



Sustainable eNews

IWMC World Conservation Trust

Wild Tiger needs New Blood, New Ideas

By Kirsten Conrad



Another meeting to “Save the Tiger” has just taken place (March, 2011), this time in India. It follows up on the recovery plan which was approved at the Global Tiger Summit in last November. The GTS, hailed as a watershed event, was in reality little more than a gala fundraiser eagerly attended by the very NGO's who have overseen the tiger's demise. As the official website pointed out, at the close of the summit conservationists were “jubilant and cautiously optimistic” on wild tiger's future. Of course they were jubilant, because some \$350 million had just been earmarked for their pockets. And of course they had to express optimism, because what fool would fund a project with pessimistic outcomes?

India released new census results at the March meeting. They indicate that although the wild tiger population has increased by about 300 over the last three years (including new areas not previously surveyed), habitat has shrunk.

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So we have more tigers, less habitat, increased trade restrictions (or enforcement thereof), growing stockpiles (from seizures and farms), and inelastic demand (meaning people will buy it at any cost, financial or otherwise)-a nice little recipe for poaching.

Indeed, poaching is universally acknowledged to be the most immediate threat to wild tigers. It has already wiped out tigers in several reserves, and has the potential to take out the rest in no time. Meanwhile, the biggest names in tiger conservation are squabbling over reserve design. One side has proposed a “6% solution”, where we throw all our resources behind populations with more than 50 breeding females and abandon the others, while the other argues that, in the name of genetic diversity, we must also protect corridors.

I don't know what's best, “site-level” and/or “landscape-level”, but I do know that neither paper addresses poaching (which broadly includes managing human-animal conflicts, and sustaining prey numbers). Collectively speaking, the authors—we're talking the Who's Who of tiger conservation—offer few ideas to deal with these make-or-break issues. There are some nice phrases about making a live tiger worth more than a dead one, but precious few concrete measures to make this happen, either on the supply or the demand side.

Everybody, World Bank included, admits that current strategies have failed. Despite being heralded as “game changing”, the GTS recovery plan is largely old stuff. What we have here is a lot of good money going after bad. And the very people who were behind these strategies now want payment up front to try again. This boggles the mind.

How is it that tiger experts have failed? The answer is simple—they have stuck to a similar formula (which works for fund-raising) and have failed to consider, let alone, adopt, measures which fall outside their area of expertise or are “controversial” (which might be anathema to their fundraising base).

Yet, who is the fool? Not only do we blindly continue to fund work which is doomed to fail (again), we fund efforts which fly in the face of logic. For example, if demand can be met with a sustainable source, why not take a hard look at that alternative? But no. Nobody talks about dealing with demand by means other than “reduction strategies” (one of which features a Twitter campaign) and increased enforcement. Enforcement is a good idea and can certainly be done smarter, yet at what point will it cost more to protect a wild tiger than buy one on the black market?

One really has to question the wisdom of entrusting the tiger's future to the very strategies—and organizations—that have gotten us where we are. As the saying goes: “If you keep on doing what you've always done, you'll keep on getting what you've always got.”

Clearly, new blood and new thinking is required to save the wild tiger. We need to seriously consider at every possible solution from the perspective of different disciplines. This would necessarily include controversial ideas such as legalizing trade (tigers breed like rabbits in captivity), trophy hunting, and turning over reserve management to tribal occupants. To the mainstream conservation community, “controversial” means “too risky”. Yet, run out the trajectory of the status quo and run out of wild tigers.

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Le tigre a besoin de sang nouveau, de nouvelles idées

Par Kirsten Conrad



Une nouvelle réunion pour “sauver le tigre” vient de se tenir (mars 2011), en Inde cette fois. Elle a fait suite au plan de rétablissement

approuvé au Sommet mondial pour le tigre de novembre dernier. Le SMT, salué comme un événement marquant, ne fut en fait rien d'autre qu'un gala de collecteurs de fonds auquel participèrent avec passion les ONG qui avaient elles-mêmes supervisé la fin du tigre. Comme le montre le site internet officiel, les protectionnistes, à la clôture du sommet, “jubilaient et étaient prudemment optimistes” quant à l'avenir du tigre. Bien sûr qu'ils jubilaient ; ils allaient se mettre dans la poche environ USD 350 millions qui venaient de leur être promis. Et ils devaient évidemment faire preuve d'optimisme puisqu'il faudrait être fou pour financer un projet pessimiste quant à ses fins.

A la réunion de mars, l'Inde rendit public les résultats d'un nouveau recensement. Ceux-ci (couvrant des régions non inspectées auparavant) montrent que bien que la population de tigres sauvages se soit accrue d'environ 300 têtes au cours des trois dernières années, l'habitat lui s'est réduit.

Ainsi, nous avons davantage de tigres, moins d'habitat, des restrictions commerciales (ou des mesures coercitives) accrues, des stocks (provenant de saisies ou de fermes) croissants et une demande inflexible (signifiant que les gens sont prêts à acheter à tout prix, financier ou autre) - une bonne petite recette pour le braconnage.

En effet, le braconnage est universellement reconnu comme étant la menace la plus immédiate pour les tigres. Il a déjà causé leur élimination

dans plusieurs réserves et est à même d'en faire autant en tout temps dans celles qui restent. En attendant, les plus grands noms de la conservation des tigres se chamaillent sur des projets de réserve. D'une part, une 'solution à 6%' a été proposée, selon laquelle tous les moyens seraient mis au profit des populations comptant plus de 50 femelles reproductrices, les autres étant abandonnées. D'autre part, au nom de la diversité génétique, il est estimé que les corridors devraient être aussi protégés.

Je ne sais pas ce qui du 'niveau du site' et/ou du 'niveau du paysage' est le mieux; mais je sais qu'aucun document ne traite du braconnage, lequel comprend la gestion des conflits homme-animal et le maintien du nombre des proies. S'exprimant ensemble, les auteurs - il s'agit du 'who's who' de la conservation des tigres - n'offrent guère d'idées quant à ces questions pour lesquelles ça passe ou ça casse. Quelques belles phrases sont proposées pour dire qu'un tigre vivant vaut davantage qu'un tigre mort mais peu de mesures concrètes le sont pour que cela se vérifie, tant en ce qui à trait à l'offre qu'à la demande.

Tous, la Banque mondiale incluse, admettent que les stratégies actuelles ont échoué. Bien que le plan de rétablissement du SMT soit considéré comme un 'changement de jeu', il est largement fondé sur des vieilles recettes. Ce que nous avons ici, c'est beaucoup de bon argent pour rien de bon. Et ceux qui sont derrière ces stratégies veulent maintenant être payés pour essayer encore. C'est à désespérer.

Comment les experts en tigre ont-ils échoué ? La réponse est simple. Ils s'en sont tenus à une formule (qui fonctionne pour la collecte de fonds) et

ont omis d'examiner, et donc d'adopter, des mesures qui vont au-delà de leurs connaissances d'experts ou 'sujettes à controverse' (qui pourraient être contraires à ce qui est à la base de leur collecte de fonds).

Alors, qui est fou ? Non seulement nous continuons à financer un travail voué (encore) à l'échec mais nous payons pour agir contrairement à toute logique. Par exemple, si la demande peut être satisfaite par une source durable, pourquoi ne pas envisager sérieusement cette alternative ? Eh bien non. Personne ne parle de traiter de la demande autrement qu'en termes de 'stratégies de réduction' (l'une d'elles envisageant une campagne sur Twitter) ou de mesures coercitives renforcées. La mise en oeuvre de la loi est utile et peut certainement être améliorée, mais à quel point sera-t-il plus coûteux de protéger un tigre sauvage que d'en acheter un au marché noir ?

Il faut bien poser la question de savoir s'il est sage de vouer l'avenir du tigre à celles-là même

des stratégies - et organisations - qui nous ont menés là où nous en sommes. Comme le dit l'adage, "si vous continuez à semer ce que vous avez toujours semé, vous continuerez à récolter ce que vous avez toujours récolté".

De toute évidence, un sang nouveau et de nouvelles idées sont nécessaires pour sauver le tigre. Nous devons sérieusement examiner toutes les solutions possibles, sur la base de différentes disciplines. Cela comprendra nécessairement des idées sujettes à controverse, comme la légalisation du commerce (les tigres se reproduisent en captivité comme des lapins), la chasse aux trophées et la remise de la gestion des réserves aux occupants tribaux. Pour le courant principal de la communauté conservatrice, 'sujet à controverse' signifie 'trop risqué'. Il est pourtant temps de quitter la trajectoire du statu quo et de l'élimination des tigres.

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Los Tigres Silvestres Necesitan Nueva Sangre, Nuevas Ideas

Por Kirsten Conrad

Otra reunión para " Salvar al Tigre " acaba de finalizar (marzo de 2011), esta vez en la India. Esta reunión da continuidad al plan de recuperación aprobado en la Cumbre Global sobre el Tigre (CGT) que se realizó en noviembre pasado. La CGT ha marcado una divisoria de aguas, ya que en realidad no fue más que una gala para recaudar fondos a la que asistieron las mismas organizaciones no gubernamentales, testigos indolentes de la desaparición gradual del tigre. Tal como se indica en el sitio Web oficial de la CGT, sobre el cierre de la cumbre los conservacionistas se mostraron "jubilosos y cautelosamente optimistas" con respecto al futuro del tigre silvestre. Y hay de qué estar jubilosos, ya que se han recaudado unos 350 millones de dólares para sus bolsillos. Además, es preciso demostrar optimismo, si no ¿quién sería tan tonto de

financiar un proyecto cuyos resultados son pesimistas?

La India ha publicado los resultados del censo más reciente en la reunión de marzo. Estos resultados indican que si bien la cantidad de tigres se incrementó en 300 individuos durante los últimos tres años (incluyendo nuevas áreas no antes inspeccionadas), el hábitat ha disminuido drásticamente.

En consecuencia, tenemos más tigres, menos hábitat, más restricciones al comercio (al menos en los papeles), existencias que crecen (de confiscaciones y cría en granjas), y una demanda inflexible (la gente comprará productos de tigre a cualquier precio). Todo esto conforma una receta ideal para el furtivismo.

De hecho, la caza furtiva es reconocida mundialmente como la amenaza más inmediata que pesa sobre los tigres silvestres. Esta caza ilegal ha borrado al tigre de varias reservas, y tiene el potencial para hacer desaparecer al resto en un abrir y cerrar de ojos. Mientras tanto, los nombres más importantes del mundo de la conservación del tigre se ocupan de discutir sobre diseños de reservas. Un sector ha propuesto "una solución del 6 %", en donde todos los recursos disponibles se concentren en conservar poblaciones que cuenten con más de 50 hembras reproductoras, abandonando al resto de los tigres a su suerte, mientras otro sector argumenta que, en nombre de la diversidad genética, también debemos proteger los corredores naturales.

No sé cuál es el mejor enfoque, si "a nivel local" o "a nivel integral", pero sí sé que ninguna de las dos propuestas se ocupa de la caza furtiva (que es un tema mucho más amplio e incluye conflictos entre la especie y los seres humanos, temas de manejo, y el sostenimiento de un número determinado de animales presa). De manera general, los autores - y hablamos de los más renombrados en términos de conservación del tigre - ofrecen muy pocas ideas para resolver estos temas. Se han pronunciado algunas frases muy conmovedoras sobre el valor de un tigre vivo superando el valor de uno muerto, pero se han tomado muy pocas medidas concretas para que esto suceda, tanto por parte de proveedores como de consumidores.

Todos, incluyendo el Banco Mundial, admiten que las estrategias actuales han fracasado. A pesar de haber sido anunciado como "un cambio en las reglas del juego", el plan de recuperación de la CGT es más de lo mismo. Lo que tenemos hoy es dinero fresco y a la vista. Y la misma gente que estaba detrás de esas estrategias que fracasaron, ahora quiere pago por adelantado si se les pide volver a intentarlo. Esto es alucinante.

¿Cómo puede ser que los expertos en tigres hayan fracasado? La respuesta es simple: todos ellos han utilizado fórmulas similares (que pueden ser efi-

caces para recaudar fondos), y no han considerado, mucho menos adoptado, aquellas medidas que caen fuera de su ámbito, o que son "polémicas" (lo que podría significar el anatema del desarrollo de fondos).

Entonces ¿Quién es el idiota? No sólo continuamos financiando trabajos que están condenados al fracaso (otra vez), sino también financiamos esfuerzos que no tienen una lógica. Por ejemplo, si la demanda pudiera ser abastecida con una fuente sostenible... ¿por qué no analizar una alternativa en esa dirección? Pero no. Nadie habla de tratar la demanda sino a través de "estrategias de reducción" (una de las cuales utiliza una campaña en Twitter) y más observancia de la ley. Incrementar los esfuerzos de observancia podría ser una idea buena y seguramente se puede mejorar en ese sentido, pero no al punto en que cueste más proteger un tigre silvestre que comprar uno en el mercado negro.

Debemos preguntarnos si realmente debemos confiar el futuro del tigre a las mismas estrategias - y organizaciones - que nos han llevado a la situación actual. Como dice el refrán: "Si usted sigue haciendo lo que siempre hizo, seguirá consiguiendo los mismos resultados."

Definitivamente, se necesita sangre nueva y pensamientos nuevos si queremos salvar al tigre silvestre. Tenemos que considerar seriamente cada solución posible desde la perspectiva de cada una de las diferentes disciplinas. Esto sin duda conllevará el tratamiento de ideas polémicas como la legalización del comercio (los tigres se reproducen como conejos en condiciones de cautiverio), los trofeos de caza, y el manejo de las reservas a manos de las comunidades rurales. Para el gran parte del mundo de la conservación, el término "polémico" significa "demasiado riesgoso". El día que el *status quo* se agote, también se habrán agotado los tigres silvestres.

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Since 1999, Kirsten has consulted with numerous wild cat research and conservation projects throughout Asia, including most tiger range states as well as Mongolia and the island of Borneo. A veteran of over a dozen missions to China, Kirsten's book, *Nine Lives: Saving Asia's Wild Cats*, is forthcoming.

A Regulated Trade in Rhino Horn

By Mike Eustace

There were said to have been 100,000 rhino in Africa in 1960. That number should have grown to 1.6 million today, at a growth rate of 6% p.a., but poaching has reduced it to less than 25,000, or 1.6% of what it should have been.

About 20,000 of Africa's 25,000 rhino are in South Africa.

CITES (The Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species) banned international trade in horn 35 years ago but all that the ban achieved was to push the trade underground where it has made money for criminals and not for conservation.

How would a regulated trade work?

South Africa could form one agency to control all the legal trade. The Agency would enter into partnerships with a few Chinese State Pharmaceutical companies and sell marked horn to them from legitimate suppliers such as KZN Wildlife and Sanparks.

The sale would not be an auction but a "sight". The way a sight works is for a buyer to be invited into a sales-room and be shown a parcel of several horns. He is told the weight and price for the par-

cel. He has to buy the whole parcel at the offered price or nothing. He knows that the wholesale price, which he is being offered, is half the retail price, so he will probably buy.

Some people caution that if there is a legal trade "there may not be enough rhino to meet the demand for rhino horn". That argument is spurious because price will always bring demand into balance with supply. The annual supply to the market now is about 400 horns. Demand is brought into balance with supply at a wholesale price of \$20,000, per Kg. We can collect 400 horns p.a. from natural deaths alone, i.e. 2% of our population. We also have stocks that would satisfy the current market volumes for 10 years. South Africa could easily supply 800 horns p.a. without having to kill one rhino.

Illegal goods typically sell at a discount of 30% and if the Chinese state is a partner in the legal trade then one can expect them to be more robust at closing down the illegal trade. The prices to the illegal trade will become less and their business risks much higher. The only way to get horn now is to poach and kill the animal. If there was a legal trade, South Africa would earn R200 million per annum for conservation and in 12 years time that would grow

to R400 million, and to R800 million in 24 years. These amounts are at current prices, not inflated prices. We would also have 80.000 rhino in 24 years time, and not fewer than 20.000, which is the current outlook.

The current ban on trade makes little sense. It seems to me that a regulated trade would be a better plan.

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Dignity and Determination Excerpt from The National, I'm Rex Murphy

March 17, 2011

I look at the pictures and I'm tempted to say "the poor Japanese." Not in any condescending way, or out of the detachment allowed by distance, but in a kind of sad wonder and admiration.

What an unutterable battering the poor Japanese, and their country, have taken in the last week or so.

Not enough to have a titanic earthquake - a magnitude 9; not enough half an hour later to have a ferocious 3-storey high tsunami roar with immense violence into the northern part of the island; not enough also, almost for cruel ornament, to have a volcano erupt; not enough to have the weather turn on them just then with snow and freezing temperatures in the area when some 500,000 are displaced; all of this blended in with the unfolding, high tension suspense over the crisis at its nuclear reactors.

Japan is being brutally hammered on so many different fronts, it is difficult to find any realistic comparison for what its citizens are enduring, as the world's attention whiplashes from the acknowl-

edged deaths and disaster, to the unfolding and ominous story of the reactors. Any one of these disasters would - temporarily - smash most countries, and summon the sympathy of all the world besides. But multiple, concurrent and overwhelming crises, against the backdrop of the economic one which, for the moment only, can be passed by, robs the mind of the power truly to comprehend the scope of what is going on.

And still amid all of this, amid their own shock, grief, alarm and pain, there are so many stories coming out of Japan of their quiet, deep resilience, their stoicism and their willingness, where possible, to opt for order and calm. We hear of people lining up for relief supplies, or read of others volunteering to distribute supplies in devastated areas, absent aid or government workers. When a cash register in a store stopped working - electrical failure - customers, in this context, returned items to their shelves.

Japanese culture is a great garment worked over the ages, sheltering them now from at least some of the awful cold.

Maybe it's a sad paradox, but I sense because Japan and its people are setting such a standard, because they are, within the boundaries of what is possible there now, doing all that they can do with minimal posturing or display, the international community is not as alert to, not as vigorous and swift and passionate in its response, as it could be.

The earthquake, the tsunami, the volcano, the reactors, the weather, the economy - they have ripped the island of Japan and shattered the country in ways it will take years to repair and rebuild. But not even these horrific and combined forces have broken the great code of community; of self-

discipline and dignity. The citizens of Japan are setting wonderfully high standards in their determination and fortitude, even as they must be reeling from personal tragedies of the deepest pathos and sorrow over the partial ruin of their very country and the loss of so many loved ones.

Rex Murphy, a respected Canadian national commentator who captures the positive voices that have appeared widely in the print and electronic media. Rex Murphy's commentary is at <http://www.cbc.ca/thenational/indepthanalysis/rexmurphy/story/2011/03/17/thenational-rexmurphy-110317.html>

Noteworthy

A most interesting article by Dan Goodman entitled "The Future of the IWC: Why the Initiative to Save the International Whaling Commission Failed" published in the Journal of International Wildlife Law and Policy by Routledge Taylor & Francis Group is available on <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~db=all~content=g934947695>

Amazing and Sweet...

- As 'wars' increase and more people are displaced as refugees, 'natural disasters' escalate causing huge concerns for nations, and famines decrease the amount of food available, we should look at our abundant marine resources for the purposes of humanitarian aid.

John McDougall

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- Nunavut to Winnipeg has meant big changes for Annie Bowkett, 54, who runs a small company making super warm, traditional Inuit clothing. For one thing, she can't get used to "southern food," as she puts it. So she has caribou, beluga whale meat and Arctic char shipped from home. Some of it she boils but most of it she and husband, Roy, eat raw. Neither Bowkett can get used to "men's knives," as she calls our common utensil. Instead, she uses a traditional ulu -- it's a short, crescent-shaped blade with a hand grip on it like on a corkscrew. (Winnipeg Free Press | February 28, 2011) (Source: Fur Institute of Canada)