KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

SURAT KHABAR	:	NEW STRAITS TIME			
TARIKH	:	28.01.22 (JUMAAT)	MUKA SURAT	:	14
JABATAN	:	PERHILITAN			

HABITAT FRAGMENTATION

A BLEAK FUTURE FOR MALAYAN TIGERS

THE term habitat fragmentation also means intrusion. When roads, structures or agricultural and logging operations divide a natural territory such as grassland, the area is considered fragmented.

An original area that is divided into a smaller and sometimes an isolated parcel is called a habitat island. As a result, tree cover may be lost or animal migratory patterns may be disrupted.

Fragmentation can also divide animal populations into smaller groups, making them more vulnerable to predators or diseases. Animals may have trouble locating food and water.

Encroachment may bring new species of plants or animals, which can eventually become invasive.

Tigers need water to drink, animals to hunt and foliage to hide in order to survive in the wild.

Tigers are disappearing as the mountains, jungles, forests and long grasses that have long been home to them vanish.

Agricultural growth, wood harvesting, new roads, human habitation, industrial expansion and hydropower dams are pushing tigers into ever-smaller amounts of territory.

These forest portions are bordered by fast-developing, impoverished human populations, including an increasing number of illicit hunters. The wild tiger will perish if there is no forest.

As tigers compete for territory with people and industry, they find fewer and fewer food sources. Locals hunt the same prey as tigers, forcing tigers to rely on domestic animals and, in rare cases, humans.

Due to the lack of extensive natural forest cover, the Malayan tigers are unable to adopt their natural behaviour or prevent intraspecies conflict, thus endangering their survival.

The Malayan tigers are one of the world's most iconic wild animals, yet they are critically endangered. They used to inhabit much of this area, but severe habitat loss, prey scarcity and poaching have decreased their numbers to fewer than 150.

They are found in small pockets of habitat throughout what remains of the forests in Malaysia. The Malayan tiger, a critically endangered subspecies, is hanging by a thread in its native home.

Recent pictures and news showing Malayan tigers roaming in the open are strong indications that they are coming out of forests to forage for food, to survive and to breed.

Their habitat has been destroyed, degraded and fragmented by human activities. The clearing of forests for agriculture and timber, as well as the building of road networks and other development activities pose serious threats to them.



Tigers face extinction as their natural habitat is reduced due to encroachment. PIC BY SHARUL HAFIZ ZAM

Malaysia is on the brink of losing its Malayan tigers — Panthera tigris jacksoni — which means the world is one step closer to losing another tiger subspecies.

Nature had gifted us with nine subspecies of tigers. Unfortunately, three subspecies are extinct. The Panthera tigris virgata (Caspian Tiger), Panthera tigris sondaica (Java Tiger) and Panthera tigris balica (Bali Tiger) have all been wiped off the face of the Earth.

The Malayan tiger is also facing the threat of extinction.

The Malayan tiger is the symbol of Malaysia's national pride and it stands tall on our national coat of arms or Jata Negara. It has been a national icon for decades.

For example, the Malayan tiger has been the mascot for the national football team, as well as for companies such as Proton and Maybank.

Being part of our planet's natural heritage, they have great cultural and historical significance. Sadly, the Malayan tigers have not been so lucky.

In the words of Wild Heart Wildlife Foundation founder and chief executive officer Paul Oxton: "Humanity can no longer stand by in silence while our wildlife are being used, abused and exploited. It is time we all stand together, to be the voice of the voiceless before it's too late. Extinction means forever."

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