

Malayan Tiger



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Did you know that Malaysia is one of only 14 countries where the tiger is found? Peninsular Malaysia has its own special sub-species, the Malayan Tiger. It proudly flanks Malaysia's Coat-of-Arms, but the tiger is now in trouble. The time to save the tiger is now, and the first step is to learn more about this predator. Then you'll understand why we must act now.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The average weight for adult male Malayan Tigers is 120kg, and the female, 100kg. This *feline* is perfectly made for stalking, ambush and attack. Its deep orange coat allows it to blend into the shadows as it stealthily moves through the forest. Its striped coat breaks up the hard lines of its shape, giving it the ability to disappear into the background. Its razor-sharp canines, retractable claws, keen sense of smell and sight are also vital hunting tools.



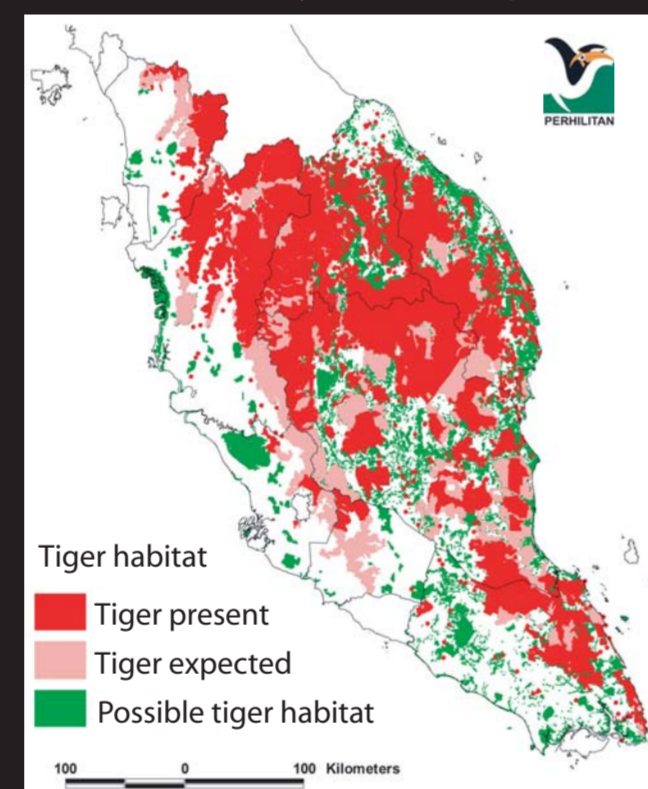
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DISTRIBUTION & HABITAT

The tiger is found only in Asia. It can live in a wide range of different kinds of habitats from grasslands to rainforests, as long as their three basic requirements of thick vegetation for cover, sufficient prey for food, and water supply are met.

Malaysia's largest national park, Taman Negara, holds one of the few known *viable populations* of tigers, and it is likely that the Belum-Temengor forests in Perak supports another. Other large forests also support many tigers.

This map shows you where tigers are.



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The key to the long-term survival of the Malayan Tiger is to keep these important tiger habitats connected with forest corridors so that tigers and tigers' prey can live and travel in the forests safely.

GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
<i>carnivore</i>	an animal with a diet consisting mainly of meat
<i>diurnal</i>	active during the day
<i>extinct</i>	an animal that no longer exists naturally
<i>feline</i>	member of the cat family Felidae
<i>nocturnal</i>	active during the night
<i>predator</i>	an animal that hunts and kills other animals
<i>prey</i>	an animal that is killed and eaten by a predator
<i>scent-marking</i>	produced by scratching tree barks and spraying urine
<i>solitary</i>	an animal that does not live with others of its own kind
<i>species</i>	a group of animals or plants with similar features
<i>sub-species</i>	It is a basic unit in scientific classification of animals and plants. A single species can be made up of several subspecies in which individuals consistently differ in certain features from individuals in other populations of the same species. E.g., Siberian Tigers and Sumatran Tigers are two different sub-species of the tiger where as tigers and lions are different species
<i>territorial</i>	an animal that defends an area against others of the same species
<i>viable populations</i>	populations with the capacity to survive for a long term (usually more than 100 years)

It is a shy, elusive creature, which is why it is rarely seen in the forest, although traces are obvious; footprints, called pugmarks, scratched trees, and sometimes, a distant roar.

It is a *territorial* animal, and it defends its territory from other tigers by *scent-marking* the boundary.

Tigers are *solitary* animals, except during the mating period, or when females are raising young. Tiger cubs stay with their mothers for about 2 years, during which time they learn survival skills like hunting and avoiding danger.



© Zoo Negara

The tiger enjoys swimming, especially in the heat and humidity of the Malaysian rainforest.



© Zoo Negara

BEHAVIOUR

The tiger is generally known to be *nocturnal*, but in Malaysia, studies show that it tends to be more *diurnal* than other places. This is probably because the Malayan Tiger has altered its activity patterns to match its diurnal prey species such as Wild Pig and Barking Deer.

MEATY DIET

The tiger is a *carnivore*. It is the top *predator* of the food chain, hunting efficiently alone.



© Man/MYCAT
Sambar Deer



© Zoo Negara
Barking Deer

In Malaysia, its main *prey* is Wild Pig, Sambar Deer and Barking Deer, but it eats other animals when the opportunity arises.

TIGERS IN DANGER!

How many tigers are there in the wild?

That's probably the question that everyone working on tigers is most often asked. But no one really knows, and no one will ever know the exact number of tigers in Malaysia because it is impossible to count all the living tigers in the forest at once. For now, all we know is that there is enough suitable known tiger habitat to support at least 500 tigers. More research could reveal more tigers, or less.



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Once there were 9 tiger *sub-species*, but 3 are now *extinct*. In the last decade, tiger numbers worldwide have dropped from 100,000 to less than 5,000; that's around 95% of our tigers gone!



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Other body parts, such as its teeth, claws and skin are sought after as trophy, magical and collectible items. People also compete with the tiger to hunt prey species such as deer and Wild Pig. This can lead to the tiger



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attacking cattle and other livestock. This is called human-tiger conflict. As a result, the tiger may be killed by angry farmers, or captured by the authorities and sent to a zoo for the rest of its life.

The tiger is threatened by loss of habitat and prey, and illegal hunting and trade. It is poached because some people believe that eating its flesh, or taking traditional medicines made from tiger body parts, will make them stronger and healthier.

INTERNATIONAL & LOCAL PROTECTION

The tiger is listed on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which bans commercial trade in all tiger sub-species, including the Malayan Tiger.

All tiger sub-species, including the Malayan Tiger, are totally protected under the Protection of Wild Life Act 1972. This means that it is illegal to hunt and trade in tigers.

