



for a living planet

WWF International

Avenue du Mont-Blanc
1196 Gland
Switzerland

Tel: +41 22 364 9111
Fax: +41 22 364 8307
www.panda.org

Media Backgrounder

January 2010

Saving Wild Tigers

-- WWF and the Asia Ministerial Conference on Tiger Conservation --

Hua Hin, Thailand: The following background document includes information for media about WWF's role at the Asia Ministerial Conference on Tiger Conservation (AMC), which runs 27-29 Jan. 2010.

Ministers from the 13 tiger range countries will meet in Hua Hin, Thailand to determine high-level commitment and action to secure the future of the tiger. WWF urges the ministers to set a target of doubling the number of wild tigers by 2022, the next Year of the Tiger, which WWF believes will lay down the necessary foundation for the recovery of the species across its range.

This follows a meeting held in Kathmandu, Nepal in October 2009, where experts from the tiger range countries recommended a series of actions that will change the trajectory of tigers from extinction to recovery. For more information about the outcome of that meeting, visit http://www.panda.org/wwf_news/news/?178922/Tiger-experts-call-for-urgent-action-to-save-species

The meeting process will culminate with a Heads of State Tiger Summit in Vladivostok, Russia in September 2010, to be hosted by Russia's Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and co-chaired by the World Bank President Robert Zoellick.

WWF is working with tiger range countries at the AMC to ensure that participating governments come up with a strong plan to double the number of tigers in the wild. This plan can then be taken to the Heads of State Tiger Summit and then formally endorsed by the leaders of the 13 tiger range states.

This backgrounder includes:

- A primer on the situation of wild tigers and the Heads of State Tiger Summit Process
- A brief look at the AMC agenda
- Overviews of WWF positions in Q&A format on tiger-related issues
- Useful links to additional WWF information on tigers
- Media contacts and general information about WWF

WWF and the Tiger Summit process – Defining actions to save wild tigers

The first day of the Chinese *Year of the Tiger*, on Feb. 14, 2010, will mark the start of a year when the world must focus on tiger conservation – or risk losing this iconic species forever.

This press release and associated material can be found on www.panda.org

WWF– World Wide Fund For Nature (also known as World Wildlife Fund)



for a living planet®

Today, tiger populations are plummeting, driven by a rampant, systematic attempt by poachers to sweep the last tigers out of the forests of Asia. There are only an estimated 3,200 tigers left in the wild, and it is likely that existing tiger numbers will continue to drop and reach a point of no return before the following Year of the Tiger in 2022. Determined, collaborative and focused action is needed immediately and this is what WWF will help to establish in 2010.

As part of this effort in 2010 to save wild tigers, WWF, the Russian government and the World Bank agreed to help establish the Heads of State Summit for the Tiger Conservation in Russia in September 2010 to be hosted by Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.

The Summit has now become the centre point for all actions during the year. The Global Tiger Initiative (GTI), a coalition of NGOs and institutions supported by a dedicated secretariat in the World Bank, is leading a process to engage the highest levels of government in the task to save tigers.

WWF is supporting the Heads of State Tiger Summit process in order to secure the political will to double the number of wild tigers by the next year of the tiger in 2022. In addition, these meetings also will help step up efforts to protect tigers on the ground by ensuring that anti-poaching patrols are fully supported, working to protect tiger habitat at an unprecedented scale, and clamping down on the illegal tiger trade.

Asia Ministerial Conference on Tiger Conservation Agenda

The AMC will:

- Update each country's national tiger action plans in coordination with law enforcement, financial, and land use planning agencies based on the outcomes of the Global Tiger Workshop in Kathmandu.
- Identify political, management, and financial instruments, including support from the international community, needed to implement national tiger action plans.
- Define the key elements of a global tiger plan, which will outline how to stabilize and increase the tiger population to double its size.
- Launch the priority actions for tigers in advance of the Global Tiger Summit in Russia in September 2010.

Tiger range states include Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand and Vietnam.

For more information about the meeting agenda, visit: http://www.amc-tiger.com/AMC_Program_as%20of%20Jan%202002%20_4.pdf

Tiger Q&A

How many tigers are there?

WWF estimates that wild tiger numbers to be as low as 3,200.



for a living planet®

It is impossible to say exactly how many tigers there are in the wild because counting tigers is a notoriously difficult task. Tigers are wide-ranging, solitary, secretive animals that live mainly in Asia's most remote and inaccessible areas. It takes enormous effort, skill and expertise to survey tigers and is very expensive to do properly. Most tiger numbers are estimates based on limited surveys and often anecdotal information. While experts do not have exact numbers, they have good data for some areas and some data for others, hence the estimated figures.

How many tiger range states are there? / Where are tigers found?

There are 13 tiger range states – Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand and Vietnam.

How many tigers are there in each range state?

Again, it is difficult to give exact numbers of wild tigers in each range state because of the varying level of knowledge and data available. In some countries such as India, Nepal and Russia, tiger population census has been undertaken systematically for many years and there is, therefore, a good, precise understanding of fluctuations in numbers, trends and causes of change. In other countries – Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar and Vietnam – we have very limited knowledge of the wild tiger population.

Therefore the numbers below are ballpark figures on the possible average estimations of tiger numbers by regions based on the best understanding of our experts.

Region	Estimated Number of Tigers	Comments
Sunderbans	200	Exact numbers are unclear especially on the Bangladesh side of the Sunderbans.
India/Nepal/Bhutan	1650	The total for India is about 1400. The number in Nepal is 120, which is a relatively accurate figure.
Greater Mekong (i.e. Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam)	350	There are probably no more than 30 tigers each in Vietnam, Cambodia and Lao PDR. The majority of tigers in Greater Mekong are found in Thailand (at least 200-300) and Myanmar. The tiger population status in Myanmar is far from clear.
China/Russia	450	Majority of the tigers are found on the Russian side of the border. Populations in China probably do not exceed 30.
Sumatra, Indonesia	400	There has been no systematic tiger census here.
Malaysia	500	This is the official government figure.

Efforts must focus on assessing population numbers more intensively and regularly if we are to reach our goal of doubling the wild tiger population by 2022. During 2010 there will be new tiger estimates as new studies come in; the Amur tiger census results are expected in May while in June there will be the tiger population status/base line study in from Cambodia's Eastern Plains.



WWF *for a living planet*[®]

How fast will tigers disappear without action?

According to tiger experts, wild tigers may disappear by the next year of the tiger 2022, if no action is taken to stop the poaching and illegal hunting, and to enhance habitat protection.

How is today's crisis different? Is there an increase in poaching? Why? What is making this more urgent?

Today's tiger crisis is due to the deliberate and large scale illegal hunting of tigers for their body parts, mostly for use in traditional medicine. The situation is so dire that tigers have been completely wiped out in several reserves set up to protect them, and traders are storing dead tigers for their parts which increase in value as numbers of live tigers fall. Hence one of the objectives of WWF's Year of Tiger campaign is to raise emergency funding to implement measures to stop poaching.

What is the World Bank's investment in tiger conservation?

The World Bank has established the Global Tiger Initiative, to help elevate tiger conservation on the international political agenda and strengthen conservation efforts. The Bank hopes to invest in high-priority conservation actions, ensure that its own infrastructure investments do not damage tiger populations, and support investigations and economic analyses of key issues such as poaching and habitat conversion. The Bank also seeks to influence and promote improved national and global cooperation and commitment. This is believed to be the first time in the Bank's history that it has undertaken such a major and focused initiative targeting a single species, and indicates its concern over the tiger's plight. For more information, please visit <http://www.globaltigerinitiative.org/>

Can we save tigers?

Tigers are cats and therefore breed easily. Given adequate space, prey base and protection, wild tiger populations can increase. This has been shown with the success of Project Tiger in the late 1970s. Back then, when tiger numbers were crashing in India – from an estimated 40,000 in the 1930s to fewer than 2,400 – WWF launched Operation Tiger, committing \$1 million for emergency action. WWF then got Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi behind this massive effort. This led to the Indian Government launching Project Tiger and establishing a high-level Tiger Task Force to rebuild tiger populations. Within months, several now world famous tiger reserves were established including Corbett in Uttar Pradesh, Kanha in Madhya Pradesh, Manas in Assam, Ranthambhore in Rajasthan, and Sunderban in West Bengal. The areas were chosen according to the best potential for tiger conservation, including a strong existing population, possibilities to remove disturbance, and for extension of the protected area to adjoining forest areas to allow for expanding tiger populations. A core area of at least 30,000 hectares was established in each tiger reserve, free from human interference. The effort had immediately positive results, proving that as a cat, tiger populations can recover quickly provided they, their habitat, and their prey are all protected. By 1979, the campaign had expanded to 11 tiger reserves, with a further four added subsequently. Tiger censuses carried out subsequently showed an increase in tiger population.

Additional useful WWF information on tigers:

Asia Ministerial Conference on Tiger Conservation (AMC) website:

<http://www.amc-tiger.com/>



WWF *for a living planet*

For more information on tigers:

www.panda.org/tigers

Summary document from the Kathmandu Global Tiger Workshop:

<http://www.globaltigerinitiative.org/download/GTI-KGTW-report-mgmt-comm.pdf>

Global Tiger Initiative website

<http://www.globaltigerinitiative.org/>

For further information:

Ian Morrison, Media officer, WWF International

+41 79 874 6853, imorrison@wwfint.org

Nicole Frisina, Communications Officer, WWF Greater Mekong Programme, +66 8 3787 8859,

nicole.frisina@wwfgreatermekong.org

Soh Koon Chng, Communications, WWF Tiger Initiative

+66 8 7516 1511, sohkoon@wwf.panda.org

About WWF

WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organizations, with almost 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

www.panda.org/media for latest news and media resources