

# Save a Tree. Save Me!

## SUMATRAN TIGER

The Sumatran tiger is the smallest of the tiger subspecies and is the only tiger to have a white 'beard'. Its smaller size allows it to move through the forest quickly. Its stripes are thinner than those of other tigers, assisting with camouflage in the shadows. Unlike other cats, tigers like to swim. Sumatran tigers have partial webbing between their toes, which makes them fast swimmers.

Tigers are carnivores and will eat whatever they can catch, including fish and fowl; among their larger prey are crocodiles, wild pigs and deer. The Sumatran tiger will often chase hoofed animals into the water — their hoofs indicate that they can't swim very well and are an easy catch.

The tiger is a solitary animal. A male will control a territory that contains a number of females. Males mark their territories by spraying scent on trees or bushes.

Sumatran tigers are listed as critically endangered. A major cause for their decline in numbers is habitat destruction. They have also been hunted by poachers for their body parts, which are used in some traditional medicines.

Eight subspecies of tiger once stalked the Earth; only five are left. The Javan, Bali and Caspian tigers became extinct in the twentieth century. There are only about 7500 tigers left in the wild, so it's heartening to know that all major zoos in Australia are involved in a regional breeding program for Sumatran tigers.

### Zoos

Find out the nearest zoo to your school that has Sumatran tigers. As a class, visit the zoo's website to research more about the tigers and what the zoo is doing to help save them. Zoo staff may be able to give your class ideas on how they can help save the Sumatran tiger—from adopting a tiger at the zoo, to raising funds or public awareness. If possible, organise a class trip to the zoo to see the tigers!

### Spread the Word

Ask students why they think rainforests are being destroyed. Explain to the class that people around the world use wood from rainforests to make furniture, flooring and buildings, paper and fuel. The land is then used to grow oil palm trees—the oil is used worldwide in many foods and cosmetics we use every day. The more native rainforest that is destroyed, the less habitat and food there is for tigers and orangutans.

Ask students what we could do to help save rainforests, Sumatran tigers and orangutans. Suggest to them that if everyone stopped buying things made from rainforest timber or products containing palm oil, there would be no incentive to destroy rainforests. Ask pairs of students to design posters to spread this message. Advise the groups that effective posters are eye-catching and have a high-impact message. They could include a list of do's and don'ts. Each pair should present their poster to the class, which could then be used in a class display.

### Protection of the Environment

Ask students if it would be a good idea to drain the school pond and replace it with an adventure playground. Obviously most would love to have a new playground but at what expense

would it come? Ask them what would happen to the animals and plants that live in and around the pond and if they'd be able to survive without it. If there is no other similar habitat nearby, the chances are that the animals and plants wouldn't survive. Explain to the class that this is the case when rainforests are destroyed. In Indonesia, the equivalent of 300 football fields of rainforest is cleared every hour! Indonesia is one of the five most species-diverse countries in the world—it is home to 12% of all mammal species, 16% of all reptile and amphibian species, and 17% of all bird species. What would happen to all of these animals if rainforests continue to be destroyed?



### Rainforest Riddle!

Ask students to fill in the blanks of the following riddle with an endangered rainforest animal of their choice. A template can be downloaded from the Teacher Toolkit ([www.scholastic.com.au/toolkit](http://www.scholastic.com.au/toolkit)).

I am \_\_\_\_\_ (colour).

I have \_\_\_\_\_ (number) legs.

I have \_\_\_\_\_ (scales / fur / feathers / a hard body).

I live \_\_\_\_\_ (on the ground / in the trees).

I \_\_\_\_\_ (slither / walk / run / fly).

Include one other fact about the animal.

What animal am I?

### Recycled Rain

Students may be surprised to discover that rainforests help to create their own wet climates. This process, called transpiration, is made possible by a lush plant population. The rain that falls on the ground in the rainforest is quickly sucked up by the trees' roots. Trees use some of the rainwater to help them grow, but they put almost half of the water back into the air through tiny openings in the leaves.

Demonstrate this process with a simple experiment with a potted house plant. Cover some or all of the leaves with a clear, dry plastic bag. Use a rubber band, a twist-tie or tape to keep the bag tightly closed. Wait several days, after which water droplets should be present in the bag. Point out to students that you have simulated a water cycle in the bag. Ask students to imagine how much water all the plants in a rainforest could produce. Advise students that rainforests give off enough water to affect weather all around the world.