



**Endangered cats:** Steps are being taken to protect the King of the Jungle. — FAIHAN GHANI/The Star.

# Concerted effort to save the Malayan Tiger

Sizeable fines, arrests in last three years

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**PETALING JAYA:** Almost half a year into the Year of the Tiger, 43 poachers have been arrested in joint operations between several enforcement agencies to save the Malayan Tiger.

In a graphic posted on Harimau Malaya's Instagram account yesterday, which was also World Tiger Day, it noted that forfeitures worth nearly RM4mil had been collected from 2019 until July this year.

The campaign page is organised by the Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan).

Of the 43 arrested, three were foreigners. There were also 45 cases recorded.

Besides going after poachers, the authorities also managed to find and destroy 215 traps and locate 231 poaching areas and 13 signs of trees being cut, believed to have been done by poachers to allow them access to these areas.

They also found 45 camps believed to belong to illegal immigrants who entered Malaysian forests to, among others, steal agarwood, install traps, kill wildlife and build illegal camps inside the jungles.

Operasi Bersepadu Khazanah (OBK) is one of the Save the Malayan Tiger campaign initiatives, according to Harimau Malaya.

"It is a joint effort involving Perhilitan, the police and several other agencies to improve the integrity of the natural habitat of wildlife and combat all forms of wildlife crime such as illegal hunting, smuggling and offences under

the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010 (Act 716)," it added.

In a statement, the Regent of Pahang, Tengku Hassanal Ibrahim Alam Shah Al-Sultan Abdullah, called for stricter enforcement and affirmative steps to save the species.

"We need government agencies that will be serious in ensuring the protection of our wildlife and habitat.

"Several tiger conservation efforts are now being implemented in Pahang, including the Pahang Wildlife Committee which has been established under the Pahang State Biodiversity Council.

"The committee spearheads efforts to combat poaching activities across the state.

"The Pahang Wildlife Ranger Unit was formed to be part of the operations while the 'Save the Malayan Tiger' campaign, in line with the efforts of the Federal Government's National Tiger Conservation Task Force, has helped raise awareness of the issue," Tengku Hassanal said.

Perhilitan director-general Datuk Abdul Kadir Abu Hashim continues to appeal for public support to save the Malayan Tiger.

In a statement posted on the department's Facebook page, Abdul Kadir called on those with information related to Malaysian wildlife to contact Perhilitan at 1800-88-5151.

"Did you know that World Tiger Day is celebrated on July 29 every year to raise awareness as well as to celebrate the uniqueness of our national icon, which is the Malayan Tiger, also known as 'Raja Rimba' (King of the Jungle) or 'Pak Belang'?" he said.

## Wildlife officers get CSI-type training

**KOTA KINABALU:** New genetic traceability and forensic tools were among the innovations introduced to frontline officers involved with curbing the illegal wildlife trade.

During a four-day training session, WWF-Malaysia, the Australian Museum and Sabah Wildlife Department (SWD) led a session on 'ShellBank', a marine turtle trade traceability toolkit.

ShellBank brings together multiple organisations, countries and communities to collectively develop a global repository for marine turtle mtDNA haplotype (genetic variant) data, to enable trade to be traced back to poached turtle populations.

Extracting DNA from seized items can pinpoint the nesting origin of the turtle killed,

and enable authorities to crack down on poaching hotspots, according to the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), which organised the training.

Those involved in live animal seizures from wildlife trade, which includes smuggling exotic pets, were given advice on the handling and care of confiscated wildlife until they can be transported to a suitable care facility, it added.

"It is vital that we provide the resources needed by frontline officers to enable them to adequately deal with live animal seizures, which can present unique challenges in terms of biosafety, public safety and animal welfare," IFAW programme manager (Wildlife Rescue) Lois Lelanchon said in a statement.