



Tigers



YOUR FIELD REPORT
SPRING 2025

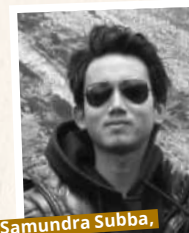
The moment one of two tigers was released into its new home at Ile-Balkhash Nature Reserve in Kazakhstan

This is a **standard update**, but if you'd rather receive the **version for under-12s**, scan this QR code, visit wwf.org.uk/switchupdates or call 0800 035 5929



Hello!

Welcome to your latest tiger update



Samundra Subba,
senior research
officer, WWF-Nepal

Since your last update, we've received exciting news from Kazakhstan. Tigers were hunted to extinction there decades ago. But thanks to efforts by the Kazakhstani government, supported by us and

our partners, a male and female tiger have been relocated to a spacious semi-natural enclosure within a nature reserve. Hopefully, cubs born to this pioneering pair will be released into the wild, becoming the first tigers to roam the country in 70 years. Work to restore the tiger's forest and prey populations is already under way. With more translocations planned, it's the first step towards building a population of 50 tigers by 2034. We're excited to see what the future holds! **Pheri bhetaula!**

(This means 'see you again' in Nepali!)

MEET THE ADOPTION TEAM

Editor Liz Palmer editor@wwf.org.uk, **Senior supporter engagement manager** Hannah Crawley, **Supporter engagement manager** Adam Field, **Senior editor** Guy Jowett, **Editorial executive** Emma Brill, **Content research executive** Zoe Brown **For Our Media Consultant editor** Sophie Stafford, **Senior art editor** Nicole Mooney, **Art editor** Julia Young, **Managing editor** Charlotte Martyn, **Production editor** Sarah Newman, **Copywriter** Kelly Ray, **Senior account manager** Katy Hewett, **Account executive** Leah Goldring, **Creative director** Matt Pink **Contributors** Barney Jeffries, Mike Unwin



FIELD NOTES



TIGER FRIENDS

Around India's Pilibhit Tiger Reserve, volunteers are helping tigers and people share the landscape safely

Tigers have always been part of Atul Singh's life. As a child, he often explored the dense forests of nearby Pilibhit Tiger Reserve with his grandfather, who was the area's first private tiger hunter. He was hired by the forest department to shoot tigers that were seen as a threat by communities around the edge of the reserve.

But while his grandfather hunted tigers, Atul was developing a deep appreciation for these majestic animals and knew there had to be another way to live alongside them. Using the skills passed down from

his grandfather, Atul began tracking tigers that ventured into settlements and would warn people to keep a safe distance. When the big cat population began to surge, doubling in number within the space of a few years, the increasing risk of encounters between people and tigers needed greater intervention.

Atul gathered like-minded locals to set up the Bagh Mitra ('tiger friends'). These dedicated volunteers work with the region's forest department to respond swiftly when tigers

There are now around 200 Bagh Mitra volunteers in Pilibhit and the local area



"I feel very proud of our work"



Tiger prints!



Family connections

Forest watchers

Five years on, the Bagh Mitra network has grown to some 200 volunteers, trained with your support. "We're proud to be Bagh Mitra," says Atul. "Through our

work to raise awareness, conflicts have decreased significantly, and the community is realising that the tiger is a beautiful animal that can coexist peacefully with people."

As both human and tiger populations grow, your adoption is helping us work towards a future where people and tigers can thrive together. Thank you.

Samundra



Whenever a tiger is spotted, the Bagh Mitra rush to the scene to help people stay safe

FORESTS OF PLENTY

Chital



Since your last update, we've surveyed all the tiger prey species living in Khata Corridor, a vital wildlife route between India and Nepal that you helped restore. Thanks to you, we now know there are 78 prey animals in every square kilometre of the corridor. This is a healthy number – a sign the corridor is thriving.

We counted plenty of nilgai (a type of antelope) and chital and barking deer. These herbivores aren't just the tiger's main prey – they're also vital for the health of the forest as they keep vegetation under control and disperse seeds through their poo. We're working to ensure they all continue to flourish.



Nilgai: a meal for a tiger

Photographer Emmanuel Rondeau uses his own motion-sensing camera traps to capture stunning images of tigers and other wildlife. These photos help us study and monitor big cats, and also raise awareness of the threats they face

CAUGHT ON CAMERA

Finding and counting elusive creatures such as tigers is crucial to conservation efforts. But it's not easy. That's why camera traps are vital

Just a century ago, perhaps 100,000 wild tigers prowled swathes of Asia. But the 20th century wasn't kind to these big cats. Decimated by hunting, habitat loss, illegal poaching and conflict with humans, their numbers plummeted by around 95%.

After decades of conservation efforts, their numbers are on the rise. The Global Tiger Forum announced a global estimate of 5,574 tigers in the wild in 2023, which is an incredible achievement. But the tiger's long-term survival is still threatened by habitat loss and fragmentation, and conflict with people.

To tackle these threats, we need to know more about these elusive predators. Where do tigers live? How far do they travel? How do they use wildlife corridors? How do they interact with other species in their habitat? How are they affected by interactions with livestock and people? And, of fundamental importance, how many are there, and how densely concentrated are remaining populations?

Tigers roam widely, stalking huge home ranges up to 100 sq km, often in remote, hot, humid or otherwise challenging

conditions. So monitoring them is tricky. That's where camera traps come in.

It's a century since early camera traps were first used in India's Himalayan foothills to capture high-quality photographs of tigers. Today, large numbers of much smaller, more sensitive and versatile models are deployed to help us answer those key questions.

Innovation for conservation

Modern digital camera traps have large memory capacities and long-lasting batteries, so they can be left in the field for weeks or even months, capturing thousands of images between checks. They offer a highly repeatable method of data collection, often out-performing other sampling methods, and are highly cost-efficient. And they typically cause minimal disturbance to the lives of the animals photographed.

By placing them on both sides ►





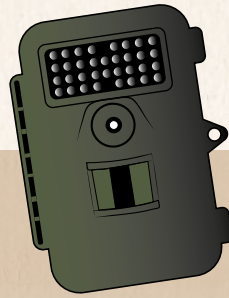
NIGHT OF THE HUNTER

Tigers hunt mostly at night, using their excellent hearing and eyesight to catch their prey: deer, wild pigs and antelopes. Soft toe pads help the big cats quietly stalk their target until they're close enough to pounce, before delivering a fatal bite with their powerful jaws. A tiger will typically cover up to 20km during a single night's hunt.



HOW CAMERA TRAPS WORK

Modern camera traps are digital cameras that typically use infrared sensors to detect the heat of warm-blooded animals. They're most easily triggered by larger mammals – ideal for tigers.



1

The camera trap is fixed on a steady mount at a suitable height (for a tiger, around 40-50cm above the ground) preferably facing a trail known to be used by that animal.

2

The infrared sensor detects a sudden change in temperature when a warm-blooded animal enters the detection zone. This triggers the camera to capture an image.

3

An animal will only set off the camera trap if it's moving. If a tiger is stationary in the detection zone there's no change of temperature so the camera might not be activated.

of a known trail, we can capture photos of both sides of a tiger. That's important because each individual's markings – its stripe patterns – are unique, like a human fingerprint. It means we can identify tigers as individuals, helping researchers estimate the number in any given area.

We use camera traps to help us identify priority areas for tiger conservation. In addition, the images and footage they produce are beautiful and inspiring, helping us engage with communities and raise funds for conservation efforts.

The development of networked camera traps, which send images over phone or satellite networks, can also help tackle poaching. Meanwhile, new software tools and statistical models are making it easier

and faster to get useful information from the thousands of images generated. All this is improving our understanding of human impacts on wildlife. In turn, this helps community-based institutions and managers of protected areas preserve these spaces to benefit tigers.

Real results

Award-winning photographer Emmanuel Rondeau has worked with WWF for several years, using his flair with camera traps to gain insights into rarely seen tiger populations. In 2017, he captured the first high-resolution photograph of a wild tiger in Bhutan, a mountainous, long-isolated country that's home to around 100 of the cats. After analysing the stripes we believe

this individual had never been recorded before.

In 2019, Emmanuel set up camera traps in Khata Corridor, a stretch of forest between Bardia National Park in Nepal and Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary in India. They captured images of wild tigers living in the corridor and using it to move between the two protected areas to feed and find mates. His photos emphasised the importance of this 13km-long stretch of forest.

In Malaysia, where tiger numbers had

DID YOU KNOW?

Camera-trap photography was pioneered by American politician George Shiras in the late 19th century. Early attempts used trip wires.

plummeted to fewer than 150 by 2022, Emmanuel captured a camera trap photo that drew attention to the need to safeguard crucial habitat and restore numbers of the national animal. His mission was supported by Indigenous Orang Asli tiger patrol teams, who've now set up hundreds of camera traps to monitor wildlife and identify threats.

When people power is combined with camera trap technology, conservation efforts can become more targeted and efficient, to give tigers a brighter future. ■

Illustration: Julia Young | Image © DoFSC/WWF-Nepal

Camera-trap images, such as this one captured in India's Khata Corridor, can be used to estimate tiger populations, detect their movements and monitor threats



A WORLD OF GOOD

Try a daily dose of nature to boost your mental and physical wellbeing

The UK is facing a mental health crisis. In any given week, one in six adults in England say they're experiencing a common mental health issue such as depression or anxiety, with one in 11 reporting severe mental health symptoms. Rates in children and young people are equally high. And over the past few years, the numbers have been increasing.

An overwhelming body of evidence shows that connecting with nature is one of the best things we can do for our mental wellbeing. It helps us relax, lowers stress levels, boosts confidence, self-esteem and creativity, and helps us to find focus and emotional balance.

But many of us aren't getting enough nature in our lives, particularly people from low-income households and urban areas. In a recent survey, 70% of adults said being close to nature improves their mood – but 44% said

they weren't connecting with nature often enough to help their mental health.

With the UK's mental health in a worrying state, WWF is on a mission to help everyone enjoy the health benefits our natural world provides. Spending just 20 minutes a day in nature can make a massive difference to our mental wellbeing. Our new campaign, Prescription for Nature, offers a series of simple, fun and uplifting activities to help everyone get their restorative daily dose of nature.

While spending time in the great outdoors is rewarding, our handy prescriptions offer ways that you can connect with nature when you're at home too – from growing herbs on your windowsill, and listening to birdsong, to enjoying images of nature

to bring a sense of calm to your day.

The great news is that many of these powerful mood boosters are totally free – as long as we look after our world. Let's restore nature, and let nature restore us.

DO ONE THING!

Nurture your wellbeing
Make time to enjoy nature every day. If you can't get outside, tend a houseplant or listen to natural sounds.

Our handy prescriptions – bitesize doses of nature – will help us all build better connections with the natural world



GET YOUR DAILY DOSE OF NATURE

Visit our Prescription for Nature site to discover easy ways to enjoy time in nature: wwwf.org.uk/prescription-for-nature



ADOPTION ACTION

Thanks to adopters like you, we're protecting wildlife around the world. Here are some of the great things we've achieved together

PANDAS

Giant pandas need safe dens, protected from the elements and predators, to raise their fragile cubs. But logging prior to a 1998 ban removed many of the old, hollow trees they prefer – and this might be limiting their population growth. With local partners, we've built artificial dens in China's Giant Panda National Park. Females have been inspecting these purpose-built dens, which we hope will help cubs thrive.

Find out about the other species you can help with an adoption at wwf.org.uk/adopt

Jaguars

Our jaguar adopters have been helping us listen to the amazing wildlife of the Colombian Amazon. With the help of local communities, we placed audio recorders high in the trees within a crucial jaguar habitat – and they revealed species that aren't caught on camera traps, including bats. This innovative technique is giving us new insights into this biodiversity hotspot, and helping us monitor changes in the forest.



Gorillas

One of our adopted mountain gorillas has been seen dismantling poachers' snares in Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park. A silverback named Muturengere has been helping rangers keep his family safe from these deadly traps by destroying them and throwing away the pieces. Thanks to our adopters, rangers scour the gorillas' mountain home for these traps, protecting all the forest animals from harm.



Rhinos

Our rhino adopters are helping us outsmart poachers with night-vision cameras. This revolutionary kit enables rangers in key rhino areas to detect and locate poachers in total darkness. Recently, adopters helped upgrade the solar panels powering these crucial cameras in Kenya's Lake Nakuru National Park, ensuring round-the-clock protection for rhinos and other wildlife.



Snow leopards

Snow leopards know no boundaries and, in Nepal, it's thought that over 40% of their habitat lies outside protected areas. These in-between areas are crucial but largely unstudied. Our adopters supported a camera-trap survey of a region that connects two vital conservation areas, revealing a healthy population of these cats.





IN YOUR SUMMER

Field report

*Big cat
communication*

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FSC logo

As well as helping to safeguard tigers, you support our other vital work to help protect our beautiful planet and its wildlife. Thank you.

All information correct at time of printing (February 2025)