

Biodiversity of tigers in asia



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Experts say protecting about 42 sites across Asia, ranging from forests to tropical grasslands, could be key to the survival of one of the world's most iconic and feared wild cats, the tiger. Habitat loss and the overhunting of its prey and poaching have caused its numbers to drop from more than 10, 000 in the 1980s to fewer than 3, 500 today.

Tiger parts are so prized in Eastern medicine that a dead one can sell for \$1 , 500 to \$3, 500 before its eyes are sold as a cure for epilepsy and malaria, its penis is converted into a soup for virility, and its bones are ground into powder to treat ulcers, rheumatism and yphoid, according to Wildlife Conservation Society species program director Elizabeth Bennett. In addition to poaching, Asia's rapid economic development has eroded tiger habitat.

Researchers have determined that tigers occupy less than 7 percent of their historic range. Robinson and others advocate a two-step process that focuses on monitoring and protecting tigers in the 42 source sites and a longer-term effort to preserve the large landscapes tigers need to hunt and roam. " All you need to do is provide tigers with space and prey and protection," said Barney Long, tiger program manager for the World Wildlife Fund. " That really should not be that hard to provide for the world's favorite animal. This sort of focused conservation strategy has been successful with the African rhinoceros, whose numbers plummeted in the 1980s because of poaching. In November, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin will host a tiger preservation summit that will build on the Global Tiger Initiative that World Bank President Robert Zoellick launched in 2008. According to the paper, the world spends \$47 million on tiger conservation, the bulk f which

comes from range states such as India and \$10 million of which comes from the Wildlife Conservation Society and the World Wildlife Fund.

That leaves a \$35 million shortfall in funds needed to protect critical tiger breeding populations. With sufficient support, even imperiled species such as the tiger can survive. Eilperin, By Juliet. " Experts Call for Protecting Sites in Asia to Ensure the Survival of the Tiger. " Washingtonpost. com - Nation, World, Technology and Washington Area News and Headlines. Web. 16 Sept. 2010..