

Tiger population nearly doubles in Nepal

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The wild tiger population in Nepal was counted as 235 in a survey carried out this year, double that in 2009

Nepal's wild tiger population has nearly doubled over the last nine years, officials said Monday, in a victory for the impoverished country's drive to save the endangered big cats.

Wildlife groups have welcomed the news as a sign that political

involvement and innovative [conservation](#) strategies can reverse the decline of the majestic Royal Bengal tiger.

A survey carried out earlier this year counted 235 tigers in Nepal, up from around 121 tigers in 2009.

Conservationists and [wildlife](#) experts used more than 4,000 cameras and around 600 elephants, trawling a 2,700-kilometre (1,700-mile) route across Nepal's southern plains where the [big cats](#) roam.

"This is a result of concentrated unified efforts by the government along with the local community and other stakeholders to protect the tiger's habitat and fight against poaching," Man Bahadur Khadka, director general of Nepal's Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, told AFP.

Deforestation, encroachment of habitat and poaching have devastated big cat numbers across Asia, but in 2010 Nepal and 13 other countries signed a pledge to double their tiger numbers by 2022.

The 2010 Tiger Conservation Plan—which is backed by high profile figures including actor Leonardo DiCaprio—quickly began bearing fruit, and in 2016 the World Wildlife Fund and the Global Tiger Forum announced that the wild tiger population had increased for the first time in more than a century.

In 1900, more than 100,000 tigers roamed the world but that fell to an all-time low of 3,200 in 2010.

DiCaprio tweeted his support for Nepal's success: "I am proud of @dicapriofdn's partnership with @World_Wildlife to support Nepal and local communities in doubling the population of wild tigers."

Ghana Gurung, country representative of WWF in Nepal, said that the country's progress was an example for [tiger](#) conservation globally.

"The challenge now is to continue these efforts to protect their habitats and numbers for the long-term survival of the tigers," he said.

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