

Poaching puts pressure on Malayan tiger

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Malaysian Department of Wildlife and National Parks officers display confiscated tiger skins to the media in the northern Kedah state, February 2012. A Malaysian government plan to double its population of endangered Malayan tigers to 1,000 through tighter protection is under threat due to persistent poaching.

A Malaysian government plan to double its population of endangered Malayan tigers to 1,000 through tighter protection is under threat due to persistent poaching, a conservation group warned Tuesday.

Illegal hunting, fuelled by continued demand for tiger parts remains a serious threat to the animal and other endangered wildlife, MYCAT Tracks, an alliance of conservation groups, said in a report.

The Malayan tiger is a subspecies of the great cat and is found in central and southern parts of the Malayan peninsula.

In 2009, the government announced a plan to double the wild Malayan [tiger population](#) -- now estimated at just 500 -- by the year 2020.

Conservationists say factors behind the fall in numbers include poaching, declines in prey such as deer and [wild boars](#), and habitat loss due to agricultural development.

But protective measures, among them a ban on deer hunting aimed at preserving tiger food sources, are being cancelled out by continued poaching, MYCAT Tracks said.

"This is evidenced by the discovery of many poaching signs and close to a thousand snares in (key [tiger habitat](#) areas) between 2010 and 2011 as well as the arrest of several poachers," it said.

WWF-Malaysia has previously said demand for wildlife parts to be used in [traditional Chinese medicine](#) posed a grave threat to tigers and a range of other species.

There were an estimated 3,000 tigers in Malaysia as recently as the 1950s but numbers have steadily declined since.

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