



WCS Cambodia 2017 Activity Report



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WCS - WE STAND FOR WILDLIFE

Founded in 1895 as the New York Zoological Society, the Wildlife Conservation Society was one of the first conservation organizations in the U.S. The Society began with a clear mandate: Advance wildlife conservation, promote the study of zoology, and create a first-class zoo. In fact we have five: the Bronx Zoo, Central Park Zoo, Queens Zoo, Prospect Park Zoo, and New York Aquarium.

WCS envisions a world where wildlife thrives in healthy lands and seas, valued by societies that embrace and benefit from the diversity and integrity of life on earth.

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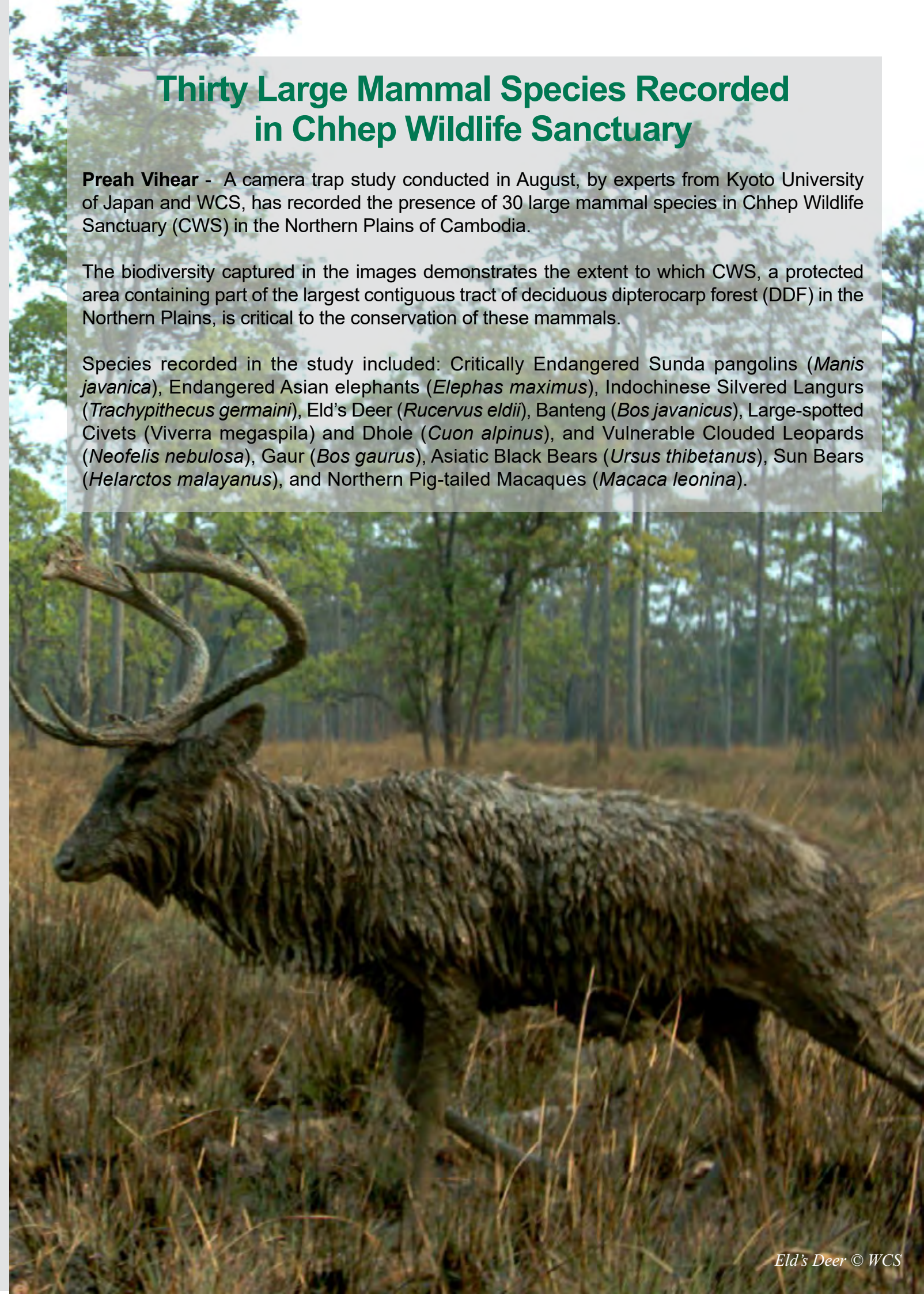
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Thirty Large Mammal Species Recorded in Chhep Wildlife Sanctuary

Preah Vihear - A camera trap study conducted in August, by experts from Kyoto University of Japan and WCS, has recorded the presence of 30 large mammal species in Chhep Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS) in the Northern Plains of Cambodia.

The biodiversity captured in the images demonstrates the extent to which CWS, a protected area containing part of the largest contiguous tract of deciduous dipterocarp forest (DDF) in the Northern Plains, is critical to the conservation of these mammals.

Species recorded in the study included: Critically Endangered Sunda pangolins (*Manis javanica*), Endangered Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*), Indochinese Silvered Langurs (*Trachypithecus germaini*), Eld's Deer (*Rucervus eldii*), Banteng (*Bos javanicus*), Large-spotted Civets (*Viverra megaspila*) and Dhole (*Cuon alpinus*), and Vulnerable Clouded Leopards (*Neofelis nebulosa*), Gaur (*Bos gaurus*), Asiatic Black Bears (*Ursus thibetanus*), Sun Bears (*Helarctos malayanus*), and Northern Pig-tailed Macaques (*Macaca leonina*).



Pulling Together to Rescue 11 Asian Elephants From the Mud

Mondulkiri - The rescue of 11 Asian Elephants (*Elephas maximus*) from an irrigation pool inside Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary, Mondulkiri Province, on 24th March 2017 avoided a tragedy for wildlife conservation in Cambodia.

“If the community had not got together with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), ELIE and the Department of Environment to rescue these 11 Asian Elephants, this would have been a tragedy,” said Tan Setha, WCS Technical Advisor to the protected area.

“This herd consisted of three adult females and eight juveniles of various ages, including a male that had almost reached maturity. These elephants represent an important part of the breeding population in Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary, and their loss would have been a major blow for conservation.”

The mud hole where the elephants were trapped was a bomb crater left over from the Vietnam War that had been enlarged by farmers to store water. When local farmers discovered the elephants they notified the Department of Environment, who in turn notified WCS who were able to mobilize a rescue.

“This is a great example of everyone working together in Cambodia to save wildlife,” said Dr Ross Sinclair, WCS Country Director.

“Too often the stories around conservation are about conflict and failure, but this is one about cooperation and success. That the last elephant to be rescued needed everyone to pull together on a rope to drag it to safety is symbolic of how we have to work together for conservation” he added.





Lesser Adjutant Conservation in the Northern Plains of Cambodia

Preah Vihear - After being guarded by local community members for almost three months, 172 Lesser Adjutant chicks have been successfully protected in the Northern Plains, so far this nesting season.

The Lesser Adjutant (*Leptoptilos javanicus*) is a large stork reaching 130cm in height with a wingspan exceeding two meters. Despite a global upper population estimate of 10,000 mature individuals, Lesser Adjutants are experiencing rapid population declines, and their range is undergoing widespread contraction. As a result, the Lesser Adjutant is listed as Globally Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of Threatened species.

WCS has employed local community members to protect nesting colonies threatened by egg collection, predation and loss of habitat. In the Northern Plains nest protection is sustainably financed by revenue from the eco-tourism partner of WCS, Sam Veasna Centre who bring bird watchers to see the birds of the Northern Plains. Additional support from our donors Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, also supports the conservation of these threatened species.



First Nest of Critically Endangered Siamese Crocodile Recorded in Sre Ambel River System

Koh Kong - In July conservationists from the Fisheries Administration (FiA), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and local communities found a nest with 19 eggs of the Critically Endangered Siamese Crocodile in Kean-to pond, near Preah Angkeo Village, Dongpheng Commune, Sre Ambel District, Koh Kong Province, while searching for tracks, signs, and dung of wild crocodiles in the area. This is the first Siamese Crocodile nest recorded in six years of research and protection in the Sre Ambel River System.

Siamese Crocodile (*Crocodylus siamensis*) is listed on IUCN Red List as Critically Endangered, because its global population is declining at alarming rate. This species lives only in Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam. Its global population is around 410 adult Siamese Crocodiles, while 100-300 wild adult Siamese Crocodiles live in Cambodia, making it the most important country for the conservation of this species.

Siamese Crocodile faces many threats to their survival. In Cambodia, threats include illegal hunting of adults and hatchlings and collecting of eggs to supply crocodile farms in Cambodia, Vietnam, and Thailand, especially during the last two decades. Other threats are habitat degradation, decrease of natural food supply, low chance of breeding in the wild due to low number of individuals in the wild and weak law enforcement such as regulations on crocodile farming and trading.

"I am delighted to see this Siamese Crocodile nest because previously we found only its tracks and dung. This is the first nest of Siamese Crocodile found on the Sre Ambel in six years," said In Hul, FiA counterpart staff of WCS.

"To avoid any threats, we moved the eggs to a safe place to hatch and track their progress," he added.

The Sre Ambel River is famous because it is the only place in Cambodia where the Royal Turtle can be found. The Royal Turtle was believed extinct in Cambodia until 2000 when a small population was re-discovered by FiA and WCS in the Sre Ambel River System. Earlier this year, the conservation group also found a nest of globally Endangered Asian Giant Softshell Turtle in this river system.

"This finding shows the global importance of the Sre Ambel River system for reptile conservation, as it is home to the Critically Endangered Siamese Crocodile and Royal turtle, the national reptile of Cambodia, as well as globally Endangered Asian Giant Softshell Turtle," said Som Sitha, WCS's Technical Advisor for the Sre Ambel Conservation Project.

"Protecting the Sre Ambel River system is needed to ensure the survival of these important reptile species," he added.

WCS would like to thanks our long-term donor Wildlife Reserve Singapore for providing financial support to the project.

Signing Ceremony of Keo Seima's REDD+ Carbon Project Agreement

Phnom Penh - The Royal Government of Cambodia and the Wildlife Conservation Society signed an official Project Agreement for the Keo Seima REDD+ Project (Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) today witnessed by H.E. Say Samal, Minister of Environment and U.S. Ambassador William A. Heidt, at the offices of the Ministry of Environment. The signing ceremony was part of the first large carbon sale for Cambodia and will initiate sustainable financing to protect Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary (KWS), formerly known as the Seima Protection Forest. This globally important site is home to more than 60 species of animal and plants that are threatened with extinction. The area is of international importance for the conservation of primates, including the world's largest known populations of black-shanked douc and southern yellow-cheeked crested gibbons, and is important for many species of wild cats, Asian elephants, Banteng and several bird species. The lush forests of Keo Seima are also a store of millions of tonnes of carbon.

“On July 27, Royal Government of Cambodia through the Ministry of Environment released information about carbon credit sale of Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary to an international corporate buyer,” said H.E Say Samal, Environment Minister. “This is the first large carbon sale for Cambodia that will provide sustainable financing of Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary. This is a great achievement for forest and wildlife protection and community development in Cambodia, and for sustainable financing of these efforts.” Keo Seima's REDD+ Project proves that Cambodia is ready for performance based payment for climate change mitigation. It demonstrates a result from the commitment of the Royal Government of Cambodia to protecting forests, conserving biodiversity and improving local livelihoods,” added H.E Say Samal.

“Protecting Cambodia's forests and helping the country combat climate change are priorities for the U.S. government,” said U.S. Ambassador William A. Heidt. “These are global issues that are significant beyond Cambodia's borders. A partnership between an iconic American company and Cambodia is a symbol to the world that there are innovative ways to protect the earth and a wide variety of partners who can help. We are proud to have supported this partnership and will continue to help develop strategies that make forests more valuable standing than they would be cut down.”

“The ceremony today represents a significant achievement for sustainable financing of forest conservation in Cambodia,” said Ross Sinclair, WCS's Director Cambodia Program. “It is also about the strong partnership between WCS, the Royal Government of Cambodia, local communities, and development partners like USAID.”

The project agreement will oversee several activities that will help protect the Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary and the communities that live in and around its forests. It will support a full range of conservation and forest management activities including the training of Cambodian government staff in forest and wildlife management. Equally as important, it will help the communities living in and around these forests to improve their livelihoods by using forest's resources in a sustainable way.

The Keo Seima REDD+ project started in 2010 and is being implemented by the Ministry of Environment (formerly by the Forestry Administration) and WCS in Mondulkiri and Kratie provinces, with financial support from USAID's Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project implemented by Winrock International, as well as other donors.



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Over 150 Asian Giant Softshell Turtles Returns to the Wild

Kratie – In June WCS in collaboration with Cambodia's Fisheries Administration (FiA) and the Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA) released 150 Endangered Asian Giant Softshell Turtle hatchlings into their natural habitat along the Mekong River.

The hatchlings are part of a community protection program designed to increase the wild population of the species, and had been collected from nests that were guarded by local communities.

The Asian Giant Softshell Turtle (*Pelochelys cantorii*) is listed on the IUCN Red List as globally Endangered. It was thought extinct in the Cambodian portion of the Mekong River until re-discovery in 2007 in a 48-kilometer stretch of the river between Kratie and Stung Treng Provinces.

"The purpose of this release is to increase the wild population of the Asian Giant Softshell Turtle," said Mr. Sun Yoeung, WCS's Asian Giant Softshell Turtle Conservation Project Coordinator.

"As the project pays local people as guardians and rangers, the release will also increase local incomes and encourage the support and involvement of local communities in conserving the species," he added.

The release is part of a project that has been ongoing since 2007, formerly run by Conservation International (CI), and now by WCS in collaboration with the FiA and TSA. The community-based protection program encourages the participation of local communities living in Kratie and Stung Treng Provinces by hiring former nest collectors to search for and protect nests, instead of harvesting the eggs. Since 2007, 378 nests have been protected and 8528 hatchlings released.

"Protection with all participants is needed to conserve the Asian Giant Softshell Turtle from extinction," said Mr Ouk Vibol, Director of Fisheries Conservation Department of Fisheries Administration.

"Collection of eggs or adults for consumption or sale is illegal in Cambodia. Everyone can help conserve Asian Giant Softshell Turtles by not buying or eating their meat or eggs."

Conservation of the Asian Giant Softshell Turtle along the Mekong River would not be possible without the support of the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), CI and the TSA.

Gibbon Habituation at Jahoo Gibbon Camp Shows Positive Results

Mondulkiri - Habituation of Yellow-cheeked Crested Gibbon (*Nomascus gabriellae*) in the forest surrounding Jahoo Gibbon Camp - Andoung Kralong's community-based ecotourism project inside Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary - is allowing tourists visiting the area a unique insight into the life of these primates. A group of tourists recently visiting Jahoo Gibbon Camp sighted and spent over half an hour watching the gibbons.

“By spending so much time in the forest following the gibbons, they become used to our presence, meaning that tourists can come and easily observe the gibbons in their natural habitat without disturbing them,” said Ms. Harri Washington, Ecotourism Consultant in Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary.

Those visitors made an extra payment into the community's development fund that can be used to develop social services in the community. The extra payment is for the privilege of seeing two globally Endangered species of primate - Yellow-cheeked Crested Gibbon and Black-shanked Douc Langur - in forest that is protected by the community at Andoung Kralong.

WCS, working with the local community, has been habituating two groups of Yellow-cheeked Crested Gibbons in the forest surrounding Jahoo Gibbon Camp. One group is made up of a pair (a male and a female) and the other is a family group of six.

For sixteen days every month, two local gibbon researchers get up before dawn and spend the morning in the forest looking for one of our two groups, and collecting data on their behaviour and tolerance of human contact. Collected data is being analyzed, and results will be used to help improve the habituation process.



WCS Supports Decision by Ministry of Mines and Energy to Stop Sand Dredging in Sre Ambel River System

Koh Kong – WCS supports the Ministry of Mines and Energy's (MME) decision to stop all types of sand dredging activities in Sre Amble River system in Koh Kong Province and ban all export to abroad. The circular and declaration was issued on 10 July 2017.

This decision reflects strong commitment and efforts from MME in avoiding the negative impacts from sand dredging activities on the environment, fisheries, local communities as well as the protection of biodiversity, including Royal Turtles.

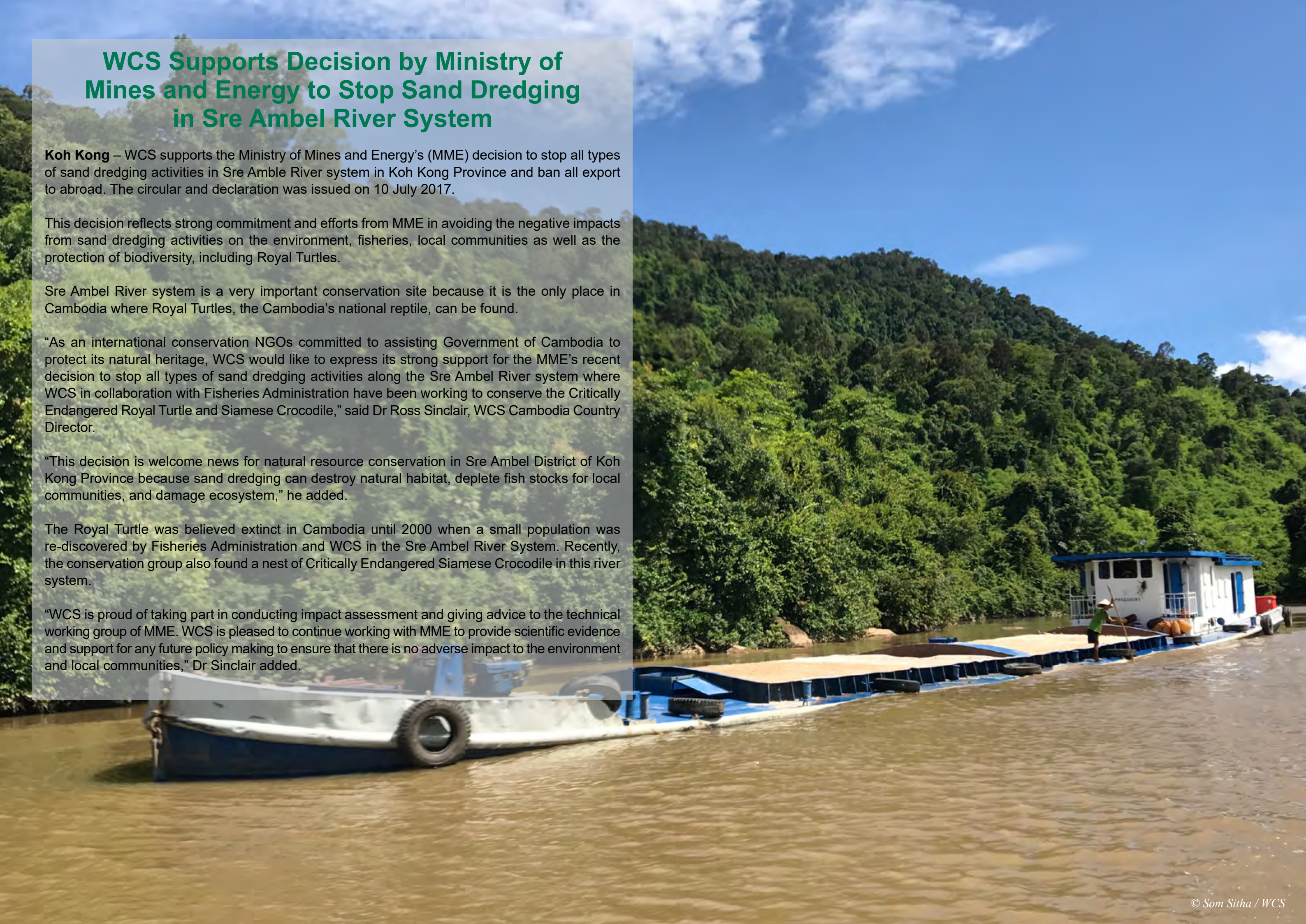
Sre Ambel River system is a very important conservation site because it is the only place in Cambodia where Royal Turtles, the Cambodia's national reptile, can be found.

“As an international conservation NGOs committed to assisting Government of Cambodia to protect its natural heritage, WCS would like to express its strong support for the MME's recent decision to stop all types of sand dredging activities along the Sre Ambel River system where WCS in collaboration with Fisheries Administration have been working to conserve the Critically Endangered Royal Turtle and Siamese Crocodile,” said Dr Ross Sinclair, WCS Cambodia Country Director.

“This decision is welcome news for natural resource conservation in Sre Ambel District of Koh Kong Province because sand dredging can destroy natural habitat, deplete fish stocks for local communities, and damage ecosystem,” he added.

The Royal Turtle was believed extinct in Cambodia until 2000 when a small population was re-discovered by Fisheries Administration and WCS in the Sre Ambel River System. Recently, the conservation group also found a nest of Critically Endangered Siamese Crocodile in this river system.

“WCS is proud of taking part in conducting impact assessment and giving advice to the technical working group of MME. WCS is pleased to continue working with MME to provide scientific evidence and support for any future policy making to ensure that there is no adverse impact to the environment and local communities,” Dr Sinclair added.



USAID Donates Patrolling Equipment to Rangers

Preah Vihear - Twenty government rangers working to protect forest and wildlife in Chhep Wildlife Sanctuary received much needed patrolling equipment from USAID's Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project implemented by Winrock international. The donation will help improve on-the-ground action combating illegal activities, such as illegal logging, poaching and land clearance in the wildlife sanctuary.

Equipment included essentials such as boots, hammocks, tents, raincoats and flashlights that will support patrolling activities, especially during rainy season.





Asian Elephant © WCS

Wildlife Images in Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary Confirms Site’s Importance for Conservation

Mondulkiri - Recent images from hidden cameras placed in Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary (KSWS), in Kratie and Mondulkiri Provinces, have confirmed the protected area’s ongoing importance for many of Cambodia’s most charismatic species. Wildlife recorded include Asian Elephant, Guar, Banteng, Sambar, Wild Pig, Leopard Cat, Macaque species (Pig-tailed, Long-tailed and Stump-tailed), East Asian Porcupine, Large-spotted Civet, Lesser Oriental Chevrotain, Green Peafowl, Germain’s Peacock Pheasant and other wild birds.

In April this year, WCS’s Wildlife Research and Monitoring Team placed hidden cameras (called camera trap) traps at natural waterholes and wildlife hotspots in order to record wild mammals and birds living in KSWS. This study was to check for the continued presence of difficult to see wildlife.

“This study again confirms that key wildlife species are still living in KSWS, making it a very important protected area in Cambodia for wildlife conservation,” said Sot Vandoeun, WCS’s Wildlife Research and Monitoring Team Leader.

KSWS is of international importance for the conservation of primates (including the world’s largest known populations of Black-shanked Douc and Southern Yellow-cheeked Crested Gibbons), Wild Cats, Asian Elephants, Wild Cattles and several species of birds. However, these important species are under threats due to illegal poaching and habitat loss that requires strong protection to secure their lives and habitat.

“Strengthening law enforcement is critical to ensure Cambodia’s unique wildlife remain in KSWS. We need government and local communities to work together to reduce threats on KSWS’s forests and wildlife resources,” said Soth Vandoeun said. “All Cambodians also play a key role in conserving wildlife by refusing to buy and eat wild meat,” he added.

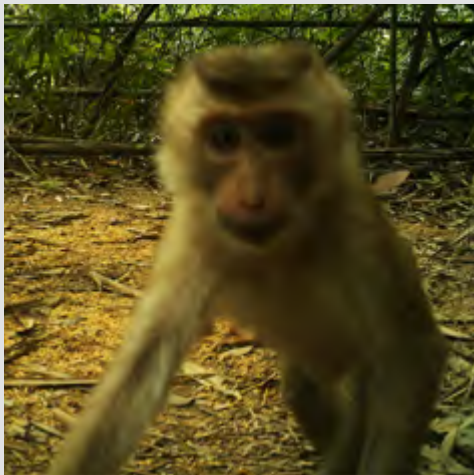
Effective management of Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary would not be possible without the support of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and Fonds Français pour l’Environnement Mondial (FFEM), and the European Union (EU).



Guar © WCS



Germain’s Peacock Pheasant © WCS



Pig-tailed Macaque © WCS



Wild Pig © WCS



Ibis Rice Improves Local Livelihood and Wildlife Conservation

Preah Vihear – A first-ever milestone event brought together Cambodian officials and others. The IBIS Rice initiative began when we discovered how endangered animals, like the Giant Ibis, were competing with humans for the same prized natural resources in one of the last remaining ecosystems of its kind. The humans were winning, obviously, and the Ibis was as good as extinct. So, together with local farmers, we devised a plan where man and animal could coexist while actually improving the state of their habitat.

We buy paddy (rice still in its husk or not yet threshed) directly from the farmers - paying up to 50% above market price. We process, package, market and sell a range of jasmine wholefoods and snacks, allowing the farmers to focus on working their land. In exchange, they commit to zero deforestation and zero poaching, certifying them as Wildlife Friendly and preserving a slice of one of Southeast Asia's most diverse ecosystems.

1,000 farmers from 12 remote villages are now certified or on their way, and, as a result, the Giant Ibis population is slowly recovering, along with a number of other threatened species. Our satellite monitoring team is watching out for deforestation, Cambodia's top restaurants are serving our pure jasmine rice and major supermarkets across the country have our products on their shelves

Success of Local Nest Protection Gives Hope of Worldwide Conservation of Globally Endangered Greater Adjutant

Battambang - Endangered Greater Adjutant chicks have successfully fledged from 175 nests in the Prek Toal Ramsar Site in Cambodia and disbursed across the country. The nests were protected for six months by conservationists from Cambodia's Ministry of Environment (MoE), Prek Toal village, and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).

The Greater Adjutant (*Leptoptilos dubius*) is the largest stork species in the world, reaching 1.5 meters in height, and is listed on the IUCN Red List as Endangered. An estimated 800-1,000 mature individuals exist globally and 150-200 pairs live in Prek Toal, the only known breeding site in Southeast Asia.

"I am proud of working with my team to conserve this rare bird and am happy to see Greater Adjutants and other important waterbirds living and breeding safely here," said Chhan Chhoum, former egg collector and now a nest protector. "Local people in Prek Toal recognize the importance of waterbird conservation and the fact that these birds are providing a sustainable source of income through ecotourism."

Prek Toal is home to the world's second largest Greater Adjutant breeding colony after that in Assam, India. The site is the premier freshwater wetland area on the Tonle Sap Great Lake, and is well known for its incredible biological, social and economic resources. In October 2015, Prek Toal was designated a Ramsar Site due to its global significance for conservation.

WCS has been working with the MoE to conserve Prek Toal's flooded forests and biodiversity for nearly 20 years. This program began with the recruitment of 20 rangers and other local community members (half of whom at one point illegally collected eggs for food and sales), to serve as nest protectors. Most of those original recruits are still working for the project today.

"Prek Toal is the most important habitat for waterbirds in Cambodia. Over 130 waterbird species live and breed in this area," said Sun Visal, Waterbirds Monitoring and Research Team Leader with WCS and MoE at the Prek Toal Ramsar Site.

"I would urge all local communities, authorities at all levels and development partners to continue cooperation and support of conservation activities in Prek Toal to safeguard its priceless waterbirds and natural habitat," he added.

WCS conservation efforts in Prek Toal are supported by Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund. The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation, and the World Bank. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation.



Spatial Planning for Expanded Protected Area Network

2016 saw the expansion of the protected area network in Cambodia from 3 million hectares to over 7 million hectares. WCS Cambodia provided GIS and remote sensing support to the Ministry of Environment throughout this process. This included the identification delineation of key habitats using field observations and high resolution remote sensing imagery and, in collaboration with UNDP, the development of decision support planning tools and analyses to aid in the zonation of this protected network. Following the collection of spatial data from Ministries, development partners, and NGOs a multi-criteria framework was developed to identify potential critical habitat and areas suitable for sustainable use.

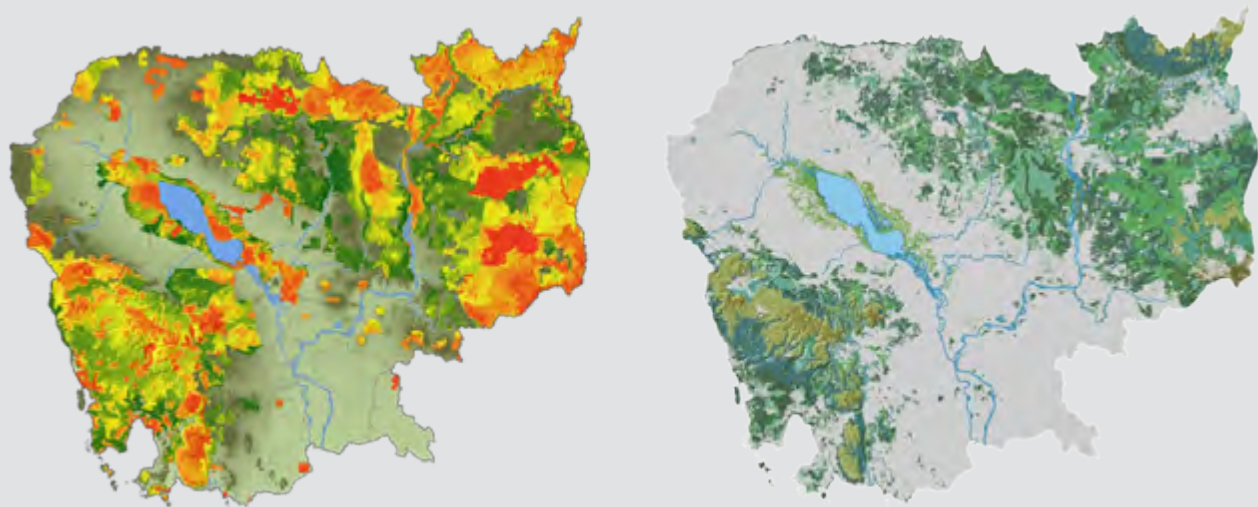


Figure 1. On left is a map of forest ecosystems created to inform the analysis. The map on right identifies critical habitat, with red areas being the most ecologically important.

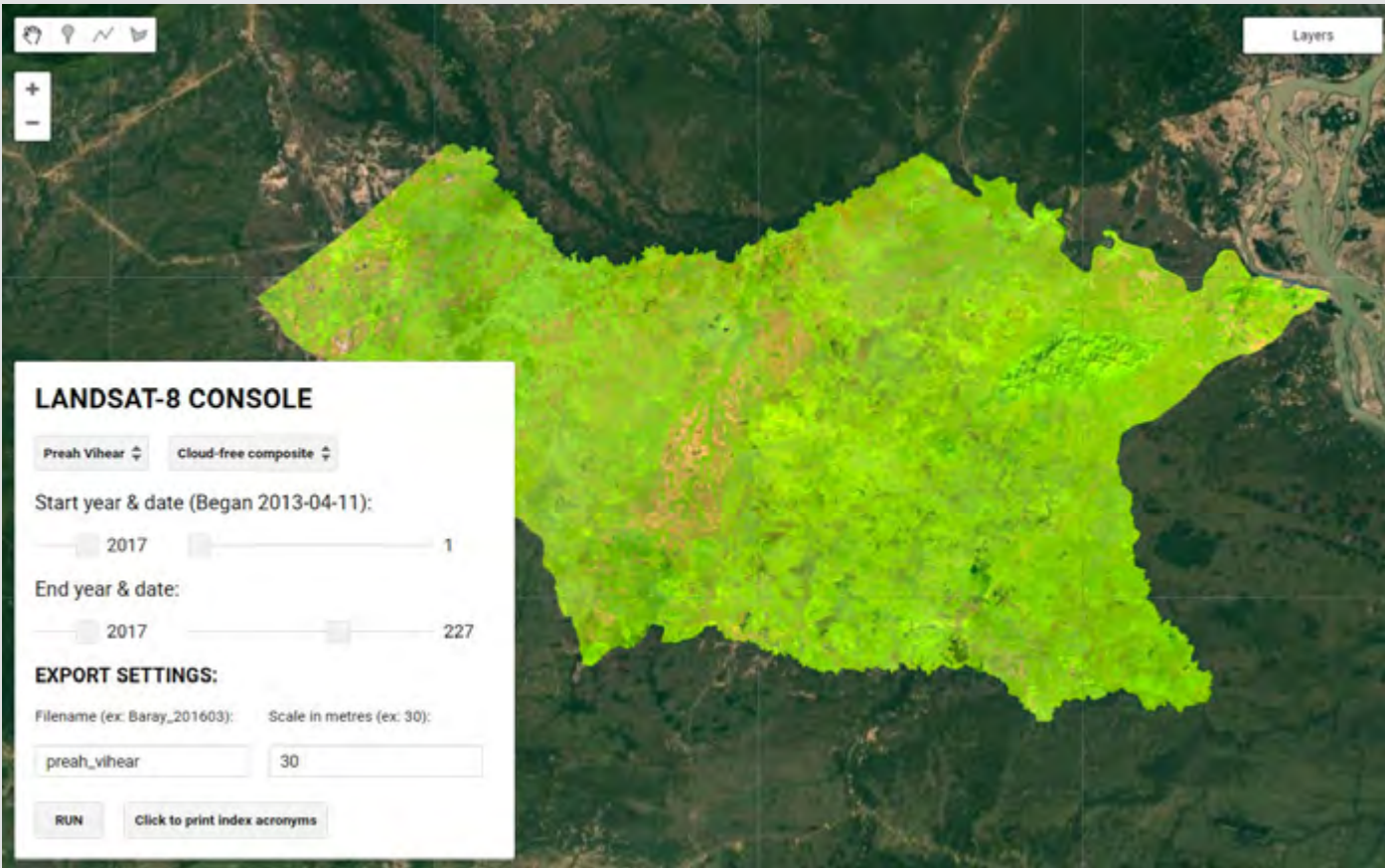


Figure 2. A Landsat image composite for the Chaeb Wildlife Sanctuary (formerly Preah Vihear Protected Forest) generated on-the-fly. The tool allows the user to (a) select the Protected Area to monitor, (b) the time period and (3) a number of different visualization options to support monitoring of Protected Areas.

WCS Cambodia Partners with SERVIR-Mekong

Under an innovation grant from the Cambodian Climate Change Alliance (CCCA), WCS Cambodia has partnered with the USAID/NASA SERVIR-Mekong program to develop remote sensing tools for the government. The SERVIR-Mekong program, hosted by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, is tasked to provide geospatial support to Mekong region governments. Using the big data, cloud computing, and machine learning platform provided by Google Earth Engine, WCS has developed online tools to allow MoE and WCS staff to retrieve, process, and download earth observation imagery across the Cambodian protected area network. Additional tools allow for identifying trends across a time series of images for change detection and observing vegetation seasonal dynamics.

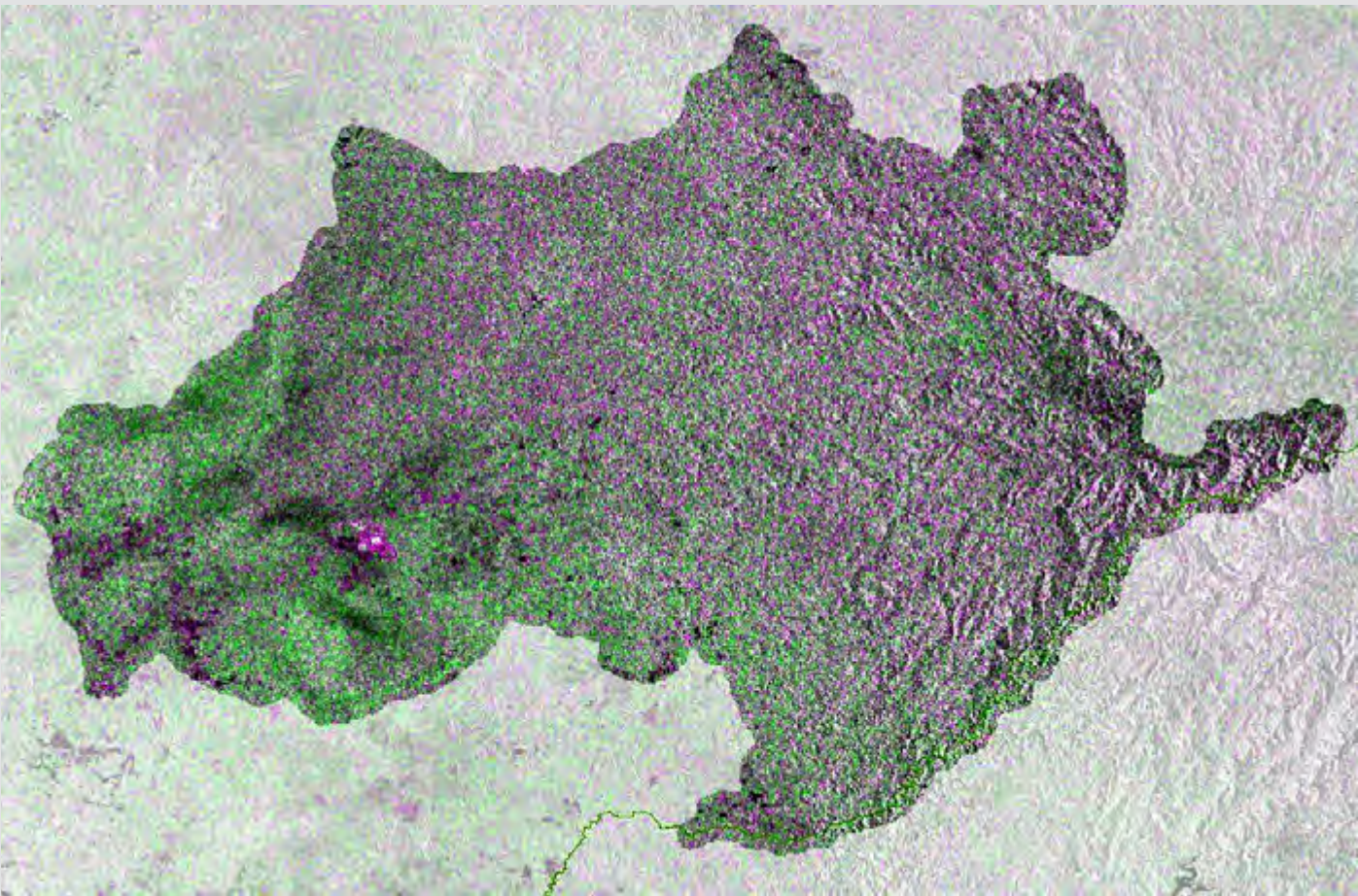


Figure 3. Radar image of the Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary used to monitor deforestation during the rainy season.

WCS Cambodia Pilots Radar Monitoring at Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary

A common issue with remote sensing in the tropics is persistent cloud cover during rainy seasons. Careful monitoring of the Keo Seima REDD+ project is required in order to quickly respond to threats, however for much of the year images are not available due to cloud cover. To solve this the WCS Cambodia program has started using cloud-penetrating radar data, from ESA Sentinel 1, to monitor during the rainy season. While imaging satellites rely on light from the sun which can be blocked by clouds, radar satellites project a beam to earth that can penetrate clouds. Radar data is difficult to work with and interpret but is a suitable alternative to when cloud free imagery is not available.

Stakeholders Demarcate Wildlife Sanctuary Boundary

Preah Vihear - Stakeholders from the Department of Environment, district and commune authorities, police, and local community members, in collaboration with WCS installed 20 concrete poles to demarcate the newly established Preah Roka Wildlife Sanctuary in Preah Vihear Province.

With support from the Rainforest Trust, WCS is holding a series of awareness raising meetings and boundary demarcation events that will significantly enhance the protection of this landscape and its globally threatened wildlife, whilst supporting the livelihoods of many families dependent on its ecosystem services.



Can Cambodia's Rice Farmers and Bengal Floricans Co-exist?

Kampong Thom – Commercial dry-season rice cultivation in Cambodia's Tonle Sap floodplain increasingly threatens the Critically Endangered Bengal Florican, a new study says. This and other threats put the species at high risk of extinction in the near future, unless it is managed appropriately.

Conducted by researchers with the Imperial College London, the University of Oxford and WCS Cambodia, the study published in the Journal Oryx, assesses the impact of local community livelihood activities on Bengal Florican habitat in and around the Northern Tonle Sap Protected Landscape in Kompong Thom and Siem Reap provinces.

“Dry season rice cultivation increasingly encroaches on Bengal florican breeding areas, disturbing the birds during key breeding periods,” said Imperial College of London's Harriet Ibbett, corresponding author of the study.” In addition, dry-season rice cultivation is strongly associated with agro-chemical use that has potentially significant implications for florican food availability.”

She added, “An estimated 20 percent of dry season rice fields are located within identified florican habitat, including formally protected areas. Forty-six percent of dry-season rice farmers cultivate two crops of rice per year, extending cultivation activities into breeding periods. This significantly reduces both the amount of time and habitat that floricans have to breed undisturbed and successfully.”

“Substantial investment in community engagement, education and outreach are required to prevent the extinction of the florican,” said Simon Mahood, WCS Senior Technical Advisor. “Beyond protected areas, we urgently need to work with dry season rice farmers to help them make their farming profitable and compatible with Bengal floricans. For example, we need to trial legumes instead of a second crop of rice to improve soil fertility and create foraging habitat for floricans.”

The Bengal florican is listed on the IUCN Red List as Critically Endangered, and has a global population of fewer than 800 individuals. Cambodia is the most important country worldwide for Bengal florican conservation with an estimated 432 individuals nationwide in 2012. The grassland habitat of the Tonle Sap floodplain in Kompong Thom Province is home to the largest population of the birds in the world and is critical to their survival.

In other findings, the study indicated that at least 8 percent of surveyed households actively hunt birds in grassland areas, suggesting a small but significant threat to floricans. Hunting levels were highest around unprotected areas, highlighting a pressing need for greater protection and awareness raising programs within these communities.

“There is an urgent need for conservation interventions in unprotected grassland areas, and the findings emphasize the role of community engagement in improving protection within protected areas,” said Hong Chamnan, Ministry of Environment's Deputy Director of Freshwater Wetlands Conservation.

Conservation of the Bengal florican is supported by Foundation Ensemble, Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF). The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the Macarthur Foundation, and the World Bank. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation.



Red-headed Vulture Nests Protected in the Northern Plains

Preah Vihear - In early 2017 two nests of the Critically Endangered Red-headed Vulture (*Sarcogyps calvus*) have been located in Chhep Wildlife Sanctuary (formerly Preah Vihear Protected Forest) in the Northern Plains of Cambodia. With financial assistance from Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies and Agence Française de Développement (AFD), WCS has employed four local community members to protect these nests, and will be attaching “predator exclusion belts” to nesting trees, preventing terrestrial carnivores such as civets from scaling nesting trees to feed on eggs.

Cambodia’s vultures are threatened by food shortages caused by low numbers of wild and domestic cattle. Vulture restaurants are regularly conducted at Veal Buntoal eco-tourism campsite in Chhep Wildlife Sanctuary to supplement the vultures’ diet. As well as helping vulture populations, the restaurants provide WCS research teams the opportunity to monitor vulture numbers.

Vulture restaurants also attract bird watcher who flock from around the world to witness the spectacle of vultures feeding. Revenue generated by WCS eco-tourism partner Sam Veasna Centre provides sustainable livelihood opportunities to community members of Dangphlet village, as well as sustainably financing vulture conservation in Cambodia.



Cambodia's Ministries Come Together to Address Wildlife Trafficking

Phnom Penh – In June a first-ever milestone event brought together Cambodian officials and others today to discuss law enforcement options and responses to wildlife trafficking – an increasing threat to the world's wildlife species.

In attendance at the meeting were representatives from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Ministry of Interior, Military Police, Anti-Corruption Unit, the diplomatic sector, and conservation NGOs.

“This is the first time that all of the relevant ministries have met to discuss this important issue,” said Sarah Brook, Technical Advisor for Counter Wildlife Trafficking for the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). “We are pleased with the results of the meeting; a number of important recommendations were made by the participants on how to strengthen law enforcement and on the legal and regulatory issues around wildlife crime. We hope that the results of the meeting will be taken up by the respective ministries and we are committed to continue working with the government on this issue,” Brook said.

Thought to be the fourth most lucrative global criminal activity after trafficking in drugs, people and arms, wildlife trafficking is said to generate an estimated US\$7-23 billion per year.

The event—hosted at the Cambodiana Hotel, by the Ministry of Justice and supported by WCS, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the US embassy—was held to raise awareness among the relevant ministries about the seriousness of these crimes and the impact they are having. In addition, the meeting was conducted to break down barriers to collaborative effort and develop solutions to strengthen the national enforcement and judicial response to wildlife trafficking.

US Ambassador William Heidt who provided opening remarks for the meeting, highlighted that wildlife trafficking is increasingly a problem for Cambodia as evidenced by the recent large scale seizures of ivory and rhino horn. He commended the authorities on these recent seizures but recommended that the Cambodian government re-double its efforts to combat wildlife trafficking and ensure it adheres to its obligations under CITES. Wildlife trafficking not only threatens the survival of species but also threatens security and stability, and can have devastating economic and social consequences for affected communities.

Ambassador George Edgar from the European Union Delegation highlighted that this crime is a profitable undertaking “Wildlife crime is an attractive option for criminal networks because the fight against is still regarded as a low priority for many Governments worldwide”. Along the same line Giovanni Broussard, UNODC's Regional Coordinator for the Global Programme on Combating Wildlife and Forest Crime stressed that “It is important that the Government of Cambodia acknowledges its role as a player at the regional and inter-regional levels. It is crucial that the relevant authorities here are prepared to cooperate with their counterparts in other countries to dismantle these transnational networks. This requires better laws and better enforcement capacity.”

Funding to WCS was provided by the United States Department of State.



Nineteen Critically Endangered Giant Ibis Nests Located in Northern Plains of Cambodia

Preah Vihear - Nineteen nests of the Giant Ibis (*Thaumatibis gigantea*) have been discovered during the 2017 breeding season in the Northern Plains of Cambodia in Preah Vihear Province. Community members and conservationists are working together under the Bird Nest Protection Program to protect these nests from human disturbances and other threats.

The Giant Ibis, Cambodia's national bird, is listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List, and occurs only in Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. About 99 percent of the global population, estimated to contain 194 mature individuals, lives in Cambodia, making it the most important country in the world for giant ibis conservation.

"As of July this year, our research team has recorded 19 nests of the Giant Ibis; 14 located in Chhep Wildlife Sanctuary and five in the Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary," said Thong Sokha, Wildlife Research and Monitoring Team Leader for MoE and WCS in Chhep Wildlife Sanctuary.

"We expect to find new nests of this species in both sanctuaries because its breeding period is between June and September. Our team is now working closely with local communities to monitor those recorded nests and search for new ones in both sanctuaries," he added.

WCS, in collaboration with MoE, has been involved in the conservation of the giant ibis and its natural habitat in the Northern Plains of Cambodia through various activities. These include the Bird Nest Protection Program, in which local people and contracted community wildlife rangers are rewarded with 'direct conservation payments' when they locate nests, and receive a bonus if nestlings successfully fledge. The program also promotes awareness about the importance of this species, and installs protective measures on nesting trees that prevent small carnivores from eating eggs.

"These latest findings represent the continued importance of the Northern Plains landscape in Preah Vihear Province for conserving this Critically Endangered bird," said Alistair Mould, WCS's Technical Advisor to the Northern Plains of Cambodia:

Urgent conservation actions for this globally important population include the prioritization of key Giant Ibis habitat within monthly SMART law enforcement patrols and protected area management plans. In addition, the incorporation of village-level agreements to create Important Ibis Areas (IIAs) is needed to raise awareness and strengthen community participation in the Bird Nest Protection Program.

Nest protection in the Northern Plains of Cambodia is supported by the Akron Zoo, Sam Veasna Centre, the European Union, and Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies.



Official Opening of Prey Veng Ecotourism Lodge

Preah Vihear - WCS in collaboration with Department of Environment (DoE) and the Prey Veng Community Protected Area (CPA) Committee opened an eco-tourism lodge with a village awareness raising ceremony. The ecotourism lodge is situated in Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary.

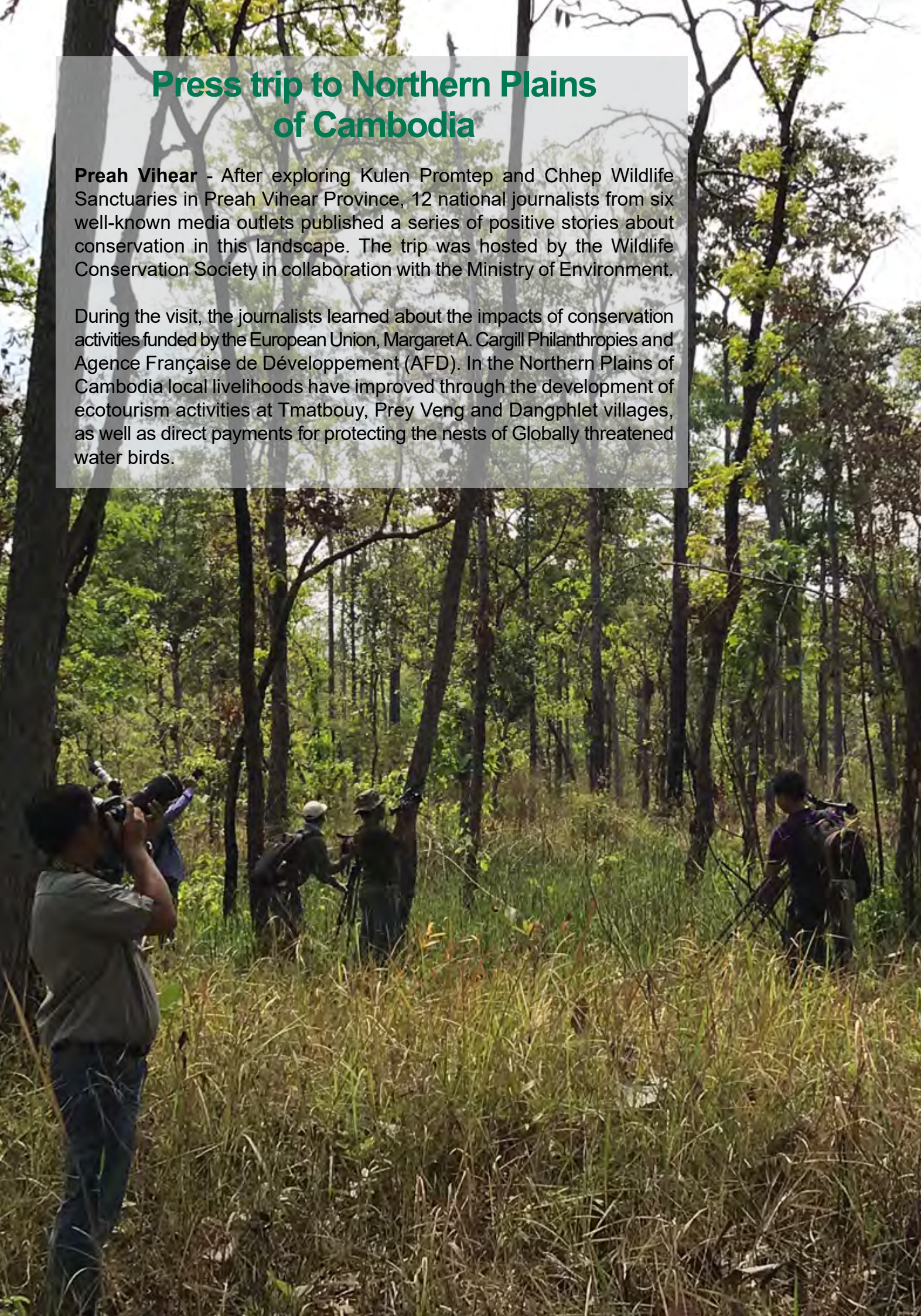
During the ceremony Mr. Ea Sokha, DoE Director (Preah Vihear Province), Mr. Phon Sophea, SVC Director and CPA committee members explained the benefits of sustainable financing through ecotourism revenue and the importance of safeguarding the biodiversity and habitats that are necessary for their success. The event was attended by more than 150 participants including DoE, WCS, local authorities, local community members and students.



Press trip to Northern Plains of Cambodia

Preah Vihear - After exploring Kulen Promtep and Chhep Wildlife Sanctuaries in Preah Vihear Province, 12 national journalists from six well-known media outlets published a series of positive stories about conservation in this landscape. The trip was hosted by the Wildlife Conservation Society in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment.

During the visit, the journalists learned about the impacts of conservation activities funded by the European Union, Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies and Agence Française de Développement (AFD). In the Northern Plains of Cambodia local livelihoods have improved through the development of ecotourism activities at Tmatbouy, Prey Veng and Dangphlet villages, as well as direct payments for protecting the nests of Globally threatened water birds.





First Nest of Endangered White-winged Duck Recorded in Northern Plains of Cambodia

Preah Vihear – After one month of intensive protection by local community members participating in the Bird Nest protection scheme, conservationists from the Ministry of Environment (MoE), local communities and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) finally confirmed that the belongs to a female White-winged duck (IUCN Globally Endangered), which was re-released back into its natural habitat (Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary) in late 2015. This rare duck had received an individual identification ring during rehabilitation at the Angkor Centre for Conservation of Biodiversity (ACCB), which the conservationists were now able to identify and confirm by photograph.

On the 4th of July, a nest with seven eggs of the Globally Endangered White-winged Duck (*Asarcornis scutulata*) was detected within Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary. The three local villagers have since been hired by WCS to safeguard the nest, the first observed in five years within the Northern Plains Landscape, Preah Vihear province.

“I was delighted to see the ring on the bird’s right leg because I joined the release with the local community in December 2015 and still remember it,” said Rours Vann, Wildlife Research Team Leader in Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary between WCS and MoE. “The nest of this White-winged Duck has been protected very well by three local men, and the eggs should be hatching soon,” he added.

The White-winged Duck is listed on IUCN’s Red List for Threatened Species as Globally Endangered, primarily because its global population is in decline due to habitat loss, disturbance along key stretches of riverine habitat and illegal poaching. The global population of this enigmatic duck species is estimated to be between 250 - 1,000 individuals, while little is currently known about the numbers present in Cambodia.

“After receiving the information and images from the field, our team has double-checked the records and we are very certain that this is the duck, ACCB in collaboration with MoE and WCS released on 20th December 2015,” said Michael Meyerhoff, Project Manager at the ACCB. “We are so happy to see this duck again, because it shows that joint efforts between international organizations and government agencies to preserve endangered species are not only necessary, but can be very successful”, he emphasized.

The Northern Plains of Cambodia are home to many globally endangered bird species. Those include Critically Endangered Giant Ibis, White-shouldered Ibis, and three species of vulture, globally Endangered White-winged Duck, and many other important wildlife. Local people living in two protected areas in the Northern Plains of Cambodia are offered conditional payments if they successfully locate, monitor and protect nests until fledging.

“This finding represents a remarkable conservation success in Northern Plains with the re-discovery, after 1.5 years, of this individual rare female duck in healthy breeding condition,” said Alistair Mould, WCS’s Technical Advisor to Northern Plains of Cambodia.

“This success would not be possible without important support and efforts from local communities and MoE’s wildlife sanctuary rangers committed to protecting forests and wildlife in the Northern Plains,” he added.

Nest protection in the Northern Plains of Cambodia would not be possible without supports from Akron Zoo, Sam Veasna Centre (SVC), the European Union, Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies (MACP).



Globally Threatened Lesser Adjutant Returned to the Wild

Preah Vihear - In July Angkor Centre for Conservation of Biodiversity (ACCB) in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and the WCS released a threatened Lesser Adjutant back to the wild in Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary, Preah Vihear Province after this Adjutant had been rehabilitated at ACCB for more than a year.

The Lesser Adjutant (*Leptoptilos javanicus*) is a large stork reaching 130cm in height with a wingspan exceeding two meters. Despite a global upper population estimate of 10,000 mature individuals, Lesser Adjutants are experiencing rapid population declines within their former range undergoing widespread contraction across Asia. As a result, it is listed as “Vulnerable” in IUCN’s Red List of Threatened Species.

In June 2016, a villager found this Lesser Adjutant in bad condition in a forest near Tmatboey village. It was very weak and unable to fly, therefore the villager contacted WCS and it was sent to ACCB for treatment and rehabilitation. It was in an overall bad condition and had all flight feathers severely damaged. Now after one year, this adjutant is fully recovered and equipped to survive in the wild.

Globally Endangered Masked Finfoot Nest Recorded in Cambodia

Preah Vihear - In July Conservationists from the Ministry of Environment (MoE), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and local communities found the first Globally Endangered Masked Finfoot nest for four years on the Memay River in the Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary (KPWS) in Preah Vihear Province. This site is the only confirmed breeding location in Cambodia for this very rare species.

Masked Finfoot (*Heliopais personatus*) is listed on IUCN Red List as Globally Endangered, because its global population is declining at an alarming rate. This riverine species lives only in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Its global population is less than 1,000 individuals, while little is known about numbers in Cambodia.

“After educating local communities about the Masked Finfoot, the Research team worked together with Community Protected Area committee and other local community members to search for the species. We then found a Masked Finfoot on the nest near the Memay River in KPWS, Preah Vihear Province,” said Rours Vann, MoE/WCS Research Team Leader in KPWS.

“I am proud of this finding because it is very rare species. We have not recorded any nests since 2013. Through nest protection program, we have hired two local villagers to protect the nest to prevent any harm and disturbance,” he added.

“Department of Environment (DoE) staff in KPWS work closely with community wildlife rangers employed by WCS to protect and monitor river networks for Masked Finfoot. DoE rangers conduct law enforcement patrol in key breeding and feeding habitat,” said Song Chansocheat, Deputy Director of Environment in Preah Vihear Province.

The Northern Plains landscape in Preah Vihear Province consists of KPWS, Prey Preah Roka Wildlife Sanctuary and Chhep Wildlife Sanctuary, and is home to many globally endangered bird species. Those include Critically Endangered Giant Ibis, White-shouldered Ibis, and three species of vulture, globally Endangered White-winged Duck, Masked Finfoot and many other important wildlife. WCS is working in collaboration with the MoE to conserve Northern Plains' forests and wildlife through a variety of conservation interventions. The Bird Nest Protection Programme is a payments scheme designed to combat the threats of hunting and egg/chick collection.

“This finding provides further evidence that Northern Plains of Cambodia is an important biodiversity hotspot and critical area for conserving breeding habitat for globally threatened water birds,” said Alistair Mould, WCS's Technical Advisor to Northern Plains of Cambodia.

“Masked Finfoots are globally endangered and extremely rare in Cambodia, targeted riverine habitat protection at key breeding locations like the Memay river is required to ensure the survival of these remaining Cambodian populations.” he added.

Nest protection in the Northern Plains of Cambodia is supported by the Sam Veasna Centre, the European Union, and Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies.



Sustainable Rice Platform Kompong Thom Trial Begins Second Year

Kampong Thom - Following promising results in the first year, WCS and SMP's Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP) field trial, with funding from Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), is beginning its activities for the second year, allowing local farmers to register to be member of SRP to increase their rice yields and get involved in environmental protection and wildlife conservation.

SRP is a global scheme that was created to increase the sustainability of rice farming using 12 measures of sustainability, ranging from water use, inputs, biodiversity conservation and labor rights. Taken together, these measures significantly contribute to protecting the environment and wildlife, meanwhile improving livelihood of local farmers. WCS is trialing SRP in seven targeted villages (Chhouk, Prey Kla, Kampong Veng, Kouk Roveang, Anlong Pring, Kompreal, and Prey Kla of Prolay Commune, Stung District, Kompong Thom Province. This area is adjacent to the Northern Tonle Sap Protected Landscape (NTSPL) and is used by the Critically Endangered Bengal Florican when they disperse from their protected breeding grounds. SRP farmers agree not to hunt Bengal Florican, and are being encouraged to grow legumes that will increase insect food for the birds. The SRP rice is purchased by BRICO, and exported to Mars.

So far, more than 140 families are members of the SRP field trial. Those members have been trained with necessary growing rice techniques and provided rice feed for growing. They have agreed to respect the SRP regulations, including reducing chemical use, caring about the environment and taking part in conserving wild animals, especially Bengal Floricans, so that they are eligible to sell their rice as SRP.





Nine New Royal Turtle Hatchlings Taken to Conservation Center in Koh Kong

Koh Kong – After being protected for three months, nine new hatchlings of Royal Turtle successfully hatched and were taken to Koh Kong Reptile Conservation Centre, Koh Kong Province, for feeding, raising and possibly breeding in the future.

The Royal Turtle, also known as Southern River Terrapin (*Batagur affinis*), is one of the world's most endangered freshwater turtles and is listed on the IUCN Red List as Critically Endangered. The species is also Cambodia's National Reptile.

In February 2017, one nest of Royal Turtle with 14 eggs was found by a villager along the Kaong River, the only place the species is still found in Cambodia. Royal Turtle Conservation Team from the Fisheries Administration (FiA) and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) went to check the nest; built a fence to protect the eggs; and hired a villager to guard the nest until those eggs are hatched.

“I am delighted to see those eggs are successfully hatched, and the hatchlings are taken to conservation center in Koh Kong Province. I am proud of the result, especially be part of conserving Cambodia's Royal Turtles from extinction”, said Long Sman, who have guarded the Royal Turtle nest for three months.

The turtle was believed extinct in Cambodia until 2000 when a small population was re-discovered by FiA and WCS in the Sre Ambel River. A community-based protection program was implemented in Sre Ambel and employs former egg collectors to search for and protect nests, instead of harvesting the eggs.

“There are only a few Royal Turtles left in the wild, so numbers of their nests are also low. This year, conservation team found only one nest compared to two nests found in 2016 and three nests in 2015,” said Som Sitha, WCS's Technical Advisor to Sre Ambel Conservation Project.

“This is a big concern for Royal turtle conservation. If sand dredging, illegal clearance of flooded forest and illegal fishing still continues, Our National Reptile species will face high risk of extinction,” he added.

This project is supported by Wildlife Reserves Singapore.

WCS works to save turtles and tortoises around the world. In 2012, WCS launched an organization-wide program to revive some of the most endangered turtle and tortoise species. Efforts include breeding programs at WCS's zoos in New York, head start programs abroad, and working with governments and communities to save species on the brink of extinction.

A large flock of Sarus Cranes is captured in flight over a dry, grassy landscape. The birds are shown in various stages of flight, with some fully extended wings and others in the process of taking off or landing. The background features a line of trees under a clear sky. The overall scene conveys a sense of natural beauty and wildlife conservation.

Over One Hundred Sarus Cranes Return to Ang Trapeang Thmor Protected Landscape

Banteay Meanchey - In January one hundred and fifteen Sarus Cranes have returned to Ang Trapeang Thmor Protected Landscape (ATTPL) in Banteay Meanchey province for feeding after their breeding season is over. These are the first of at least 350 Sarus Cranes that return to the site every year, making ATTPL the most important habitat for Sarus Crane. The cranes typically arrive in the ATTPL in January, and stay until late May, when they go to the Northern Plains and other sites across the country for breeding.

The Globally Vulnerable Sarus Crane (*Grus antigone*) is a large and elegant crane standing up to 180cm tall, making it the tallest flying bird in the world. Its estimated global population of 15,000 mature birds is declining due to degradation and destruction of wetland habitats, human exploitation and from the effects of pollutants and poisons. The population in Cambodia is only 800 birds, which is half of the global population of the Southeast Asian subspecies *Grus Antigone sharpii*.

ATTPL was created by Royal decree in 2000 and managed by Ministry of Environment with technical and financial support from WCS. This site protects 12,650 hectares of wetlands and dry forest. It supports half of Cambodia's Sarus Crane population during the non-breeding season, together with thousands of other waterbirds including storks, pelicans and ducks. ATTPL also supports a population of the Endangered Eld's Deer. These species and the beautiful wetlands attract thousands of tourists each year.

In addition to providing critical habitat for Sarus Crane, waterbirds, and mammals, ATTPL is also an attractive ecotourism area where national and international guests can come and watch many waterbirds species and Endangered Eld's Deer. In 2016, around 400 international and hundreds of thousands national visitors visited the ATTPL. This allows local communities to generate extra income to support their families, and boosts conservation efforts in the landscape.

These conservation activities in the NTSPL would not be possible without the generous support of the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) and Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies.

A Black-shanked Douc Langur is perched on a thick, dark brown tree branch. The monkey has dark brown fur, a lighter brown face, and a small tuft of hair on its head. It is looking towards the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a dense forest with green leaves and branches, slightly out of focus.

Poaching for Traditional Medicine a Threat to Colorful Primate's Last Refuge

Mondulkiri – In June two suspects were sent to Mondulkiri Provincial Court after being arrested on suspicion of killing two Globally Endangered Black-shanked Douc Langur inside Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary (KSWs).

“While patrolling inside KSWs, we saw three men carrying the dead Black-shanked Douc Langurs along a track in the forest. Our team immediately arrested the suspects and filled the complaint to send to the court,” said Mr Em Tray, KSWs’s Community Patrolling Team Leader.

Black-shanked Douc Langurs (*Pygathrix nigripes*) are found only in Cambodia and Vietnam, with the largest known surviving population found in KSWs. Sadly, these beautiful animals are hunted for their stomachs due to a mistaken belief that they are medicinally beneficial. They are also killed for meat, and in some areas adults are killed and their babies taken for the pet trade. They are listed on IUCN Red List as Globally Endangered. Under Cambodia’s Protected Area Law, poaching endangered wildlife can result in a prison sentence of up to 5 years and a fine of 15-100 million riels.

“Illegal poaching is still occurring inside the protected area, even though KSWs rangers and community rangers are working hard to patrol the forest. Demand for bush meat for consumption and traditional medicine leads to poaching that is now threatening the survival of key species,” said Mr Tan Setha, WCS’ Technical Advisor to KSWs.

“Educating local communities is needed to encourage their participation in wildlife conservation. In addition, all Cambodian people can also play an important role in conserving our priceless wildlife from extinction by not purchasing or eating wild meat,” he added.

Samples were taken from the carcasses by the Wildlife Health Team, and will provide important information on both diseases affecting the primate populations and zoonotic diseases, which are transferred from animals to humans.

The carcasses were transferred to the Ministry of Environment, where they will be preserved for future study.

Asian Giant Softshell Turtle Nest Fails in Sre Ambel

Koh Kong - The Sre Ambel conservation team consisting of local people and Fisheries Administration, WCS and Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA) has discovered that the nest of the Globally Endangered Asian Giant Softshell Turtle (*Pelochelys cantorii*), laid in January this year, has failed.

The team makes regular routine checks of all turtle nests to ensure that they are healthy. They found that most of the eggs were rotten, and the rest show little sign of being fertilized. This is the fifth nest of this species that has been found in the Sre Ambel River system, Koh Kong Province since 2011. However, none of them have hatched. The team suspects that there might be only one female Asian Giant Softshell Turtle remaining in the river, and her eggs were not fertilized because there is no male present.



Strengthening Strategic SMART Patrolling and Data Collection in Chhep Wildlife Sanctuary

Preah Vihear - In April WCS in collaboration with Ministry of Environment began a 4-day training course to strengthen strategic SMART patrolling and data collection at Kampong Sralao patrol team station in Chhep Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS).

Supported by USAID's Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project implemented by Winrock International, 20 patrol team staff (CWS) will receive training from WCS technical staff aimed at increasing participants core skills for effective SMART field data collection.



តើអ្វីជា GPS គឺជាអ្វី?
WHAT IS GPS?

- ប្រព័ន្ធទីតាំងភូមិសាស្ត្រសកល (GPS) ត្រូវបានគេប្រើប្រាស់សម្រាប់ធ្វើការវាស់វែង ទីតាំង កំដូរជា ឈ្មួញ និងពេលវេលា។

Two More Bengal Florican Chicks Found

Kampong Thom - In June Wildlife Research and Monitoring team of Ministry of Environment (MoE) and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has seen two Bengal Florican chicks in the Northern Tonle Sap Protected Landscape, Kampong Thom Province.

The Bengal Florican is listed on the IUCN Red List as Critically Endangered, and has a global population of fewer than 800 individuals. Cambodia is the most important country worldwide for Bengal Florican conservation with an estimated 432 individuals nationwide in 2012. The grassland of the Tonle Sap floodplain in Kompong Thom Province is home to the largest population of the birds in the world and is critical to their survival. Bengal Floricans typically have either one or two chicks each year, these birds come from one nest.





Tun Sarorn has spent over 10 years taking care of captive Royal Turtles

Koh Kong - Hundreds of thousands of people have heard of the Royal Turtle, Cambodia's National Reptile, but not many are aware that Ms. Tun Sarorn has spent over 10 years taking caring for and feeding captive Royal Turtles.

Tun Sarorn, age 41, is a widow living in Boeung Preav Village, Sre Ambel District of Koh Kong Province. She has cared for the captive turtles since 2006. In her first year she took care of 47 turtle hatchlings in the Sre Ambel Royal Turtle Conservation Center. When the wild turtles hatch from nests protected by community members, the WCS and Fisheries Administration (FiA) team bring them to the conservation center for Tun Sarorn to care for them until they are big enough to be safe from predators and can be released back into the river.

Initially, Sarorn faced many challenges and difficulties in her role well because it was new to her. "First it was so difficult, and I faced problems because I did not have experience in raising turtles. But, I have never thought I would quit, because I love this job," said Tun Sarorn.

"I tried to learn and spent time with the turtles, and I asked the Project Manager to teach me how to raise those turtles well. After several months, I could solve the issues and understand a lot more about the turtles. I am now confident in caring for the turtles and the number of turtles in the center has increased to more than 200" she added.

Sarorn has received trainings from turtle experts on feeding and care for captive turtles, and experienced veterinarians have provided her with training in conducting basic health screening. She is now able to check the health condition of the turtles to quickly identify whether the animals are healthy or not. If the turtles get sick Sarorn cares for their health and feeds them until they are fully recovered.

"I love the work I do to take care of those turtles. I miss them whenever I go away because I think of them as if they are my children. I hope that they can live well, and will not go extinct," said Sarorn.

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WCS envisions a world where wildlife thrives in healthy lands and seas, valued by societies that embrace and benefit from the diversity and integrity of life on earth. WCS saves wildlife and wild places worldwide through science, conservation action, education, and inspiring people to value nature.

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