

The national animal of our nation is on the verge of extinction. A survey conducted by the Wildlife Protection Society of India has given us a clear image of the grievous situation. Different NGOs have also done surveys on their own and all of them have come out with grim results. Records state that in the last eight months we lost as many as 66 tigers, which is a huge number in itself.


The causes for the widespread disappearance of tigers are manifold. Blame it on poaching or disease or old age or the man-animal conflict, we are moving a step closer to losing the animal. Surely we do not wish our coming generation to find the tigers only in history books. With rapid development the

country is losing its forests. Where do the tigers go then? Their habitat is threatened by such developments. There are just 1,411 tigers left and the country must do something to stop this from happening.

Loss, fragmentation, and degradation of forests have been major factors in the decline of the tiger population. Illegal killing also plays an increasingly damaging role as tigers have become more vulnerable. Habitat loss remains a grave danger for the tiger, particularly in Asia. In India, where there is the problem of increasing human population, people are always looking for more room which infringes on the tiger habitat. When people reside close to tigers, they transform the ecological system with cattle and

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# SAVE THE TIGER, ACT NOW

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crops and this in turn harms the tigers.

Poaching of tigers has been playing a determining factor for the loss of the big cats. Tiger skins are in demand for rugs, wall hangings and fur coats. Even medicines are made from the bones and other parts of the tiger. The demand for such medicines is high in China and also in India. It is interesting to know that most of the tiger-based drugs are found only in places where there are Chinese communities.

Poaching of tigers is also prevalent in places like Myanmar, Vietnam and Laos where anti-poaching laws are lenient. We can say that China has a growing demand for tigers and this



need to be sorted out as soon as possible.

The mating of tigers has also been a cause of concern. Recent surveys have found that there are not enough female tigers compared to the male counterparts. Such a situation will only add to the decrease of the tigers.

Tiger being our national animal deserves the attention of the nation. Just 1,411 tigers remaining — it is a grim situation indeed. The government needs to go that extra mile to save the tigers, not just save, but increase their numbers also.

A strong political will is essential to curb the problem. Our country is a democracy. Let the voice of the general public be heard. We being responsible citizens can definitely spread the awareness and send the message loud and clear to the concerned authorities. Blogging, writing, sms-ing — do whatever it takes to spread the message. Let us stand united against poaching. Let us demand stricter punishment for the poachers, because unless the poachers are handled with an iron fist the situation will remain critical. Let us join hands to "Save the Tiger". A small initiative by everyone and we can help preserve them. The national animal should and must be protected. Act responsibly, act now.

## STATE-WISE TIGER DEATHS

Period: 1-1-2009 to 19-8-2009

Andhra Pradesh:	1
Assam:	4, 5 kg bones and other body parts recovered
Goa:	1
Karnataka:	6, 4 tiger skins seized
Madhya Pradesh:	11, 1 skin seized
Maharashtra:	7, including 3 cubs
Manipur:	2 skulls, 2 paws and 16 kg bones seized
Orissa:	1
Rajasthan:	1
Tamil Nadu:	1 cub, 1 skin
Uttar Pradesh:	3, 30 kg bone seized
Uttarakhand:	6, 1 skin, skeleton seized
West Bengal:	1, 2 skins, skeleton seized