



Tajuk	:	Poachers Threaten Defence Of Tigers
Tarikh	:	21 Jan 2010
Sumber	:	Malaysian Mirror
Ruangan	:	News

Poachers threaten defence of tigers



KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 20, 2010 : Thursday, 21 January 2010 04:19

KUALA LUMPUR - Conservationists have called for a war on the poachers who are undermining Malaysia's ambitious goal to double its population of wild tigers to 1,000.

With 2010 declared the Year of the Tiger according to the Chinese zodiac, experts fear there will be an upsurge in poaching of one of the world's most endangered species.

"The demand (for tiger parts) has been strong. It will remain strong in the Year of the Tiger," said Dinoysius Sharma, executive director of WWF-Malaysia.

"Prices may increase amid dwindling numbers in the wild, which makes it more lucrative to hunt for tigers," he said. "Security should be beefed up for the tigers."

Evidence of poachers

Sharma said that in the past year, 10 tigers have been taken by poachers from one of Malaysia's main habitats, the Belum-Temengor forest in northern Perak state.



"We have evidence of (poachers) living in the jungle for long period of times," he said.

Sharma said that in the last 12 months, 114 tiger traps have been destroyed and 10 poachers arrested in the Belum-Temengor forest.

Malaysia's wild tigers are mostly found near the Malaysia-Thai border, but there are also some living in central Pahang state and as far south as Johor, which borders Singapore.

In 2008 Malaysia unveiled an ambitious "National Tiger Action Plan" aimed at doubling the number of wild tigers in peninsular Malaysia to 1,000 by 2020.

In the 1950s, there were as many as 3,000 tigers in Malaysia but their numbers fell as the country opened up more land for agriculture.

Most immediate and worst threat

Elizabeth John, from TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, said poaching "is the most immediate and worst threat" to Malaysia's wild tigers and that poachers are "well armed and well equipped".

"Other threats include loss of habitat and prey," she said, adding that areas close to the Thai border are "poaching hotspots."

Melvin Gumal, director for Malaysia's Wildlife Conservation Society, said that tigers are killed by poachers for their skin, meat, claws and other body parts which are prizes for their supposed medicinal value.

"Enforcement must be our priority to reach the ambitious target (of 1,000 tigers). The target is achievable," he said. - AFP