



# Sumatran Ranger Project Quarterly Report 3

September 2022, Leuser Ecosystem, North Sumatra

# Note from program leader

The past three months have been largely filled with monitoring of the relic Sumatran elephant herd that frequents the forest border in areas Sumatran Ranger Project patrols in.

We have captured incredible diversity in our camera traps over the last quarter including some Critically Endangered species. These images are always very motivating for the rangers to see and gives them renewed energy and excitement in their role as protectors of these incredible animals.

The number of snares destroyed this quarter has increased although the overall tally remains comparatively low.

There have been no reports of livestock depredation this quarter which is pleasing. At the end of July SRP finished construction of our seventh predator-proof livestock corral and have identified two additional sites for imminent construction.



*Ranger Pera, watching a Sumatran elephant*

## **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.*



*National Park boundary marker. SRP patrols on the outside of these marker posts.*

# Patrols

A total of 12 snares were destroyed in the last quarter, double the number from the previous reporting period which is disappointing but not entirely unexpected. Across Southeast Asia there are reports that the coronavirus pandemic has led to increased poaching as locals turn to hunting to supplement diminished incomes. We feel fortunate to have been able to continue a fully staffed ranger team throughout the pandemic when funding has been difficult to secure. This has led to a reduction in rangers across tiger habitats as funds are reallocated towards Covid relief. In August Sumatran Ranger Project hosted a team of international zookeepers who participated in a days' patrol and assisted in detecting and destroying seven snares along the border of the Gunung Leuser National Park. Significant Malayan sun bear activity was found on patrol this quarter, with 30 data points documented across both teams, making it the second most numerous species after wild pigs.



*Ranger Jasson holding a wire snare designed to entrap animals around the neck*



*Ranger Togar dismantling a rope snare. With this type of snare the animal steps into the rope noose and immediately becomes trapped by a leg or foot*



*Malayan sun bear scratch marks. Sun bear and tiger claw marks are distinguishable with bears having 5 claws and tigers 4*



*Sumatran tiger pug mark*

Species	Sighted	Tracks	Faeces	Scratches	Nest	Wallow	Damage	No.
Malayan sun bear <i>Helarctos malayanus</i>	1	3	4	19	3			30
Leopard cat <i>Prionailurus bengalensis</i>			9					9
Sumatran orangutan <i>Pongo abelii</i>					11			11
Brahminy kite <i>Haliastur indus</i>	2							2
Wild boar <i>Sus scrofa</i>		37			2	7		46
Lar gibbon <i>Hylobates lar</i>	2							2
Sambar deer <i>Deer unicolor</i>		7	1					8
Sumatran tiger <i>Panthera tigris sumatrae</i>		6						6
Sumatran porcupine <i>Hystrix sumatrae</i>		1	5					6
Palm civet <i>Paradoxus hermaphroditus</i>			7					7
Great hornbill <i>Buceros bicornis</i>	1							1



Summary of wildlife findings in this reporting period. Sumatran elephants are covered in separate patrols and later in this report.

Patrol waypoints July – September. The village of Tangkahan is labelled for reference. Green areas are conservation area boundaries.



# Sumatran elephants

During July the size and amount of dung found in plantations indicated that the herd was entering, not just lone individuals. Size of dung boli ranged from 19-51cm circumference indicating a wide demographic in the group. The herd of 15 animals was sighted on patrol as was dung, tracks and plant damage. The elephants browsed in groups every afternoon amongst rubber and oil palm plantations and additionally there were lone elephants in community owned plantations around the village of Sumber Waras. During the July survey the team carried out conflict mitigation to prevent further crop damage. The herd raided the contents of a field hut and fatally damaged 12 oil palm trees. Additionally, multiple durian trees were damaged, most likely fatally. The circumference of the adult footprints ranged from 73-117cm.

Throughout August and September, the patrol team sighted the herd as well as individuals on a number of occasions near Sumber Waras. Dung of varying sizes was found indicating herd activity within plantations. Eight elephants were seen in bushy foliage as pictured.



*Fatally damaged oil palm tree*



*Dung boli from infant elephant*

# Communities

At the end of July SRP completed our seventh predator-proof livestock corral along the forest edge between the villages of Tangkahan and Sumber Waras. The image shows the written agreement we have landowners sign, agreeing to maintain the corral and provide access for other livestock owners.

During community engagement as part of routine monthly patrols the teams have identified two additional communities that have requested corrals due to recurring livestock depredation by Sumatran tigers.

During patrols rangers document crops planted along or close to the forest border and whom the crops belong to, to help predict where future wildlife conflict events may occur. Crops include orange, rubber, oil palm, durian, lime and chili.



*SRP livestock corral construction team with landowner*



# Camera Trap Programme



Over the last quarter we have captured some incredible wildlife in our trail cameras, including species not frequently seen such as Marbled cat (*Pardofelis marmorata*), Sunda pangolin (*Manis javanica*) and Moon rat (*Echinosorex gymnura*) which isn't actually a rat or rodent but a small carnivorous animal. We captured some beautiful footage of a female Malayan sun bear and her cub who curiously investigated our camera. Earlier this year our patrol team discovered Malayan sun bear tracks that appeared to be an adult bear with a missing paw – most likely from a snare injury. It appears we have captured images of this animal in our cameras recently, showing the bear is living locally around the forest edge. We also captured images of a Sumatran tiger, Malayan porcupines, Muntjac, Sambar deer, Pig-tailed and Long-tailed macaques (recently reclassified by the IUCN as Endangered), Thomas leaf monkey, Mongoose, Monitor lizard, Palm civet and Silvery langur. We are in urgent need of replacement camera traps as the harsh Sumatran environment of humidity, heat and rain means even with careful maintenance, they do not have a long lifespan.



*Pardofelis marmorata*



*Echinosorex gymnura*



*Manis javanica*



*Macaca fascicularis*

# Malayan sun bear

Due to the high volume of sun bear activity recorded in the last quarter they are worthy of a mention in this report.

Sun bears (*Helarctos malayanus*) make nests in trees similar to orangutans, pictured here. Some research suggests in areas where bears live close to human settlements and disturbance, they make nests more frequently. They also make nests to avoid large ground-based predators like Sumatran tigers. They are primarily nocturnal, but some diurnal activity has been observed.

The smallest of the bear species, the sun bear is an adept climber, at home in trees. They possess huge claws, 10cm long and hairless soles on their feet to help aid in climbing. Their tongues are incredibly long (up to 25cm) and slender, an excellent tool for extracting honey from bee nests, hence their nickname 'honey bear'. Opportunistic omnivores, they also eat fruit, insect larvae and other insects like termites and ants, and small animals like rodents, lizards and birds.



*Malayan sun bear nest*



*We suspect this bear has a missing front paw likely resulting from a snare injury*

# Thank you to our supporters



# Contact

e: [sumatranrangers@gmail.com](mailto:sumatranrangers@gmail.com)



@sumatranrangerproject



@sumatranrangerproject



@sumatranrangers

[www.sumatranrangerproject.com](http://www.sumatranrangerproject.com)

