

Malaysia Hopes to Increase Tiger Population

National Tiger Action Plan's goal is to double wild tiger population.

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The wild tiger population in Malaysia is 500; the nation hopes to double that number by 2020. Malaysia plans to implement steps to double its wild tiger population by the year 2020. The National Tiger Action Plan would protect jungle corridors where the big cats are hunted by poachers and would give the animals more territory to roam, the Associated Press reports.

Through the plan, the country hopes to increase the wild tiger population from 500 to 1,000 over the next 12 years, according to Sara Sukor, spokeswoman for Malaysia's chapter of the World Wildlife Fund. WWF was one of several groups that helped the Malaysian government create the National Tiger Action Plan.

While hunting of the tigers is illegal under Malaysian law, the plan strengthens protection of the animals in an effort to reverse the tigers' population decline. The animals' numbers have dropped from 3,000 to 500 in the last 50 years as a result of human destruction of the cats' jungle territory. Poachers, who sell tiger meat to exotic restaurants, also impact the tigers' population.

The plan will provide better protection of the tigers' territory by diminishing the effects of infrastructure projects, increasing enforcement of current wildlife laws, and removing tigers from areas where they might be at odds with human activities. The plan also will advance scientific research about tiger protection.

"We are optimistic the plan will succeed with cooperation among all the agencies involved," Sukor said. "We want to show that we are serious about wildlife protection."