

# Indochinese Tiger



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## **Population** around 350 (2010 estimate)

In 2010, WWF sounded the alarm for the Indochinese tiger because the population of this subspecies had fallen by more than 70% in just over a decade. Six countries—Thailand, Cambodia, China, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Vietnam—are now home to only around 350 tigers.

The region contains the largest combined area of tiger habitat in the world—equal to roughly the size of France. However, rapid development, such as road construction, is fragmenting habitats. Due to decades of rampant poaching many of the landscapes of this region have no tigers left in them.

There is hope in other remaining Indochinese tiger habitats, which have a relatively low human presence and offer a unique opportunity for tiger conservation. The best hope of the survival of this subspecies is in the Dawna Tenasserim landscape on the Thailand-Myanmar border where perhaps 250 tigers remain. WWF considers the forests of the Lower Mekong a restoration landscape with the possibility of reintroducing tigers as the habitat and prey base are there. Southern Laos and Central Vietnam also have potential for recovery of wild tiger populations.

Access to the areas where Indochinese tigers live is often restricted, and biologists have only recently been granted limited permits for field surveys. As a result, there is still much to learn about the status of these tigers in the wild.

## Protecting tigers and their habitat

From the world's largest mangrove forests in the Sundarbans to temperate forests in the snowy mountains of Bhutan, protecting tigers and their natural homes helps provide benefits for thousands of other animals and millions of people.

# Why They Matter



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Maintaining tiger habitats in the Greater Mekong directly benefits a host of other globally important species like Asian elephants, Asiatic black bear, a suite of wild cattle and many endemic deer.

## Threats

Indochinese tiger numbers are in shocking decline across its range because of shrinking habitats, expanding human populations, and the increasing demand for traditional medicines, folk remedies and wild meat.

## Habitat Loss

While healthy habitats are extensive in some areas they are under constant pressure from agricultural plantations, mining concessions and inundation from hydropower development. Habitat fragmentation due to rapid development – especially the building of road networks—is a serious problem. This fragmentation forces what tigers are left into scattered, small refuges, which isolates populations and increases accessibility for poachers.

## **Poaching and Illegal Wildlife Trade**



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Vital tiger populations are also depleted by a growing commercial demand for wild meat in restaurants. In the Lower Mekong Forests region—Cambodia, Lao PDR, Vietnam—prey densities are very low due to intensive hunting and weak law enforcement over the past few decades. Wild tigers are also poached in order to meet increasing demand for tiger body parts used in traditional medicine and new folk tonics. Tiger farms in Thailand, Vietnam and China maintain the demand for tiger products from all sources—including the wild—and worsen the poaching problem.

### **What WWF Is Doing**

In the Greater Mekong region, we have an opportunity to double the local wild tiger population by 2022. WWF works closely with government partners to restore tiger populations in areas where tigers were once abundant.

### **Stopping Poaching and Illegal Wildlife Trade**

WWF works to enforce zero tolerance for tiger poaching across Asia. We help create dedicated enforcement units in each landscape and install the best new technologies to help local agencies achieve maximum results. We invest in stronger law enforcement by improving the effectiveness of wildlife rangers, training personnel from enforcement agencies and empowering community patrols and enforcement networks. WWF continues to work with TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, to stop tiger parts and products from being channeled into black markets in Asia.