

Harimau Untuk Selamanya



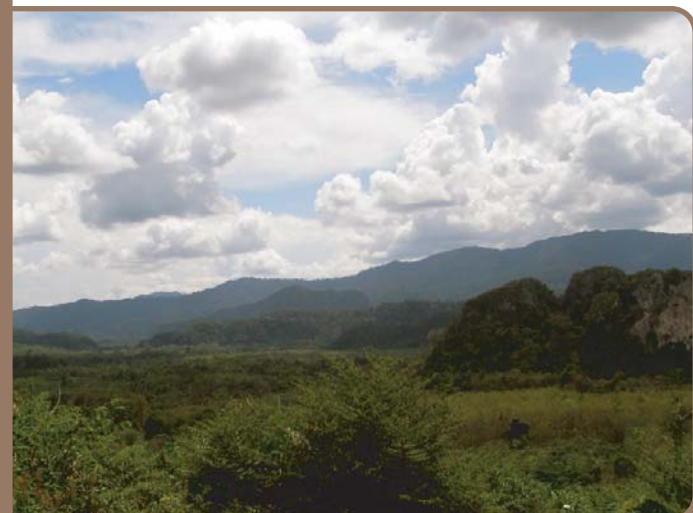
Working with the local community to protect the
Taman Negara Tiger Corridor, Sungai Yu, Pahang
MYCAT Outreach Programme, 11th to 14th September 2009

Text by Loretta Ann Shepherd and Kae Kawanishi. Layout by Suzalinur Manja Bidin.

The Malaysian Conservation Alliance for Tigers (MYCAT) and the Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia (DWNP) reached out to 800 villagers living immediately outside Taman Negara. These villagers, residing near Sungai Yu (Sg. Yu) in the Kuala Lipis district, Pahang, were roped into conservation efforts as they could play a crucial role in saving the Malayan tiger in Peninsular Malaysia's most important national park.

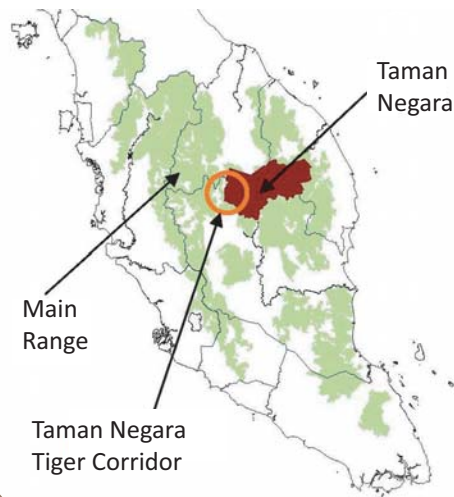
This outreach took place in six villages near Sg. Yu between the 11th and 14th of September 2009.

Federal Highway 8 crosses Sg. Yu at the center of the last narrow stretch of the forest connecting the Greater Taman Negara and Titiwangsa Main Range. These are the two largest forest complexes in Peninsular Malaysia, forming much of what is called Central Forest Spine, and provide crucial environmental services to the country and a large expanse of habitat to wildlife.



A view of the corridor and the Main Range
from Taman Negara

Tiger Landscapes and Taman Negara



Sg. Yu is at the center of the last critical linkage between the Greater Taman Negara and the Main Range forest landscapes

Agricultural expansion along the highway has created a forest bottleneck and the ecological integrity of the last connectivity is threatened by two main factors: forest fragmentation by further development of, and along, the existing road, and poaching of wildlife.

Malaysia's National Tiger Action Plan aims to double the number of the Malayan Tiger by the year 2020 to 1000 wild tigers.

For the nation to realise the target, protecting the tiger and its prey from poachers as well as securing their habitats and dispersal corridors are most urgent. To this end, the MYCAT partners work with local communities, land development agencies, road planners, state governments, plantation owners, and wildlife and forest authorities to secure the Central Forest Spine at the three priority areas; Belum-Temengor, Taman Negara and Endau-Rompin.

MYCAT supports DWNP's wildlife protection efforts by conducting outreach programmes in poaching and illegal trade hotspots and other critical conservation areas such as this Taman Negara Tiger Corridor.

Some people living near tiger habitats or poaching hotspots are either directly involved in or closely connected to wildlife crimes. Appealing to them is crucial, for they are in the best position to provide real-time, accurate information to aid enforcement efforts.

For this purpose, MYCAT set up the Wildlife Crime Hotline in 2007. More watchful eyes and knowing that their community is targeted by conservation efforts make it more difficult for those involved to continue with illegal activities.

The timing for this programme was crucial as the weeks preceding Aidilfitri is when wild deer are targeted by local poachers every year.

According to a survey by TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, despite the one-month deer hunting season, which is November every year, the disappearance of sambar deer in many places is due to poaching. To recover the depleting deer populations, DWNP placed a moratorium on deer hunting starting 2009.

The programme highlighted the ban and the grave status of wild deer, so savoured by local people, and also publicised the hotline and monetary reward DWNP provides in exchange for quality information on poaching.



A sambar deer in Taman Negara



Banners promoting rewards in return for quality information on wildlife crimes caught the attention of visitors to the markets as well as the road users passing by

The programme involved setting up stalls operated by the outreach team comprising staff from MYCAT Secretariat's Office and DWNP and a regular MYCAT volunteer in the local night markets (*pasar malam*) in Kg. Merhamah, FELCRA Sg. Temau and Merapoh.

The team also made house-to-house visits to 60 households in Kg. Teluk Gunung, Kg. Gua Palong, Kg. Merhamah, and 40 restaurants and sundry shops along Highway 8. To reach out to the slightly more reclusive Orang Asli (indigenous people) in the area, the team conducted a special programme in their village of Kg. Pecah Kelubi to disseminate and receive information.

The stalls with the display of confiscated tiger parts, deer trophies and snares were highly popular, drawing villagers who could be informants or poachers themselves. Provocative posters of poached wildlife emphasized the cruelty and illegality of snares, highlighting the inhumane crimes that were occurring in their backyards.



Larangan Memburu Kijang dan Rusa Berkuatkuasa November 2009



Specially-designed posters by local cartoonists were used to reinforce the message that deer meat should be left for tigers to consume. Reusable shopping bags and refrigerator magnets emblazoned with the hotline number were distributed to the locals to have the number handy.

During and after the programme, a number of reports were sent to the hotline related to several poaching cases. The information received enabled DWNP to take enforcement action.



In 2010, the Year of the Tiger, MYCAT hopes to return to the same site for reinforcement of the message and to raise awareness among school children towards more sustainable future for the people and wildlife.



Thank You!

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Images used in this update are by: Chris R. Shepherd, Kae Kawanishi, Loretta Ann Shepherd and Paul Henry.



This programme would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of the staff from DWNP – Abdul Rahman Ahmad, Hazril Rafhan Abdul Halim, Mahamad Zakpeli Mohd. Ramli, Mohamad Taufik Ismail, Mohd Nor Firdaus Rahim, Mohd. Syukri Jali – and MYCAT Volunter Paul Henry.

About MYCAT

MYCAT is the joint programme of the Malaysian Nature Society, TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, Wildlife Conservation Society - Malaysia Programme and WWF-Malaysia, supported by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia for joint implementation of the National Tiger Action Plan for Malaysia.

The National Tiger Action Plan for Malaysia was developed by DWNP in collaboration with the MYCAT partners and published by the Malaysian Government in 2008 as the national tiger conservation strategy for Malaysia.



Saving tigers together



MYCAT Secretariat's Office
Unit 3-2, 2nd Floor, Jalan SS 23/11, Taman SEA,
47400 Petaling Jaya, Selangor
T: +6 03 7880 3940 F: +6 03 7882 0171
E: mycat.so@malayantiger.net

Check out www.malayantiger.net for information on Malayan tiger and to download your copy of the National Tiger Action Plan.

Take action!

- Learn about tigers and their prey from reliable sources and share with your friends and family.
- Join and support conservation organisations.
- Ask for legal herbal alternatives instead of traditional medicines claiming to contain tiger or other endangered species.
- Do not eat the meat of tiger, wild deer or wild pig.
- Stay away from all wildmeat restaurants.
- Pay more for wildlife-friendly products.
- Do not support zoos, theme parks or private collections which display illegally acquired wildlife.
- SMS reports of any suspected crimes involving tigers and their prey to the Wildlife Crime Hotline at 019 356 4194.