



Sumatran **tigers**

conservation

Sumatran Tiger

Panthera tigris sumatrae

Description: The smallest of the remaining five tiger subspecies, it has **lived exclusively, for over a million years, in the once extensive moist tropical jungles of the island of Sumatra, Indonesia.** Their population in the wild is now heavily fragmented and is estimated to range between **400 and 500 individuals.** Groups of between a few and several dozen tigers can be found principally in and around Sumatra's national parks.

Diet: Sumatran tigers are **carnivores** commonly prey on larger ungulates, like wild boar, Malayan Tapir and deer, and sometimes also smaller animals, like fowl, monkeys, and fish. Orangutans could be prey, but since they spend a minimal amount of time on the ground, tigers rarely catch one. Sumatran tigers will sometimes prey upon mice and other small mammals when larger prey is scarce.

Behavior: Tigers are mostly solitary animals except for times of mating and when the female cares for her young cubs. Sometimes tigers gather to share a large kill. **Tigers are most active at night (they are primarily nocturnal),** but are active in the day during the winter. Tigers mark out their territory, like most cats, by spraying their urine together with a glandular secretion, by leaving fecal droppings, or by scratching marks into trees with their claws. Tigers need a territory of about 10-30 or more square miles to provide enough prey to support them. The size of the territory depends on the amount of prey available in the area.



Jackson Zoo: The Jackson Zoo's Sumatran tiger exhibit (above) a new outdoor space with trees, a waterfall and a pool opened in April 2010. The exhibit offers 8,000 square feet of roaming space for tiger littermates 'Kipling', 'Taymor' and 'Emerson'. The exhibit includes containment fencing at a height of 17 feet, an 1,800-square-foot holding facility and more than 10 times the space of the tigers' previous exhibit. It can accommodate up to five animals and the zoo hopes to use this facility for breeding in the near future.

Conservation: The Sumatran tiger is considered to be a **'critically' endangered species.** Found naturally in Sumatra, a large island in western Indonesia. Its habitat ranges from lowland forests to sub-mountain and mountain-forests, including peat swamp forests. Much of its habitat is unprotected, with only about 400 living in game reserves and national parks. The largest population of about 110 tigers lives in Gunung Leuser National Park. Another 100 live in unprotected areas which are being converted for agriculture.

Deforestation resulting from the production of palm oil is a major threat to the Sumatran Tiger. The reserves also do not provide safety, as many tigers are killed by poachers each year despite conservation efforts. According to the Tiger Information Centre and the World Wildlife Fund **there are no more than 500 remaining Sumatran Tigers in the wild,** with some estimates considerably lower. The continuing loss of habitat is intensifying the crisis to save this tiger. Accelerating deforestation and rampant poaching across the Sumatran tiger's range mean that unless authorities enforce the law, the Sumatran tiger will shortly follow the fate of its Javan and Balinese relatives. Sumatran tigers are especially well represented in zoos around the world, most of which participate in sophisticated global conservation breeding programs. More than 270 Sumatran tigers are now documented in formal studbooks and are involved in captive breeding programs aimed at preserving their genetic uniqueness.

