

Harimau Untuk Selamanya

Working with the local community to protect the
Taman Negara Tiger Corridor, Sungai Yu, Pahang
MYCAT Outreach Programme, 24th to 27th March 2010

Text by Wong Pui May and Loretta Ann Shepherd. Layout by Suzalinur Manja Bidin.

A leopard tucks her cubs away safely before she goes out into the night to hunt for food. Sniffing out a wild boar, she stalks it for a few metres and gets ready to pounce.

Suddenly, she feels a sharp pain in her paw. A wire snare got her! In vain, she struggles fiercely to break free, trashing the tree that the wire is tied to. She tries to chew the wire away, but it only gets tighter and begins to gnaw into her flesh.

A few agonising hours later, the exhausted leopard slumps to the ground and contemplates her fate and that of her hungry cubs.

Suddenly, a human appears, and she recognizes the gleam of the metal - the nasty weapon that snuffs out lives.

Bang! She loses consciousness, never to wake again. Her blood seeps into the ground, into the earth of the forest.

Her terrified cubs are unable to feed themselves as their mother had yet to teach them hunting skills. They search desperately for her and eventually stumble upon her cold, dead body. They slowly grasp the fact that their mother is no more, and they are alone. Before long, they also die.



This was part of a poignant drama enacted for students of three schools near Sungai Yu, Pahang. The story was based on an incident that took place in the same area a month before. As the world entered the Year of the Tiger on 14th February, a dead leopard with its skin and paws removed was found in the Persit Forest Reserve, adjacent to the Sungai Yu Forest Reserve.

This area is part of the Taman Negara Tiger Corridor, the last critical linkage for tigers to move between the Greater Taman Negara and the Main Range forest landscapes.

The gruesome find included several other snared victims - a clouded leopard and four wild boar. More wild animals could have been caught as 17 other snares were also found lying in wait.

In September 2009, MYCAT held the first programme in Sungai Yu and this time, returned with a larger team of 18 people, comprising staff from the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP), TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, the MYCAT Secretariat's Office, and MYCAT volunteers.

The objective this time was to hit home the cruelty of snares, basically reinforcing earlier messages by using the recent case of the mutilated leopard.

Outreach programmes were held in Kampung Bencah Kelubi, an Orang Asli village, two primary schools (SK Teluk Gunung and SK LKTP (FELDA) Chegar Perah) and a secondary school (SMK Merapoh), as well as the largest and most popular night market in the area.

Village watchmen

A programme involving just over 100 members of the Orang Asli village was held to promote the 24-hour Wildlife Crime Hotline (WCH) 0193564194 by distributing WCH T-shirts.



During the programme, they shared an incident of a child from the village who was hurt by a snare in the same forest. Although they expressed fear of repercussions from nearby villagers, they agreed to provide information when possible to assist in anti-poaching efforts.

The outreach team assured them of the confidentiality of their information and we hope more will come forth to help make their surroundings a safer place for wildlife and people.

Painfully impressive young minds

A total of 330 students between the ages of 10 and 13 were involved in this programme. The drama's closing scene had them in an extremely sombre mood, but it appeared to have driven home the cruelty of poaching.

The classroom activities focused on sharing life resources among humans and animals in the intricate web of life. The students grasped that poaching and habitat loss tears away at the very threads that hold everything together.



The school programme also provided an insight into the local community's relationship with wildlife. A majority of the students said they had consumed deer meat and were familiar with snares. But they were clearly unaware of the amount of pain that snares inflict onto animals before they die.

A before-and-after assessment revealed that over 70% of students retained new knowledge of the threats to wildlife in the area. The challenge is to ensure that the knowledge gained at our programme leads to improved attitudes towards wildlife conservation in the long run.



Nightshift – Mari, mari, ada harimau!

The programme at the Kampung Merhamah night market reached out to more than 150 villagers.

A steady stream of curious villagers visited the MYCAT stall, which displayed a snared paw, bones and pelt of a tiger, and the skull of the recently-poached leopard, which provided a stark reminder of the recent incident in their area.

Market-goers were informed that rewards will be offered by DWNP when tip-offs lead to successful arrests.

WCH pocket calendars were given out as incentives to report wildlife crime, while WCH reusable shopping bags were distributed to 74 villagers to spread awareness. The team also swept the busy market on foot to promote the cause.



Reaching out to grassroots

The outreach programmes conducted are part of MYCAT's concerted effort to improve habitat protection, build larger intelligence networks and enhance biodiversity monitoring in order to secure this critical corridor. To prevent further loss of threatened wildlife, it is vital that we address one of the root causes of wildlife crimes – apathy.



While the students themselves may not be poachers themselves, some are already consumers, and it is hoped that the programmes will develop a greater conservation ethic among them and their family members who may be involved in poaching and illegal wildlife trade.

One small step towards achieving Malaysia's goal of 1,000 tigers by 2020, but a giant leap in creating more defenders of the Taman Negara Tiger Corridor.

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About MYCAT

MYCAT is the joint programme of the Malaysian Nature Society, 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 (TAP).

The TAP was developed by DWNP in collaboration with the MYCAT partners and published by the Malaysian Government in 2008 as the national tiger conservation strategy for Malaysia.

Saving tigers together



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Check out www.malayantiger.net for information on the Malayan tiger and to download your copy of the National Tiger Conservation Action Plan.

Take action!

- Report suspected crimes involving tigers and tiger prey to the Wildlife Crime Hotline at 019.356.4194
- Learn about tigers and tiger prey from reliable sources and share this with your friends and family
- 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 (wild deer and wild pig)
- Boycott all wildmeat restaurants
- Voice your opinion on issues like indiscriminate development, illegal logging and poaching
- Do not support zoos or theme parks with illegally acquired wildlife
- Pay more for wildlife-friendly products
- Support conservation organisations