

# Malaysia plans sanctuary for captive tigers

January 14 2011

---



A Malayan Tiger takes a dip at the National Zoo in Kuala Lumpur in 2010. Malaysia plans to set up a large enclosed natural habitat for captive tigers, a senior wildlife official said Friday, an ambitious proposal that has raised concerns among conservationists.

Malaysia plans to set up a large enclosed natural habitat for captive tigers, a senior wildlife official said Friday, an ambitious proposal that has raised concerns among conservationists.

The authorities say the reserve will provide a good home for tigers rescued from poor living conditions, but campaigners argue the focus should be on protecting the animals in the wild.

"It is still at the preliminary stage. It will be an enclosed area big enough for the big cats to roam," a wildlife and national parks department official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

"Tigers in the park will be fed and it will be a tourist attraction."

A final decision on the programme, which will be located in peninsular Malaysia, will be made by the end of the year, the official said.

The plan was prompted by the discovery of 27 captive tigers living in poor conditions in a zoo in southern Malacca state, the official said.

He played down fears of poachers raiding the tiger park, saying it would be "enclosed and guarded."

But William Schaedla, regional director of TRAFFIC Southeast Asia, which monitors trade in wildlife, urged the authorities to concentrate on battling poaching rather than breeding tigers.

"TRAFFIC Southeast Asia agrees that something must be done to care for the tigers that are casualties of poaching and conflict. However, the facilities undertaking these efforts should avoid becoming factories for more captive tigers," he said.

"Captive tigers would not have the ability to feed themselves or a fear of humans, and so cannot be returned to the wild. Also, this will not prevent tiger [extinction](#) in the wild," he added.

Schaedla said the priority should be to protect tigers in the wild where they still face a serious threat.

Last year WWF-Malaysia said tribesmen in Malaysia were being paid by syndicates to trap wildlife, including critically endangered tigers, to meet demand from China.

[Conservationists](#) have called for a war on poachers who are undermining Malaysia's ambitious goal to double its population of wild tigers to 1,000.

In the 1950s, there were as many as 3,000 [tigers](#) in Malaysia but their numbers fell as the country opened up more land for agriculture.

(c) 2011 AFP

Citation: Malaysia plans sanctuary for captive tigers (2011, January 14) retrieved 7 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-01-malaysia-sanctuary-captive-tigers.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.