

Interpol campaign to protect threatened tiger

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A tiger wearing a collar, is spotted during a jungle-safari at the Ranthambore National Park in India. Interpol has launched a new campaign to coordinate the global fight against tiger poaching, warning that failure to protect the endangered cats would have economic and social repercussions.

Interpol on Wednesday launched a new campaign to coordinate the global fight against tiger poaching, warning that failure to protect the endangered cats would have economic and social repercussions.

The international police organisation said it was imperative that the 13 nations where tigers can still be found work together to combat wildlife crime.

David Higgins, manager of Interpol's environment crime programme, said the extinction of the [tiger](#) would impact not only biodiversity but the "economic stability and security stability" of countries where they are

now found.

"The communities, the nations will lose confidence in their governments, and their good governance and their rule of law to be able to protect an iconic species such as the tiger from criminality," he said in Vietnam.

Interpol's new Project Predator is designed to help coordinate efforts of police, customs and [wildlife officials](#) in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand and Vietnam.

"[Illegal trade](#) and trafficking in tiger parts and products is rampant across international borders, making enforcement of laws against it a challenge," Interpol said in a statement released at its annual general meeting in Hanoi.

Project Predator, which has US, British and World Bank funding, will also share information with conservation agencies in an effort to raise awareness.

Higgins said law enforcement was "not the only answer" and greater education and poverty reduction were also needed.

Tiger numbers have been devastated by poaching and loss of habitat in the last century, falling from an estimated 100,000 in 1900 to fewer than 3,500 now, Interpol said.

The big cats, which are hunted for their fur, bones and other parts, are expected to be extinct by 2022 if left unprotected, according to wildlife group WWF.

Deputy head of Vietnam's department of environmental crimes, Major General Vu Hong Vuong, told reporters that the country had more than

110 tigers -- although 80 of these were kept in captivity.

"We have detected several cases of tiger trafficking from Thailand, through Laos, Myanmar to Vietnam and then to China. We need the cooperation from police of other countries in the protection of wild animals, especially tigers," he said.

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