



JOINT PRESS STATEMENT BY THE DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND NATIONAL PARKS (PERHILITAN) PENINSULAR MALAYSIA* AND MALAYSIAN CONSERVATION ALLIANCE FOR TIGERS (MYCAT)**

The Critical Status of the Malayan Tiger

Kuala Lumpur, 15 September 2014 – The status of the Malayan tiger has reached a very critical point.

From studies conducted between 2010-2013 using camera traps under a standardised protocol at seven sites across three major tiger landscapes in Peninsular Malaysia, experts suggest that there may be 250-340 wild Malayan tigers left. The survey trend suggests that the current estimate may be less than the previous estimate of 500 tigers.

However, more sites need to be surveyed to determine a robust tiger population estimate for Malaysia.

This new information also indicates that the Malayan tiger meets the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species' criteria for a 'Critically Endangered' listing. It has been classified as 'Endangered' since 2008.

Having 1,000 wild Malayan tigers thriving in our forests by 2020 was the target for the *National Tiger Conservation Action Plan (NTCAP)* for Malaysia, launched in 2008. With the new estimate in 2014, that target may now be unachievable in this timeframe.

Despite all efforts, including the strengthening of legislation and increased patrolling, tiger conservation across the vast tropical forest landscape continue to

face challenges. Poaching for illegal commercial trade is the greatest and most urgent threat to tigers in Malaysia, followed by loss and fragmentation of forests.

The Department of Wildlife and National Parks (PERHILITAN) Peninsular Malaysia and Malaysian Conservation Alliance for Tigers (MYCAT) are very concerned over the future of our tigers. To reverse the situation, we will not only strengthen the existing mechanisms but also will re-examine the ongoing efforts to identify and meet the gaps.

PERHILITAN and MYCAT, with the support of the stakeholders of the NTCAP, will explore means to immediately strengthen tiger conservation efforts through:

1. Establishing dedicated Tiger Patrol Units on the ground to protect and monitor individual tigers that have been identified through surveys at the three priority areas (Belum-Temengor, Taman Negara, and Endau-Rompin).
2. Undertaking a comprehensive National Tiger Survey that will also increase the number of boots on the ground, and therefore increase tiger protection, throughout the Central Forest Spine (the remaining major forested landscapes in Peninsular Malaysia).
3. Strengthening the existing mechanism to review, better coordinate and monitor the implementation of the *National Tiger Conservation Action Plan (NTCAP)* and *Central Forest Spine (CFS) Master Plan*.

Malaysia has put in place appropriate and comprehensive policies through the adoption of NTCAP and CFS Master Plan to mainstream Malayan tiger conservation and the management of its habitats. Various funding has been provided by the Federal Government and MYCAT NGOs' donors thus far, which has enabled the stakeholders to strengthen the capacity to undertake systematic field surveys within protected areas. This has greatly enhanced the scientific knowledge to manage wild Malayan tigers and reconnect fragmented habitats with ecological corridors.

In order to fulfil the immediate needs and future requirements for the implementation of the NTCAP and CFS Master Plan, more resources are needed. Therefore, the technical assistance by the Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded and UNDP-supported Protected Area Financing Project and CFS Project are greatly appreciated as these will strengthen the management of the three priority tiger areas, the management of critical wildlife corridors within the CFS and the implementation of National Tiger Survey.

* Department of Wildlife and National Parks (PERHILITAN) Peninsular Malaysia is a federal government agency in charge of wildlife conservation and protected areas management under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

** 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 PERHILITAN for joint implementation of the National Tiger Conservation Action Plan for Malaysia.

For further information, please contact:

Nosrat Ravichandran, Director, Consultancy Division, PERHILITAN
Tel: 03.9086.6813 (O); Email: nosrat@wildlife.gov.my

Wong Pui May, Coordinator, MYCAT Secretariat's Office
Tel: 03.7880.3940 (O), 017.682.1006 (M); Email: mycat.so@malayantiger.net