

Tigers could be extinct within 12 years: WWF

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A captive Sumatran tiger roams through its enclosure at Jakarta's Ragunan Zoo. Tigers could become extinct within 12 years but a top level meeting in Russia next month could help reverse the decline, according to the WWF nature conservation body.

Tigers could become extinct within 12 years but a top level meeting in Russia next month could help reverse the decline, nature conservation body WWF said on Thursday.

"The worse scenario is that the [tiger](#) could be gone when the next year of the tiger comes along, in 12 years," said Ola Jennersten, head of the international nature conservation programme at WWF Sweden.

The organisation is leading a global campaign to attempt to double the number of tigers by 2022, when the next Chinese calendar year of the tiger comes around.

WWF said that in the last century, illegal hunting, a shrinking habitat and the trade of tiger parts used in oriental medicine had sent the number of the big cats worldwide plunging 97 percent to around just 3,200 tigers today.

"Despite the gloomy figures, the situation is more hopeful than ever," Jennersten said, praising a political initiative of 13 'tiger states' and different bodies set to meet in Russia on November 21-24 in a bid to halt possible [extinction](#) of the species.

"This will be achieved through increased political involvement, focus on the tiger landscapes that have the greatest chance of long term retention of the tiger, and increased control of tiger trade," he said.

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, who in the past years has made a big show of his love for nature, publicly kissing animals and engaging in a string of stunts involving wildlife including tigers, is expected to attend the summit in Saint Petersburg.

WWF said some 1,800 tigers live in India, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh, 450 live in [Sumatra](#), 400 in Malaysia, 350 are spread throughout southeast Asia and around 450 live in the wild in Russia.

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