



Anti-Poaching Programs: WWF is helping train law enforcement staff, create public awareness campaigns, and equip anti-poaching squads with surveillance and field equipment.

Raising Awareness: Information collection through field surveys and literature reviews is being used to develop a web site on tigers in Bhutan. In addition, 5000 copies of posters on the biodiversity of Bhutan have been distributed to schools and institutions. The main purpose is to create awareness among the Bhutanese youth, and the public in general, about the need for tiger conservation and the protection of natural resources.

Capacity Building and Education for Major Stakeholders: Rangers have been given field training on tiger survey methodology and reporting techniques. Two candidates (1 from Bomdeling Wildlife Sanctuary and 1 from Jigme Dorji National Park) attended a certificate level course for three months and another staff from Jigme Singye Wangchuck (former Black Mountains) National Park attended a nine-month diploma course at the Wildlife Institute of India.

Regional Information Exchanges: Officials from Nature Conservation Division have been attending regional workshops in Asia regarding tiger conservation. The objectives of these meetings are:

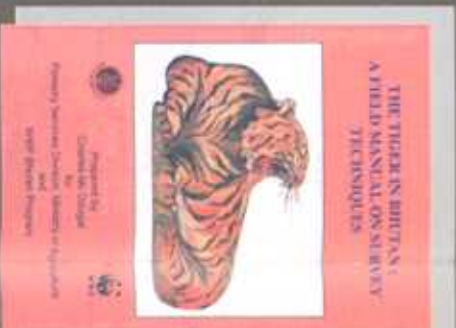
Tiger stamp



to promote a worldwide campaign to save the tiger, its prey species and habitats; promote a legal framework for countries involved in biodiversity conservation; increase the protected area network of tiger habitats and facilitate their migration between range countries; promote eco-development programs for communities within tiger habitat; urge countries to enter into relevant conventions for conservation of tiger and elimination of illegal trade; promote the easy dissemination of scientific research on tigers; and learn about technologies and training programs for scientific wildlife management.

Tigers in Bhutan at a Glance

- Only 6,000 Royal Bengal Tigers exist in the wild in Asia
- 115 -150 live in Bhutan – 67-81 adults
- Tigers recorded in Bhutan at over 3,900 meters
- 72 percent forest cover creates 11,000 sq. km. of unfragmented tiger habitat
- Extensive protected areas and biological corridors cover 35 percent of country
- Key threats are retaliation for livestock kills, poaching and general lack of awareness



Publications related to Tiger Conservation



Tiger Conservation in Bhutan



...to realize the conditions necessary for tiger conservation and to protect and manage the biological corridors linking protected areas...



Tiger Conservation in Bhutan

Tigers on High

When camera traps photographed a Royal Bengal Tiger at 3,900 meters in Bhutan's ThrumshingLa National Park in 2000, it was the first photographic evidence that the magnificent creatures exist at such high altitudes.

The photograph also helped confirm that Bhutan's pristine and well-protected environment is one of the best habitats for tiger conservation in all of South Asia. Based on extensive surveys of tiger habitats conducted between 1996 - 1998, the tiger population in Bhutan is somewhere between 115 - 150, forming the centerpiece of one of the largest tiger populations on the Indian subcontinent. As a flagship species, its protection is vital because so many other important species live in its habitat.

Although most tigers in Bhutan are found in the southern region of the country, they also occur in ThrumshingLa National Park and the recently developed biological corridors. These corridors are part of the Government's ambitious Bhutan Biological Conservation Complex (B2C2), which connects the country's nine protected areas through biological corridors that allow tigers and



Tiger sighted at 4000+ meters at TNP

other species to migrate. As a key partner in the development and support of the B2C2, WWF is working on dozens of programs with the Royal Government of Bhutan to address the threats to tigers and develop solutions involving all stakeholders.

Threats

Unlike in most other countries where tigers are found, habitat loss is not a major threat to tigers in Bhutan, since 72 percent of the country is forested and the government has pledged to keep at least 60 percent forest cover. The main threat is retaliatory killings by farmers of tigers that attack their livestock. In the two years between 1999 and 2001, over 200 individual livestock were killed by tigers and studies and estimates conclude that 5-10 tigers are killed each year in retaliation, usually by poisoning or trapping.

Tiger Conservation Program in Bhutan

Started in 1996, the tiger conservation program in Bhutan initially dealt in human resource development and scientific surveys. But it soon became evident that a much more comprehensive approach was needed, so on July 1, 2002 a Tiger Conservation Program was started with the following activities:

Tiger Conservation Fund:
This fund was established at the Nature Conservation Division with seed money of

\$30,000 to compensate farmers who have lost livestock to tigers. The Fund is managed by a board under the chairmanship of the Secretary of Agriculture, four senior officials of the Ministry and the Country Representative of WWF and the Joint Director of Nature Conservation Division.

Surveys: Surveys throughout the country have resulted in solid baseline data on tiger numbers. Plaster casts of pugmarks (footprints) have been collected and wildlife prey species recorded, in addition to other wildlife such as leopards, Himalayan black bears, wild pigs barking deer and yellow-throated martens. The surveys revealed evidence of tigers in areas where they previously were not known — at heights as much as 3,900 meters and in the western parts of the country.

Continuous distribution of Tigers in Bhutan

Based on Bhutan tiger survey 1996-98

