



The Sumatran Ranger Project Quarterly Report 2

June 2022 Leuser Ecosystem, North Sumatra

Note from program leader



Rafflesia arnoldii in bloom in May, in North Sumatra

Our Vision

To ensure long term protection of the forest edge within the Leuser Ecosystem in North Sumatra.

Our Mission

To halt activities that are a threat to the environment and to wildlife, and to support forest edge communities in ways that benefit people and the environment.

The last quarter has been incredibly busy for our team of hard-working rangers. The herd of Sumatran elephants we regularly monitor has caused widespread damage across multiple communities requiring close monitoring and mitigation; another predator-proof livestock corral has been constructed; and the team have encountered some tough environmental conditions whilst on patrol with heavy rainfall, mud, and flooding.

Following the unexpected loss of our much-respected field coordinator Sutresno Aries earlier this year, the team have achieved a lot without senior leadership. Discussions continue about how we move forward and whether we second or recruit for this position. We are currently trialling the team with some self-governance and conjoined leadership with good success.

Rafflesia flowers were in bloom in multiple locations around the Gunung Leuser National Park in April/May. *Rafflesia* is native to Sumatra and Borneo and is a genus of parasitic flowering plants. The species pictured boasts the title of the largest single flower on Earth, only flowering once a year. Also known as the corpse flower due to their offensive smell of rotting meat, the odour attracts carrion fly pollinators. The rangers saw a number of these impressive flowers in bloom earlier this year whilst on patrol and took some stunning images of them unfurling.

July 31 is World Ranger Day – watch our socials for ways to support the team.

thingreenline.org.au/campaign/srp

Amy Robbins



Sumatran elephants

Sumatran elephants (*Elephas maximus sumatranus*) are a subspecies of Asian elephant and are Critically Endangered. They are only found in Sumatra with fewer than 2000 individuals remaining in heavily fragmented habitat. Over the last quarter the team have been primarily focused on monitoring the herd of Sumatran elephants that frequents our patrol areas. A total of 15 elephants were counted including a new-born calf. The herd has left a trail of destruction amongst forest edge communities, destroying property and crops such as durian and oil palm trees.



Significant conflict has occurred in cacao, orange, durian, and palm plantations from Tangkahan to Pancasila. Camera traps were set, and we were able to obtain images of the herd which we are yet to analyse. A building was damaged, and property destroyed but our rangers have been following the elephants, trying to prevent and mitigate conflict at all times, attempting to safely drive the elephants back into the forest.



Building damaged by elephants

Noise deterrents were given out on each patrol to ensure communities are equipped with tools to deter elephants themselves when necessary.



Durian trees damaged by elephants



Fatally damaged oil palm tree

Oil palm trees are uprooted so the elephants can reach the green fronds at the top and durian trees are stripped of bark, causing fatal damage. For smallholders this has a significant impact on livelihoods. The team record every incident of elephant crop damage they find on patrol or are alerted to by the community and continue to measure dung bolus size

and footprints to gather as much herd data as possible.

The team have spent many hours waiting in trees to capture images of the elephants and determine where they are headed.



Passing elephants taken by rangers in a tree

Thank you to International Elephant Project for support that allows Sumatran Ranger Project to closely monitor this herd and help ensure their safety.



Measuring dung bolus size



Measuring elephant footprints



Corral #7

We constructed our seventh predator-proof livestock corral in June, in an area that has recently (and historically) experienced livestock depredation to Sumatran tigers. The corral is our biggest yet, at 20m². Corrals are such a cost-effective solution to human-tiger conflict (and human-predator conflict elsewhere in the world) and we are thrilled that the communities we work to support are realising their positive impact. Initially these communities were resistant to the idea of corrals but our community engagement work and prioritisation of relationship building as well as long term proven support for communities has paid off. There was one reported livestock depredation event in this quarter with tiger pugmarks measuring 12cm x 12cm.





Patrols

A total of six active snares were destroyed over the past quarter, an increase of 50% since the previous quarter. April saw the highest count of four snares with only one in May and June, respectively. In May a calf was found trapped in a wire snare along the forest edge. It appeared to have been ensnared for at least two days but was freed by rangers.



Rangers Dedy and Togar with a snare

12 vertebrate species were recorded over the past three months on patrol – by far the most numerous evidence found was from Wild boar with 59 data points recorded, followed by Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*) with 20 data points, then Leopard cat and Sambar deer. There seems to be plenty of prey for Sumatran tigers in this area.

Conditions have been very challenging while patrolling recently, due to heavy rain, flooded rivers, and extreme mud.



Measuring Sun bear scratch marks



Measuring Sun bear footprints

Camera traps

In April we captured some stunning images of a beautiful male Sumatran tiger walking through the forest. The team found some large pug marks while on patrol around the same time, which we assume are from this animal.



Another incredible image we captured was of this Silvery lutung or langur (*Trachypithecus cristatus*). This species is not often seen on camera.





Thank you to our supporters

We are pleased to have the ongoing support of Thin Green Line Foundation who can accept donations on our behalf. thingreenline.org.au/campaign/srp

This opens opportunities for supporters to provide a tax-deductible donation which is passed on to Sumatran Ranger Project. Without this support the only option is via our Indonesian account which we acknowledge can sometimes feel challenging to use if you haven't before. The process is simple, and we can provide all the details necessary for a smooth international transfer.



Support spotlight

We are grateful to Toronto Zoo's Endangered Species Reserve Fund for selecting Sumatran Ranger Project to support this financial year. We are thrilled to be partnering with them to build additional predator-proof livestock corrals and help keep Sumatran tigers safe.



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Donate: thingreenline.org.au/campaign/srp

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