



The Sumatran Ranger Project Quarterly Report 2

July 2020 Leuser Ecosystem, North Sumatra

Note from program leader



Our Vision

To ensure long term protection of the forest edge within the Leuser Ecosystem in North Sumatra

Our Mission

To halt activities that damage the forest edge environment and are a threat to wildlife and to support forest edge communities living within the Leuser Ecosystem

The past quarter has been productive even while the effects of Covid-19 have continued to plague Indonesia and the rest of the world. The villages where our rangers live and surrounding areas have been affected by loss of tourism, the backbone of the livelihood of many forest edge communities along the Gunung Leuser National Park in North Sumatra. Thankfully our team and their communities are healthy and safe.

The effects of Covid-19 have had an impact on funding that Sumatran Ranger Project relies on to continue to achieve its objectives. We are grateful for the continued support of the Auckland Zoo Conservation Fund and a small grant from International Elephant Project to pursue our elephant community project in collaboration with Sumatran Elephant Project.

SRP has made great progress with community engagement and support across multiple forest edge communities recently, including providing the funds to renovate a kindergarten, coordinate a community workshop to discuss human-tiger conflict and develop a community-based elephant conflict mitigation team.

Our relationship with local government authorities continues to develop and we are collaborating on a number of key projects along the border of the Gunung Leuser National Park in North Sumatra. I hope you enjoy this quarterly update, thank you for your support of this incredible team. Stay safe!

Amy Robbins

Program Update

Human-tiger conflict



A spate of conflicts with Sumatran tigers in several forest edge communities has resulted in a significant loss of livestock to a number of locals. This is an issue that is having a substantial impact on the livelihoods of these communities and we are committed to addressing the human-tiger conflict within this landscape and providing support for locals affected by this ongoing issue. By demonstrating community support and providing socialisation and awareness we aim to reduce the number of snares set in retaliation for livestock loss. Our

team have been spreading awareness and understanding of the minimum 1km proximity to the forest for grazing livestock, recommended by the National Park authority. They have responded to several incidents over the past three months by driving tigers back into the forest using noise deterrents and providing communities with their own fireworks to deter and move tigers on safely.

Sumatran Ranger Project initiated and chaired a community meeting alongside several other governmental and NGOs in June. The outcome resulted in a coordinated approach to conflict mitigation and commitment by SRP to fund the first tiger-proof livestock corral in the area that will be available to the wider community for up to 50 cows. If successful and widely accepted and supported by the communities, we hope to gain support to enable the continued construction of corrals across the communities we



support and reduce human-tiger conflict in this area, that hosts the largest viable Sumatran tiger population in the world. With fewer than 400 tigers left in Sumatra, every individual matters.



A ranger uses noise deterrents to move a tiger back into the forest

Elephant program



Recently we partnered with Sumatran Elephant Project (SEP) to help develop a community based conservation strategy for human-elephant conflict in the Langkat district. The first stages involve working together with the communities to understand the issues, discuss possible solutions and gain information on the elephant groups within the area. We plan to employ locals to assist our team with conflict mitigation as it happens, thereby mobilising them to be able to act swiftly

and safely to protect their livelihoods as well as providing employment. Huge thanks to International Elephant Project for the funding to begin this partnership and help us maximise the impact we can have on such a critically endangered and important keystone species like the Sumatran elephant. We now have a specialist elephant team who are undergoing professional development to maximise their outreach potential and effectiveness as well as strengthen community relationships and awareness.



A research assistant from SEP collects information from locals about human-elephant conflict in the village of Pancasila



Camera trap program



Malayan sun bear entering the forest

At the beginning of 2020 SRP developed an MoU with a local oil palm plantation owner to place camera traps on his land, which lies between areas of forest along the edge of the Gunung Leuser National Park. The data we are collecting shows an abundance of local wildlife are using this plantation as a corridor and we are capturing Sumatran tigers on our cameras every



month as well as regular images of Malayan sun bears, two key megafauna species within this ecosystem.



Sumatran tiger

We are collaborating with Enviro Conservation Consulting (ECC), a conservation-based consultancy in South Africa. ECC offers drone data analysis, feature extraction, vegetation analysis, GIS analysis and data digitisation. ECC have recently begun to provide us with camera trap analyses to investigate and understand the diversity of species within the plantation

in a more scientific manner. Their first report showed Leopard cats and Pig-tailed macaques were the most commonly captured species in this area, followed closely by Malayan sun bears and Sumatran tigers which is very encouraging. We have also started to try and identify individual tigers based on their markings, through camera trap image analysis.



Courtesy ECC – note correct species name is Panthera tigris sumatrae

Community support

Providing support to the communities we work in and around is vital to the success of our long-term conservation objectives. The village of Porli in the Langkat district is home to a number of our rangers and where the SRP office is based. Recently the team identified a local kindergarten in the village in dire need of refurbishment. We were fortunate to be in a position to provide total funding for this project including employing local labour which the community is incredibly grateful for. This type of goodwill enables continued positive relationships between SRP and the communities we are trying to effect change in.



team who are passionate about protecting wildlife.



The team have identified a school in an additional community that is affected by tiger conflict, which requires support for school necessities like shoes and school bags. We will be seeking funding to support this need.

Patrols

Sumatran Ranger Project is very pleased to report a **zero** snare count during June and July patrols. Only one snare was found and dismantled during May. This is an outstanding result and a testament to the hard work our rangers put in to patrolling the forest edge on foot as well as the community outreach and education they provide.

In May the patrol team found evidence of poachers hunting Helmeted and Rhinoceros hornbill and after receiving information from locals spent three nights waiting for them to come out of the forest. They were unsuccessful in confronting the hunters but the team used noise cannons to let them know they were being followed. This is exceptional commitment from the



The single snare removed in the past 3 months

In early July the patrol team joined forces with National Park rangers (TNGL) and National Natural Resources Conservation Bureau (BKSDA) and the Forestry Ministry (KPH) to discuss short and long-term solutions for human-tiger conflict. A tiger came into a village and killed a cow, and together we responded by mobilising locals to assist in driving the tiger back into the National Park. The team spent seven days patrolling, ensuring the tiger was safely away from the village as well as

donating noise deterrents to locals to use.



Rangers from SRP, BKSDA and TNGL working together to mitigate human-tiger conflict

The patrol teams have recently provided assistance to safely relocate a Sumatran orangutan back into the forest as well as Sumatran elephants; both species having raided durian crops and farmland. Durian season has begun in Sumatra and we expect to be providing mitigation for an increasing number of human-wildlife conflicts; particularly with orangutans and elephants. The team also supported

locals to drive a sun bear out of private land after damaging rubber trees to find food.



Rangers destroy a cow carcass, killed by a tiger to prevent it returning to the village



Thank you!

Throughout April to June the rangers hosted intern Roderick from Maastricht University in the Netherlands who completed his Masters thesis on community conservation. Roderick was invaluable with his skill set, ideas and local knowledge, including fluency in Bahasa Indonesia. We are grateful to Roderick for his ongoing commitment to Sumatran Ranger Project.



Thanks.....

As usual we extend extreme gratitude and thanks to all the organisations and individuals who provide support to the Sumatran Ranger Project, whether financial, in-kind or by following us on social media and sharing our stories.

As we head towards World Ranger Day, a day to celebrate the incredible and inspiring work of rangers across the world, our team of amazing individuals says huge thanks for enabling us to provide them with a vocation they love and that makes a difference to entire communities and wildlife in one of the most precious and threatened ecosystems on Earth.





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