

# Tiger Watch

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## World Governments Reject Tiger Farming and Trade

Tigers should not be bred for trade in their parts, said governments gathered at the June CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) meeting in the Hague, approving a decision to strengthen conservation of wild tigers.

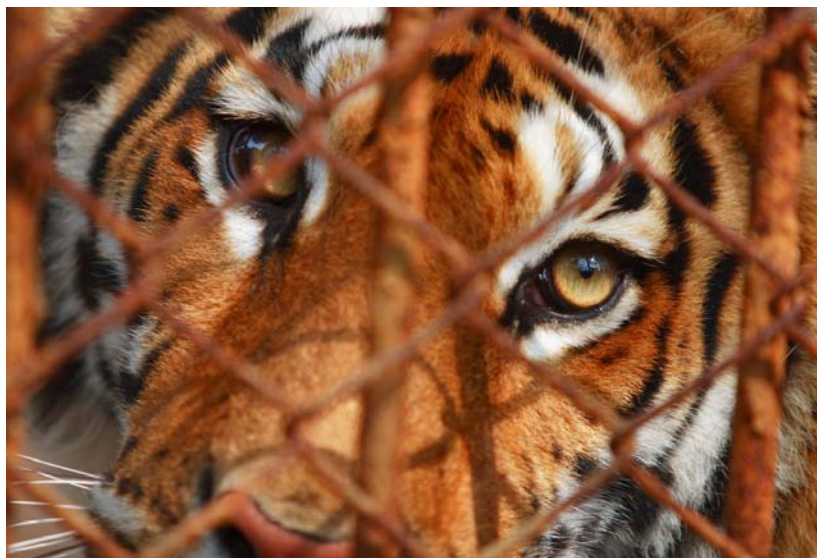
“This was a major victory for wild tigers, which could be quickly wiped out by poaching if there is a legal market anywhere,” said Uttara Mendiratta of the Wildlife Protection Society of India, on behalf of the 35 member organizations of the International Tiger Coalition. “The international community has sent a clear message that the world cannot sacrifice the last wild tigers for the sake of a handful of wealthy tiger farm investors.”

The International Tiger Coalition commended delegates from four countries with wild tigers - India, Nepal, Bhutan and Russia - and the United States in standing firm on behalf of wild tiger conservation during a lengthy debate at the meeting. The decision was adopted by consensus, but not before China tried to soften the language.

Privately run “tiger farms” across China have bred nearly 5,000 captive

tigers that have the potential to produce 800-1000 offspring each year. The farmers are putting enormous pressure on the Chinese government to allow legal trade in tiger parts within China. They argue that their captive tigers will meet the demand of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) users for tiger-bone tonic wines and medicines. But TCM practitioners worldwide have stopped using tiger bone and reject the argument that it is needed in legitimate medicines.

“The request for reopening trade does not come from TCM,” Lixin Huang, president of the American College of TCM, told the forum before the decision was made.



“TCM does not wish to be responsible for the extinction of wild tigers.”

All international trade in tiger parts is banned by CITES, and China has banned domestic trade since 1993. The ban has proven successful in reducing demand for tiger bone and raising public awareness about tiger conservation, studies have found.

### The Fate of Wild Tigers



In June, the global status of tiger populations was featured as the cover story of *BioScience*, one of the world's leading academic journals.

The article notes that tigers occupy just **7 percent of their historic range** and calls on tiger-range countries to host a high-level summit to establish a major collaborative conservation effort to ensure that tigers and their habitats are protected in perpetuity. By extending the dialogue beyond a few conservation scientists and reserve managers, the authors conclude that “leaving room for wide-ranging mammals such as tigers is vital and must

become part of an effort to incorporate wildlife conservation into national and regional development agendas.”

Shortly after this article was published, the preliminary results of the most recent tiger census in India were released, reporting that between 1300 and 1500 tigers remain in India, about half of what the official estimates were (See Tiger Watch: 9:1).

Read *Dinerstein et. al. 2007 The Fate Of Wild Tigers, Bioscience p. 508-514* in full on our website

[www.savethetigerfund.org/publications](http://www.savethetigerfund.org/publications)

# Stockpiles of Dead Tigers Should be Destroyed, Experts Urge China

Disturbing new images of tiger carcasses piled up in cold storage at one of China's largest "tiger farms" raise questions about enforcement of tiger trade bans in effect in China and internationally.

The photos were taken by participants invited to a government-sponsored workshop and tour of China's two largest tiger "farms" earlier this month for international observers and scientists. The tour was held on the heels of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) agreeing in June that captive breeding of tigers should be restricted "only to conserving wild tigers."

"What is the point of these stockpiles when tiger trade is banned inside and outside China?" asked Belinda Wright of the Wildlife Protection Society of India, who participated in China's State Forestry Administration's tiger farm tour and tiger trade workshop. "The 171 member nations of CITES made it clear last month that tigers should not be bred for their parts and derivatives".

Among the carcasses piled in a re-

frigerated building at the tiger farm in Guilin, China, was a tiger that had been skinned and another that had been gutted. CITES officials formally asked China in June to investigate illegal sales of tiger meat at the Guilin farm.

Tiger "farms" in China house nearly 5,000 live tigers, and farm investors are pressuring the government to lift a ban on tiger trade so that they can profit from the sale of skins, bones and other body parts of tigers after they die. The Guilin farm's owner submitted a report to CITES saying he was saving the tigers in cold storage for the day when trade is legalized in China.

"Given that these bodies are commercially valuable and their sale is prohibited by law, they amount to contraband," said Adam Roberts of Born Free Foundation. "Why not burn them the way other illegal wildlife products are burned in China?"



The 35 organizations of the International Tiger Coalition stand ready to offer guidance and technical support to China on shutting down its tiger farms and stepping up law enforcement efforts to stamp out illegal trade of tiger parts. The Coalition encourages China to invest more resources in increasing its wild tiger population, which could rebound quickly with proper protection.

## Grantee Spotlight: International Fund For Animal Welfare

In a recent report entitled "Made in China: Farming Tigers to Extinction", IFAW investigates large scale tiger farms in China and their potential impact on wild tiger populations. IFAW's country director for China, Grace Gabriel, sums up their main finding: "Tigers are being speed-bred at these farms to supply tiger bone and other body parts for commercial trade in the hope that China will one day allow the sale of their byproducts to be legal."

Tigers are protected by CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) which prohibits international trade in tiger parts and derivatives for commercial purposes. China joined CITES in 1981 and banned the domestic trade in tiger parts in 1993. Since then, the Chinese government has invested significant efforts in reducing market demand in tiger products: by eliminating tiger bone from the official

pharmacopeia, raising consumer awareness and identifying cheaper and more effective herbal alternatives to tiger bone for use in traditional Chinese medicine. Yet in spite of official efforts to conserve tigers, businessmen are attempting to disguise these tiger farming ventures as "conservation" initiatives and "as benefiting human health", while breeding tigers excessively, stockpiling tiger carcasses, re-kindling demand and illegally making and selling wine made from tiger bone. About 5,000 captive-bred, semi-tame tigers live on these farms today, and the investors in these ill-conceived business ventures are now pressuring the Chinese government to allow them to sell tiger products.

The project concludes that when reduced to bones or used in wine, it is impossible to distinguish a farmed tiger from a wild tiger. Thus, legalized trading of tiger bone from any source will allow

people to "launder" parts from poached wild tigers and that tiger farming poses a direct and imminent threat to the survival of the less than 5,000 tigers left in the wild. IFAW recommends that tiger farms immediately cease breeding tigers, destroy the stockpiles of tiger carcasses and products, and cease the production and promotion of trade in tiger parts and derivatives.

IFAW works throughout the world to improve the welfare of wild and domestic animals by protecting wildlife habitats, reducing commercial exploitation and helping animals in distress [www.ifaw.org](http://www.ifaw.org).



# SAVE THE TIGER FUND GRANT AWARDS—FIRST HALF OF 2007

In May this year, Save The Tiger Fund's Council approved grants for \$660,000, leveraging additional funds totaling \$1.5 million for tiger conservation. Since it was established in 1995, Save The Tiger Fund has invested \$15.7 million in over 300 tiger conservation projects in 13 tiger range countries. This year's funding will go to the following projects in the landscapes:

## RUSSIAN FAR EAST

**1) Amur Tiger Conservation in Primorye in 2007:** Ensure the long-term survival of the Amur tiger. The project will conduct tiger-human conflict resolution, habitat and prey protection and education/outreach in Primorye, Russian Far East. *Phoenix Fund*, \$60,000.

**2) Amur Tiger Conservation in New Russian Parks:** Support the infrastructure of two National Parks: Zov Tigra and Udege Legend in the Russian Far East. Project will solidify protection for the Amur tiger across 442,000 acres. *World Wildlife Fund*, \$69,000.

**3) Traditional Use and Conservation of Tiger Habitat:** Lower the threats of the Amur Tiger and its habitat through partnership with business. Project will stabilize and recover the tiger population and secure a future of tigers in wild in Khabarovsk Krai, Russia. *The Wildlife Foundation*, \$30,000.

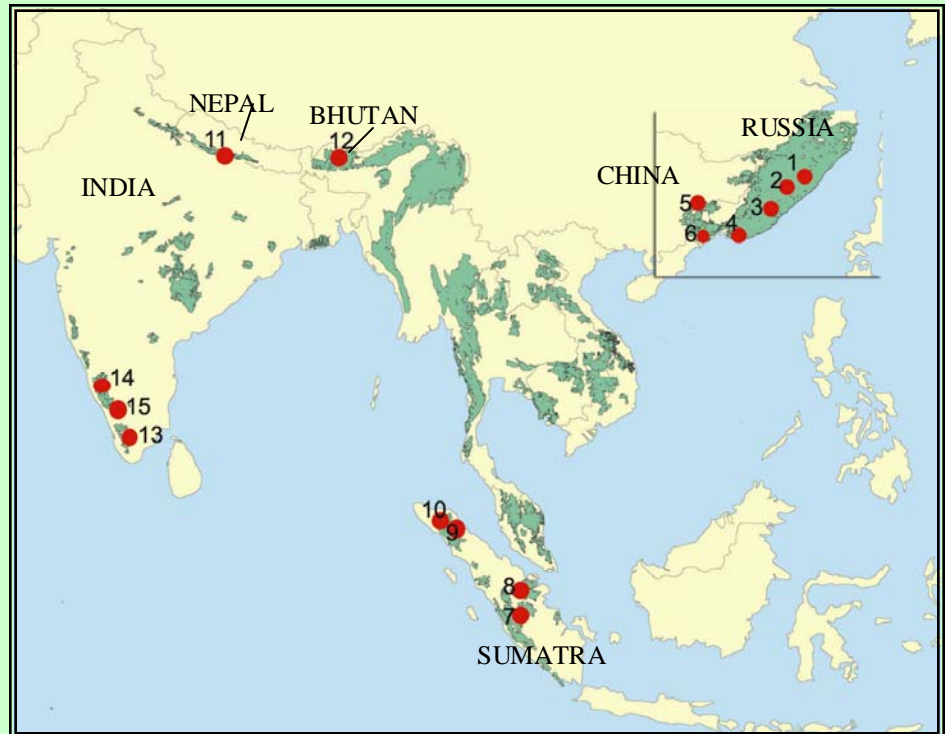
**4) Amur Tiger Monitoring Adjacent to Lazovsky Park:** Monitor Amur tigers on hunting bases and Lazovsky Zapovednik to protect a key habitat for Amur tigers. Project will reduce tiger poaching through outreach to hunters and environmental education. *Lazovsky State Nature Zapovednik*, \$36,000.

**5) Surveying Tiger Corridors between Russia and China:** Produce and garner support for a regional tiger landscape management plan of transboundary corridors in the Changbaishan and Wandashan Mountains to ensure the survival of the Amur tiger in China. *World Wildlife Fund – China*, \$46,680.

**6) The Transboundary Amur Tiger Project, 2007:** Enhance Russia-China transboundary tiger conservation on a political and local scale. Project will focus on capacity building, tiger & prey monitoring. *Wildlife Conservation Society* \$76,000.

## REMAINING SUMATRAN FOREST

**7) Conserving Sumatran Tigers in the Bungo Landscape:** Support local govern-



ment to establish a new protected area. Project will hold stakeholder workshops and build local capacity to conserve the tiger population *Durrell Trust for Conservation Biology*, \$29,890.

**8) Conservation of Tigers in the Riau Landscape II:** Combine scientific research on tiger ecology with concrete conservation measures in Riau province, Indonesia. Project will build local capacity for land use planning and protection measures. *World Wildlife Fund*, \$30,000.

**9) Sumatran Tiger Conservation in Leuser Ecosystem I:** Study the ecology, distribution, occupancy, and habitat use of Sumatran tigers and main prey across the Leuser Ecosystem. Project will census tigers and prey over a 3 year period. *Denver Zoological Society* \$37,473.

**10) Tiger Conservation in the Gunung Leuser Ecosystem:** Begin a program to increase tigers in key areas of the Leuser Ecosystem by 50% within 10 years. Project will estimate the baseline tiger population size and strengthen habitat conservation and law-enforcement. *Wildlife Conservation Society*, \$55,563.

## TERAI ARC LANDSCAPE

**11) Restoring Grasslands in the Terai Arc, Nepal:** Increase tiger breeding areas of the Terai Arc Landscape, Nepal. Project will use conservation payments to restore

the alluvial grasslands and connect protected areas. *World Wildlife Fund* \$50,000.

## EASTERN HIMALAYAS

**12) Conflict Resolution and Conservation, Bhutan II:** Conserve Bhutan's tigers & leopards and alleviate conflict with local farmers. The project will lay down a scientific basis from which to plan and implement practical human-tiger conflict alleviation measures. *The University of Oxford*, \$30,100.

## WESTERN GHATS OF INDIA

**13) Identifying Corridors for Tiger Conservation:** Identify and map habitat corridors, evaluate threats and assess their conservation potential. Project will assist state governments in designing and implementing a landscape-level conservation strategy. *Nature Conservation Foundation*, \$51,400.

**14) Valuation of Watershed Services of Tiger Reserves:** The project will economically quantify the watershed value of well-protected tiger habitats. *Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment*, \$30,556.

**15) Training Indian Wildlife Biologists:** Train four Indian wildlife biologists at the Master's degree level in the conservation of tigers and their habitats. *Wildlife Conservation Society*, \$27,400.

# Building a Tiger Online

Delegates at the recent CITES conference at the Hague were left with no doubts about how much people around the world care about wild tigers, after being greeted by a two-story high billboard mosaic outside their venue. The mosaic of a tiger's face was made up of 26,000 individual photos, urging tiger delegates to end the trade in tiger parts. The mosaic project was conceived by the World Wildlife Fund and other members of the International Tiger Coalition, with individual portrait photos submitted online through the Save The Tiger Fund Website.

"I've always been curious about how to effectively harness the power of the internet to achieve conservation objectives, and I found this to be one of most exciting and novel art projects ever," said Brian Gratwicke of Save The Tiger Fund, "Yet it had a serious conservation message that was very effectively communicated to key audiences." The billboard helped frame tiger trade as one of the key issues at this CITES meeting, where a decision was successfully passed rejecting proposals to raise captive tigers in order to sell their parts.

The image was also featured around the world on a number of international



news stations, including the huge electronic billboard overlooking time square in New York City. Currently, the mosaic is travelling around India.

To view the mosaic online visit [www.savethetigerfund.org/mosaic](http://www.savethetigerfund.org/mosaic)

**NEW!**  
Download your Save The Tiger Fund *tiger cub* screensaver  
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## Help save the world's wild tigers

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Established in 1995, Save The Tiger Fund is a special initiative of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in partnership with ExxonMobil Foundation to support diverse tiger conservation projects. For more information about Save The Tiger Fund, please visit [www.savethetigerfund.org](http://www.savethetigerfund.org) or write to us at:

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The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of natural resources and was created by Congress in 1984. For more information see [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org)