

Ban on deer hunting to save Malayan tiger

Moratorium to be extended by six more years

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PETALING JAYA: A six-year hunting moratorium on sambar deer is expected to start from November in a move to help save the Malayan tiger, the Government revealed.

Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar said wildlife officials had asked to renew the ban, which ended in November last year.

"I am going to extend the moratorium for another six years beginning November this year.

"The sambar deer is the main prey for the tiger. They prefer it to any other animal," he told *The Star*.

He said there were only 700 to 1,000 sambar deer left in the peninsula and that if these were to die, the tiger would be forced to hunt other prey.

This, Dr Wan Junaidi said, included going after other animals or

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Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar

even human beings.

There may only be 250 to 340 Malayan tigers – which is also critically endangered – left in the peninsula today.

Dr Wan Junaidi spoke to *The Star* after three men were caught in Perak earlier this month loading parts of a sambar deer into their car.

Two others, including one carrying a gun, escaped.

A Department of Wildlife and National Parks (Perhilitan) official had said then that deer meat could cost between RM40 and RM60 a kg.

Environmentalists have said before that there was a direct link

between sambar deer and tigers in Malaysia.

"Where there are more sambar deer, there are more tigers," said WWF-Malaysia tiger biologist Dr Mark Rayan Darmaraj in 2013.

Dr Wan Junaidi said that even if there was no moratorium – the original ban started in 2009 – sambar deer hunting was only allowed during the month of November each year.

"Even during the season, a hunter needs a permit to hunt," he said, adding that an investigation was underway to find out who the other two men were.

No sambar deer was legally hunted in the peninsula last year, he said.

He added that he would also get a ministry official to write to the Inspector-General of Police to get the gun owner's licence revoked.

As a follow-up, the minister warned that he would not hesitate to get gun licences withdrawn if these were found to be used for hunting wild animals.

Habitat of Sambar deer and tiger in the wild



Malayan tiger
Type: *Panthera Tigris Jacksoni*
Range: Peninsular Malaysia, south Thailand.
Size: Two to 2.286m
Weight: 100 to 120kg
Notes: The tiger is Malaysia's national animal and can be found on its coat of arms, and appears as the symbol of many organisations, such as the police and Proton.

Source: Arkive, IUCN Redlist, WWF, Sedgwick County Zoo, Astro Awani



Sambar deer
Type: *Rusa Unicorn*
Range: India, China, much of South-East Asia, Taiwan, Sri Lanka, Nepal. Can be found in South Africa and Australia.
Size: 160-270cm (head to body length), 102-160cm (shoulder height), 25-30cm (tail length)
Weight: 150-320kg
Notes: Only males have antlers and are likely to be darker than females. Shy, can be active at night. A major source of food for tigers.

Source: Arkive