



## Three Rare Black-necked Storks Hatch in Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary

After five weeks of active nest protection by community members, three Black-necked stork chicks have hatched in Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary (KPWS) in the Northern Plains of Cambodia, giving hope to the future conservation of this rare species in the country.

The Black-necked stork (*Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*) is a very rare bird species in Asia and listed on the IUCN Red List as Near Threatened. An estimated 15,000 to 35,000 individuals exist globally, with the vast majority of them in Australia. Less than 10 pairs are known to exist in Cambodia, the only country in Southeast Asia where the bird is regularly recorded.

“We are happy to see these three Black-necked stork chicks because they are a rare bird, not often seen in the forest,” said Yoeun Yerb, a WCS-supported nest protector, who found the nest with a fellow villager in Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary. “We achieved our goal of guarding the nest and strongly hope that others will help to safeguard this species.”

[Read More](#)

Key Coverage:

1. [Bayern TV](#) 2. [Kley Kley](#) 3. [Thmey Thmey](#) 4. [Koh Santepheap](#) 5. [Khmer Times](#)

## First Asian Giant Softshell Turtle Nest of the Season Located in the Mekong River

A nest of the globally Endangered Asian Giant Softshell Turtle was found so far this season on a sandbar on the Mekong between Kratie and Stung Treng Provinces by conservationists of Fisheries Administration, WCS and local communities. This is the only remaining area in the country where these huge turtles still breed. This nest is now being protected by local communities until all eggs are hatched and the hatchlings will be then released into the river.



*A nest with 19 eggs of the Asian Giant Softshell Turtle found on a sandbar on the Mekong. © Som Sitha / WCS*

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 its re-discovery in 2007 in a 48-kilometer stretch of the river in Kratie and Stung Treng provinces.

“From now until June is the breeding period of the Asian Giant Softshell Turtle. This is the first nest we have found so far this year. We will work hard with FiA and local communities to find more nests along the Mekong River and protect them from egg collection,” said Som Sitha, WCS’s Technical Advisor to the Turtle Conservation Project. [Read More](#)

## Asian Giant Softshell Turtle Story Goes Viral Around the Globe

The story of Asian Giant Softshell Turtle nest found in the Mekong has gone viral. Over 100 national and international media outlets have reported on it. Those media outlets, which include Yahoo, New York Times, Washington Post, Fox News, Daily Mail, ABC News and StarTribune have ensured that millions of people around the world know about the global importance of Cambodia for threatened wildlife conservation.

The story detailed how on December 19, a nest of the globally Endangered Asian Giant Softshell Turtle was found on a sandbar of the Mekong between Kratie and Stung Treng by conservationists of Fisheries Administration (FiA), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and local communities. This is the only remaining area in the country where these huge turtles still breed.

International Key Coverage:

1. [Washington Post](#)
2. [Fox News](#)
3. [ABC News](#)
4. [CTV News](#)
5. [Daily Mail](#)



*China Xinhua News shared the Asian Giant Softshell Turtle story on their page with over 7,000 shares and hundred comments.*

## Two Endangered White-winged Ducks Rescued in Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary

Two White-winged Ducks were rescued from Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary (KPWS) after they were found exhausted and unable to fly. The conservationists from the Ministry of Environment (MoE) and WCS have sent these two ducks to the Angkor Centre for Conservation of Biodiversity (ACCB) in Siem Reap Province for care and rehabilitation until they have fully recovered and are able to survive in the wild.



*Michael Meyerhoff, ACCB's Project Manager, is holding the White-winged Duck after receiving from local villagers. © WCS*

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

"After receiving information from two local villagers, our team traveled to collect the ducks and hand them over to the ACCB team for care and rehabilitation," said Rours Vann, Wildlife Research Team Leader in KPWS for WCS and MoE. [Read More](#)

Key coverage:

1. [Phnom Penh Post](#) 2. [VAYO FM](#) 3. [Thmey Thmey](#) 4. [Koh Santepheap](#) 5. [Khmer Times](#)

## Final meeting of the EU-funded LACANET project on Wildlife Health

The Laos Cambodia One Health Network (LACANET) brought together various stakeholders from government, NGOs, private sector and health experts to review and comment on project's finding and achievements, while providing the recommendation for future action and policies after the project has been implemented for almost four years in both Cambodia and Lao countries.



*During the meeting, all partners shared the outstanding achievements of this project. © Sours Sreyem/WCS*

LACANET, funded by European Union (EU), brings together partners in the human health, animal health and wildlife sectors to create capacity to survey, diagnose, and understand the drivers of disease at the human-animal-environment interfaces. This project is led by the Institute Pasteur du Cambodge (IPC), in collaboration with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the Cambodian National Animal Health and Production Research Institute (NAHPRI), the Lao National Animal Health Laboratory (NAHL) and the Lao Oxford Mahosot Wellcome Trust Research Unit. [Read More](#)

## New Recording Tool Introduced to Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary's Conservationists

Taking advantage of advances in cloud and mobile computing platforms, CyberTracker, a third-party software application, was introduced by WCS Cambodia to over 30 conservationists from Ministry of Environment's law enforcement teams, community patrol teams and wildlife research staff operating inside the Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary (KSWS) in Kratie and Mondulkiri Provinces.



*After two-day training, trainees practice how to use CyberTracker inside Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary. © Kong Sophalrachana / WCS*

With this application, they record patrolling information, human activities, wildlife observations and other observations inside the KSWS and transmit this information along with GPS coordinates and digital photographs directly to a cloud-based spatial monitoring system. This system is an advancement of the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) that has been in operation in KSWS since 2014. The enhanced software, called SMART Connect, allows for real-time reporting of field observations through mobile devices, a time savings over labor intensive use of paper field notebooks which previously were manually entered into SMART on a monthly basis.

## Birding in January: Sarus Cranes in the Tonle Sap floodplain

Are you interested in birding? Sarus Crane is the tallest flying bird, standing up to 165 cm tall. It is listed on the IUCN Red List as Vulnerable because its global population is rapidly declining due to widespread degradation and destruction of wetland habitats, human exploitation, and the effects of pollutants and poisons.



*Sarus Cranes in Ang Trapeang Thmor Protected Landscape. © Eleanor Briggs / WCS*

After they finish breeding in the Northern Plains, more than one hundred Sarus Cranes will return to Ang Trapeang Thmor Protected Landscape (ATTPL) in Banteay Meanchey Province and the Northern Tonle Sap Protected Landscape (NTSPL) in Kampong Thom and Siem Reap Provinces for feeding during the non-breeding season. During this season, ATTPL & NTSPL support more than half of Cambodia's Sarus Cranes together with thousands of other waterbirds including storks, pelicans and ducks. You can visit these two areas for birding. Your visit will significantly contribute to conserving the Sarus Cranes and improving the livelihoods of the local community. Contact our ecotourism partner, [Sam Veasna Center](#) for detail.

## Jahoo Gibbon Camp Attracts More Visitors

Jahoo Gibbon Camp - Andoung Kralong's community-based ecotourism project inside Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary - is increasingly attracting tourists' attention after being operated by community members for four years and provide unique ecotourism opportunities. These include watching Yellow-cheeked Crested Gibbon, Black-shanked Douc Langur and beautiful wild birds, visiting wonderful natural waterfalls and evergreen forest, and staying in natural ecotourism accommodation.



*A very beautiful natural waterfall inside KSWS near Jahoo Gibbon Camp. © Sot Vandoeun/ WCS*

This year to date, more than 250 tourists national and international tourists have visited the Jahoo Gibbon Camp compared to 185 tourists in 2016. This has allowed the community to generate over \$6,000 for project staff incomes and over \$3,100 for the village's Community Development Fund. If you would like to be immersed in the forest and see the wildlife of Jahoo Gibbon Camp, contact [Sam Veasna Center](#) for detail.

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