

Year 5 and 6 – Can We Save the Sumatran Tiger?

The Zoo Project – The Illegal Wildlife Trade



Factual Information

Sumatran tigers are the smallest of the subspecies.

They occupy the forests of Indonesia and their habitat ranges from lowland forest to mountain forest **and includes** evergreen, swamp and tropical rain forests.

The Sumatran tiger is one of the smallest subspecies of tiger and their small size helps them to move through the jungle much easier than the bigger tiger species.

The stripes of the Sumatran tiger are much closer together than in other tiger species which helps them with camouflage.

They have large strong front paws with five toes and sharp claws which can be pulled inside while they walk which helps to keep them sharp. The paws are webbed which help them to be very fast swimmers.

The lifespan of the Sumatran tiger is about 15 to 20 years in the wild and up to 25 years in captivity.

They are carnivores (meat-eaters) and often hunt at night, making them a nocturnal species. They also prefer to live out a solitary life, despite coexisting with a number of other species.

Vocabulary

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| subspecies | Refers to one of two or more populations of a species living in different subdivisions of the species' range and varying from one another by morphological characteristics. |
| solitary | Existing alone, being by oneself |
| nocturnal | Active at night |
| ambush | A surprise attack by lying in wait in a concealed position |
| commercial | Involved in trade or business |
| curtailing | Reduce in extent or quantity; impose a restriction on |
| mitigate | Make (something bad) less severe, serious, or painful |
| agricultural growth | Expansion of farming including domesticated species |
| poaching | The illegal hunting or capturing of wild animals, usually associated with land use rights. |
| coexist | Exist at the same time or in the same place. |
| stealthy | Behaving or done in a cautious and surreptitious manner, so as not to be seen or heard |
| consumer | A person who purchases goods and services for personal use. |
| producer | A person, company, or country that makes, grows, or supplies goods or commodities for sale. |

We Must Act Now!

The Sumatran tiger is considered to be a 'critically' endangered species and there are less than 400 individuals surviving in the wild.

More than 90 tigers are still living in an unprotected area that might give rise to their further extinction

Most tigers in Sumatra are killed deliberately for commercial gain. According to a survey from TRAFFIC, the global wildlife trade monitoring network, poaching for trade is responsible for over 78% of estimated Sumatran tiger deaths—amounting to at least 40 animals per year.

Habitat destruction forces tigers into settled areas in search of food and where they are more likely to come into conflict with people. Human-tiger conflict is a serious problem in Sumatra. People have been killed or wounded, and livestock fall prey to tigers. Retaliatory action by villagers can result in the killing of tigers.

Tiger skins are very valuable on the black market and their bones are used to make medicines.