

ProFauna Demands More Indonesian Government Action to Curb the Illegal Trade of Tiger and Elephant

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The illegal trade of tiger and elephant parts is still flourishing. The rampant trade is revealed in an investigation report launched by ProFauna Indonesia which is supported by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). The four month investigation, carried out from July to October 2008, ProFauna visited 21 regions in Sumatera and Jakarta and investigated into the trade.

Elephants and tigers face extinction due to poaching to meet the growing demand for wildlife. The investigation confirms that this region is a hotspot for illegal wildlife trade with almost 100 per cent of traded animals being caught from the wild," IFAW Asia Pacific Wildlife Trade Campaigner, Jorge Basave, said.

The findings showed that among the 21 regions, the locations which sold either tiger or elephant parts were found in ten regions (48%). The locations for tiger trade only were found in six regions (28%) and the locations for elephant parts only were found in five regions (24%). The report also shows that the lucrative parts of elephant are a whole ivory tusk or cigarette pipe made from it. While the tiger parts which are most sought after are skin, whisker, claw, fang, and a whole stuffed tiger. Most of these endangered animal parts are sold in art shops, gemstone and traditional medicine vendors. The highest level of tiger parts trade was in Lampung province, Sumatera, while elephant parts are sold the most in Western Sumatera.

The prices of these illegal parts are varied from hundred thousand to half a billion Indonesian Rupiah or from dozens to 50 thousand USD. For examples, a cigarette pipe made from ivory tusk costs from 15 to 250 USD, while 40 kg whole ivory tusk cost 50,000 USD. A tiger fang costs 40 to 110 USD. Tiger skin could fetch to 1,000 USD a piece. We can imagine the price of a whole stuffed tiger.

ProFauna has reported the investigation findings to the Forestry Department in April 2009 while encouraging the government to take more action to strictly curb the illegal trade of the endangered species. ProFauna applauds government enforcement in Jakarta to tackle the trade of tiger parts in Jakarta.

On 7 August 2009, the Forestry Department Rangers and the Jakarta Police Department raided a tiger skin syndicate in Jakarta. The team has successfully confiscated two whole tiger skins, six stuffed birds of paradise, two whole leopard cat skins, 12 stuffed deer heads, a surili, five deer skulls, a bear head, and a deer skin. This syndicate is alleged to involve the officials of the zoos in Java and Sumatera.

The raid in Jakarta has proven that ProFauna's report revealing the illegal trade of tiger and elephant parts are factual and

must be taken seriously. This is only the tip of the iceberg, there are more endangered animals killed out there to supply the black market.

According to the 1990 Wildlife Act concerning the Conservation of the Natural Resources and Ecosystem, “Every one is prohibited to trade, keep, own, export (inside and outside Indonesia) the skin, body or other parts, by-products of a protected animals.” Offenders are liable to a maximum five year prison term and 100 millions IDR (10,000 USD).

ProFauna Campaign Officer, Radius Nursidi stated, “ProFauna appreciates the raid by the Police. But seizures such as that in Jakarta should be conducted in Sumatera as the hub of the illegal wildlife crime. The law must be enforced and this should not go unpunished”. ProFauna records show that the illegal trade of tiger and elephant parts still happens in the cities of Sumatera, like Palembang, Lampung, Jambi, and Bengkulu. The government must curb this; otherwise the endangered species will be extinct in the wild.

ProFauna Indonesia (www.profauna.org) is a wildlife protection organization in Indonesia established since 1994. With the help of it volunteers all over Indonesia, ProFauna works through campaigns, education, trade survey, and wildlife rescue.

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