

Global Tiger Day marks mixed progress 10 years after governments commit to doubling wild tigers

29 July 2020 - Wild tiger numbers are increasing in five countries - Bhutan, China, India, Nepal and Russia - but a snaring crisis in Southeast Asia is decimating the population, as Global Tiger Day marks 10 years since the 13 tiger range countries committed to double tiger numbers in the wild.

This initiative, known as TX2 and launched in November 2010, is one of the most ambitious conservation goals ever for a single species.

“From an historic population low in 2010, tigers are finally making a remarkable comeback in much of South Asia, Russia and China - and that’s great news for the other threatened species they share their home with, and also the millions of people dependent on these ecosystems,” said Stuart Chapman, Leader of WWF’s Tigers Alive Initiative.

Despite this progress, tigers remain under threat from poaching for the illegal wildlife trade, habitat destruction and fragmentation across their range. This has reached critical levels in much of Southeast Asia, where a snaring crisis is decimating wildlife, including tigers and their prey.

[Recent WWF analysis](#) estimates there are 12.3 million snares threatening wildlife in the protected areas of Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Viet Nam. This crisis is spreading, with one of Southeast Asia’s most important remaining tiger landscapes, Belum-Temengor in Malaysia, experiencing a 50 per cent decline in tiger numbers from 2009-2018 largely due to snaring.

“Snares are the principal threat to tigers in Southeast Asia, and a major contributor to the fact they are now presumed extinct in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam. Without strong action from governments, a snaring driven extinction wave could break across the region,” said Stuart Chapman.

WWF urges governments in Southeast Asia to increase resources to protected areas, strengthen legislation and enforcement, and prevent the illegal and high-risk trade and sale of wildlife that can spread zoonotic diseases. Other changes are also needed, including increased collaboration with indigenous peoples and local communities on anti-snaring plans, as well as the introduction of wildlife demand reduction efforts.

These negative trends contrast with upward trends in five other tiger range countries.

India’s story of tiger recovery is one of astonishing success: from 2006 to 2018, the estimate for tigers in the wild more than doubled. In Nepal, wild tigers have nearly doubled since 2009, with the population of Bardia National Park alone increasing five-fold to more than 80 tigers in 2018. In Bhutan’s Royal Manas National Park, tigers [more than doubled from 2010 to 2018](#). In the

northern limits of tigers range, in China and the Russian Far East, tiger populations are increasing and dispersing into new areas.

“These countries are leading the way in tiger recovery. The results speak for themselves. Sustaining and building on this remarkable success is the key to the future of living with tigers in a human dominated landscape,” said Stuart Chapman.

Ugyen Tshering is the national park manager of Jomotshangkha Wildlife Sanctuary in Bhutan - a site showing an increase in its tiger population.

“If we want to conserve a tiger then we need to conserve a large area of healthy forest. Healthy forest means that we have clean air and clean water. When we have a healthy forest, then we are also protected from landslides and erosion,” said Ugyen Tshering. “This is important, because Bhutan is located in a fragile ecosystem where landslides and erosion are very common. Having healthy forests means we can prevent natural disasters.”

For more information on Southeast Asia’s snaring crisis see [here](#).

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