



Big Cats

A WCS Progress Report





We Stand for Wildlife.SM

Elusive and iconic, big cats are among the most recognized and revered species on Earth. These apex predators are critical to maintaining healthy ecosystems, yet they face severe threats across their ranges. Dwindling habitat and prey, conflict with humans and consequent retaliatory killing, wildlife trafficking, and infectious disease—these are the threats we must combat in order for big cats to survive.

WCS is committed to protecting big cat species through long-term programs in 44 landscapes across 30 countries spanning Africa, Asia, and the Americas. We have more boots on the ground conserving big cats than any other organization. By saving these species, we protect their habitats and prey species, and hence their entire ecosystems.

This WCS Progress Report provides our generous supporters with insights on recent advances in big cat conservation in some of the most critical habitats across the globe. In this edition, we will provide updates on the philanthropic impact of the WCS Big Cat Fund and share stories about our efforts to protect the world's tigers, lions, jaguars, cheetahs, leopards, and snow leopards.

Leading Big Cat Conservation

A long-term commitment to big cats and success in conserving key strongholds for these species have made WCS a global leader. Our expertise in scientifically proven solutions for saving big cats provides a nimble toolkit to address the diverse set of threats to these at-risk animals with tailored approaches in each field site. WCS's strategies are deployed and tested in the field—and they are being adopted around the world.

Core Strategies

1

STOP illegal hunting and trafficking of big cats for their pelts and other body parts.

2

PROTECT the prey species on which big cats feed, such as deer and wild pigs.

3

HALT big cat habitat loss and strengthen habitat protection while restoring connectivity in fragmented landscapes.

4






PREVENT retaliatory killings and reduce conflicts between big cats and ranchers, farmers, and other communities.

5

CONDUCT conservation research that enhances knowledge of big cat species.

6

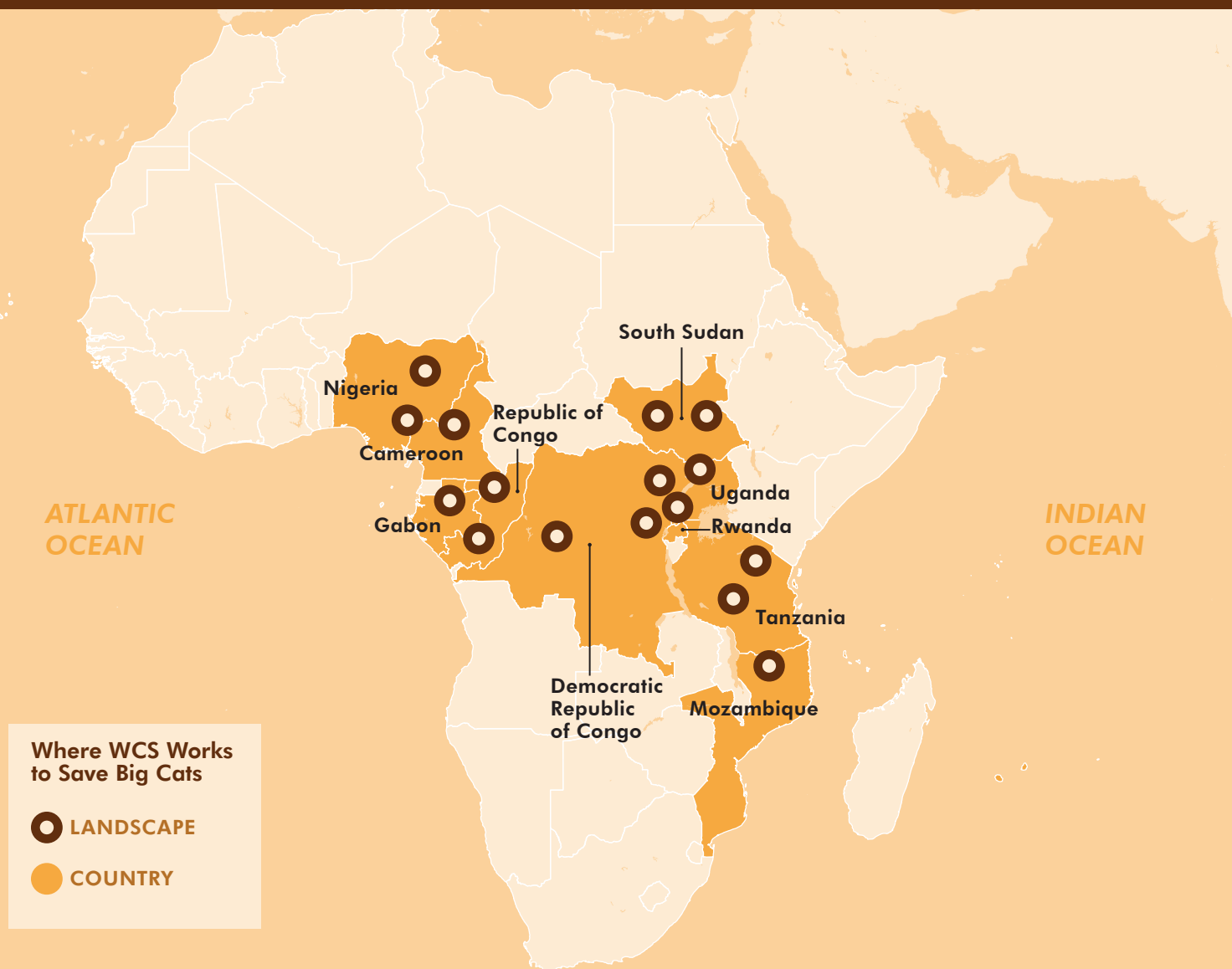
MONITOR populations of big cats and their prey to inform conservation actions.

SPECIES	CONSERVATION STATUS	WCS OUTLOOK*	STORIES
Cheetah (<i>Acinonyx jubatus</i>)	VU VULNERABLE		Pages 5, 17
Lion (<i>Panthera leo</i>)	VU VULNERABLE		Page 6
Tiger (<i>Panthera tigris</i>)	EN ENDANGERED		Pages 7–12, 16
Leopard (<i>Panthera pardus</i>)	VU VULNERABLE	? **	Pages 10–11
Snow Leopard (<i>Panthera uncia</i>)	EN ENDANGERED		Page 13
Jaguar (<i>Panthera onca</i>)	NT NEAR THREATENED		Pages 14–15

*SOURCE: WCS EXPECTATION OF POPULATION TRENDS AT WCS FIELD SITES, BASED ON OUR SCIENTIFIC DATA, EXPERT OPINION, AND TREND DATA

**INSUFFICIENT DATA TO PROJECT FUTURE OUTLOOK

Big Cats in Africa



The big cat species of Africa are lions, cheetahs, and leopards. Across the continent, these animals are experiencing a troubling decline. The complex challenges they face are acutely experienced by WCS field teams. We have responded by helping governments to establish and manage protected areas. WCS is also working with partners to strengthen ranger patrols, and is carefully monitoring the status of these iconic species.

Over the coming decades, Africa will face a tipping point for its biodiversity. The human population on the continent is expected to double by 2050, and this growth will exert unprecedented additional pressures on wildlife and the environment. This is a critical moment to protect these fierce, enigmatic predators. WCS's African big cat initiatives deploy proven tactics to help these animals rebound amid a major transition for the continent.

Raising International Alarm Around Cheetah Decline

According to a recent study by WCS and partners, the world's fastest land animal is declining more sharply than previously understood. We estimate that there are only about 7,100 cheetahs left in the wild. The species is now restricted to less than 10 percent of its historical range, and only 33 populations survive, most of which number fewer than 100 individuals. This predicament is made more challenging by the fact that cheetahs are wide-ranging, and many live primarily outside of protected areas where they face several threats including further habitat loss,

Armed with this new data, WCS is advocating for cheetahs to be uplisted on the IUCN Red List from Vulnerable to Endangered.

human conflict, and illegal wildlife trade. Armed with this new data, WCS is advocating for cheetahs to be uplisted on the IUCN Red List from Vulnerable to Endangered.

In addition to strengthening our advocacy around cheetahs, WCS continues to partner with the Zoological Society of London through our joint Range Wide Conservation Program for Cheetah and African Wild Dogs. This collaboration has engaged cheetah range-state governments for nearly 10 years. The Program conducts unprecedented species conservation planning across Africa, and has helped establish 4 regional conservation strategies and 16 national conservation action plans. Ten countries have already appointed dedicated National Cheetah Coordinators to help drive cheetah conservation under the range-wide initiatives. 🐾

WCS is also working to end the illegal cheetah trade. See full story on page 17.

CHEETAH TRENDS

7,100 remaining ↘

90% of historic range lost

33 populations remaining, most fewer than 100 individuals

Source: Peer-reviewed study published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences





INTERVIEW

Discussing Lions with Tim Tear

Dr. Tim Tear is the Executive Director of WCS's Africa Program, overseeing all Africa country programs and activities. We focused our conversation on WCS's response to the growing pressures on lion populations.

What is the current state of lions in Africa?

TIM TEAR: Lion numbers are falling fast, and WCS teams are concerned about what they are seeing in the field. Over the last 20 years, the total lion population has fallen by more than 40 percent. In response, they were added to the US Endangered Species Act in late 2015. The drivers behind this dramatic decline are human-lion conflict, habitat loss, loss of prey, insufficient regulations, and weak protected area management. These issues are unfolding in WCS's field sites across the species' entire range. Lions can be found in 16 of our sites; of these, we have trend information for 12 sites and lions are declining in 11. Our data are an indicator of what's happening to the species at large.

How is WCS responding to this problem?

TT: WCS tends to engage in areas where governance is low and where few other NGOs work. Therefore, we are operating in some of the places where lions are most gravely at risk. This puts us at the front lines of lion conservation, and we will not back away from the difficult battles ahead.

WCS is bolstering efforts throughout our African landscapes to address the lion decline with all we have. Because our sites are situated throughout the lion's range, we understand both the high-level and site-specific problems and what action must be taken.

In many places, growing human populations are adjacent to crucial lion habitat and protected areas. Reducing human-lion conflict is essential, and we must improve dialogue and increase community engagement in lion conservation so we can reduce encroachment and retaliatory killings. We also have to reduce the unsustainable hunting of prey species. This is why our ranger patrol efforts, supported by the use of SMART monitoring technology, are designed to effectively lower the impacts of bushmeat hunting practices, particularly by reducing the use of snares that capture not only lion prey, but lions as well.

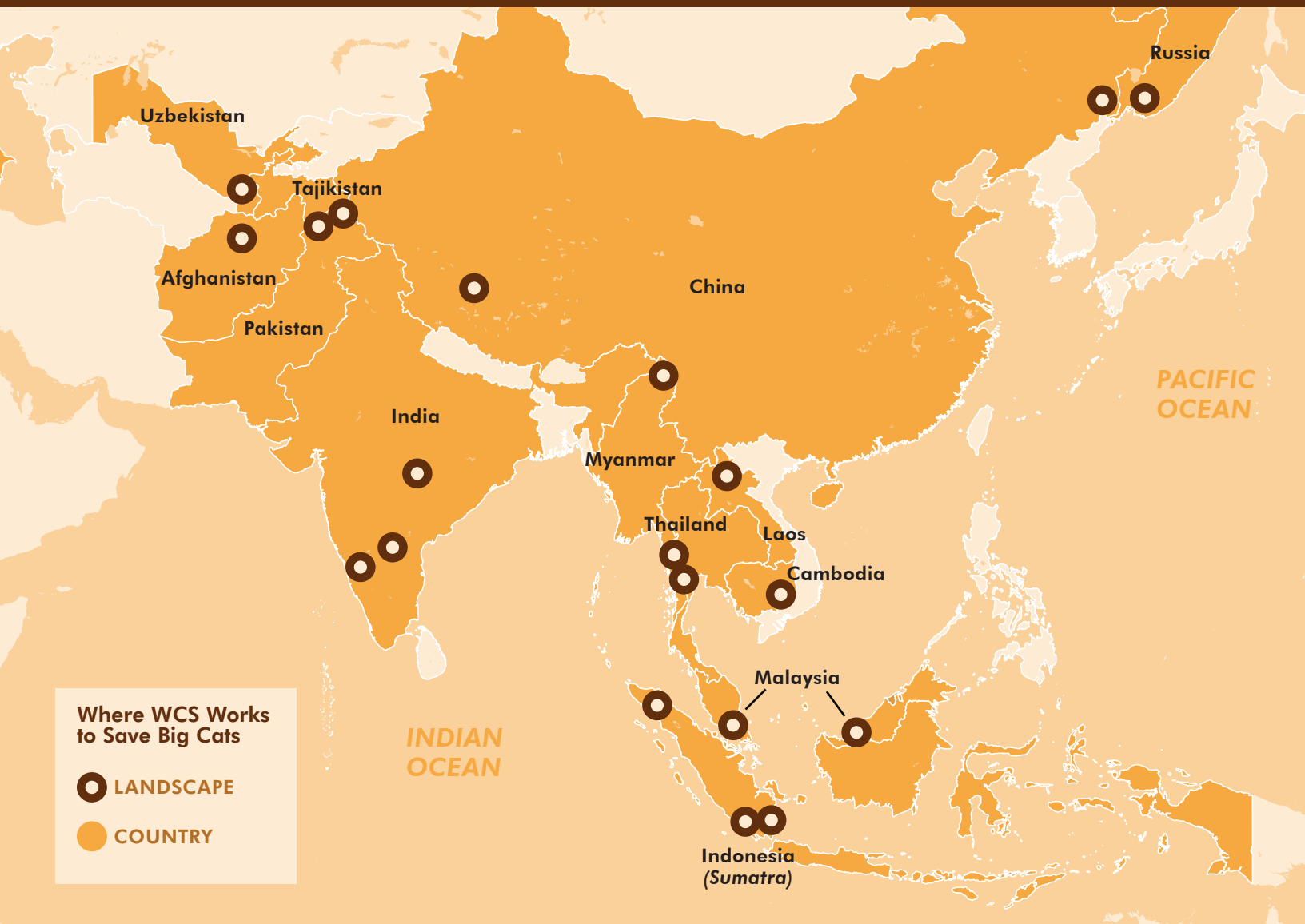
One of our most successful lion projects is in Queen Elizabeth National Park, Uganda, where our efforts have decreased snaring and human-lion conflict. We are now planning to launch a robust lion initiative in Tanzania, home to one of the largest populations of lions in Africa.

What gives you hope for the future of lions?

TT: From a scientific point of view, lions have tremendous reproductive capacity. They absolutely have the potential to rebound and that is the vision we are working to realize. There are undeniable challenges ahead, but there is also great promise if the right strategies can be effectively applied in the most important sites. It is true that lions face many serious threats, but I see hope in that considerable habitat and prey still remain. A recent study showed that lions and their prey base are well below carrying capacity in many African protected areas. We can change that situation with sound management. We are confident that with the right resources, protected areas can be the sanctuaries they were intended to be for these animals. With strengthened conservation efforts, we can flip the outlook for lions in a positive direction. 🦁



Cat Conservation in Asia



WCS has seen successes in conserving big cats across many of our field sites in Asia, demonstrating the efficacy of our conservation strategies and the will of our government and community partners. Our programs in Asia help protect five big cat species: tigers, snow leopards, leopards, Indochinese clouded leopards, and Sunda clouded leopards. Our tiger efforts in particular are a model of what long-term targeted conservation can accomplish. In most tiger landscapes where WCS is not active, populations are declining, but in landscapes where WCS invests resources and personnel, tiger populations are either stable or increasing. In some areas, WCS is even witnessing recolonization of surrounding habitat by tigers. We are applying these practices in additional sites and hope to see similar outcomes in other critical big cat habitats.



Tiger Trends on the Ground

The majestic tiger, once the top predator of most of Asia's vast tropical and temperate forests, today faces persistent dangers in a vastly diminished range. But there is reason for hope. WCS's concerted conservation actions have demonstrably grown tiger populations. 🐾

GLOBAL TIGER POPULATION

3,500 tigers (Estimated)

TIGERS PROTECTED BY WCS

2,000 tigers (57%)



Protected areas across 9 landscapes in Asia where WCS has programmatic sites containing tigers

POPULATION TRENDS



↑ Increasing in 5 landscapes

→ Stable in 4 landscapes



**RANGER TEAMS
TIRELESSLY PATROL
GUNUNG LEUSER
NATIONAL PARK TO
PROTECT WILDLIFE
BY PREVENTING
ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES
WITHIN THE AREA.**

Patrolling Indonesia's Leuser Landscape

The Leuser landscape in northern Sumatra, one of the world's largest tropical rainforest ecosystems, supports an estimated 100 to 150 tigers, making it one of Southeast Asia's largest tiger populations. Yet this forest has the potential to support as many as 300 to 400 tigers. WCS is helping the population in these forests to stabilize and grow by reducing threats through ranger patrols and human-tiger conflict reduction.

WCS works within Gunung Leuser National Park to carry out patrols that prevent human encroachment within the forest, crack down on illegal loggers and poachers, and deter others considering illegal activities in the park. Our patrol efforts have consistently grown since we began patrolling here in 2010. We have expanded to eight teams, and in 2016 these teams made 91 trips covering 2,192 miles over 793 patrol days. To put this enormous effort into context, this is nearly double the length of the island of Sumatra at 1,118 miles.

WCS also has four human-tiger conflict teams called Wildlife Response Units that

operate throughout the Leuser landscape. The teams ascertain areas of high conflict, build communication networks in conflict-prone regions, travel to villages where tigers are reported, and use mitigation techniques like noise cannons to return tigers to the forest. These teams have successfully reduced the number of tigers killed or removed from the region due to conflict. Thanks to WCS's Wildlife Response Units, no tigers were killed as a result of this issue in the last 12 months. In contrast, an average of 15 tigers were killed or removed per year prior to WCS involvement. During 2016, the Units responded to 16 tiger conflict incidents over 66 days. Our teams also worked with local communities to prevent these incidents from happening. In collaboration with these communities, we built a total of 28 tiger-proof enclosures in 8 villages, bringing our total to 245 enclosures constructed since 2008. Finally, we have expanded community outreach and education in conflict-prone communities at the forest edge. 🐾

LEUSER LANDSCAPE

**9,650 square miles
of forest**

100–150 tigers

CONSERVATION ACTIONS

**8 ranger patrol teams
operating in the park**

**4 Wildlife
Response Units**

**2,192 miles
covered in 2016**

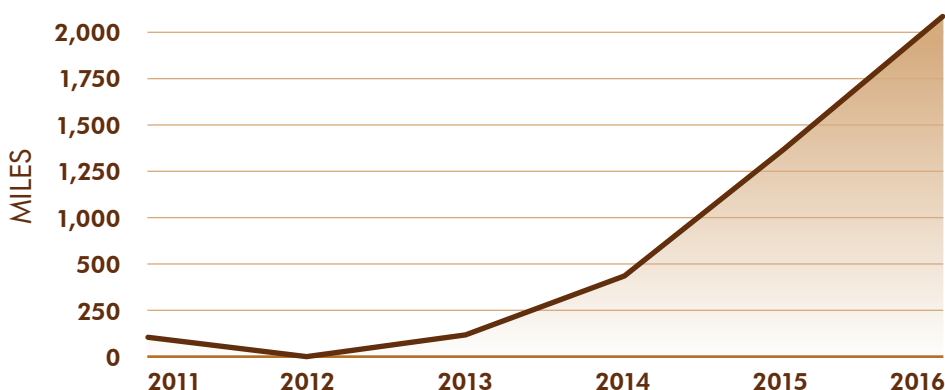
**793 ranger days
on patrol in 2016**

**16 human-tiger conflict
incidents addressed
in 2016**

OUTCOME

**0 tigers killed
as a result of conflict
in 2016**

Increase in Gunung Leuser Ranger Patrol Coverage



Continued Success in India's Western Ghats

INDIA'S MALENAD LANDSCAPE

One of the world's largest tiger populations

3 decades of WCS conservation fieldwork

700+ camera traps deployed

254 individual tigers and 308 leopards recorded in 2016 sample areas

300 incidents of illegal activity responded to by WCS

6,000 families assisted with wildlife conflict issues

WCS's long-term conservation efforts in the Malenad region of India's Western Ghats have yielded robust, demonstrable successes in the recovery of tiger populations. Our efforts here have been used as a blueprint around the world for saving big cats. Thanks to the collaboration between WCS, the Indian government, and other local partners, the Malenad landscape has benefited from consistent protection and now harbors one of the world's largest wild tiger populations, with more than 400 tigers.

WCS India has been a world leader in developing and using camera trap technology to advance big cat science and monitoring techniques. Each year, the WCS team collects tens of thousands of camera trap images to survey wildlife populations and provide critical information to protected area managers. Last year's sample data from five key reserves in the landscape—covering a 3,100-square-mile area—identified 254 individual tigers and 308 leopards captured by our 700 strategically placed camera traps and monitored by our expert field teams.

This ongoing photographic record is stored in WCS's database, which now holds photos of more than 800 individually identified tigers from the Malenad landscape.

Our field teams also support official law enforcement agencies and engage in community outreach activities throughout the Malenad landscape. Since April 2016, we have responded to and informed authorities of approximately 300 wildlife crimes, ranging from tiger and elephant poaching to timber smuggling and forest encroachment. WCS has mitigated conflict between humans and tigers (as well as other wildlife) in the heart of the Malenad landscape by assisting 6,000 families to claim compensation from the government related to damage from wildlife, with more than 1,300 families receiving compensation so far.

The success that WCS has seen for tigers in this richly biodiverse landscape is now being adopted in additional landscapes in India and Thailand, and we plan to leverage these practices to achieve lasting conservation success for India's most important wildlife species. 🐾



WCS SCIENTISTS USE STRATEGICALLY PLACED CAMERA TRAPS TO MONITOR WILD TIGER POPULATIONS AND IDENTIFY INDIVIDUAL TIGERS.



TIGER



LEOPARD

TIGERS, LEOPARDS, AND DHOES TYPICALLY AVOID EACH OTHER BY LIVING IN SEPARATE LOCATIONS, BUT A NEW WCS STUDY SHOWS THEY ARE COEXISTING IN FOUR PROTECTED AREAS IN INDIA.



DHOLE

Big Cats and Wild Dogs Coexist Despite Competition

A new WCS study in India recently showed that three species of carnivore, seemingly in direct competition with one another, are living side by side with surprisingly little conflict. The species are tigers, leopards, and dholes (an Endangered, wild dog species found in Asia). Typically, big cats seek out different places to make their homes than wild canids and vice versa. Yet, in four relatively small reserves in India's wildlife-rich Western Ghats region, WCS researchers have discovered that wild feline and canid species coexist despite their reliance on the same prey, such as sambar and axis deer, as well as wild pigs. The WCS team used dozens of camera traps to monitor the wildlife populations in this region and recorded nearly 2,500 images of the three predators in action. Research indicated that these carnivores have developed clever

adaptations to fulfill their needs. However, their strategies vary. In reserves with abundant prey, dhole remained active during the day and did not come into much contact with the more nocturnal tigers and leopards. In Bhadra Reserve where prey is scarcer, the three species inevitably had overlapping activity, yet the dhole carefully avoided the big cats. Finally, in Nagarhole, a park teeming with all three species and their prey, leopards were observed actively avoiding tigers.

Understanding the distinct yet overlapping needs of these animals is critical to managing predators and prey in small reserves, a scenario we expect to see more of in the future. This study illustrates that by carefully managing populations of flagship predators like tigers, overall biodiversity can also be conserved. 🐾



A CAMERA TRAP CAPTURES TWO PREVIOUSLY REHABILITATED TIGERS IN THE WILD. WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT CUBS WILL RESULT FROM THEIR TIME TOGETHER.

Reintroduced Tigers Continue to Thrive in Russia

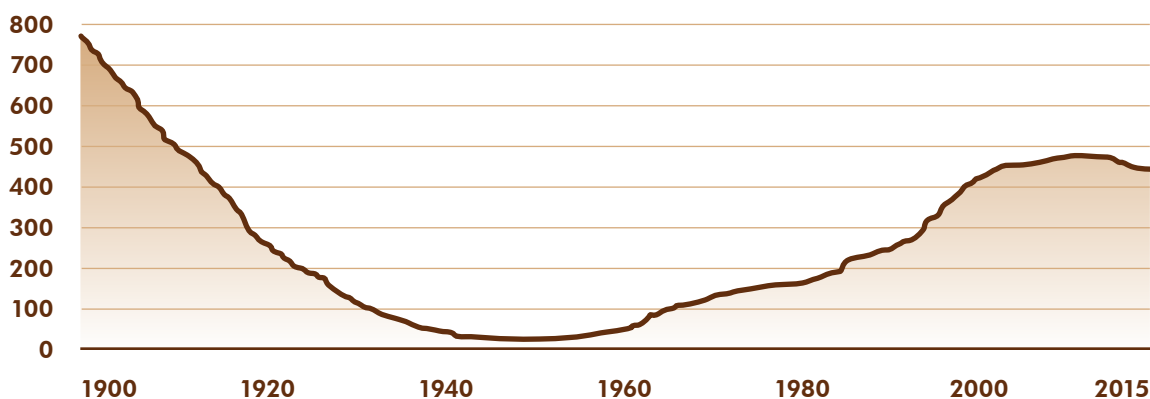
The southern Russian Far East is a unique tiger landscape. While most of the region is unprotected forest, it still retains its potential as important tiger habitat due to its vast area. This stands in contrast to many tiger landscapes across tropical Asia where tigers are confined to smaller protected areas surrounded by degraded habitat and high human densities. Russia is a remarkable success story for conservation, with its tigers rebounding from only 20 to 30 individuals in the 1940s to between 400 and 500 today.

A rewarding facet of our collaborative work in the Russian Far East is the successful reintroduction of tigers into the Pri-Amur region of Russia, an area that had tigers historically, but lost them decades ago due to overhunting. The tiger reintroduction effort here is led by the Russian Academy of Sciences Servertsov Institute, and its success is due to the closely coordinated efforts of many organizations, including WCS. Last year, camera trap

photos documented the first birth of cubs to a rehabilitated mother, Zolushka. We later confirmed these cubs were still alive, proving three important points: **1)** that an orphaned tiger cub retains the instincts to raise cubs of her own; **2)** that the Pri-Amur region holds enough prey to support a mother and her growing young; and **3)** that collaborative efforts are essential for successful conservation interventions.

Last year, we also documented another remarkable tiger occurrence. Two orphaned tigers that had never met during their simultaneous treatment in a rehabilitation facility, and had been separately reintroduced into the Pri-Amur region, managed to defy expectations and unite in the wild. Camera traps have provided photographic evidence that the pair has met multiple times and has stayed in close proximity, often rejoining to share a successful kill. We believe the two tigers are mates and are hopeful that the time they have spent together may soon yield tiger cubs. 🐾

Amur Tiger Numbers in the Russian Far East





New Effort to Study Tibetan Snow Leopards

WCS is conducting a first-ever research effort that uses camera traps to protect snow leopards in Changtang, Tibetan Autonomous Region, China. The camera traps were supplied by Panthera, the global wild cat conservation organization. This work is part of a more comprehensive conservation effort to protect snow leopards in Changtang. At this early stage, we are completing field surveys to understand the distribution of snow leopards as well as identify areas of high conflict with local communities. This information will help us design appropriate conservation action plans for this big cat species and its habitat.

To study these remote and elusive animals, WCS deployed 78 camera traps in 58 locations covering approximately 500 square miles. From preliminary review of the camera trap

images, 73 percent of the locations have recorded sightings of snow leopards. Our team also completed household interviews in two target villages; findings highlighted human-snow leopard conflict, showing it is surprisingly high. For instance, the 67 households interviewed in 2016 reported that their livestock suffered 234 alleged incidents of depredation by snow leopards in the year prior.

WCS will continue analyzing camera trap results in the research areas to determine the population density of the region's snow leopards. Our team will also continue to partner with local authorities and communities to identify conflict areas and develop community-supported conservation actions to protect Changtang's snow leopards. 🐾

SCIENTISTS HAVE BEGUN THE FIRST-EVER CAMERA TRAP RESEARCH ON SNOW LEOPARDS IN CHANGTANG.

SNOW LEOPARD RESEARCH IN CHANGTANG, TIBET

First-ever study of its kind in the region

78 camera traps deployed in **58 Sites**

73% of locations recorded snow leopards

Early findings: Reports of livestock attacks more prevalent than previously thought

Stories from the Americas



Even though the jaguar's habitats have not been lost and fragmented to the same extent as those of Asia's big cats, development across Latin America has reduced the jaguar's historic range by more than 50 percent over the last century. WCS's projects currently protect approximately 5,000 jaguars across 249,000 square miles, an estimated 12.5 percent of their entire population. We focus our fieldwork in seven core jaguar conservation areas, and jaguar populations are fairly stable in these regions despite habitat integrity loss in some areas.

WCS is working in key landscapes across the jaguar's vast range—from northern Argentina to the southwestern United States—to ensure we hold ground for the species so it can survive in the face of a heavier human footprint. WCS recently helped develop comprehensive management plans for jaguar strongholds in Paraguay and the Amazon basin, as well as a recovery plan for the species in the United States.

Action Plans for Jaguars Across Their Range



Amazon

The jaguar's largest population is found in the Amazon basin in an area known to conservationists as the Amazon Jaguar Conservation Unit. This vast region encompasses parts of Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, French Guiana, and Suriname. Across this lush and seemingly secure area, changes to biodiversity and habitat are coming quickly, which makes it essential to plan ahead to protect jaguars before it is too late. To guide proactive conservation efforts across many institutions and governments, WCS contributed key expertise to outline jaguar priorities. A comprehensive action plan for the region was launched among several partners in November 2016.

Paraguay

Paraguay is the sixth largest exporter of quality beef to international markets, and deforestation is spreading as the ranching industry expands into formerly wild areas. WCS is working at the local and national levels to engage motivated ranchers and implement large-scale guidelines to protect jaguars. In December 2016, years of WCS partnership with the Government of Paraguay and collaboration with ranchers resulted in the creation of a National Jaguar Management Plan. This 10-year plan offers a roadmap for balancing the ecological needs of the jaguar

with the growing ranching industry that shares the same landscapes. The plan is a multifaceted effort with all the elements needed for effective jaguar conservation. The most critical component of the plan is the protocol for managing human-jaguar conflict, a must-have in a country with cattle and jaguars in close proximity.

To guide proactive conservation efforts across many institutions and governments, WCS contributed key expertise to outline jaguar priorities.

United States

It may seem hard to believe, but jaguars still roam across the United States-Mexico border. Recent sightings in Arizona indicate that viable habitat for the species might still exist within the United States. In an effort to aid range-wide recovery and enable jaguar cross-boundary movement, WCS played a critical advisory role to the US Fish and Wildlife Service's jaguar conservation efforts. We provided the scientific data and research findings to guide development of a Jaguar Recovery Plan for the species, published in December 2016.

WCS scientists conducted an exhaustive synthesis of all the northernmost known jaguar observations since the sixteenth century. Using these records, WCS built a novel database that can be viewed publicly online and used to explore jaguar migration or inform better management plans. In addition, the database includes a habitat model that depicts the pathways of greatest jaguar movement probability across existing or planned roads or other linear infrastructure. WCS pinpointed the best places to plan road crossing structures to facilitate jaguar movement across man-made barriers. 🐾

The Beginning of the End for Tiger Farms

Commercial tiger farms represent a serious threat to wild tiger populations. Current estimates suggest that 200 facilities are holding approximately 8,000 tigers, mainly in China, but also in Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam. This compares with only about 3,500 tigers remaining in the wild. Although sometimes claiming to serve conservation goals, farms are a source for the illegal global trade in tiger parts as they provide a cover for the laundering of wild tigers. Closing tiger farms is a vital component of eliminating all trade in tiger parts, yet ending this practice has proven difficult.

WCS has been a vocal opponent of these operations for nearly a decade.

In light of this challenge, WCS has been a vocal opponent of these operations for nearly a decade. At the 2016 CITES meeting in Johannesburg, with technical support from WCS, Laos became the first country to announce its intention to phase out tiger farms. WCS praised this effort, but also recognized that fulfilling this promise would be a complex challenge.

WCS immediately offered assistance to the Government of Laos and, in close collaboration with the Ministry of Forests and other NGOs, developed a three-stage strategy for phasing out farms which is now underway. Laos represents a great opportunity to demonstrate how to resolve what has been, up to this point, an intractable problem. Therefore, gentle persistence is critical as we make progress toward a world free of trafficking in tigers and other big cats. ♡



Arresting Tiger Traffickers in Indonesia

In Indonesia, WCS's Wildlife Crimes Unit continues to thwart tiger trafficking operations by identifying those engaged in illegal activities and helping government partners arrest and sentence these criminals. In 2016, the Unit deployed more than 20 intelligence agents in the provinces of Aceh, North Sumatra, West Sumatra, Lampung, Jakarta, and West Java to investigate tiger traders and dealers. These investigations resulted in 8 tiger trafficking cases and the arrests of 17 suspects, and enabled the Indonesian authorities to successfully confiscate 8 tiger skins, 4 stuffed tigers, more than 9 pounds of bone, 2 skulls, and 4 smaller sections of tiger skin. Five suspects were sentenced from 1.5 years to 3 years in jail and received \$5,000 fines (with the remaining 12 suspects still awaiting the judicial process). These prosecutions not only halt poaching and trading, but also deter would-be traffickers from engaging in the trade. Established in 2008, our Wildlife Crimes Unit operation in the Leuser landscape has dismantled nearly 80 percent of the landscape's tiger-trafficking criminal networks. ♡

CONFISCATED TIGER SKINS AND BONES FROM A WILDLIFE CRIMES UNIT CASE IN NORTHERN SUMATRA. OUR TEAM HELPED ENSURE THE CRIMINALS WERE SUCCESSFULLY PROSECUTED.



Ending the Illegal Cheetah Pet Trade

Cheetahs have become prized pets as a status symbols for wealthy individuals in many countries, particularly in the Middle East. This practice tragically involves the smuggling of wild-born cubs, as they are tame and therefore easier to handle. Trafficking in live cheetahs as pets has been particularly severe from the Horn of Africa to the Arabian Gulf countries.

WCS has partnered with governments and other NGOs to highlight the plight of wild cheetahs, bring attention to the perils of this practice, and help put legal systems in place that will end this trade. WCS led the effort to raise this issue among CITES member governments starting in 2013. At the 2016 CITES Conference of the Parties, WCS provided data and worked closely with many

member governments, resulting in the successful passage of resolutions addressing the illegal cheetah trade. At the conference, decisions were unanimously adopted to:

1) produce a Cheetah Tool Resource Kit to support enforcement personnel; **2)** create a Cheetah Forum to involve additional stakeholders; and **3)** launch a social media campaign in consumer countries to raise awareness and stop this illegal trade.

The long-term efforts of WCS and partner organizations were rewarded in January 2017 when the Government of the United Arab Emirates announced a ban on exotic pets, including cheetahs, tigers, and lions. WCS is continuing to carefully monitor the issue, and we are working closely with range countries in Africa and the consumer countries of the Arabian Gulf to end this nefarious trade. 🐾

WCS Big Cat Fund

The WCS Big Cat Fund was launched in 2016 to bolster conservation efforts for these magnificent and ecologically critical animals. The Fund has supported key measures to protect imperiled big cats across the globe.

Thank you to the early champions of this vital initiative. WCS is proud to acknowledge the supporters who helped us successfully launch the WCS Big Cat Fund. The following supporters were instrumental in powering this year's critical conservation actions:

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