



Hello!

Welcome to your latest tiger update



Becci May, senior programme adviser, WWF-UK

Since 2009 WWF's Tigers Alive initiative has coordinated our efforts to boost the numbers of these big cats. Combining the expertise of international WWF offices, the Tigers Alive strategy is aligned

to the 12-year lunar calendar. Our goal for 2034 – the next Year of the Tiger – is that the population of wild tigers and the number of places they're found will be stable or increasing. But we never forget that these spaces aren't just home to wildlife – they're also home to millions of people. As both populations grow, it's vital we embrace people-centred conservation, and that's why supporting coexistence is our priority. Turn over to see how we're tackling conflict between tigers and people in India. **Thanks for your support.**

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India is home to over half of the world's wild tigers, but as numbers grow, conflict with humans increases, posing a significant threat to both local people and the big cats

MEET THE ADOPTION TEAM

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SIDE BY SIDE

As their wild habitat becomes fragmented, tigers are finding new homes closer to people

In a sugar cane field in northern India, there's a sense of relief as forest officials finally capture a tiger living in the community farmlands, and return it to Dudhwa National Park.

Most of us will never share our space with a large predator, but this is the reality for many people living near protected habitats. India – the world's most populous country – is home to over half of the planet's wild tigers, and around a third of them live outside protected areas. In the region bordering Dudhwa National Park, tigers are frequent visitors.

Over the past two centuries, vast stretches of natural habitat across the country have been whittled down to pockets of protected areas, with a mosaic of forests, farmland and settlements in between. Several species that once

roamed large areas – including tigers – now live in small 'islands' of habitat. But every tiger needs a huge territory, so as their population grows, they often move beyond protected areas.

The forests of Dudhwa National Park and Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary make up one of India's 54 tiger reserves. They're separated by around 20km of land that serves as a vital thoroughfare for wildlife. As in so many parts of India, this wildlife corridor is dotted with agricultural fields and human habitation. Indeed, 78% of the Dudhwa-Kishanpur corridor is farmland.

Dense swaths of towering sugar cane provide a livelihood for local people, but also offer shelter – and even prey – for tigers, particularly where fields are close to forests. Some local cats make more than flying visits, effectively incorporating the

Some 'sugar cane tigers' are born and raised in the sugar cane fields after females settle there, attracted by prey



With water, prey and secure hideouts, it's not surprising that tigers have moved in to fields

fields into their hunting territories. Recently, a tigress spent six months here, not once returning to the park.

Local people have heard tales of these new residents, and some have spotted signs of their presence. Though they're inclined to be tolerant, their goodwill is eroded by attacks on livestock and dogs, and people working in the fields feel at risk. It's clear we need sustainable solutions that balance the needs of both sides: connected habitat is critical to tiger conservation, but safe fields are vital for communities.

People here know that tigers are regular visitors to their farmland. But by using camera traps and recording faeces and pawprints, our colleagues in India can pinpoint the cats' movements. It's one of many corridor profiles they're building across the country. To get real-time information, they aim to enlist a team of community members to respond swiftly to reports of tigers and help keep people safe – a scheme that's been successfully trialled at Pilibhit tiger reserve to the west of Dudhwa.

In the past, some conservation approaches involved creating separate spaces for wildlife and people. But this is unrealistic and constantly challenged by nature – the determination of tigers to live in sugar cane fields blurs these artificial boundaries.

It's clear the only way forward is coexistence and, thanks to you, we can build a world where tigers and people can thrive together.

Becci

FIELD FARE



Tigers may be attracted to sugar cane fields by the prey animals that also seek shelter here

NILGAI

With a name meaning 'blue bull' after the male's blue-grey coat, the nilgai (above) is the biggest antelope in Asia and makes a good meal for a tiger. Their territories are more likely to overlap in sugar cane fields.

INDIAN HOG DEER

Named for the pig-like way they duck under obstacles, instead of leaping over them, these small deer are prime tiger prey and not as fast as chital deer.



INDIAN WILD BOAR

These robust, plump pigs are among a tiger's favourite meals. They have a distinctive mane along their spines.

