



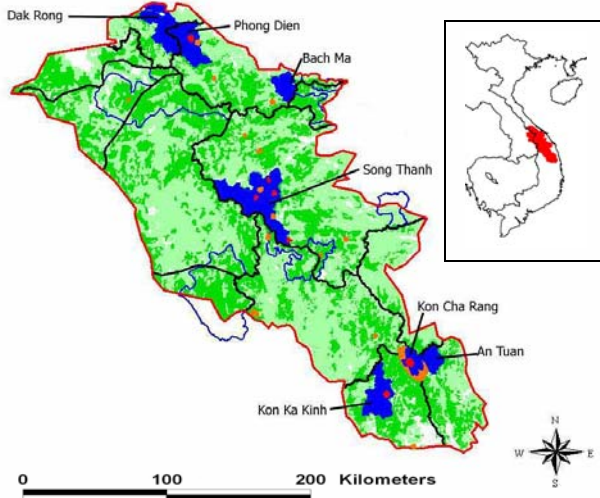
# Tiger and Prey in the Central Truong Son

## Preliminary results of a survey and monitoring plan



The Truong Son Mountains are famous for the spate of large mammal species discovered in the last decade. The area is less well known for its tigers and is often 'written off' as a location for tiger conservation. The political will for conservation, especially of tigers, however, provides a good opportunity for integrated landscape and tiger conservation. Over the past year WWF and the Forest Protection Department of Vietnam has been trialling a tiger and prey monitoring programme yielding some interesting results. A preliminary analysis is presented here:

### The Central Truong Son Landscape, forest cover and priority protected areas



The Central Truong Son is a large area of mountainous evergreen tropical moist forest. Such conditions make it difficult to survey a solitary carnivore that naturally occurs at low densities. As such, a monitoring programme is being trialled based on standardised interviews for tigers, prey, threats and human-tiger conflict. Field surveys in important sites are also being conducted. In the future it is hoped that standardised prey transects and camera-trapping, in combination with field-based threat indices will be conducted throughout the landscape. The indices created from this work will provide the basis of adaptive tiger and prey management strategies at provincial and protected area levels.

Nine field surveys of 10 days duration were conducted in key tiger locations within the middle three provinces of the Central Truong Son landscape. Surveys occurred between January and June 2004 and covered approximately 230 km<sup>2</sup> of tiger habitat. During these surveys **two sets of tiger tracks were found**, one washed out track in Quang Nam province and one **mother and cub track** in Thua-Thien Hue province. This is the first confirmed breeding record of tigers in Vietnam for six years.



Tiger track in Quang Nam



**Field evidence and ranger sketches confirming tigers are breeding in the Central Truong Son**





**Tiger track in Quang Nam**

**A further tiger track** was found in Quang Nam province 25km from the first during primate surveys funded by USFWS and the Margot Marsh Biodiversity Foundation. This track was discovered close to a track discovered in 2002 and also by a camera-trapping grid.

Camera-trapping in Quang Nam has yet to capture a tiger, but two bears and two golden cat along with numerous small carnivores and prey species have been photographed to date.

404 interviews were conducted in 68 communes. Interviews were met with mixed success due to the limited training of the rangers conducting the work. **Interviews were more successful where further training and detailed one-to-one instructions were provided;** a lesson for further work.

**Interview number and location**

Province	Commune	Village
Thua-Thien Hue	10	34
Quang Nam	33	70
Kon Tum	15	58
TOTAL	68	162

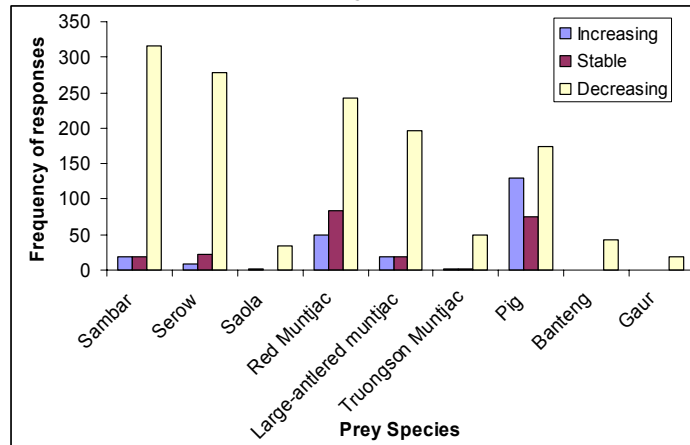
19 out of **68 communes reported observing tiger sign** during 2003 and 2004, but only four of these were first hand reports, with justification for their identification and with a high trust level assigned by the interviewing ranger.

**Low conflict?** 140 communes reported human-tiger conflict, but only nine reported such conflict since 2000. **Low direct threat?** Only two communes reported the presence of organised big game hunters.

**Serious decline in prey base**

**Nine medium to large prey species were reported** as present within the survey area. Interview results indicate that **all prey species are undergoing a decline in numbers**. The larger species (sambar, serow, banteng and gaur) all showed a perceived decline in all or almost all interview responses.

**Prey species population changes as perceived by interviewees**



Ungulate **snaring was reported in most communes**, but only 23 considered it to be increasing in contradiction to the answers on prey species population changes. The fact that rangers were conducting the interviews is clearly biasing the results of this section of the method and so modification will be required.

- Conclusions:**
1. Tigers are present and breeding in the Central Truong Son
  2. Rangers can conduct monitoring programmes with sufficient training
  3. Prey base maintenance by enforcement is the required priority intervention

