

Malaysia: Legal logging biggest threat to tigers, says green activist

Monday 26 August 2019, by [AUGUSTIN Robin](#) (Date first published: 9 August 2019).

PETALING JAYA: An environmentalist has called for a stop to logging in the parts of the Belum-Temenggor forest complex where it is currently allowed, saying it is the biggest threat facing wildlife, particularly the endangered Malayan tiger.

“Belum-Temenggor is large and tigers need big areas in which to roam,” said Andrew Sebastian, the CEO of the Malaysian Eco-tourism and Conservation Society.

The forest complex comprises the Royal Belum State Park and the Temenggor, Amanjaya and Gerik forest reserves.

The park is off-limits to commercial activities, but certain sections of the forest reserves are production forests, meaning licensed companies can extract timber from them.

A recent news report quoted Perak State Parks Corporation general manager Mohamed Shah Redza Hussein as saying rampant poaching could result in the extinction of the Malayan tiger in less than a decade.

He cited a study saying only 23 tigers were left in Belum-Temenggor whereas there were more than 60 less than eight years ago.

Sebastian said it would be unrealistic to expect the remaining tigers to confine their movements to the fully protected Royal Belum park because “tigers don’t know boundaries”.

He said he frequently visited the area and was concerned over the effects of logging.

“I’ve been going on tours for many years now, and I find the situation very bad. If you take a boat on the way to Sungai Gadong, the scarring of the hills is visible.

“The logging is legal but, to me, it has to stop. Why would we want to allow logging next to one of the world’s oldest rainforests?”

He said logging activities would ultimately destroy the habitats of wildlife and make them susceptible to poaching.

A private tour guide who identified himself as Miloko also said he was worried about the risks logging activities posed to wildlife.

He said he had been working in the area for 10 years and had noticed that the hornbill population had dwindled severely. “In the past, you could see thousands, but now we see only hundreds.”

He told FMT he believed hornbill nests were being destroyed in the logging process.

Miloko also said he had seen sun bears coming closer to the Temenggor lake to find food, which he took as a sign that they were losing their habitats.

“To me, the main threat is logging, not so much poaching,” he said. “There is an enforcement presence near the lake area. So poachers won’t dare come so close.”

FMT has contacted the office of Abdul Aziz Bari, the Perak executive councillor in charge of the environment, for his comments and is waiting for a response.

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