

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



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TIGER RANGE STATE REPORT – MALAYSIA

The attached document has been submitted by Malaysia in compliance with Decision 14.65 (*Asian big cats*).*

* *The geographical designations employed in this document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the CITES Secretariat or the United Nations Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The responsibility for the contents of the document rests exclusively with its author.*

Report prepared by:

Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP), Peninsular Malaysia.

In compliance to Decision 14.65 on Asian Big Cats

MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION OF TIGER IN MALAYSIA.

1. Legal status

In Peninsular Malaysia, tiger (*Panthera tigris*) is listed as totally protected species under the Protection of Wild Life Act 1972. Under the Wild Life Protection Ordinance 1998 (State of Sarawak), tiger is listed under Protected animals category whereas Sabah Wildlife Conservation Enactment 1997 accorded totally protected status to tiger. For further clarification, tiger is not found in Sabah and Sarawak.

In Peninsular Malaysia, trade in tiger is only allowed for non commercial purposes such as research, captive breeding programme and exchange between zoological parks. For these activities, permission in term of Special Permit from the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Malaysia is required. With regards to tiger, no Special Permit has been issued for activities other than this.

2. Ex-situ Conservation

Under the ex-situ conservation programmes, tigers placed (homed) in the zoological parks in Peninsular Malaysia are doing well and most of the tigers holding facilities in Malaysia are able to breed this species in captivity. Malacca Zoo (Zoo under the management of DWNP), which started the captive breeding programme in 1982, has since then bred a total of 64 tigers (22 males and 42 females). Successfully bred tigers not only able to support Malacca Zoo for its own exhibition but also for other zoological parks in Malaysia. So far 27 captive bred tigers have been adopted by the major zoological parks in Malaysia under zoo exchange programme. Internationally, Malacca Zoo had already exchanged 9 tigers with zoological parks in Germany, Singapore, Viet Nam and United States of America.

Since 2005, Malacca Zoo has temporarily ceased its captive breeding programme due to high maintenance cost and due to limited space. The tigers were separated in order to avoid mating so that the captive bred population in the zoo can be controlled. Apart from breeding tigers in captivity, Malacca Zoo also acts as holding facility for tigers rescued from law enforcement work and which has been removed from wild due to conflict with human and livestock.

3. Enforcement

From 2007 until November 2009, Malaysia has apprehended 10 big cats related cases. 1 case involving leopard and the rest were related to tiger. Out of these cases, a case was successfully charged in court, two pending in court and 7 cases still under investigation.

a. Wildlife Crime Unit (WCU) – flying enforcement squad

In early 2005, the Wildlife Crime Unit (WCU) was established in addition to the existing enforcement units, to forge a better networking among the enforcement officers within the DWNP and other enforcement agencies. The aim is to strengthen enforcement actions and to further intensify anti-wildlife crime efforts.

b. Inter agency Cooperation

DWNP is enhancing its inter-agency cooperation with other enforcement agencies such as Royal Malaysian Police, Royal Customs Department of Malaysia, Royal Malaysian Armed Forces, Maritime Agency and Anti Smuggling Unit. These enforcement agencies acted as front liner and the cooperation given by these agencies is very important to ensure that the exit and entry points of the country are not used to smuggling wildlife. Since the cooperation started, a number of wildlife smuggling cases were referred to DWNP by the Anti Smuggling Unit.

c. Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN)

Malaysia, along with the rest of the ASEAN member countries is a member of the ASEAN-WEN, the world's largest wildlife law enforcement network. The network is designed to promote inter-agency and international cooperation to combat the illegal wildlife trade and targets wildlife crime syndicates by promoting intelligence sharing and cross-border operations. As focal agency for Malaysia, DWNP has been actively involved in the meetings and discussions. Malaysia through Ministry Of Natural Resources and Environment and Department of Wildlife and National Parks host and co-organised the Second ASEAN-WEN Workshop on Task Force and Working Groups Development with ASEAN-WEN Support Programme.

d. Intensified Border Control

Under the recent reorganisation of DWNP, emphasis has been given to strengthen the enforcement for all entry points to this country. DWNP has identified 17 established entry points located in 9 states that have to be manned at all times. The department is now in the process of recruiting new officials and setting up new offices for these entry points. Apart from this, DWNP recognises the heavy tasks ahead and has started to organise courses for the officers at the border posts to be better equipped with knowledge on wildlife identification and enforcement procedures.

e. Continuous Patrolling of Taman Negara National Park Against Foreign Poachers

Taman Negara National Park, which serves as the main habitats for tigers, are now being encroached by foreigners. In addition to illegally extract gaharu (*Aquillaria malacensis*), the main target by these encroachers, they also trap wild animals for their consumption while looking for gaharu. This has lead to the destruction in pockets of habitats and reduction of wildlife populations in these habitats. The foreign poachers prefer to use snares, since it is the easy way for them to get the animals. Unfortunately these snares do not select the intended wildlife victim. Any wildlife, including tigers could be victim of these snares. In order to effectively curb this encroachment, the DWNP has initiated the continuous patrolling programme of the Taman Negara National Park by deploying rangers from other parts of Peninsular Malaysia. The DWNP has also requested the assistance from Armed Forces of Malaysia in carrying out the enforcement and anti-poaching work since the year 2001. To date, about 80 foreign encroachers have been apprehended within the Taman Negara National Park under this programme.



Snares confiscated from poachers



Camp erected by poachers in the forests.

4. Tiger Action Plan

In 2008, Malaysia had created its very own “Tiger Action Plan”, the Tiger Action Plan (TAP) is a good blend of collaboration between government and non-governmental organisations, the NGO sector consists of MYCAT (Malaysian Conservation Alliance for Tigers), TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, MNS (Malaysian Nature Society), WCS (Wildlife Conservation Society) and WWF-Malaysia. The Tiger Action Plan is a consolidation of current knowledge and conservation strategies for the Malayan tiger and identified specific actions to be carried out over the next eight years. It is a foundation for achieving the 2020 target of 1,000 wild tigers living in the Central Forest Spine which is the backbone of the Malay Peninsula. For those who are interested, it could be downloaded from the DWNP’s website at http://www.wildlife.gov.my/printed_material/misc/TAP.pdf

5. Public Awareness Programme

Malaysia realises that in order to prevent or eradicate illegal trade in tigers, apart from effective enforcement and cooperation with NGOs, public awareness programmes no doubt can be seen as one of the most powerful tool in bringing the message across. DWNP is very much involved with public awareness programmes on environmental issues. Activities that carried out by the DWNP such as exhibition, talks, seminars and dialogues are targeted at school children, general public, wildlife traders, restaurateurs, Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners, rural folks and also Orang Asli (aborigines).

Local community is always the link between the DWNP and enforcement work especially in densely populated areas either urban or rural areas. It is very pertinent to have local community support for any enforcement work especially in tackling illegal activities. DWNP organizes constant meetings and dialogues with local community for the past years. DWNP takes the opportunity to work with the village head, Community leader and other influential person to gain information on illegal activity against the wildlife law.

DWNP is also working closely with mass media and electronic media to educate general public on the conservation of wildlife, offences and penalties stipulated under the Protection of Wild Life Act 1972. The news papers often covered stories of court proceeding where wildlife offenders been charge. The electronic media also has shown interest when a few TV production companies agreed to work with DWNP to produce wildlife related programmes without any charges to the department. Series epic stories about the experience of DWNP in enforcement work on illegal hunting which named after “Hunters” also aired via one of the TV Station in Malaysia.

6. Malaysian Conservation Alliance for Tigers (MYCAT)

MYCAT is the alliance of governmental and non-governmental organisations committed to saving the Malayan tiger. Since its formation in 2003, MYCAT has been chaired by the Director General of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia (DWNP). DWNP hosts the coalition's Secretariat's Office (MYCAT SO). The remaining MYCAT partners are the Malaysian Nature Society (MNS), TRAFFIC Southeast Asia (TSEA), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and WWF-Malaysia, the four leading NGOs involved in wildlife conservation in Malaysia.

MYCAT's objectives are:

1. Secure the Central Forest Spine (51,000 km² of contiguous forests) with protected core areas linked within the greater landscape by ecological corridors.
2. Provide effective protection for tigers and their prey from poaching and trade.
3. Promote the practice of ecologically sound land-use, compatible with tiger conservation, outside protected areas.
4. Apply sound science in monitoring the efficacy of conservation actions and improving the knowledge of tiger ecology.

MYCAT also facilitates communication among the partners and coordinates their joint projects.