



## **PRIVATE OWNERSHIP IS SAVING TIGERS FROM EXTINCTION**

*February 2010*

Dear Editor

I would like to address the misinformation perpetuated by the latest WWF (World Wildlife Fund) press release that claims captive US tigers pose danger to their wild cousins.

Captive US tigers are a self sustaining population, totally independent from the wild population. American tigers are born here, and not stolen from the wild.

According to the July 2008 "Paper Tigers? The Role of the U.S. Captive Tiger Population in the Trade in Tiger Parts" (page 34) report by TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, a joint programme of WWF and IUCN, ...*"there is no evidence at present that the United States is a source for Tiger parts entering the international market"*.

For WWF to insist in these harsh economic times that US government wastes more money on *"A registration scheme for all captive tigers and a means to monitor disposal of dead tigers is urgently needed to ensure they aren't exploited for the illegal trade"* is as absurd as to insist the government does the same for the American domestic dogs and cats, so they don't end up on Asian dining tables.

Americans love their pets, domestic and exotic variety. We, the American tiger owners, are tired of being used as scapegoats, because the global conservation community is failing miserably to save the wild tiger with their current non efficient methods.

I wish WWF would stop misinforming the public and donors, as well as stop the possible defamation of a responsible exotic animal community in the USA. The fact that USA has more captive tigers than the wild shows the true dedication of US private owners to at least save these magnificent animals in captivity, since the wild is becoming more and more deadly place for them.

Sincerely

Zuzana Kukol, President REXANO

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## Fewer tigers in forests than captive in US

Malaysia News.Net

Thursday 11th February, 2010 (IANS)

The tiger population is in real crisis worldwide, including the US, where more big cats are held in captivity than are alive in the Asian wilds, says a WWF report.

As Asian countries prepare to celebrate Year of the Tiger, beginning Feb 14, their numbers have dwindled to only 3,200 in the Asian wilds, where they face multiple threats from poaching, habitat loss, illegal trafficking and forest conversion.

'Tigers are being persecuted across their range - poisoned, trapped, snared, shot and squeezed out of their homes,' said Mike Baltzer, Leader of WWF's Tiger Initiative.

The WWF is releasing a new interactive map of the world's top 10 tiger trouble spots and the main threats against tigers.

The issues highlighted in the trouble spots map ([www.worldwildlife.org/troublespots](http://www.worldwildlife.org/troublespots)) include: More tigers are kept in captivity in the US than are left in the wild -- and there are few regulations to keep these tigers from ending up on the black market.

The largest numbers of captive tigers are in Texas (an estimated 3,000 plus), but they are also kept in other states.

In the US, the government does not track how many tigers are in captivity within its borders, where they are, who owns them, or what happens to their body parts when they die. In many states, there are no

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controls on individuals keeping tigers as pets.

Current estimates indicate that there are more than 5,000 tigers in captivity in the US, more than exist in the wild.

Some other trouble spots are: Pulp, paper, palm oil and rubber companies are devastating the forests of Indonesia and Malaysia, home to two endangered tiger sub-species.

Hundreds of new or proposed dams and roads in the Mekong region will fragment tiger habitat. Illegal trafficking in tiger bones, skins and meat feeds a continued demand in East and Southeast Asia; Poaching of tigers and their prey, along with a major increase in logging is taking a heavy toll on Amur, or Siberian, tigers.

Tigers and humans are increasingly coming into conflict in India as tiger habitats shrink; Climate change could reduce tiger habitat in Bangladesh's Sundarbans mangroves by 96 percent.

Three tiger sub-species have gone extinct since the 1940s and a fourth one, the South China tiger, has not been seen in the wild in 25 years.

Tigers occupy just seven percent of their historic range. But they can thrive if they have strong protection from poaching and habitat loss and enough prey to eat.

The WWF is also launching a campaign: Tx2: Double or Nothing to support tiger range states in their goal of doubling wild tiger numbers by the next Year of the Tiger in 2022.

'There is hope for them in this Year of the Tiger. There has never been such a committed, ambitious, high-level commitment from governments to double wild tiger numbers. They have set the bar high and we hope for the sake of tigers and people that they reach it,' Baltzer said.

In the lead up to the Vladivostok Summit, all 13 tiger range countries recently committed to the goal of doubling tiger numbers by 2022 at a ministerial meeting in Hua Hin, Thailand, said a WWF release.

They will be helped in this goal by WWF and other members of the Global Tiger Initiative. The Summit will be co-hosted by Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and World Bank President Robert Zoellick.

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Zuzana

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