

Springboard into Comprehension **5**

Main Idea Bukit Timah Nature Reserve
The Nelson Mandela Story

Compare and Contrast

Animals under Threat

Soccer v Ballet

Fact and Opinion

The Great Rainbow Hill Council Debate
The Smith Family Diaries

Cause and Effect

It's Just Not Right
Save Our Planet!

Bias and Prejudice

What's Up?
Changing Times

Figurative Language

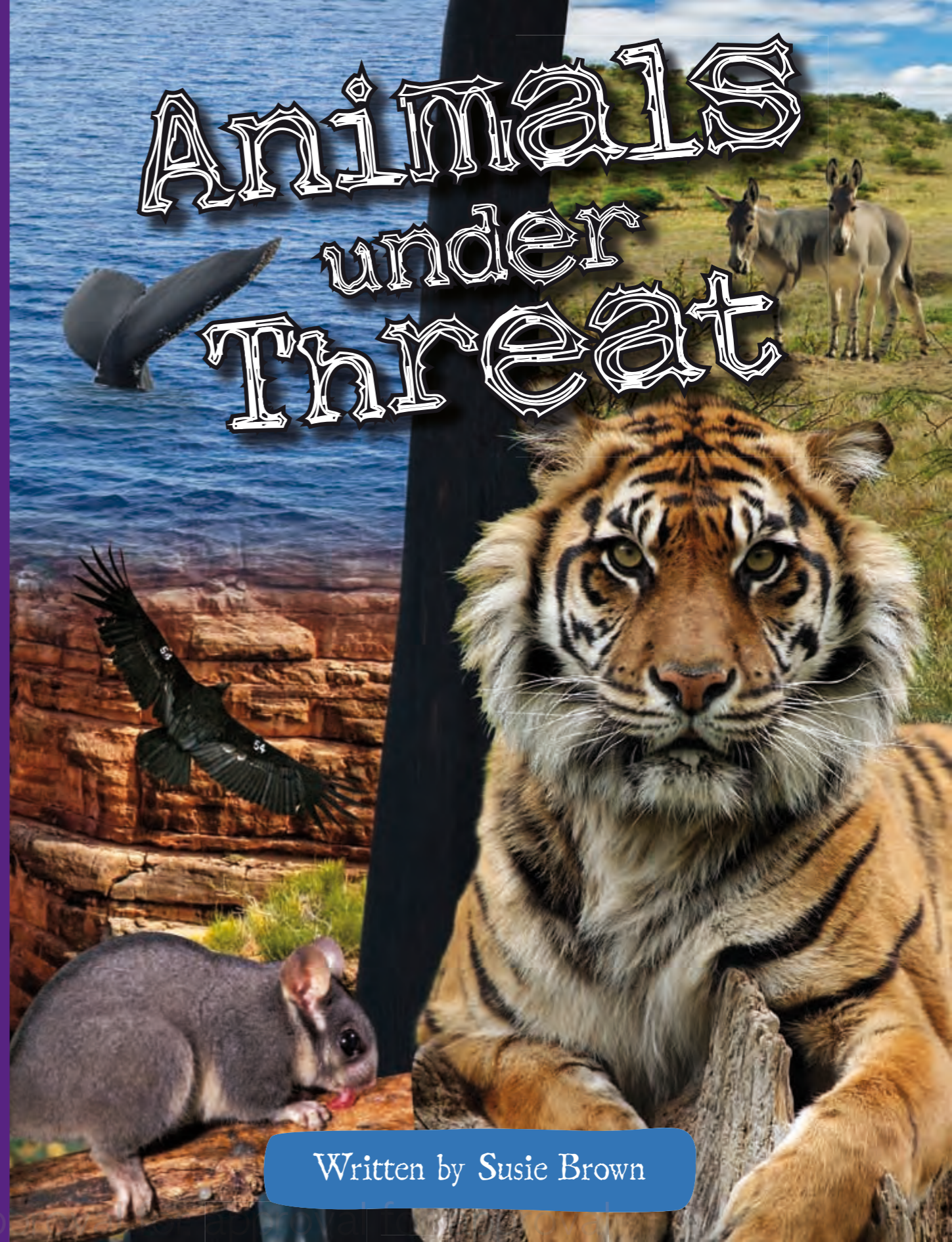
Sports Mad Magazine
The Highwayman

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Information Report

Animals under Threat



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Endangered Animals

Many kinds of animals are endangered. People class different kinds of living things by putting them into groups. These groups consist of individuals that can reproduce with each other. The groups are called species. Earth is home to 1,250,000 animal species. Today, many species are under threat. Some species no longer exist in the wild. Others face the threat of dying out altogether, or **extinction**. Some people think this is caused by human activities, such as hunting. Another problem is damage to the species' habitat.

What Threats Do Endangered Animals Face?

Hunting

People may hunt animals for meat. They may use their body parts to make medicine, clothes, or jewellery. As people develop new tools, they can hunt larger numbers of animals. Sometimes, people illegally catch and sell rare species. This trade takes animals out of the wild.



Habitat Loss

As human numbers grow, people use more and more land. For example, people cut down forests for timber. They plant crops in grassland areas and drain wetlands. Each time people take over a habitat, there is less land for animals.



Conflict with People

There are many ways people can be a threat to animals. As well as hunting them or taking their habitat, people build structures or machines that can be a danger to animals. Colliding with powerlines or cars may hurt or kill an animal. Pollution, and other changes to the environment that people cause, may make animals sick.



What Is Being Done?

Thousands of groups around the world are working to protect wildlife. Efforts like this to protect species are called **conservation**. One such group is the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). It provides a list of the **conservation** status of thousands of species. This is called the **IUCN Red List**. The higher a species is on the IUCN Red List, the **more at risk** it is of extinction. This often means that people **put more effort** into trying to save it.

How Successful Are These Efforts?

The success of these conservation efforts varies. Some have been **successful**. For example, people saved the humpback whale from extinction. However, there are many more animal species at risk.

The IUCN Red List

Conservation Status	Animal	Numbers Remaining	Where Found
Extinct	Tasmanian tiger	0 (last died in 1936)	Tasmania
Extinct in the wild	Hawaiian crow	In 2002, fewer than 60	Hawaii (only bred in captivity)
Critically endangered	Iberian lynx	Fewer than 100	Spain
Endangered	Snow leopard	4,000–6,500	Mountains of central Asia, Afghanistan, India, and China
Vulnerable	Indian rhinoceros	2,500	India and Nepal
Near threatened	Australian snubfin dolphin	Below 10,000	Ocean around north-eastern coast of Australia and south-western coast of New Guinea
Least concern	Humpback whale	Over 60,000 and increasing	All oceans

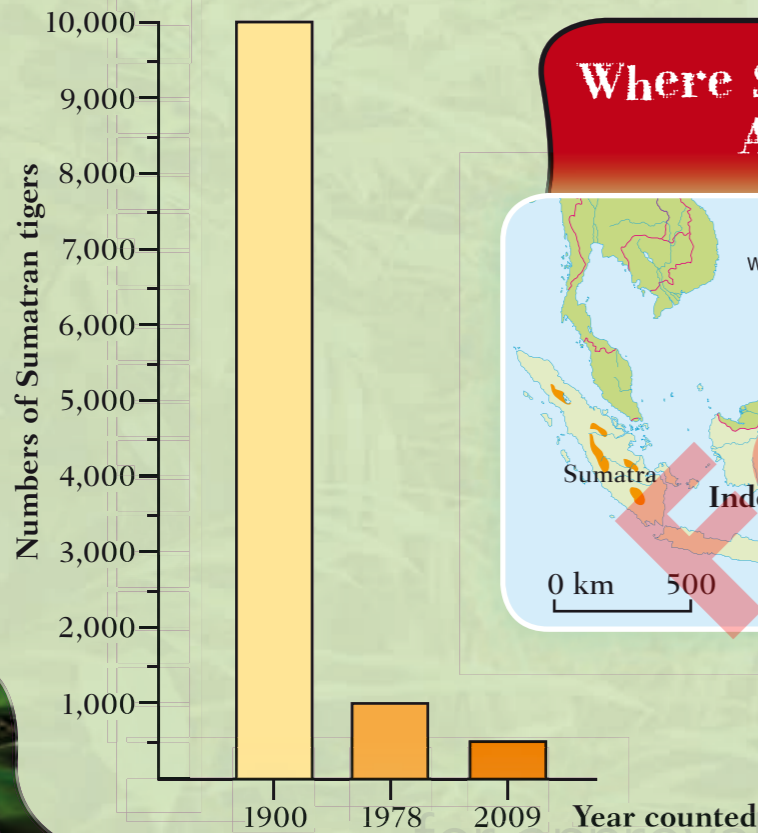
Endangered in Asia – Sumatran Tiger

Critically Endangered

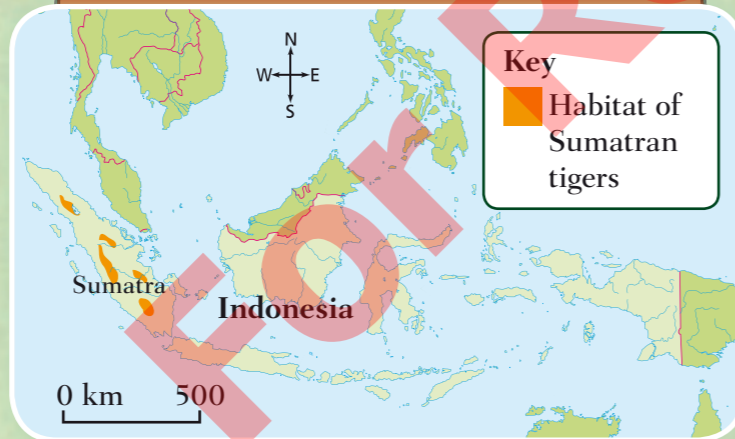
Sumatran tigers live in the forests of the Indonesian island of Sumatra. They are the smallest of all tiger species. The male tiger is about 204 cm long. It weighs about 136 kg. The female tiger is about 198 cm long. It weighs about 91 kg.

For conservation, scientists must estimate how many members of a species still exist in the world. This is the species' **population**. During the early 1900s, there were about 10,000 of these tigers on Sumatra. By 1978, there were only about 1,000. Their numbers are still going down. Today, scientists think there are fewer than 500 left.

Sumatran Tiger Population



Where Sumatran Tigers Are Found



The Sumatran tiger is one of several tiger species.

What Threats Do They Face?

Hunting

People hunt Sumatran tigers for their body parts, such as claws, teeth, and skin. Illegal hunters like this are called poachers. They sell the body parts illegally. Sometimes, people use the parts to make traditional medicines.

Habitat Loss

Sumatra has about 335,000 square km of habitat for the tiger. Only about 25 per cent of this is protected from development and logging. As a result, much of the tigers' habitat is now gone.

Conflict with People

The loss of habitat has forced the tigers into areas where people live. Sometimes, they attack people and livestock. People have killed tigers in response.



The skin of a Sumatran tiger killed by hunters



People have cut down large areas of Sumatran forest.

What Is Being Done?

The law in Indonesia now protects Sumatran tigers. However, at least 51 still die every year. At this rate, they could be extinct within a few years. People have started several programs to try to save the tigers –

- The Sister Zoo Program works with Australia Zoo to reduce conflict between tigers and people. It also aims to help tiger numbers recover. It does this with a program of raising young animals and then returning them to the wild. This is called a **breeding program**.
- The Sumatran Tiger Conservation Program aims to move tigers away from areas where people live.
- The Sumatran Tiger Project Team studies tigers to learn how they behave. It studies the way they interact with their habitat.
- The Wildlife Conservation Society's Sumatran Tiger Conservation Program focuses on protecting the tigers' habitat. It tries to expand the habitat that already exists.



These Sumatran tigers are part of a breeding program in Australia.

How Successful Are These Efforts?

Tiger Conservation and Protection units now patrol forests in Sumatra. They also work with people in **local areas**. They teach people about protecting tigers and **their habitat**.

The Sister Zoo program **between** Indonesia and Australia gives several Sumatran tigers a **safe home**. In 2008, three new tiger cubs were born. These cubs **will one day** become part of the breeding program.

These **programs are** all long-term schemes. It is too early to know if they will **succeed**. However, in 2007, there were hopeful reports. They said that **conflict** between people and the tigers had gone down by about 50 **per cent**. Also, poachers are being reported, caught, and punished.



Three Sumatran tiger cubs born in Australia in 2008 make their first appearance.