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Conservation News


Publications

■ Cat Tien Conservation Project

Bio-Diversity Knowledge of Cat Tien National Park Is Growing

Since the inception of the Cat Tien National Park Conservation Project, knowledge about the bio-diversity in Cat Tien National Park has increased considerably (see Table below). A substantial amount of information has been gathered from different institutions and compiled into species lists. As well, studies initiated and run by the Project have yielded additional information, particularly on butterflies, fish and large mammals. Visiting specialist birders are also routinely asked to leave a record of their observations. All these efforts combined have worked to form a better picture of the Park’s avifauna.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taxa</th>
<th>Number of species in Cat Tien National Park (1995 census)</th>
<th>Number of species in Cat Tien National Park (2001 census)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mammals</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birds</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reptiles</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amphibians</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butterflies</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>435</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Plan for Re-Demarcation and Resettlement in Cat Tien National Park Agreed Upon in Principle

On April 24th, MARD’s Vice-Minister, Nguyen Van Dang, chaired a meeting in Bien Hoa, Dong Nai province. The meeting hosted high-ranking representatives from Cat Tien National Park, the three Provinces in which Cat Tien National Park is located (Dong Nai, Lam Dong, and Binh Phuoc), districts where the park and buffer zone are located, WWF, the World Bank, and the Royal Netherlands Embassy. During the meeting, the Plan for Re-Demarcation and Re-Arrangement of Human Settlements in Cat Tien National Park, was discussed. This meeting recognized the existence of conflict between local people’s use of the Park’s natural resources to eke out a living, and the Park’s function to conserve bio-
diversity and the integrity of the ecosystem. A consensus that saw the re-defining of the Park’s boundaries was reached. With the new plan, most people currently living inside the Park will now be located in the Park’s buffer zone (without having to be physically relocated), and 5 small villages located deep inside the Park will be voluntarily resettled. The Project is now assisting the Park in formulating an investment plan detailing the exact location of the new boundaries and budgeting for the cost of the resettlements.

**WWF Asian Rhino and Elephant Action Strategy in Vietnam**

Together with the Asian Rhino and Elephant Action Strategy (AREAS) coordinator, Mr. Christy Williams, a proposal entitled, *Rhino Protection and Monitoring Units in Cat Tien National Park*, was drafted and submitted to AREAS and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). WWF-US has since approved the AREAS part of the proposal, building on a 3-year relation between Cat Tien National Park and WWF-US. Funds have thus been secured to recruit a Rhino Conservation Officer, establish three rhino patrol and monitoring units consisting of forest guards from the Park and local people, and purchase additional equipment required to better protect and study the Vietnamese Rhinoceros in Cat Tien National Park.(Contact Gert Polet at gert-ina@wwfhcmc.vnn.vn)

**WWF Contributes to Vietnam’s Poverty Task Force**

WWF was recently asked by Vietnam’s Poverty Task Force to lead the consultative effort to have the International Development Target for the environment better fit the needs of Vietnam. The draft report, based on consultations with a number of government and donor agencies, was presented at a workshop held recently by the WB in Hai Phong City. The report details proposed indicators to track environmental progress in Vietnam. Copies of the report are available from Craig Leisher at WWF (craig@wwfvn.org.vn).

**Johannesburg Project Preparation**

As part of the preparations for the Rio+10 workshop in September 2002 (Earth Summit II), WWF has drafted a preliminary report highlighting several key issues from an NGO perspective on the implementation of Agenda 21. Agenda 21 is the global ‘road map’ for sustainable development that was put forth at the 1992 Rio Summit. The preliminary report presented in Bangkok is as part of a sub-regional Rio+10 preparation workshop. (For more information, contact Ms. Hoang Phuong Thao at PThao@wwfvn.org.vn).

**Strengthening Protected Area Management in Vietnam (SPAM) Project**

Consultancies providing policy and management analysis and recommendations for improvements appear to be going well, as suggested by the monthly reports to the National Project Office (NPO). The four pilot provinces are in the process of finalizing their SWOT analysis reports. They continue to seek and receive guidance from the NPO.

Terms of reference for a new consultancy to examine institutional strengthening and training needs for the Forest Protection Department have been completed and the project will shortly be calling for expressions of interest.

In July, the 4th Steering Committee Meeting was held to assess the Project’s activities currently underway and approve a plan for the next year. The Steering Committee was pleased with the Project’s meeting of deadlines and disbursement targets and suggested this Project be used as a model for other projects.
The 4th National Protected Area Working Group (NPAWG) meeting was held in September to discuss and settle on an outline for the strategy document. Drafting of a number of sections of the document will commence immediately with NPAWG members playing key roles in the drafting process. Other sections of the report must wait on results from the consultancy activities. (Contact Keithdw@hn.vnn.vn for more information).

### Implementation of Decision 187 and Sustainable Forest Management Should Be Sped Up

A workshop, funded by the Tropical Forest Trust (TFT) and held by WWF in coordination with the Vietnam National Working Group on sustainable forest management (SFM) and forest certification (FC), the Forest Development and Policy Departments (within MARD), and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of Dac Lac, took place in Buon Ma Thuot, Dac Lac province from September 10-11, 2001. The participants were managers of wood processing companies from 4 central highlands districts. They discussed solutions to speed up the implementation process of the government’s Decision 187 on the renovation of state forest enterprises (SFEs) and to launch a sub-program on SFM at the provincial-level. (Contact uan@wwfvn.org.vn for more information).

### Grant Support of Ford Foundation

In September, the Ford Foundation approved a grant in the amount of US$ 40,000 to the Vietnam National Working Group (NWG) on sustainable forest management. This grant is tied to the proposal co-developed by WWF Indochina and the NWG. The purpose of this grant is to help the NWG secure the endorsement of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) membership. (Contact Dr. Nguyen Ngoc Lung at vifa@netnam.vn or uan@wwfvn.org.vn).

### Ecoregion Action Program

The Ecoregion Action Program for the Forests of the Lower Mekong Ecoregion Complex (FLMEC) is currently preparing to launch a series of publications that has been in development since the Biological Assessment Workshop, held in Phnom Penh in March 2000. The central document of this workshop is entitled, *Towards a Vision for Biodiversity Conservation in the Forests of the Lower Mekong Ecoregion Complex*. This publication documents the status and threats to biodiversity in the FLMEC, as well as incorporates a priority-setting exercise, which provides the foundations and rationale for future actions. Distribution of these publications, in each of the three countries covered by the FLMEC (Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos), will take place in the coming months.

Within the Greater Annamites Ecoregion, work has focused on the Central Annamites Priority Landscape, with the view towards developing a conservation strategy for the landscape in the year 2002. The first step in this process is to collect data in a number of areas and to ensure that a feasible and concrete conservation strategy is developed. Several studies have already been conducted with more currently underway.

The Central Annamites biological assessment was concluded in early October. This lengthy process has resulted in the development of a conservation landscape for the area based on the suggestions of a team of leading biologists, as well as a ‘vision statement’, which spells out the objectives of the Central Annamites initiative. Besides, several socioeconomic-based studies are currently underway to be incorporated. The individual studies that have thus far been completed or are in the progress of being completed include: Benchmark socio-economic data, Development plans, Land-use and management, Tourism, Wildlife trade, and Human ecology and population dynamics.
To support the above-mentioned activities, a FLMEC Information System is being developed. This system is designed to store and organize data about FLMEC (principally the data collected as part of the Ecoregion Action Programme), and thus aid in the management of the program as well as make information available to a wider audience. (For more information, write to erbc@wwfvn.org.vn).

**Marine Conservation Expansion Expected**

The field work for developing Global Environment Facility (GEF) proposal for Con Dao was conducted this summer and a national workshop organized. Mr. Peter MacNamee, a consultant contracted by UNDP, is working on the full-sized project (FSP) design together with the WWF Marine and Coastal Program. The team is working in Con Dao district and Vung Tau province to gather suggestions for the first draft of the FSP. The draft will be modified in the next period and the final proposal is expected to be completed by the end of this year. (For further information, contact Tran Minh Hien at Hien@wwfvn.org.vn).

**LINC Project**

In July, the LINC Project began the implementation of its Women and Conservation (W&C) program. A training needs assessment was carried out in 10 selected villages, where the program will be implemented. The training needs assessment identified introductory training as the primary need. Thus, a training workshop on biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management will be conducted and forest-use guidelines will be developed in cooperation with the villagers.

The LINC Project supported the forest guards in the further development and implementation of the action plans that were prepared during a training workshop in June. An agreement, in which villagers agree to refrain from entering, for exploitation, the Phong Nha Nature Reserve, was drafted. Over 100 locals from villages as far away as 15 km, have already signed the agreement.

Primate monitoring surveys were conducted at two sites in Phong Nha Nature Reserve from August 13-27. During the monitoring surveys, a number of primate groups were observed.

From June 25-July 13, a team from the Vietnamese-Russian Tropical Research Center (VRTC) carried out a vegetation survey in Phong Nha Nature Reserve. This survey will provide data for a preliminary vegetation map that is based on the forest cover and land-use map of Phong Nha-Ke Bang NR and neighboring Hin Namno NBCA (Lao PDR).

From July 14-17, Dr. Isabelle Louis, Director of the WWF Asia and Pacific Program, Mr. Eric Coull, WWF Representative from the Indochina Program, and Mr. Hoang Thanh, the WWF Vietnam Conservation Manager, visited Phong Nha NR.

A July 16 meeting between the Quang Binh PPC, IRD, FPD, the Department of Science, Technology and Environment, and the Phong Nha NR, was held. The purpose of the meeting was to strengthen the relationship and cooperative efforts between WWF and Quang Binh province. The WWF delegation took this opportunity to express its concerns about the current road construction, its impact on the Phong Nha NR, and encouraged the province to develop strategies to minimize this impact. WWF Indochina is seeking support from its donors to help in this endeavor. (For more information, write to wwflicn@hn.vnn.vn).

**Lao PDR**
• **CITES National Workshop – Vientiane, Lao PDR**
On July 26th and 27th, WWF and the Lao PDR Department of Forestry hosted a national workshop to discuss forestry laws and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. Technical support was provided by TRAFFIC, and speakers from CITES offices in Vietnam, China and Cambodia were invited to share their insights concerning the impact of the CITES convention on their respective countries. Over 50 delegates from Lao PDR took part in the meeting. The workshop gave forestry officials an opportunity to discuss current forestry laws. (For more information, contact Roland Eve at roland@laotel.com).

• **ERBC Socio-Economic Survey**
As part of the Central Anammites ERBC initiative, members from WWF Laos, the Department of Forestry, and GAPE Laos, completed a socio-economic survey of the provinces of Salavan and Sekong. The survey was carried out from September 13th-23rd, and included discussions with all provincial ministries and NGOs working in the provinces. It was a strong start to what will hopefully become much more work in the area (For more information, contact Roland Eve at roland@laotel.com).

• **Missing Rhino in Lao PDR**
WWF and the National University of Laos are about to begin the hunt for any remaining rhino in Lao PDR. The campaign will ask primary and secondary school students and teachers to distribute notices and information booklets throughout target districts around the country.

• **National Biodiversity Conservation Area Legislation in Lao PDR**
Lao PDR has recently rewritten its National Biodiversity Conservation Area (NBCA) legislation. This new legislation gives greater weight to Conservation Area status and demonstrates the Laos government’s commitment to protecting land and species within its boundaries. There are currently 20 NBCAs in Lao PDR, covering approximately 12.5% of the country. (For more information, contact Roland Eve at roland@laotel.com).

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### Cambodia

• **Surveys on Birds**
An aerial survey of large water birds in northern Cambodia, primarily in the Central Indochina Dry Forests Ecoregion, was recently conducted. The International Crane Foundation, along with WWF Cambodia, Wildlife Conservation Society Cambodia, the Royal Government of Cambodia, and others, carried out this survey. The survey team was headed by Jeb Barzen of the International Crane Foundation. Results of the survey suggest that the crane population of northern Cambodia may represent anywhere from 30%-50% of the entire population of nesting cranes in Southeast Asia. Similar numbers have been suggested for other bird populations including Lesser Adjutants, Greater Adjutants, Giant Ibis, and Black-necked Storks. (For more information, contact Dale Withington at drwithing@bigpond.com.kh).

• **Community-Based Natural Resource Management Project**
From September 2-9, the Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) Project organized a study tour to Ratanakiri Province for 12 people from the CBNRM Project and the Resource Rights and Participatory Planning (RRPP) Project. The purpose was to exchange information with other CBNRM projects in Ratanakiri Province. The knowledge gained as a result of this study tour will be useful to the WWF team as it implements similar projects in Mondulkiri province and other parts of the
Central Indochina Dry Forests Ecoregion. (For more information, contact Dale Withington at drwithing@bigpond.com.kh).

- **Surveys of Tigers and Other Large Mammals in Virachey National Park**
  
  Two workshops on "Tiger Conservation and Survey Techniques", funded by the WWF US Species Program, were offered in two of the three ranger stations in Virachey National Park (VNP). 30 participants, including rangers from the VNP and staff from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and Department of Environment, of both Ratanakiri and Stung Treng provinces, attended the workshops. They were instructed on tiger ecology and how best to identify tiger track and other sign-survey techniques.

  Two tiger survey teams were formed and asked to carry out surveys in four selected sites, from the east to the west of the VNP. Track and sign surveys and camera-trapping activities were used simultaneously.

  During the course of the 2000-2001 dry season, camera-trapping surveys were conducted in four areas in the VNP. The track/sign and camera-trapping surveys indicate that *Panthera tigris corbetti* (Indochinese tigers), are definitely still present in the park, although at a relatively low density. Elephants were spotted in a location in the western part of the park. Other large mammals like *panthera pardus* (leopard), *pardofelis nebulosa* (clouded leopard), golden cats, and Asian dhole have also been recorded.

  A two-day workshop on “Tiger Data Analysis” was conducted in July in Ban Lung, Ratanakiri province, to analyze the tiger field data and discuss possible threats to the tiger as well as how best to address them, and map out and set priorities for surveying tigers in other forest areas in the VNP. Field data on track/sign as well as camera-trap surveys were broadly reviewed. (For more information, contact Seng Teak at teaks@bigpond.com.kh).

### New Publications

Funded by the Dutch Government, a *Field Guide to the Key Mammal Species of Cat Tien National Park* was published by the Ho Chi Minh City Publishing House as a joint effort between Cat Tien National Park, WWF and FFI. This book aims to assist the Park’s forest guards in identifying mammals they encounter while working in the forest and also to provide information on relevant legislation. The book is available at Cat Tien NP and WWF offices in Hanoi and HCMC.

The Asian Elephant Survey Project, under the auspices of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, published a booklet entitled, *Who Cares About Asian Elephants in the Wild?* While this booklet is written for the general public, another one, geared more towards a younger audience, will be distributed to schoolchildren living near the elephant range of Cat Tien National Park. Both booklets are available at Cat Tien NP and WWF offices in Hanoi and HCMC.

A three-volume manual by Bart van Lavieren entitled, *Wildlife Management in the Tropics and Planning and Management of Parks and Reserves*, has recently been translated into Vietnamese. Both versions of the book have been sent to all national parks and nature reserves in Vietnam for reference and inspiration.

In collaboration with Cat Tien NP, the Vietnam Postal Service issued a series of stamps depicting some of the Park’s endangered species. The series consists of a 400 VND stamp of an orange-necked Partridge, an 800 VND stamp of a *Stichopthalma* butterfly, a 3,000 VND stamp of a Javan Rhinoceros, and a 5,000 VND stamp of a Siamese Crocodile.
Proceedings (edited by Andy Maxwell and Yves Pinsonneault) from the workshop on Dry Forest Landscapes of Northern and Eastern Cambodia, which took place from June 27-30, have recently been produced. (For more information, contact Dale Withington at drwithing@bigpond.com.kh).

The Importance of Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary for the Conservation of Tigers and other Biodiversity, by Rob Timmins and Ou Ratanak, is now available at the Cambodia office. (For more information, contact Dale Withington at drwithing@bigpond.com.kh).

Booklets on the Central Indochina Dry Forests (two versions, one short and one long), have been produced for different target audiences as well as the translated-version of the Biovision Summary of the Forests of the Lower Mekong. They are now available at the Cambodia office. (For more information, contact Dale Withington at drwithing@bigpond.com.kh).

Proceedings from an exchange between stakeholders and experts on forest certification in Vietnam that was held on April 13-14, 1999 have recently been published. Included are speeches and recommendations made by participants, the majority of which are in support of sustainable forest management and using forest certification as a tool to increase capacity to manage all remaining forests in Vietnam. (For more information, contact Phuong at phuong@wwfvn.org.vn).

Spatial Planning for the Nature Conservation in Vu Quang Nature Reserve, by Roland Eve, Shobhana Madharan, and Vu Van Dzung, provides further information on Vu Quang Nature Reserve and offers a better understanding of its conservation values. The book introduces a practical approach to nature conservation in the Vu Quang NR, and outlines a proposed management plan with priorities for action. The book is available at the WWF ICP office. (For more information, contact Phuong at phuong@wwfvn.org.vn or Roland Eve at roland@laotel.com).

People

Ms. Nguyen My Hanh, who worked for WWF ICP as an environmental education expert, passed away in August. She was in a boating accident while trying to reach Cat Tien National Park via the Dong Nai River in Dong Nai province. The incident took place while Hanh was conducting a training course on environmental education (EE) for the local community.

My Hanh was one of the founders of environmental education in Vietnam. She was the first full-time national environmental education person in the country, and she built the EE unit in the WWF Indochina Programme from nothing into one of the premier EE organizations in the country. Her success became WWF's success. She was the thinker, the persuader, the force behind WWF's rapid growth in Vietnam's environmental education field.

Hanh joined the small WWF office in Hanoi in December 1995 as the office receptionist and was quickly promoted to Environmental Education Officer. Working in environmental education in 1997 was an unconventional, even quixotic, choice for a talented women in Vietnam. But it was her choice. "She had tremendous vision", explains one of her colleagues. Her friends and colleagues at WWF miss her greatly.

Sara Rollet, a Luce Scholar with an environmental law speciality, has been working at the WWF Hanoi office since September 10 and will be work with WWF until July of next year.
She is working under the supervision of Martin Geiger and will focus on a comparison of environmental laws for protected area management in Southeast Asia.

**Mr. Le Van Hung** has joined WWF ICP as coordinator of the Johannesburg Project.

Since early September, **Ms. Mac Tuyet Nga** has been working for the Ecoregion Action Program. Her position as Ecoregion Program Support Officer has a term of one year.

**Truong Viet Hung** joined WWF Indochina in August 2001 and is working on the Ecoregion Action Program as an Ecoregion Information System Officer.

**Nguyen Thy Van** began work as an administrator and translator for the Cat Tien National Park Conservation Project in July 2001.

**Nguyen Thanh Quang** joined the Cat Tien NPCP as a translator in July 2001.

**Trinh Thang Long** and **Le Thuc Dinh** left the LINC Project at the end of August. We would like to extend our thanks to both for all their hard work and wish them much success in their further careers. Le Thuc Dinh has joined FFI as an Education Officer and Trinh Thang Long is a forester for GTZ.

**Nguyen Thi Dao**, currently an Ecoregion Conservation Officer, has taken a leave of absence to pursue a one-year M.Sc., funded by a Russell Train Education for Nature Program fellowship, in conservation biology. She left Hanoi for the U.K. in September.

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