommendations for immediate intervention on wildlife management at a workshop at New Delhi in January 2005.

At Sariska, no tigers have been seen since August 2004, and even indirect evidences of their presence have been rare and unconvincing since the end of the last monsoon season. Poaching is believed to be the most likely cause of this sudden crash of the tiger population in Sariska, which indicates a systemic failure of the park's management. WWF India recommended stability in the management, immediate anti-poaching measures "on a war footing" and pending relocations of villages to be expedited.

The recommendations for Ranthambore National Park include better monitoring and implementation by the Committee set up by the Indian Supreme Court in 1995. Supplementary recommendations were the regular independent research team to monitor and evaluate the tiger population and make their quarterly reports public and to make available feedback forms from tourists to independent bodies for analysis and assessment with regard to tiger sightings and illegal activities inside the park.

Both reserves fall outside of any major landscape WWF works in but WWF-India provides assistance in strengthening anti-poaching activities.

*For more information: PK Sen, Director, Tiger & Wildlife Programme, WWF-India, [psen@wwfindia.net](mailto:psen@wwfindia.net)*

## 'Billy' Arjan Singh awarded Getty Conservation Prize

Tiger conservationist 'Billy' Arjan Singh was the co-winner along with Tony Larocchi, a pioneer in marine conservation, of the prestigious J Paul Getty Wildlife Conservation Award that has a \$100,000 purse. Billy, a former hunter-turned-conservationist, was instrumental in persuading the then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to create the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve under the prestigious Project Tiger. Today Dudhwa is a vital part of the Terai Arc Landscape that is home to several priority species. The 87-year-old author of several books is also a farmer, opinion maker and a proponent of direct action who continues to inspire wildlife conservationists around the world.

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## WWF Malaysia Banking on Education and Awareness

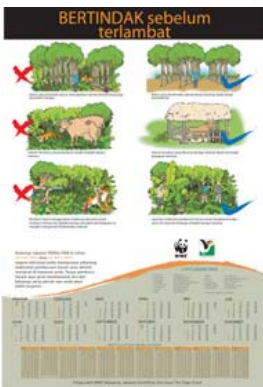
HSBC, the international banking corporation, has agreed to fund the WWF Malaysia tiger team's education and awareness component for three years starting January 2005. This will allow a wider reach to plantation industries and schools in a systematic and comprehensive manner. A wall calendar for Kelantan State showing proper management practices was jointly produced by WWF and DWNP with partial sponsorship from STF.

The first consultative workshop on incorporating wildlife considerations into logging practices was held with participants from government departments, major logging companies and research institutions. The workshop ended with an agreement to jointly develop guidelines for assessing and monitoring wildlife in logging practices that will be incorporated into the

Malaysian Timber Certification Council's Criteria and Indicators to ensure as wide an adoption as possible. The follow-up workshop is planned for April and will focus on the technical aspects of the guideline.

In December 2004, the tiger team started a review of available economic instruments that have the potential to help mitigate human-tiger conflict in the project site. These include compensation schemes, livestock insurance and other financial incentives. Although the various government departments and stakeholders are very supportive of the idea, a feasible mechanism agreed upon by all parties is still being discussed. They look forward to learning from colleagues in other tiger projects that are utilizing such financial approaches.

For more information: Brian Lee, Senior Scientific Officer, WWF Malaysia. [blee@wwf.org.my](mailto:blee@wwf.org.my)



[Click here for larger image](#)

## Tigers of fame Hobbes



One half of the hugely popular cartoon strip created by Bill Watterson, Hobbes is the stuffed tiger named after the famous philosopher and belongs to 6-year-old Calvin. Interestingly, although hailed as perhaps one of the most piercing yet funny critiques of modern society, there is no Calvin and Hobbes merchandise because Watterson did not license his creations. The last strip featuring the duo appeared at the end of 1995.

Cartoon Source: [www.freewallpapers.com](http://www.freewallpapers.com)



# Recap

## Species Working Group

The annual WWF Species Working Group meeting was held at Cape Town, South Africa in January 2005. In addition to a presentation on challenges and opportunities in common Asian Rhinos and Elephant Action Strategy and Tiger landscapes, there was a presentation on Terai Arc Landscape (Nepal) as an insurgency-affected landscape. Separate sessions also focused on human-wildlife conflict and linking species conservation with livelihood and the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs). The SWG was followed by monitoring and evaluation session focussing on fine-tuning species targerers and milestones for the Global Species Programme. Summarized action point outcomes will soon be available on CONNECT.

## Singapore screening of 'Two Brothers'

WWF and the Singapore Zoo co-hosted the public screening of the Two Brothers on 10-11 December 2004. Despite the tricky weather, there was good attendance at the open grounds of the Theatre Lawn. Paul Steele, Isabelle Louis, Chiew Chong, Christy Williams and Tshewang Wangchuk from WWF International were present at the event. Although not much funds were raised, it was a good opportunity to create awareness on the plight of tigers in the wild. The Singapore Zoo will now be working with WWF to support a field project to deal with human wildlife conflict in Malaysia.

*For more information: Tshewang Wangchuk , Tiger Programme Coordinator,  
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## Vietnam Meeting on GTF

The General Assembly and Executive Committee meetings of the Global Tiger Forum were held in Hanoi in November 2004. The meetings were attended by senior government officials from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Lao, Nepal, Myanmar and Vietnam. Thailand was represented as an observer. From non-range country members, WWF, IFAW and the UK government were present at the meetings. There was a unanimous decision to reflect on the mandates and working strategy for a renewed GTF, lay out a more strategic action strategy, actively engage the member governments, and increase its membership to include the remaining tiger range states. IFAW, WWF, the Wildlife Trust of India and the UK government agreed to work closely with the GTF secretariat and the Nepali government (who is the current Chair of the Executive Committee) on this, leading up to the next Executive Committee meeting later this year. Inter-governmental dialogues on transboundary issues and illegal wildlife trade were identified as appropriate themes for GTF to focus on. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for March 4, between the GTF secretariat, the Nepali government, WWF Nepal Program, WWF International, and IFAW (represented by WTI) in New Delhi.

*For more information: Tshewang Wangchuk , Tiger Programme Coordinator,  
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# On the ground



Yury Darman, Director of WWF Russia Far East Branch, is a wildlife biologist with a PhD in predator-prey-habitat interactions. His 25 years' field experience in this Global 200 Ecoregion, including 5 years with WWF staff, helps him manage an

integrated forest, species and freshwater programme. He leads the implementation of the Ecoregional Conservation Action Plan with various partners and stakeholders. They are striving to protect over one million hectares of Amur tiger habitat.

### 1. What is the biggest challenge in your landscape?

If there is no scope to increase the number of new protected areas, the main challenge now is to improve the management of tiger habitat outside of nature reserves. This includes Forest Stewardship Council certification of logging companies that takes into account the survival of tigers in the wild.

### 2. What is special about your landscape?

The Russian Far East Ecoregion supports the northern-most population of tigers in the world, where the total productivity of ecosystem is much lower than in tropical countries such as India. The Amur tiger has the biggest home range—up to 1,000 km<sup>2</sup> for males and 400 km<sup>2</sup> for females. During Siberian winters, with temperatures below -30°C and deep snow, tigers need available prey resources, primarily the wild boar. In its turn, the wild boar strongly depends on Korean pine and Mongolian oak seeds. It is crucial to protect these trees from logging and to decrease the level of human disturbance.

### 3. What makes your work unique?

The Amur tiger is an umbrella species the protection of which supports the survival of biodiversity in the temperate Taiga forests of the Russian Far East. Working with WWF gives me the unique opportunity of integrating tiger conservation with forest and freshwater programmes.

# Coming up

## Asia Pacific Regional meeting

The Asia Pacific Regional meeting will be held in New Delhi from 1-3 March, 2005. WWF India will be hosting this annual meeting in Maneswor, just outside New Delhi. The AREAS/Tiger Steering Group meeting will also convene during this time.

**For more information visit:**  
<http://www.panda.org/species>

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