

Tigers in India could be wiped out

December 19 2005

A survey of India's tiger population, also known as Royal Bengal tigers, could be as low as 1,500 and they could be wiped out in 10 years.

"This is an extremely worrying development," said Ashok Kumar of the Wildlife Trust of India. "We're afraid that the poachers will now move on (from depleted areas) to the other, better-known reserves where tigers are still doing well. There's complete inaction at government level."

The tiger population in India was believed to be about 3,500 officially; however, it could be as low as 1,500, Wildlife Trust figures show.

The tiger poaching is being driven by the increased demand for tiger skins in Tibet used in traditional garments worn to weddings, horse festivals and at the New Year, the Sunday Telegraph reported.

"A villager can earn as much in one night from poisoning and skinning a tiger as he could earn from farming in five years," said Kumar. "Eventually, that skin can sell for up to \$6,000 dollars in Lhasa."

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Citation: Tigers in India could be wiped out (2005, December 19) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-12-tigers-india.html>

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