

Tiger Watch

Dangers threaten the big cats.

Note: This text was first published in 2009.

Tigers rule! With their sharp claws and powerful bodies, the mighty cats run the jungle. However, the **ferocious**, or fierce, felines may not be large and in charge for long.

Wild tigers could soon become extinct, according to experts. Today there are only about 3,200 of the cats left in the wild. That's a big change from 100 years ago, when there were an estimated 100,000 tigers.

"Wild tigers, outside of a few well-protected [locations], are disappearing fast," Barney Long of the World Wildlife Fund told *WR News*. "This is something humans [really] care about."



Getty Images

Getty Images- Siberian tigers are the largest.

Born to Be Wild

Tigers live in forests and jungles across Asia. Some of the countries where the big cats make their home include China, India, and Thailand. Siberian tigers can be found in the snowy forests of eastern Russia.

However, tigers today occupy only 7 percent of their past **range**, or area in which a species can survive. That's about 40 percent less area than the felines lived in 10 years ago.

Nine types of tigers once roamed in the wild, but today just five species remain. The Bali, Caspian, and Javan tigers became extinct between the late 1930s and the early 1970s. Another species, the South China tiger, hasn't been seen in the wild for 25 years.

"[Saving the] tigers is a very important issue for all of us," explains Suwit Khunkitti. He is an environmental official from Thailand.



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Getty Images- Officials took away these tiger skins from poachers.

Double Trouble

The big cats are being wiped out by two major threats: habitat loss and **poaching**, or illegal hunting. In Russia, loggers are cutting down trees to make paper. Less forest means less room for tigers to search for food.

In Indonesia and Malaysia, both countries in Asia, loggers are chopping down the jungles where tigers live to collect palm oil from plants. The oil is used in products such as ice cream, lipstick, and laundry detergent.

In China, poachers prowl the forests and national parks on the hunt for wild tigers. The cats' fur and meat are in high demand in the Asian country. Even the felines' bones are valuable. They are used as ingredients in some traditional Chinese medicines.



AFP/Getty Images

AFP/Getty Images- Loggers cut down trees in this Asian forest.

Hunting for Help

Officials are ready to pounce on the tiger problem. Recently, world leaders met to discuss the felines' future. Together with wildlife protection groups across the world, the leaders pledged to double the number of wild tigers within the next 12 years.

To do that, the leaders are putting together a plan to help save the animals. One of their first moves is to make people more aware of the dangers the cats face. Officials also plan to outsmart poachers by creating a system to keep the hunters from entering national wildlife parks.



Getty Images

Getty Images- Tigers tend to roam alone.

Other leaders will work to reduce the demand for tigers' fur and bones, says Long. His organization is working with a college in China to stop the use of tiger bones in medicine.

If officials achieve their goals, the tiger population may **thrive**, or grow successfully, once again. "If we can solve these problems, the future is very, very bright [for the cats]," Long says.

Tiger Trivia

These big cats are some of the world's fastest, largest, and strongest felines. What makes tigers tick? Read these facts to find out.

One of a Kind



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Each cat's stripes are unique, like human fingerprints. No two tigers have the same pattern.

Hungry Hunters



Amazing Animals

Tigers work up quite an appetite running in the jungle. They can eat 88 pounds of meat at a time.

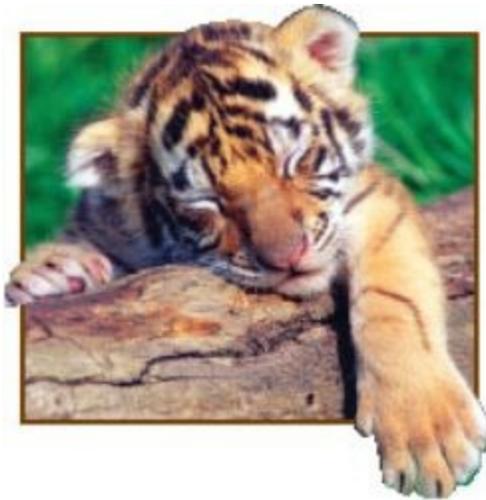
Ready to Pounce



Getty Images

Watch out, jungle animals! Tigers are skilled at stalking their prey. They can run up to 60 miles per hour.

Sleepyheads



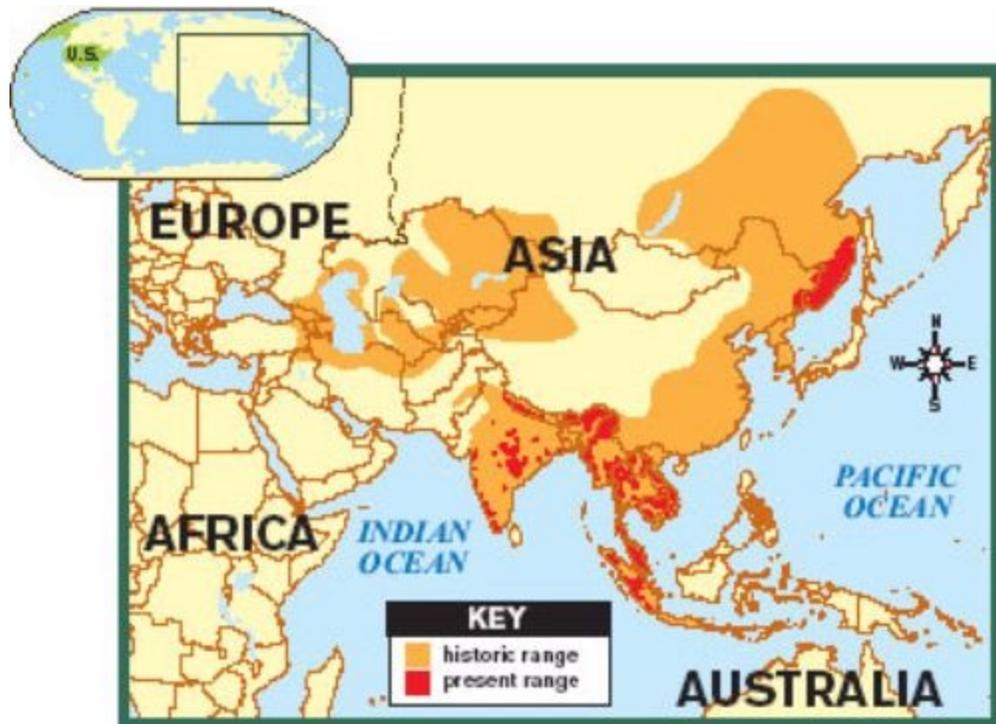
Corbis

Don't let their size fool you. Even adult tigers sleep like babies. They nap up to 18 hours a day.

Tiger Tracks

Wild tigers live in 14 countries today, but they once roamed across Asia and eastern Europe.

This map shows where the tigers can be found today compared with the region they used to roam.



Leigh Haeger

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. About how many tigers are in the wild today?

- A. 100,000 tigers
- B. 50,000 tigers
- C. 3,200 tigers
- D. 300 tigers

2. The passage describes the problem of tigers being wiped out. What is one possible solution to this problem?

- A. increasing the demand for tigers' fur and meat
- B. allowing hunters to enter national wildlife parks
- C. making people more aware of the dangers that tigers face
- D. increasing the use of tiger bones in medicine

3. One reason that tigers are going extinct is because they cannot get enough food to eat. What evidence from the text supports this statement?

- A. "In Indonesia and Malaysia, [...] loggers are chopping down the jungles where tigers live to collect palm oil from plants."
- B. "In China, poachers prowl the forests and national parks on the hunt for wild tigers."
- C. "In Russia, loggers are cutting down trees to make paper. Less forest means less room for tigers to search for food."
- D. "The oil [from plants] is used in products such as ice cream, lipstick, and laundry detergent."

4. Based on the information in the text, why might leaders be working to reduce the demand for tiger fur and bones?

- A. Leaders hope that poachers would be more likely to kill tigers if people did not want tiger fur and bones.
- B. Leaders hope that tigers poachers would be less likely to kill tigers if people did not want tiger fur and bones.
- C. Leaders hope that they can keep all tiger fur and bones if other people do not want them.
- D. Leaders hope that people will demand more tiger meat if they no longer want tiger fur and bones.

5. What is the main idea of this passage?

- A. Wild tigers are being wiped out by two major threats and could soon become extinct.
- B. Officials plan to create a system to keep tiger hunters from entering national wildlife parks.
- C. Wild tigers live in 14 countries today, but they once roamed across Asia and eastern Europe.
- D. Tigers live in forests and jungles across China, India, Thailand, and eastern Russia.

6. The map at the end of the text shows where tigers can be found today compared to where they could be found in the past. Why might the author have included this map?

- A. to show how large Asia and eastern Europe are
- B. to show how much the number of tigers in Asia and eastern Europe has decreased
- C. to convince readers that the number of tigers will increase in the future
- D. to convince readers that official plans to save wild tigers are working

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

"Officials plan to create a system to keep poachers from entering national wildlife parks _____ poachers are a major threat to the tiger population."

- A. instead
- B. therefore
- C. because
- D. moreover

8. Tigers are being wiped out by two major threats. What are the two major threats to the tiger population?

9. How are people working to protect the tiger population?

Include at least two examples from the text in your answer.

10. In the future, the tiger population will grow successfully. Form an argument for or against this prediction using evidence from the text.