



Sumatran Ranger Project

Quarterly Report 4 | December, 2019

Leuser Ecosystem, North Sumatra

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 assist forest edge communities living within the Leuser Ecosystem.





Table of contents

| | | |
|----------|--|----------|
| 1 | About Us | 1 |
| 1.1 | Sumatran Ranger Project | 1 |
| 1.2 | Leuser Ecosystem | 1 |
| 2 | End of Year Update - 2019 | 2 |
| 2.1 | General update | 2 |
| 2.4 | Camera trapping | 6 |
| 2.5 | Patrols | 7 |
| 2.6 | Elephant survey | 7 |
| 2.7 | Education | 8 |
| | Annexure A | 8 |
| | Acknowledgements | 8 |





1 About Us

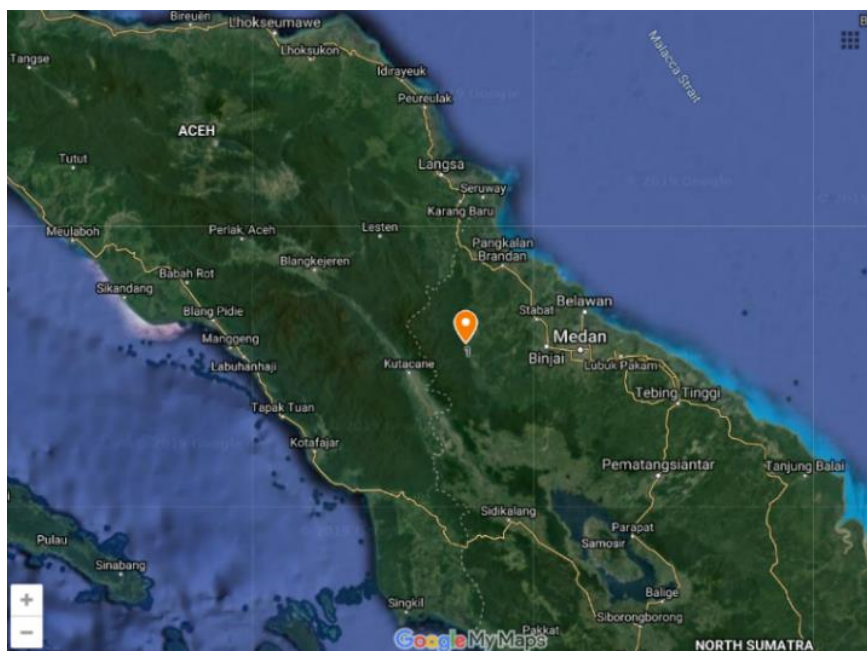
1.1 Sumatran Ranger Project

Sumatran Ranger Project is a community conservation initiative, established to help provide long term protection of the Leuser Ecosystem along the forest edge, outside government protected areas, to benefit both wildlife and people. The project was formed in 2016 to help provide protection to this landscape because of extensive destruction and human-wildlife conflict, as well as to help address poverty within the forest edge communities, both of which are closely interlinked. Buffer zones should help afford protection to a high conservation area, but along the forest edge is where much conflict with the environment often occurs as there is no managed buffer area. The forest edge is under increasing pressure from human activity and significant conflict with wildlife occurs. Communities living along the forest edge often lack employment and livelihood opportunities outside of environmental conflict industries, such as oil palm and poaching. Sumatran Ranger Project aims to support these communities to benefit both wildlife and people.

www.sumatranrangerproject.com

1.2 Leuser Ecosystem

The Leuser Ecosystem is one of the worlds' richest, yet least known and threatened forest ecosystems. Over 2.6 million hectares span the provinces of North Sumatra and Aceh on the island of Sumatra, Indonesia, around 30% of which is made up of the Gunung Leuser National Park (GLNP). This environment is the very last place on Earth where the Sumatran orangutan, tiger, elephant and rhinoceros co-exist. It acts as a life support to over four million people who live in and around it, provides flood, landslide and drought protection, and helps regulate climate worldwide. As the human population continues to expand, combined with increasing habitat destruction and fragmentation, there is increasing conflict with wildlife, particularly within forest-edge or buffer zone communities. Wildlife cannot differentiate the separation between human and wild space, and there is increasing human-wildlife conflict, putting more pressure on critically endangered species. The Leuser Ecosystem is the last stronghold of all four charismatic Sumatran mega-fauna species – it holds the largest of only two viable populations of Sumatran tigers, 85% of the remaining Sumatran orangutans and a significant proportion of the few remaining Sumatran rhinoceros, as well as being home to the critically endangered Sumatran elephant.



Where we work on the edge of the Gunung Leuser National Park.

2 End of Year Update - 2019

2.1 General update

Sumatran Ranger Project is administrated by Indonesian NGO Yayasan Cahaya Anak Nusantara (YCAN). This partnership has been mutually beneficial, and we acknowledge the work of YCAN especially over the last few months, in managing a relationship with Kesatuan Pengelolaan Hutan (KPH), Indonesia's forestry management unit. YCAN's hard work has resulted in a long-awaited memorandum of understanding that outlines how KPH and Sumatran Ranger Project will work together to build capacity within both teams and ensure we comply with legislative requirements. This means there is now law enforcement capability within our combined team and gives Sumatran Ranger Project more credibility with government departments.

In late November our team (both YCAN and Sumatran Ranger Project) undertook a relationship building exercise with three other Indonesian NGOs working to protect targeted areas within the Leuser Ecosystem: KPH, BEL (Bukit Lawang Ekosistem Lestari) and RPL (Rimba Panorama Lestari – a forest farmers group working with KPH). All five NGOs undertook a four-day patrol through privately owned forest, sharing knowledge and skills about data collection and patrol techniques. This was a very valuable, mutually beneficial exercise and enabled all teams to talk about future collaboration and ways we can support one another to achieve common goals.

At the beginning of 2019, our team was trained by a team from Frankfurt Zoological Society, Jambi province, in the use of SMART (spatial monitoring and reporting tool) in order to ensure a better patrol reporting system and bring them in line with the rest of the world's highly regarded ranger teams. SMART is a software program that enables the collection, storage, communication, and evaluation of ranger-based data on patrol efforts, patrol results, and threat levels. This training was hugely successful, despite some of the team having literacy challenges.



2.2 Community Support

Following on from the planting of fruit trees at a primary school in Batu Rongring, two of the ranger team built a fence around the school to exclude wandering livestock and make the school a cleaner and safer place for the children to play. The materials were provided by Sumatran Ranger Project and our team worked in their own time to construct the fence with the help of the children. We have committed further support to this school in 2020 through provision of a water tank to bring fresh water to the school and connecting electricity to provide further learning opportunities.



As part of our community support commitments, we were able to provide the community of Gelugur with a large donation of Modibodi period underwear and Days for Girls feminine hygiene kits. We aim to help reduce the environmental impact in the communities we engage with as well as provide socio-economic support. By empowering the women in these villages through the provision of hygienic and environmentally friendly feminine hygiene options, they can stay in work and school all month, every month. This community has identified the need for support with school supplies, which we aim to assist with in 2020. We are incredibly thankful to Modibodi for helping us to support this community by donating 150 pairs of underwear. Days for Girls Mt Gambier (Australia) made and donated the 59 Days for Girls kits.





Thanks to Days for Girls North Shore (New Zealand) we were able to supply 150 kits to the Bukit Lawang Trust in 2019 and at the suggestion of Sumatran Ranger Project, they have begun women's health classes which have been hugely popular.



In October we paid the first salaries to a small cooperative of women in the community of Gelugur. You may remember we reported on a Sumatran tiger conflict event earlier this year, where a tiger took a cow that was grazing alongside the forest. Sumatran Ranger Project compensated the owners for the loss of their cow, as there is no predator compensation scheme in Indonesia, and the family suffered a third loss of their herd. This resulted in a relationship being firmly established within this community, and the development of a snare wire cooperative with the affected family. One of the rangers provided training to two women on how to utilise snare wire and rope waste to make bracelets which we have then sold to a small number of retail outlets and international tourists, to provide alternative income. These have been hugely successful, so much so that the women have been able to leave their low paid employment cutting grass in an oil palm plantation and live off the income provided by the bracelets. We have sold so many that we are now out of snare waste, which will begin to build again as the ranger unit continues to patrol. The head of this village has expressed his sincere thanks to Sumatran Ranger Project for this support.



In July we provided 25kg of good quality used childrens clothing to the community of Sumber Waras.

2.3 Human-wildlife conflict

Our team responded to four Sumatran tiger conflict events, three of which resulted in injured or dead cows. As mentioned above, we compensated the owner of one of these which was consumed entirely. Our team has driven away tigers using fireworks and noise cannons together with locals on three different occasions. There is no easy long term solution to livestock predation in this area, given the sheer number of stock and different owners who live in various villages along the forest edge. All livestock are grazed on the edge of the National Park within oil palm plantations, making predation an ever present risk. Previously trialled barbed wire corrals have resulted in tigers getting inside and causing death and injury to a far greater number of stock. One solution is to clear a buffer area between the forest and plantations that is maintained by locals, but this is not a solution that will happen in the immediate future and requires extensive coordination and cooperation. While livestock predation by tigers is always a risk, it is presently not a widespread or common occurrence in this area.



We responded to two Malayan sun bear events where private plantation trees were destroyed or damaged. One event resulted in leg-hold traps being set in retaliation, and our team responded by providing a mobile phone to the affected family and asked to call Sumatran Ranger Project in the first instance rather than take matters into their own hands. The trap was dismantled and our team spent time engaging with the affected family to discuss why setting traps is not a good idea. We gave a number of mobile phones to various families who experience wildlife conflict events regularly with the understanding their first reaction should be to contact our team for assistance.





Sumatran Ranger Project responded to numerous Sumatran orangutan conflict events across five communities, all on private land where owners requested urgent assistance to move the orangutans away. This continued throughout the June/July durian season, and resulted in some of our team having to sleep under trees the orangutans made night nests in, in order to drive them away at first light.

We also responded to Sumatran elephant conflict on numerous occasions and helped to drive elephants away from plantations and private gardens in three communities.



2.4 Camera trapping

Some of the highlights from our camera trap program this year have included Sumatran tigers (*Panthera tigris sumatrae*), Asian short-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinereus*), Malayan sun bears (*Helarctos malayanus*), marbled cats (*Pardofelis marmorata*) and white crowned hornbills (*Berenicornus comatus*). Our most remarkable discovery of 2019 has been a video of a Sunda pangolin (*Manis javanica*), the most trafficked mammal in the world. This can be viewed on our Instagram page @sumatranrangerproject. We have documented almost 30 different vertebrate species in this small area outside the Gunung Leuser National Park, which does not have government protection. Sumatra has some of the richest biodiversity in the Indonesian archipelago and on average we record seven species a month, indicating a high level of biodiversity in our focus area. We have recently increased our camera trapping sites to two and plan to double this in 2020. Our camera traps are currently taking a break from the harsh environment of the Sumatran rainforest and undergoing some much-needed routine servicing before being deployed again in January 2020.



Malayan sun bear



Short clawed otter



Sumatran tiger

2.5 Patrols – snare removal

Approximately 200 snares were removed by our patrol teams during 2019 – all outside the Gunung Leuser National Park, usually set immediately outside the border. The teams found a number of different types of wire cable and nylon snares, as well as traps designed to trap animals live and leg hold.



2.6 Elephant survey

We are working with Oxford Brookes University (UK) researcher Emma Harkinson to help undertake the first ever population census of Sumatran elephants (*Elephas maximus sumatrensis*) in North Sumatra. Thanks to financial support from International Elephant Project, we have been able to divert two rangers into this project full time, which has allowed us to back fill their positions and employ three new rangers while the survey is conducted. The head researcher is still waiting on the last of the permits before the survey can begin, but preliminary site visits have been completed and our elephant survey team will be trained imminently. The results will be critical in understanding the population and distribution of elephants within North Sumatra, which will ultimately help facilitate targeted conservation efforts. Our team have been able to identify 17 elephants in this wider herd, where previously the number was thought to be 12.



Initial elephant survey training found dung, fresh damage to rubber trees, and the elephants themselves.

2.7 Education

Mid-year we wrapped up 12 months' of support for SOBAN school in the forest edge community of Bohorok, funding two teachers' salaries as well as giving hundreds of local children access into the National Park forest by covering their permit fee. We have provided educational materials including a laptop and projector as well as hundreds of practical activity books about the Leuser Ecosystem. We were also able to provide extra large snakes and ladders games adapted for the Leuser Ecosystem to two schools. This grant also enabled us to provide 100 botanical signs within the Gunung Leuser National Park, to help improve knowledge of locals and guides as well as tourists. Huge thanks to SeaWorld and Busch Gardens Conservation Fund for enabling us to support this worthwhile grassroots education program, developed and run by a local. In 2020 we have committed to providing support to at least two schools in villages along the forest edge.





2.8 Supporters

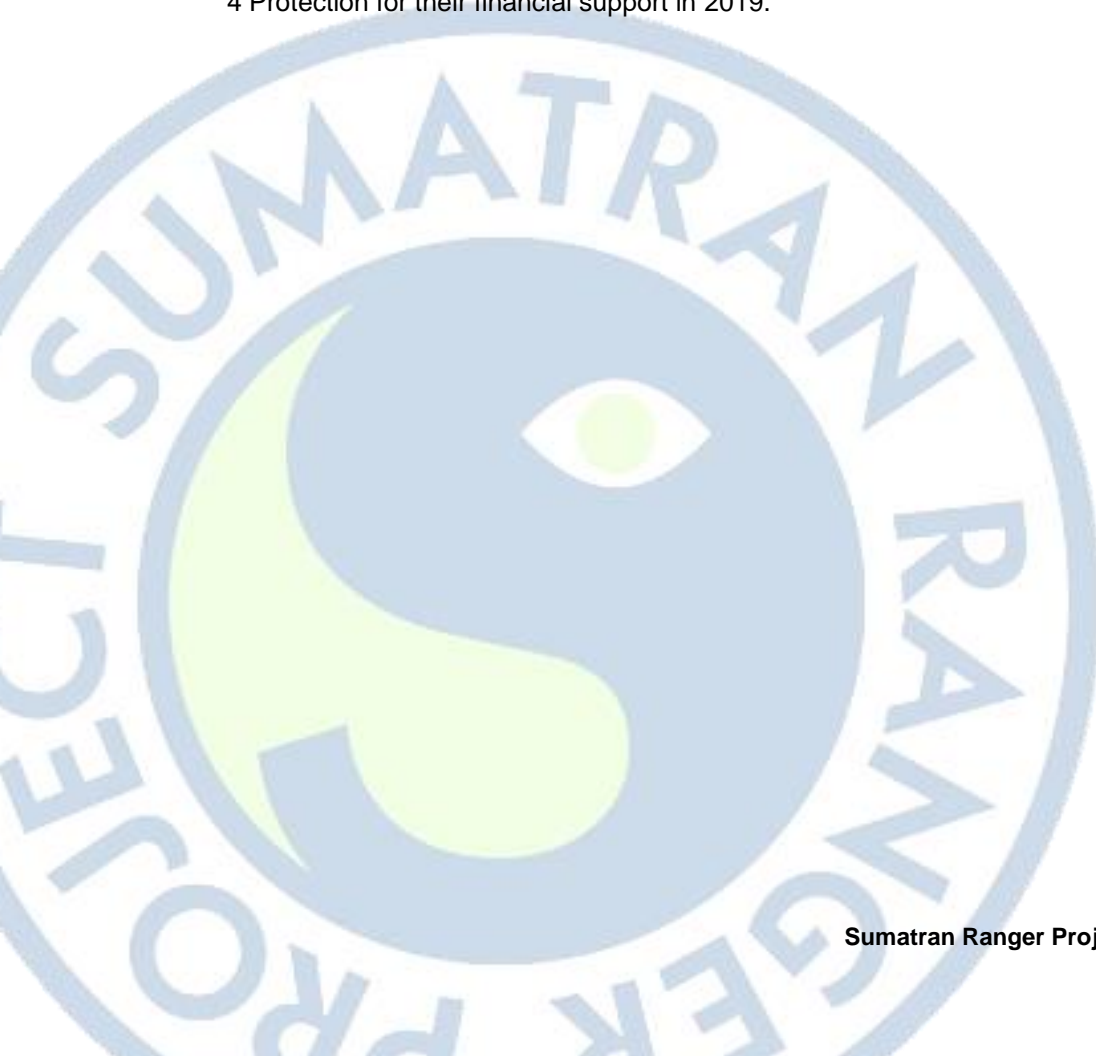
We were fortunate to host visits this year from our major supporter Thin Green Line Foundation as well as Global Conservation Force and keepers from Toronto Zoo. We welcome program visits any time with prior arrangement.

Keen Australia has once again provided incredible support to Sumatran Ranger Project by providing high quality footwear to the entire team. The Sumatran jungle environment can be incredibly harsh, and the team need reliable footwear that keeps them safe and comfortable. The patrol teams love wearing Keen and we are proud to be partnering with them.

Thanks to support from NZ Strong Construction, Studio Hanson-Roberts, Jacobs Engineering, Ignite Architects and Stevens Lawson Architects we were able to purchase new backpacks, patrol equipment and uniforms earlier in the year.

Generous grants from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) assisted by Thin Green Line Foundation, in addition to crowd funding, have made it possible for us to purchase three motorbikes to enable our teams to travel into the remote communities along the NP border. This involves traversing rivers, mud and steep hills, so they are very much needed and appreciated. We hope to purchase another three in the coming 12 months.

Thanks and recognition must go to our major financial supporters of 2019, DFAT, Thin Green Line Foundation and Auckland Zoo Conservation Fund. Without their support we would not be able to maintain full time employment for such a large and effective team. Recognition also goes to Partnerships 4 Protection for their financial support in 2019.





From all of us at Sumatran Ranger Project and CAN Foundation we express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for all your support in helping us achieve so much in 2019. We wish you a safe and happy new year and look forward to bringing you updates from the Leuser Ecosystem in North Sumatra in 2020. Selamat tahun baru, happy new year.





Annexure A

Acknowledgements

We are incredibly thankful to our supporters and backers, we wouldn't be able to do this without you!



Conservation
Fund

