



Panthera Targets Illegal Wildlife Trade with Leading Edge Anti-Poaching and Law Enforcement Initiative

Advanced Training and Technology Aim to End Illegal Killing of Wild Cats

October 14, 2015

New York, NY - Panthera, the global wild cat conservation organization, today announced that it will scale up a multi-pronged site security initiative to halt the illegal killing of wild cats for their body parts, a multi-billion dollar industry with links to human trafficking and international terrorism. In tests, Panthera's industry-leading approach, which combines intensive training of local patrols, state-of-the-art surveillance and communications technology, and partnerships with local and international law enforcement and NGOs, has led to arrests in several countries where the approach has been implemented, including Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Nepal.

At the heart of Panthera's approach is its own "PoacherCam," a custom-designed camera trap which uses advanced proprietary technology to detect poaching activity and alert law enforcement officials in real-time. Panthera intends to roll out 500 of the latest version of its camera in 2016 in countries like Nepal, Malaysia and Thailand, with thousands more to be deployed in Asia and at sites throughout Southern and Western Africa by 2018.

"The killing of tigers and other wild cats to feed the illegal wildlife trade is an insidious and increasingly organized global scourge that must be stopped," said Dr. Luke Hunter, President and Chief Conservation Officer of Panthera. "For several years, Panthera has been developing its triple pronged response of advanced training, technology and teamwork to counter illegal wildlife killing. We are very encouraged by the early results at our Asian test sites and intend to roll out this effort across many of the world's big cat strongholds. To ensure the future of wild cats and all wildlife threatened by poaching, our response needs to be as real, urgent and far-reaching as the threat."

Training in Best Practices in Site Security

Under the direction of Nick Beale, Head of Security and Operations, Panthera has developed a site security training program designed to provide local rangers and park guards with the skills to detect and safely apprehend poachers. The training programs, which are customized to each site and the needs of the anti-poaching teams on the ground, are among the most comprehensive offered today. Conducted by Panthera's team of highly-trained ex-military, law enforcement and security services personnel, the solutions offered range from basic military patrolling skills to intelligence gathering in rural environments to advanced tactical training in rapid response operations. Panthera has piloted the program with more than 13 partners in core tiger range sites in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal and Thailand. To date, Panthera has provided hundreds of new recruits and long standing wildlife law enforcement personnel with world class training to meet the urgent need to counter poaching activity. Plans to expand the program to Africa to build up on-the-ground forces equipped to counter rampant lion and leopard poaching are slated to start in January 2016.

"Providing frontline staff with the training, equipment and motivation they need to prevent wild cats from being killed in their natural habitats is the most important action we can take right now to ensure their long-term survival," said Beale. "Over time, the information our partners are gathering on the ground and sharing with key partners in local, national and international law enforcement, including INTERPOL, will be instrumental in providing the intelligence necessary to disrupt the illegal trafficking of wildlife and bring a halt to the killing of wild cats and other animals for their body parts."

Advanced Tools and Technology

Panthera's camera trap, first designed and implemented in 2007 with a motion-triggered detection system, has been redesigned so that it communicates over cellular (GSM) networks in real time. The new V6 camera uses an invisible infrared flash to enable covert image capture at night when poaching activity is at its height. Onboard image analysis software allows the cameras to distinguish between human and animal movement and transmit only human activity to the alert system. Also new in this version is two-way communication capability that allows for site security personnel to receive images in real-time on cellular-enabled devices, as well as to modify the camera's programming remotely. All images will be stored in a centralized database accessible by law enforcement to aid in the rapid identification, capture and prosecution of poachers. Panthera is currently testing technology that will establish cellular networks in remote areas to broaden the program's reach and effectiveness.

In addition, Panthera will train patrols to operate at night, supplying military-grade night vision equipment to aid in the detection of poaching activity.

Local, Regional and International Collaboration

Working closely with its partners, Panthera has established a number of informant networks that allow for a flow of critical information on poaching activity in areas of concern. With that intelligence, augmented by the real-time images captured by Panthera's PoacherCams, Panthera and its partners are working with local, national and international law enforcement agencies to improve information sharing that can rapidly identify poachers and help expedite their arrests and prosecution.

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