

Tiger anaesthesia training

Bangladesh

Background

In January 2010, the tiger was named by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) as the species most at risk of extinction. Recent estimates suggest that there may now be as few as 3,200 tigers remaining in the wild.

An important population of wild Bengal tigers remains in the Sundarbans Reserve Forest in Bangladesh. However, there is a huge problem in this area caused



by conflict between humans and tigers, resulting in the unnecessary deaths of humans, tigers and livestock.

When tigers stray into the nearby villages, they are surrounded by frightened villagers wielding sticks, spears and machetes and bludgeoned to death.

The Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh has developed a plan to try to prevent these killings, and have requested help from Wildlife Vets International to put it into action.

The Sundarbans Tiger Project aims to ensure the long-term conservation of the Sundarbans tiger population. As well as research into tigers, and raising conservation awareness in the area, a main focus of this project's work is to create an infrastructure for managing problem tigers.

Forest Department teams are to be trained to safely immobilise, capture and transport tigers straying too close to human populations. These teams require specialist training in tiger capture and immobilisation techniques and a workshop to do this has been planned for early 2010.

Wildlife Vets International has been asked to send specialist big-cat veterinarian, Dr. John Lewis, out to the project to provide training to 12 Forest Department staff during a 10-day visit.



We are now seeking funds for this project, and need to raise a total of £6,500 for the initial visit.

The workshop will provide training in:

- Tiger physiology, animal handling and drug use;
- Tiger capture techniques and safety;
- Practical demonstrations of supervised tiger capture.

At present, the Forest Department have no staff available with the necessary skills to capture and immobilise problem tigers.

Wildlife Vets International's input will help to:

- Greatly improve the capacity of the Forest Department to deal with problem tigers;
- Reduce the numbers of tigers and people killed each year;
- Improve local attitudes towards tigers;
- Assist the Sundarbans Tiger Project with the long-term conservation of the tiger.



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