

## Press Release

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### **Body part by body part, Sumatran Tigers are being sold into extinction**

*Cambridge, UK; Gland, Switzerland:* Laws protecting the critically endangered Sumatran Tiger have failed to prevent tiger body parts being offered on open sale in Indonesia, according to a TRAFFIC report launched today.

Tiger body parts, including canine teeth, claws, skin pieces, whiskers and bones, were on sale in 10 percent of the 326 retail outlets surveyed during 2006 in 28 cities and towns across Sumatra. Outlets included goldsmiths, souvenir and traditional Chinese medicine shops, and shops selling antique and precious stones.

The survey conservatively estimates that 23 tigers were killed to supply the products seen, based on the number of canine teeth on sale.

“This is down from an estimate of 52 killed per year in 1999–2000”, said Julia Ng, Programme Officer with TRAFFIC Southeast Asia and lead author on *The Tiger Trade Revisited in Sumatra, Indonesia*. “Sadly, the decline in availability appears to be due to the dwindling number of tigers left in the wild”.

All of TRAFFIC’s surveys have indicated that Medan, the capital of North Sumatra province, and Pancur Batu, a smaller town situated about 15 km away, are the main hubs for the trade of tiger parts.

Despite TRAFFIC providing authorities with details of traders involved, apart from awareness-raising activities, it is not clear whether any serious enforcement action has been taken.

“Successive surveys continue to show that Sumatran tigers are being sold body part by body part into extinction”, said Dr Susan Lieberman, Director of WWF International’s Species Programme. “This is an enforcement crisis. If Indonesian authorities need enforcement help from the international community they should ask for it. If not, they should demonstrate they are taking enforcement seriously”.

The report recommends that resources and effort should concentrate on effective enforcement to combat the trade by arresting dealers and suppliers. Trade hotspots should be continually monitored and all intelligence be passed to the enforcement authorities for action. Those found guilty of trading in tigers and other protected wildlife should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

“We have to deal with the trade. Currently we are facing many other crucial problems which, unfortunately, are causing the decline of Sumatran Tiger populations” explained Dr Tonny Soehartono, Director for Biodiversity Conservation, Ministry of Forestry of Republic of Indonesia. “We have been struggling with the issues of land use changes, habitat fragmentation, human–tiger conflicts and poverty in Sumatra. Land use changes and habitat fragmentation are driving the tiger closer to humans and thus creating human–tiger conflicts”.

As a recent show of commitment, the President of the Republic of Indonesia launched the *Conservation Strategy and Action Plan of Sumatran Tiger 2007–2017* during the 2007 Climate Change Convention in Bali.

Sumatra's remaining few tigers are also under threat from rampant deforestation by the pulp and paper and palm oil industries. The combined threats of habitat loss and illegal trade—unless tackled immediately—will be the death knell for Indonesian tigers.

“The Sumatran tiger is already listed as Critically Endangered on IUCN’s Red List of Threatened Species, the highest category of threat before extinction in the wild,” said Jane Smart, Head of IUCN’s Species Programme. “We cannot afford to lose any more of these magnificent creatures”.



“The Sumatran tiger population is estimated to be fewer than 400 to 500 individuals. It doesn’t take a mathematician to work out that the Sumatran Tiger will disappear like the Javan and Bali tigers if the poaching and trade continues” Julia Ng adds.

As Indonesia currently chairs the ASEAN-Wildlife Enforcement Network, TRAFFIC National Co-ordinator Dr Ani Mardiasuti suggested the country “demonstrate leadership to other ASEAN countries by taking action against illegal trade, including in tiger parts.”

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#### **NOTES:**

- The full report *The Tiger Trade Revisited in Sumatra, Indonesia* can be downloaded at [http://www.traffic.org/species-reports/traffic\\_species\\_mammals37.pdf](http://www.traffic.org/species-reports/traffic_species_mammals37.pdf)
- TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, works to ensure that trade in wild plants and animals is not a threat to the conservation of nature. TRAFFIC is a joint programme of IUCN and WWF. TRAFFIC published an earlier report on Sumatran tiger trade, *Nowhere to hide: the trade in Sumatran Tiger* by Chris R. Shepherd and Nolan Magnus, in 2004. The English and Indonesian versions of that report can be downloaded from the TRAFFIC website: [http://www.traffic.org/species-reports/traffic\\_species\\_mammals15.pdf](http://www.traffic.org/species-reports/traffic_species_mammals15.pdf)
- In Indonesia, wild tigers *Panthera tigris sumatrae* are found only on the island of Sumatra following the extinction of the Bali Tiger *P.t. balica* and the Javan Tiger *P. t. sondaica* last century. The Sumatran Tiger is listed as Critically Endangered on the *2007 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*, is in Appendix I under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and is a Protected species under the Act of the Republic of Indonesia No.5 of 1990 Concerning Conservation of Living Resources and their Ecosystems.