

India's tiger population jumps

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A Royal Bengal Tiger pauses in a jungle clearing in India's Kaziranga National Park on December 21, 2014

India, home to most of the world's wild tigers, on Tuesday reported a 30 percent jump in numbers over four years in a rare piece of good news for conservationists.

A census found 2,226 tigers in India last year compared with 1,706 in

2010, officials in New Delhi announced.

Environment minister Prakash Javadekar hailed the rise as a "huge success" as India battles to save the endangered animals from poachers and smugglers as well as destruction of their [natural habitat](#).

"While the tiger population is falling in the world, it is rising in India. We have increased by 30 per cent from the last count. That is a huge success story," Javadekar said at the release of the census.

The minister cited improved management of India's more than 40 [tiger reserves](#) for the increase.

He said the government was working to reduce deadly encounters between tigers and villagers, as farmers encroach on forest land and the big cats leave reserves to search for water and food.

Some 9,700 hidden cameras were used in known tiger habitats including in the northeast state of Assam and western Rajasthan to take photographs of the animals for the count.

More than half of the world's rapidly dwindling wild [tiger population](#) lives in India, but the country's conservation programme has been working to halt their decline.

The numbers have been rising since they dropped to 1,411 in 2006 but the current population still remains a long way off 2002 when some 3,700 tigers were estimated to be alive in the country.

There were thought to be around 40,000 tigers in India at the time of independence from Britain in 1947.

Authorities across Asia are waging a major battle against poachers, who

often sell tiger body parts to the lucrative traditional Chinese medicine market, and other man-made problems such as development leading to habitat loss.

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