



## Press Release

### Bonita and Atan, A Pair of Sumatran Tigers

#### Ready to Release to Nature

**Dharmasraya, 29 July 2019** - After undergoing necessary procedures for their rescue and rehabilitation, Sumatran tigers named Bonita and Atan Bintang will be returned to their natural habitat in Riau.

Bonita, a female Sumatran tiger, was rescued from the area of PT Indo Plantations in Tanjung Simpang Village, Pelangiran District, Indragiri Hilir Regency on 3 January 2018. While Atan Bintang, a male tiger, was rescued from a local settlement at Pulau Burung, Indragiri Hilir Regency on 18 November 2018.

The Ministry of Environment and Forestry (Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan/KLHK) in cooperation with the Dharmasraya Sumatran Tiger Rehabilitation Center - ARSARI Djojohadikusumo Foundation (PR-HSD Yayasan ARSARI), along with other stakeholders have previously carried out a series of rehabilitation on "Bonita" and "Atan" to prepare their release back into their natural habitat.

Wiratno, the Director General of Natural Resources and Ecosystem Conservation of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam dan Ekosistem Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan / KSDAE KLHK), stated that success in animal conservation depends on cooperation of everyone involved. He further elaborated data from the Sumatran tiger PVA that showed the population of Sumatran tigers in the wild currently numbers 603 individuals, scattered in 23 habitats.

"Furthermore, data from the Directorate General of KSDAE shows that more than 50% of the population of endangered animals are currently outside conservation areas such as production forests and protected forests," added Wiratno.

Thus, he stated, it is important to involve stakeholders such as concession managers, local governments, indigenous people, and NGOs in conservation efforts.

"We hope that from now on, endangered animals including Sumatran tigers outside the conservation area can be protected along with other wild animals in conservation areas. The spirit of cooperation is the key to future synergies," Wiratno concluded.

The initiator and founder of PR-HSD, Hashim Djojohadikusumo, stated that PR-HSD is committed to continue to support government efforts to conserve and increase the population of Sumatran tigers.

Hashim further added that since its inauguration by the Minister of LHK on 29 July 2017, PR-HSD has rehabilitated 6 individual tigers with 4 individuals successfully released back into their natural habitat. 29 July is also celebrated as Global Tiger Day by countries around the world.

"Currently, we are still treating one Sumatran tiger who has just been rescued from Padang Lawas, North Sumatra. Sumatran tigers are a symbol of ecosystem conservation, as their existence is only possible if their habitat in forests are in good condition," Hashim stated.

On another note, the Head of the Conservation of Natural Resources (*Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam*) /KSDA) Office at West Sumatra, Erly Sukrismanto, expressed that conservation efforts need cooperation of many parties. Thus, BKSDA West Sumatra continues to cooperate with other Technical Implementation Unit of KLHK and other stakeholders in rescuing endangered animals, especially Sumatran tigers.

"This is the third release done in collaboration between KSDA West Sumatra with PR-HSD, with a total of 4 rehabilitated Sumatran tigers has been released into the wild. This case is particularly unique as we released a pair of male-female tigers." Erly informed.

He explained that the tigers are fitted with GPS Collar device donated by the ARSARI Djojohadikusumo Foundation to monitor Bonita and Atan Bintang after release. The data provided by the GPS Collars will let them know the movement of these tigers to observe home range and adaptation in their new habitat.

"The KSDA Office at West Sumatra together with the KSDA Regional Office at Riau and PR-HSD of ARSARI Foundation will continue to monitor the Sumatran tigers for minimum a month after their release," he explained.

It was also in this occasion that Suharyono, Head of KSDA Regional Office at Riau, added that his team and partners has conducted a study for prospective release sites for Sumatran tigers.

"We take into account factors such as distance from human settlements, the availability of prey, and the low level of threat to decide on release sites," Suharyono explained.

He hoped that the release of Sumatran tigers in Riau Province will be able to restore the population of Sumatran tigers in this region and preserve the tigers in their natural habitat.

With the release of these two tigers, the number of tigers who have been successfully rehabilitated by PR-HSD and released into their natural habitat are now 4 individuals in total.

**For more information, please refer to the contact below:**

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