

# Citizen Action for Tigers

Engaging people to value and protect Malaysia's most iconic and critically endangered Tiger



An educational outreach programme which aims to reduce poaching of deer during the fasting month of Ramadhan in Merapoh and Pagar Sasak, Pahang, held from 10 to 13 June 2017.

Text by Quek Yew Aun and Nurul Syarafina Ramli. Layout by Suzalinur Manja Bidin.



It is Hari Raya Aidilfitri. You can smell the revelry in the air as the neighbours celebrate the coming of Syawal, after a month's long fast.

And there it is. All your usual suspects lined up buffet style. Festive delights decorate your plate. Scrumptious lemong, ayam masak merah, lontong and to top it all off, the glorious spice-laden rendang. But wait, what's with the meat? The consistency is a bit different. When asked, the village chief proudly grins: it was a wild deer that he snared himself.

*Read more about the programme inside.*

## Tiger Roadshow Counter

Number of people reached:

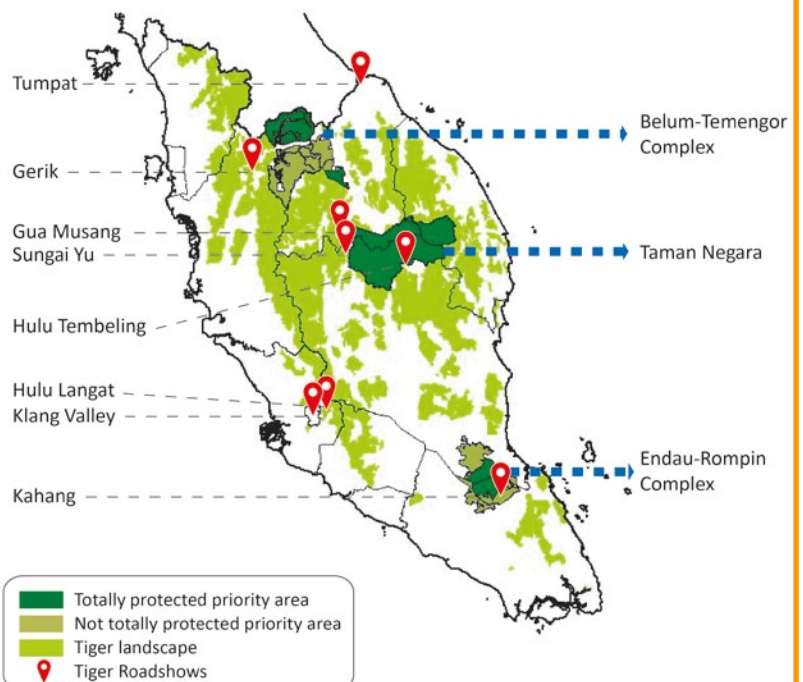
- at this event

004115

- nationwide, since 2005

50029

## MYCAT Tiger Roadshows since 2005



# Getting the message across

It is undeniable that deer hunting is part of Malaysian culture, especially in villages near forest fringes. These activities escalate during the fasting month of Ramadhan as deer meat (sambar and muntjac) are delicacies during the Hari Raya Aidilfitri celebrations.

However, decades of intense exploitation and poaching have plummeted the sambar population to a critical level and MYCAT has been advocating for its strict protection since 2008. As a result, the government placed a moratorium on hunting licenses is in place until 2021.

With that in mind, we aimed to reduce the hunting pressure in and around the forests adjacent to Merapoh and Pagar Sasak, areas close to Malaysia's largest national park, Taman Negara, and the Sungai Yu Wildlife Corridor, by conducting an educational outreach programme.

The corridor is the last patch of forest that connects the Titiwangsa Range to Taman Negara, thus allowing wildlife to travel across the two forested landscapes.

Our message was simple but hard-hitting: poaching deer could land you in serious trouble, a maximum of RM 100,000 in fines and two years in jail or both. Fridge magnets with MYCAT's Wildlife Crime Hotline were distributed to everyone who saved the number in their mobile phones.



This 24-7 hotline provides a channel for the public to report information on suspected wildlife crimes to MYCAT, which is then relayed to the relevant enforcement agencies.



# Fruitful engagement, many numbers saved

In a span of three days, the outreach team of eight persons visited 52 houses during the day and stationed a booth at one *pasar malam* (night market) and three mosques in the evening.

This marked MYCAT's first attempt at mosque outreach as the month of Ramadhan means that Muslim villagers will be gathered at nightly *moreh* (supper) sessions after *taraweeh* prayers. The variety of outreach venues allowed MYCAT to engage with 415 people face to face and 32% of them were convinced to save the Hotline number in their mobile phones.

One family caught our attention. Not only were they very friendly, but each family member agreed to save the number and allowed us to take photos of them placing the magnet on their fridge. Surprisingly, we saw two hotline magnets, with different designs from previous outreach programmes, already in pride of place on the fridge.

As a result of MYCAT outreach here since 2009, some villagers were already aware of the tiger conservation message or had heard from their children who participated in our school outreach.

However, many claimed to be unaware of the freeze on deer hunting licenses. Some villagers even admitted to hunting and snaring with the mentality of 'there are still many deer - especially muntjac - in the forests'. Snares are a commonly used method of poaching, indiscriminately killing or mutilating many wildlife from tigers to bears.

In our outreach, the awareness is raised among not only the local community but also the volunteers who are trained to facilitate the programme. Mohd Zulhairi Abdullah Sham lamented that while he had no prior knowledge on wildlife issues, he saw the value in outreach and prays that the villagers would heed the message received. He added that he would join us again in a future programme.

Amirul Aizal Abdul Aziz enjoyed interacting with the community and felt that taking part in communal activities, like helping prepare meals for breaking fast, was essential in building trust and legitimacy with the community members. Zulhairi and Amirul are now part of MYCAT's growing community of more than 1,935 citizen conservationists.

As the programme came to an end, the knowledge that both the villagers and volunteers were armed with conservation messages was encouraging. With that, they can now strive to change the hearts and behaviours of their respective communities with regards to wildlife conservation.



## Take action!

- Report crimes involving tigers and tiger prey to the Wildlife Crime Hotline at 019.356.4194 / [report@malayantiger.net](mailto:report@malayantiger.net)
- Learn about tigers and tiger prey from reliable sources and share
- Request legal herbal alternatives to traditional medicines which can contain endangered species
- Boycott all wildmeat restaurants
- Do not eat the meat of tigers, other endangered species and tiger prey (wild deer and wild pig)
- Voice your opinion on issues like indiscriminate development, illegal logging and poaching
- Do not support zoos or theme parks with illegally acquired wildlife
- Pay more for wildlife-friendly products
- Support conservation organisations

## Bonus round: CAT Walk®

Besides outreach, the volunteers participated in MYCAT's anti-poaching surveillance programme (CAT Walk®) and reforestation effort at the Sungai Yu Wildlife Corridor.

They were introduced to the importance of and threats to the Corridor and gained insight as to how the community outreach was an integral component of MYCAT's conservation effort here.

CAT Walk® is a joint project between MYCAT and Department of Wildlife and National Parks Peninsular Malaysia. For more info on CAT Walk®, please visit [www.citizenactionfortigers.my](http://www.citizenactionfortigers.my).



## Thank you!

This programme was financially supported by National Conservation Trust Fund for Natural Resources and Wildlife Reserves Singapore.



Wildlife Reserves Singapore Group

A huge shout out to the volunteers Halimatun Radziah Othman, Siti Aisyah Jabaruddin, Amirul Aizal Abdul Aziz, and Mohd Zulhairi Abdullah Sham, and WWF-Malaysia's Muhammad S'ofwan Muhammad Zubir.

We would also like to thank Alvin Lee and Chow Mei Mei for designing the outreach materials, yet another example of unique volunteerism.

Pictures courtesy of Christopher R. Shepherd, Muhammad S'ofwan Muhammad Zubir and Quek Yew Aun.



MYCAT Secretariat's Office  
A-3A-9, Block Allamanda,  
10 Boulevard, PJU6A, 47400  
Petaling Jaya, Selangor,  
Malaysia.

T: +6 03 7733 0613 | F: +6 03 7726 9078

E: [mycat.so@malayantiger.net](mailto:mycat.so@malayantiger.net)

W: [www.mycat.my](http://www.mycat.my)

[themalayantiger](https://www.facebook.com/themalayantiger) | [wildlifecrimehotline](https://www.facebook.com/wildlifecrimehotline)

[mycat.so](https://www.instagram.com/mycat.so) | [mycat2010](https://twitter.com/mycat2010)