

## **New study shows over a third of protected areas surveyed are severely at risk of losing tigers**

*Governments must ensure long-term investment or risk losing tiger populations*

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**28 February 2018** – A new survey of over a hundred tiger conservation areas, where an estimated 70% of the world’s wild tigers live, found that only 13% of them are able to meet global standards. At least one-third of them are severely at risk of losing their tigers. Alarming, most of these sites are in Southeast Asia, where tigers have suffered the most dramatic decline in the past decade.

Reassuringly, two-thirds of the areas surveyed reported fair to strong management. Yet, basic needs such as enforcement against poaching, engaging local communities and managing conflict between people and wildlife, remain weak for all areas surveyed.

“Ineffective management of tiger conservation areas leads to tiger extinction. To halt and reverse the decline of wild tigers, effective management is thus the single most important action. To achieve this, long-term investment in tiger conservation areas is absolutely essential, and this is a responsibility that must be led by tiger range governments,” said **S.P. Yadav, Assistant Secretary General, Global Tiger Forum.**

The survey, driven by 11 leading conservation organisations and tiger range governments that are part of the CAITS Partnership, is the first and largest rapid assessment of site-based tiger conservation across Asia.

Despite poaching being one of the greatest threats faced by big cats, 85 per cent of the areas surveyed do not have staff capacity to patrol sites effectively, and 61 per cent of the areas in Southeast Asia have very limited anti-poaching enforcement.

Low investment from governments in Southeast Asia was stated as one reason for the lack of management of these supposedly ‘protected areas’. While 86 per cent of areas in South Asia, Russia and China stated that finances are, or are on the way to being sustainable, in comparison only 35 per cent of areas in Southeast Asia are in a similar position.

“Unless governments commit to sustained investments in the protection of these sites, tiger populations may face the catastrophic decline that they have suffered over the last few decades. This funding is needed urgently, particularly for many sites in Southeast Asia to support recovery of its tiger population,” said **Michael Baltzer, Chair of the Executive Committee of CAITS.**

Released ahead of World Wildlife Day on 3 March, which this year calls for the protection of big cats, the report acts as a timely reminder of the need to secure the homes of wild tigers and engage local communities, in order to ensure the protection and recovery of this majestic species.

Data from this survey forms a baseline that aims to help governments and site managers understand how they are faring against CAITS (Conservation Assured Tiger Standards), an accreditation system designed to measure and improve the management of tiger conservation areas.

"The results in this report provides a way for countries to make informed decisions in driving tiger conservation forward, helping to lead a sustainable path for parks, people and tigers to all thrive together," said **Sugoto Roy, Coordinator of the Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme, IUCN.**

Addressing the lack of investment remains one of the most urgent tasks needed to ensure the future of the species and the far-reaching benefits that thriving tiger populations bring to people and nature.

"The tiger's survival is a critical indicator for sustainable development in tiger range countries – it is intrinsically linked to the integrity of nature and the services it provides, upon which all development rests," **comments Midori Paxton, Head of Ecosystems and Biodiversity at the UNDP.**

CAITS was created to support the TX2 goal to double the number of tigers in the wild, adopted at the St Petersburg 'Tiger Summit' in 2010. It was established with the aim of ensuring that where tigers live in the wild, they are receiving effective protection and management.

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## **NOTES TO EDITOR**

### **About the Report**

Jointly released by the CAITS Partnership, *Safe Havens for Wild Tigers: A Rapid Assessment of Management Effectiveness against Conservation Assured Tiger Standards*, is the first overview of the management effectiveness of tiger conservation areas across Asia. Based on criteria set by CAITS this is the largest survey of site-based tiger management to date, covering over 200,000 km<sup>2</sup> in 112 tiger conservation areas that are estimated to hold 70% of the world's wild tigers.

### **About CAITS and the CAITS Partnership**

Conservation Assured Tiger Standards (CAITS) is an accreditation system designed to measure and improve the management of tiger conservation areas. It is driven by the CAITS Partnership, which comprises of tiger range governments, intergovernmental agencies, conservation organisations and other institutions, including: Equilibrium Research, Freeland Foundation, Global Wildlife Conservation, Global Tiger Forum, IUCN, Panthera, Smithsonian Institution, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), WildTeam, and WWF. The secretariat for CAITS is hosted by WWF.

For more information on CAITS please visit: [www.conservationassured.org](http://www.conservationassured.org)



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