

Conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-1 Asian big cat species

Report submitted by Thailand for the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Party

To comply with Resolution Conf. 12.5, Thailand has taken many steps on enforcement to implement the resolution on conservation of and trade in tigers and other Appendix-1 Asian big cat.

1. Laws

Thailand uses Wild Animal Reservation and Protection Act B.E. 2535 (1992) or WARPA to implement wildlife conservation in Thailand as well as related international agreements, including CITES. Three species of tigers and other Appendix-1 Asian big cats found in Thailand are Tiger (*Panthera tigris*), Leopard (*Panthera pardus*), Clouded Leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*) Under WARPA, Tiger, Leopard, and Clouded Leopard are protected species. These species are prohibited to hunt, possess, or trade, except for scientific purposes. With the provision under WARPA, these three species are fully protected.

Beside WARPA, the species are also protected by National Park Act .B.E. 2504 (1961), which is the legislation for national park management. Since the provision under this law prohibits to hunt or do anything to harm wild animals in protected areas, these three species are fully protected.

2. Enforcement

Thailand puts great efforts to curb illegal trade in CITES and endangered species, especially tigers and other Appendix-1 Asian big cat species.

According to statistics from January 2004 to September 2006, the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DoNP), with cooperation from governmental counterparts (i.e., police, customs) intercepted 11 cases. DoNP will continue its effort to combat illegal commercial trade in tigers and other Appendix-1 Asian big cat species by working with the police from Natural Resources and Environment Crime Division and the Customs, and related inter-agencies, as well as other countries under ASEAN-WEN, recommended in Resolutions Conference 12.5.

In order to curb illegal wildlife trade by enhancing the cooperation on the conservation and trade in wildlife such as tiger and other Appendix-1 Asian big cat species, Thailand has taken more steps to strengthen enforcement both at national and international level:

(a) Set up a National Wildlife Law Network Committee consisting of 22 organizations such as DoNP, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries Department, Thai Police, Custom Department, Forestry Department, Air and Sea Port Authorities, Thai Airways International, Department of Live Stock Development, and Tourism Authority of Thailand.

(b) Set up the office of Programme Coordination Unit of ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Networks located at DoNP. This office will be the center for information

exchange and coordinate enforcement to support the ASEAN Wildlife Law Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) work in the region.

(c) Set up the new wildlife task force to enforce all wildlife issues

In addition, Thailand convened meetings to discuss the topics which are related to conserving tiger and other Appendix-1 Asian big cat species such as:

- The Seminar on Law Enforcement on Thailand and CITES Wild fauna and Flora Species, February 19-21, 2006, Khao Yai National Park, Thailand

- Introduction to CITES/Controlling Illegal Wildlife Trade Training Workshop on August 9-11, 2006, at International Laws Enforcement Academy (ILEA), Bangkok. Participants attending the workshop were from various governmental (i.e., customs, police) and non-governmental organizations (i.e., TRAFFIC, WCS), including private sectors (i.e., Fed-ex) to learn about CITES. This Training Workshop provided the opportunity to improve communication among CITES and non-CITES agencies. Many cases on CITES recently intercepted in Thailand were the results from this network.

- ASEAN Regional Law Enforcement Network, 17-21 October 2005, Khao Yai National Park, Thailand.

Thailand also cooperates with other countries to stop wildlife trade that include tiger and other Appendix-1 Asian big cat species, i.e., Australia, Australia Environmental Law Enforcement and Regulators Network (AELERT); England, Coalition Against Wildlife Trafficking (CAWT); China, the Mekong sub-regional CITES implementation and enforcement workshop; and Hong Kong: CITES Law Enforcement Seminar

3. Management Approaches and Direction

3.1 Management Approaches

Thailand uses habitat and species protection as the key strategies in conserving its natural resources. To protect key habitats for tiger and other Appendix-1 Asian big cat species, identified as keystone species, Thailand has set up strict protected areas such as National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, and Non-hunting areas all over the country. Other types of areas, i.e., watershed areas, national forests, are also managed to protect this key species. To protect key and endangered species, Thailand declares these species as protected and conserved species under the WARPA. Tiger and other Appendix-1 Asian big cat are also on the list.

To help protect key species such as tiger and other Appendix-1 Asian big cat, which need large habitats, Thailand has now started to test the idea on complex management instead of single protected area management. This helps to manage the protected area at the landscape scale. By setting up 19 complexes throughout the country, Thailand puts great step try to connect key habitats through the Corridor Projects, to connect between the complexes, or fragmented areas inside the complex. This connectivity with corridors providing key habitats for key stone or landscape species such as tiger and other Appendix-1 Asian big cat species to survival.

More importantly, with country commitment to protect key habitats which is high priority for tiger and other Appendix-1 Asian big cat species, Thailand now has two Natural World Heritage sites: Hua Kha keng – Tung Yai Wildlife Sanctuary located in Western Forest Complex, and Dong Phrayayen Forest Complex. Besides Khang Krachan Forest Complex, these are the last frontiers for Thailand' most prestigious habitats. With these two Natural World Heritage sites located at the west and east of the country, Thailand expects to apply Transboundary Protected Area Management working together to stop illegal tiger trade with neighboring countries such as Myanmar and Cambodia in the near future.

3.2 Management Direction

To guide the action to conserve wildlife species in Thailand, the government supported the National Wildlife Master plan approved by the Cabinet on October 25, 2005, to guide a long term direction in conserving, protecting, and managing the country's precious wildlife resource.

To guide the action to conserve tiger, Thailand has started to implement a National Tiger Action Plan. This plan was formulated in consultation with other government agencies, academics, and NGOs. The purpose of the plan is to encourage and to guide the actions of the citizens of Thailand and the international community at a critical time for tiger conservation. Actions are divided into four topics: (1) direct conservation and enforcement; (2) capacity building; (3) information acquisition, management, and analysis; and (4) education and public participation.

Many types of actions done to protect tiger now are the results from this National Tiger Action Plan.

(a) Capacity Building: In order to build capacity and strengthen cooperation to combat illegal trade, including tiger and other Appendix-1 Asian big cat species, Thailand sent its staff to various meetings mentioned above to discuss and exchange ideas with other countries.

(b) Technical Needed: The research on DNA testing for tiger has been discussed and the efforts will be continued. Thailand has also undertaken research that contributes to our understanding of tiger ecology and conservation. For example, population studies and long-term ecological projects related to tigers and other Appendix-1 Asian big cat have been conducted at Hua Kha keng and Tung Yai, and Khang Krachan Wildlife Sanctuaries in western Thailand.

(c) Public Relation:

To convey tiger conservation-related messages to a diverse Thai public and involve them in the conservation process, Thailand did and is doing many steps:

- To build up public awareness on Tiger conservation, especially for traders, DoNP, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries Department, and Thai police organized a seminar on CITES issues at Chatuchak market in Bangkok on August 4, 2006.

- Thailand established the wildlife campaign project in December 2006 aiming to build awareness on wildlife illegal trade through mass media such as printed

matters, signs, brochures, leaflets. Airports, tourist spots, local markets, hotels, and general public will be targeted for domestic public relations. Wildlife check points, as well as the border check points of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries Department, Police, and Custom Department, will also be targeted.

- Thailand has also designated December 26 of each year to be the National Wildlife Protection Day to raise awareness and campaign within the public to conserve wildlife.