



**KSWS
REDD+**



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Quarterly Newsletter

Issue No. 20
July–September 2020

KSWS celebrates its 18th birthday!

August 12, 2020 marked 18 years since KSWS was first recognized as a protected area. In 2002, the Royal Government of Cambodia officially designated the forest as Seima Biodiversity Conservation Area in recognition of its importance as a center of natural and cultural heritage. Since then, almost 1000 species have been recorded in the protected area, including the world’s largest populations of black-shanked douc langur and southern yellow-cheeked crested gibbon! Seven local indigenous communities have received rights and responsibilities to safeguard their ancestral lands and sustainably manage natural resources in the forest, and another three have applied to do so. Since 2016, when the area became known as KSWS, the Ministry of Environment (MoE) has been responsible for its protection. Working together with NGOs, communities, local administrations, and visitors, MoE is striving to ensure that the forest is preserved for generations to come. Happy birthday KSWS, here’s to another 18 years!



Community patrols help government rangers to fight crime

Community law enforcement patrol teams are working hard to protect a community protected area (CPA) in the south of KSWs. Several community members have signed up to join the community patrol team, which accompanies rangers from the Department of Environment during law enforcement patrols in Sre Preah CPA. The Ministry of Environment has transferred management of the natural resources in this area to the community, and an important part of this is ensuring that illegal activities are stopped. The teams have collected evidence on illegal logging, as well as finding and destroying makeshift shelters that had been illegally constructed inside the community protected area. Team members hope that by working closely with the Department of Environment they can turn the tide against those who are inappropriately exploiting the resources inside the CPA.



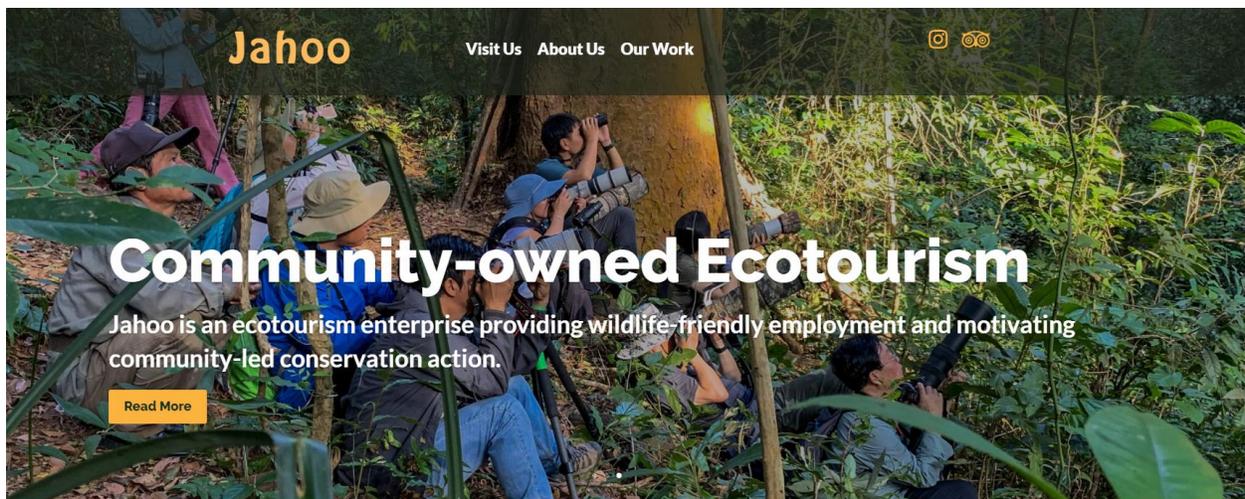
Mapping farmland for wildlife-friendly agricultural scheme

Several farmers in the south of KSWs have registered to join the [IBIS Rice](#) scheme, which pays farmers a premium for wildlife-friendly and organic rice. In return, farmers must commit to environmentally friendly farming practices, including avoiding the use of chemical pesticides and refraining from clearing additional land for their farms. After registering with the program, farmers must have their current fields mapped and measured to provide a baseline against which they will be measured each harvest to ensure that they have fulfilled their obligations under the agreement. In the last few months, the KSWs community team has been working with registered farmers to visit their fields and record detailed location information including GPS points.



New website for Jahoo ecotourism destination launches

Jahoo, the ecotourism project in Andoung Kraloeng, recently launched a brand new [website](#). Jahoo is owned by the indigenous Bunong community living in Andoung Kraloeng. The community works together to protect forest that is home to wild yellow-cheeked crested gibbons, part of the largest population of this species in the world. The gibbons are habituated to accustom them to human presence, so that tourists can peacefully observe the gibbons in their natural habitat. The new website is a leap forward for Jahoo; for the first time, tourists can now book directly with the project. A number of packages are available, including trekking in the forest, visiting waterfalls, sleeping in a traditional Bunong house, and of course spending time with the gibbons. Services during the visit are provided by community members, and a portion of the payment from each visitor goes into a fund that supports development across the whole community, including scholarships for disadvantaged children and support for community patrols to protect the forest.



Partner NGO ELIE tackles 24-hour walking challenge to fundraise on World Elephant Day

World Elephant Day falls on August 12. This year, ELIE and EVP ([Elephant Valley Project](#)), partners of the KSWs REDD+ project, decided to take on a 24-hour walking and running challenge to honor the momentous journeys that elephants have taken to reach their retirement at the EVP sanctuary (the furthest single journey was 370 kilometers!). They also hoped to raise money for elephant welfare and conservation. ELIE usually relies on visitors to their elephant sanctuary, nestled in the forest in KSWs, for much of their funding to support care of retired elephants, veterinary care for the remaining captive elephants in the province, contributions to forest protection, and covering local community initiatives including health insurance and scholarships. Teams of people in Cambodia and across the world ran or walked to raise money, with the group based near KSWs doing a relay covering the whole 24 hours! Over [560 kilometers was logged and \\$3500 raised](#) to support ELIE's work.



Sre Preah bamboo handicrafts on sale at campaign launch

In September, a campaign launch in Phnom Penh featured a stall selling bamboo handicrafts produced by community members from the Sre Preah community protected area. Using bamboo that they have sustainably harvested from their community protected area, members had previously received training in making high quality handicrafts and are now receiving orders for production. The mugs, tissue boxes, and other products were popular with buyers at the event in Phnom Penh. Meanwhile, the community has just started work on building a small-scale production plant that will house the hand-held machinery that they use for creating the handicrafts. This will allow them to streamline their production process and ensure high quality of the items that they produce.



First giant ibis nest of the season found in KSWS

At the end of August, the wildlife monitoring team in KSWS found the first giant ibis nest of the 2020 breeding season. Giant ibis are [Critically Endangered](#) and last year was the first time that the bird was witnessed breeding inside KSWS. In order to increase the likelihood of the chicks surviving, residents of villages near the nest location will be employed to protect the nest from natural predators, illegal egg and chick collectors, and illegal loggers. These nest protectors will protect the nest until the chick is old enough to leave. The wildlife monitoring team will now continue their search for additional nests, which will be added to the nest protection program when discovered. Last year, two chicks that were part of the nest protection program successfully fledged and left their nests. The team and local residents are hoping to be able to protect even more this year!



KSWS REDD+ team shares experiences to help create new REDD+ site

The KSWS REDD+ team hosted a visit from the USAID Greening Prey Lang project to share the experience of developing and implementing the REDD+ project in KSWS. As well as learning about the concept of REDD+ and its importance in tackling climate change, the visitors went to several villages participating in the project. Here, they were able to find out more about how the communities play an integral part in the KSWS REDD+ project and how consultations are integrated into project activities. They were also able to see some of the projects that communities have developed with revenue from REDD+ benefit sharing. The visiting team plan to apply the experiences shared in their development of a REDD+ project in the Northern Plains in Cambodia.



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