



WWF

SPECIES



EXPLORE!

Welcome to “WWF Explore”, a free poster resource for youth groups and young people. Each issue features one key species with news, fascinating facts and great activities to help your group members earn a special badge.

This edition looks at tigers, and how you can help safeguard their future.

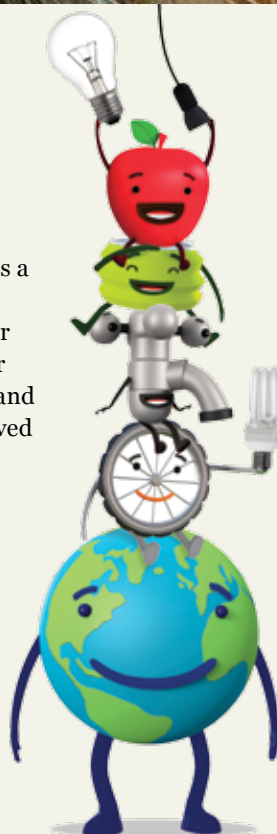
CALLING BUDDING GREEN CHAMPIONS!

Green Ambassadors for Youth – or GA4Y – is a fantastic programme to help 5-15s take the lead on green issues in their groups and their community. Our friendly Green Ambassador team – Leafy, Wheel, Switch, Crush, Smith and Tap – will help them get informed, get involved and get sharing on six topical green issues. Designed with the help of over 100 leaders, it offers six themed activity sets, a suite of posters to help you plan your green journey, and a badge scheme to reward young people for their achievements.



Sign up at wwf.org.uk/greenambassadors4youth

All our resources are accompanied by a badge.
Find out more at wwf.org.uk/ygresources



DID YOU KNOW?

-  Tigers love water and are fantastic swimmers.
-  They make a huge range of sounds including growls, roars, moans, snarls, chuffs, hisses and gasps – probably to communicate to other tigers.
-  With huge ranges up to 100km², tigers can walk hundreds of kilometres ‘on patrol’. Amur tigers have much larger territories and cover the most distance.
-  They have super-soft pads on their feet, so they can move soundlessly when stalking prey.
-  Scent glands concentrated around their face on whiskers, cheeks and chin, under their tail and even between their toes enables them to mark their territories and thus steer clear of conflict with other tigers.
-  A rare genetic mutation found only in Bengal tigers can result in a white tiger with blue eyes, pink nose and brown stripes.
-  Tigers are so powerful, they can take down prey weighing up to five times their own bodyweight.
-  Some people think that tiger urine smells like buttered popcorn!

TIGERS

THE SPECIES LOWDOWN

Of the nine different subspecies of tiger, three are extinct – Balinese, Caspian and Javan – while the South China tiger hasn't been officially sighted since the 1970s and is feared extinct. The five remaining sub-species are endangered, one critically so.

MALAYAN

Exact numbers are unknown but there are thought to be only several hundred left in the wild. True to their name, Malayan tigers are found only on the Malay Peninsula and in the southern tip of Thailand. They live in the damp, hot rainforest habitat typical of the region.

BENGAL

There are fewer than 2,500 Bengal tigers left in the wild and 2,200 of them are found in India. They can weigh up to 260kg and can measure over 3m from nose to tail. They have slightly lighter coats and striped patterns than their forest-dwelling relatives.



VITAL STATISTICS

Feeding and hunting

Tigers eat lots of meat – an adult male can eat up to 20% of his bodyweight in 24 hours. They need about 50 big kills a year to survive; each can keep a tiger going for a week. They hunt mostly deer – sambar, swamp, chital, red and rusa, but only one in 10 hunting trips are successful so they'll take almost anything – birds, fish, rodents, insects, amphibians and reptiles. Solitary hunters, they use stealth and camouflage to creep to the crucial 20 metres ambush distance. Attacks are explosive, but the chase won't last more than 150m and the 'despatch' is quick. Tigers drag their catch to a safer place, sometimes burying it for later.

Breeding

Females have their first litter at three to four years of age. Pregnancy lasts 3.5 months, producing up to four 1kg cubs. Cubs are totally reliant on their mother until weaning at six months but still need her to hunt for them until they get their permanent canine teeth at a year old. They leave her a year later to find their own territories. She'll be ready to breed again soon after. Wild tigers have a natural life-span of about 15 years.

WHY ARE TIGERS UNDER THREAT?

Poaching

Tiger parts have been used in traditional Asian medicine for hundreds of years to treat things like rheumatism, leprosy, cataracts, toothache, various skin diseases, muscle aches and malaria. Although there's no scientific evidence to prove it works, there's a strong cultural confidence in tiger parts which are still highly prized. The emergence of a new wealthy middle class in China, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia is fuelling demand and with high prices for goods, poachers are willing to risk it despite strong penalties. Recent confiscations from the illegal wildlife trade include bones, claws, skulls and teeth. The beautiful skins of tigers have always been much sought-after, along with trinkets made from tiger body parts and tiger bone wine. Their meat is still eaten. Tigers are still very much in demand as pets too. There are more tigers in captivity – more than 5000 in the USA, than are left in the wild.

Habitat loss

Tigers have lost pretty much all their territory in the past 150 years – their ranges have shrunk by nearly 95% with 50% disappearing in the last three generations. As human populations grow, wild areas are wiped out for roads and infrastructure, making it hard for the animals to move around and breed.

Climate change

Climate change could also speed up this habitat loss. If the sea level rises by 28cm in the watery Sundarbans region of Bangladesh, over 95% of tiger habitat for a population of 300 Bengal tigers could be lost. Intense droughts in south-east Asia could also affect vulnerable and fragmented pockets of rainforest territories for jungle-living tigers, leaving them with nowhere to live.

Human and wildlife conflict

Contact between tigers and humans is on the increase, and that's down to an ever-growing human population. The number of people living in Asia's 13 different tiger-range countries doubled in 40 years to 3.2bn in 2005. This means that tigers can get pushed out of their habitat and may end up going into villages and killing livestock, and even harming people. Conflict between tigers and humans can end badly for both people and tigers. People sometimes kill tigers to protect their livelihoods and families.



AMUR

Amur or Siberian tigers are the largest big cats weighing over 300kg. Found in the remote far-east of Russia, with a few individuals in China, they have little contact – and conflict – with humans, but they're endangered largely because of habitat loss. They grow a long, thick coat to help them survive the harsh Siberian winters.



SUMATRAN

Around 450 of these, the smallest of all tigers, remain on the island of Sumatra. They have very distinctive heavy black stripes on an almost pure orange coat to make sure they're perfectly camouflaged in their darker, jungle habitat.

INDOCHINESE

Small, endangered populations of these tigers exist in territories in South East Asia. Most of the 350-strong population live in Thailand, with a few tiny groups living in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos PDR. They live in the damp, hot rainforest habitat typical of the region.



ACTIVITIES

AD CAMPAIGN

Come up with a campaign to change people's minds about using tiger parts as traditional remedies. One team could design a poster to make people think twice before buying or using such products. Another could plan a documentary debunking the myths surrounding traditional remedies containing tiger parts. A third team could write a letter to the government of a tiger territory country explaining how they could intervene to stop poaching. Remind teams to think about their audience and tactics.

IS THAT YOU TIGER? (IDEAL FOR YOUNGER AGES)

Choose a 'ranger' who then goes out of the room. The rest of the group are tigers, stalking around the room and pouncing on their prey. When the leader calls out 'sleepy tiger', everyone curls up on the floor - just like a sleeping tiger. The leader then covers over one sleeping tiger in a blanket, as if they are hidden in the jungle. The ranger comes back into the room, and the leader says "It's time to wake up". Everyone except the 'tiger' under the blanket stands up and the ranger has to guess who's missing. The tiger under the blanket can growl, roar, moan, snarl, chuff, hiss and gasps if anyone comes too close, until their identity is guessed. No-one can touch the tiger under the blanket as they are too dangerous.

RECYCLABLE FOREST MURAL

This is a good one for you and your friends to add to and come back to over a camping weekend. Soak an old white sheet in water and then hang it on a clothesline or drape over a fence. Using lots of different paints and applicators – sponges, paintbrushes, squirty bottles – create a forest scene, including all the animal and tree species you can think of. You can mute and mix colours with a water-filled spray bottle, or even wash the whole lot off with a hose. You can make this a smaller project by using a pillowcase or t-shirt.

SUNDARBANS TIGER TAG

Members pretend they're one of the Bengal tigers who live in Bangladesh's Sundarbans region – a large area of swampland in a waterlogged landscape – trying to evade the poachers. Everyone collects their sleeping roll mat, lays it out in a large area – indoor or outdoor – and sits down. Choose two or three 'poachers' who then chase the 'tigers', who can only step or jump on the 'island' mats. Every tiger tagged becomes a poacher until all the tigers have been caught. You could swap the roles, so the tiger catches lots of poachers!

HELP US TO HELP TIGERS!

By adopting a tiger with WWF, you can help us to achieve our goal of doubling the number of wild tigers to over 6,000 by 2022. We're working with governments, business and local communities to:

- secure laws to support tigers
- restore fragmented areas of habitat so tigers can move around more easily and find a mate
- fund anti-poaching patrols in tiger habitat
- stop the trade in live tigers and tiger parts by educating consumers who believe in traditional remedies or who see tigers as an important status symbol
- increase the numbers and variety of prey species so they can hunt and kill effectively.

Your support will also help fund our other essential work around the world

Go to wwf.org.uk/tigeradopt to find out more.



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

wwf.org.uk