

## Will Quang Ninh close its illegal bear bile businesses?



While many anxiously wait for a decision from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development regarding the fate of the Dat Viet bears in Quang Ninh province, Ms. Van Anh, ENV's chief wildlife trade policy expert is dashing between meetings, working to build support to confiscate the bears and shut down illegal bear bile tourism for good.

ENV has actively campaigned to stop the illegal practice since September 2007 when 80 illegal bears were discovered amongst more than 200 registered bears at bear farms in Ha Long City. The bears were part of a massive tourism operation catering to mainly Korean tourists, arriving by the

busload at these farms to witness a bear bile extraction, taste bear bile wine, and illegally purchase bear products, which were then presumably smuggled back to Korea in direct violation of CITES.

ENV initiated a campaign to gather evidence, working undercover with Environmental Police, conducting countless hours of surveillance of the four largest operations, exposing the illegal activities through the media, and working with law makers and government agencies to encourage provincial authorities to shut down the farms.

A visit to one of the farms by a key

National Assembly member in May, accompanied by ENV and a film crew from VTV1, a series of critical news articles by journalists following the visit, as well as the efforts of dozens of government leaders and lawmakers that wrote correspondence to relevant ministries and the provincial leadership resulted in a police raid at one of the farms in October 2009. During the raid, Korean tourists were caught witnessing a bear bile extraction, and hundreds of bottles of bear bile were confiscated, along with equipment used in the extraction.

In Mid-November, the Quang Ninh People's Committee asked the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) to help remove all bears from the province, citing the need to put an end to illegal bear bile practices that are occurring at farms within the province.

Since mid-November, ENV has monitored progress as government bodies debate how to deal with the situation. The outcome of this process will determine the fate of not just Ha Long's illegal bear bile operations, but state more clearly whether MARD and other agencies are truly committed to ending illegal bear farming in Vietnam.

"The decision on this case will tell us a lot about the strength of

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government resolve in dealing with serious wildlife crimes such as these huge bear bile tourism operations that are making a mockery of our laws, and undermining efforts to conserve wildlife,” said Nguyen Thi Van Anh, ENV’s Wildlife Trade Program Manager. “Confiscation of the Dat Viet bears will also send a clear message to other bear farmers that their time has come. Give it up or you will be next.”

ENV’s efforts to end bear farming and trade are part of a partnership with the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA). WSPA is working closely with government agencies on developing effective bear registration monitoring programs at the national and provincial level.

## ENV promotes wildlife protection at Quang Ninh government meeting

ENV Wildlife Trade Program manager, Nguyen Thi Van Anh delivered a presentation on wildlife protection to senior provincial officials and more than 80 representatives of government agencies in Quang Ninh province at a December meeting organized by the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment. Van Anh used the opportunity to talk about bear bile tourism in the province, as well as briefed delegates on

efforts to arrest the commercial trade of protected wildlife. ENV’s latest film on bear farming in Ha Long Bay was shown, contrasting the scenic bay and lucrative tourism industry with illegal bear bile businesses operating just down the road.

LINK to film

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s45tk8OspjU> (Part 1)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZ181-6i5bo> (Part 2)



## Ending bear farming and trade

### SMS Campaign: Text to Protect Bears

Vietnam’s most famous pop star, My Linh, is helping encourage the public not to consume bear products through a new SMS campaign that asks cell phone users to dial in a pledge not to use bear bile. My Linh recorded a radio advertisement that is being aired by ENV on Voice of Vietnam radio (VOV). My Linh asks listeners to text the message, “baovegau” (protect bears) to 8069 on their cell.

ENV’s SMS bear pledge initiative was carried out in partnership with GAPIT COMMUNICATIONS JSC which has provided the call-in number and facilitated the tracking and documentation of pledges.

ENV wishes to thank My Linh who has been an avid supporter in assisting ENV in our efforts to end bear farming and trade. My Linh has recorded several advertisements for radio with ENV, appeared at major events, and starred in our very first nationally aired PSA in 2004.



Super star My Linh signs bear protection posters for children during a bear exhibit in Hanoi

Help protect Vietnam’s bears! Send a message to 8069 or access to ENV’s Vietnamese language website to sign a commitment online:

<http://thienhien.org/index.php>

## Online campaign: Bear bile is not a magic medicine

ENV is using popular news websites to promote bear and tiger protection with messages appearing this month on Dantri.com and Vnexpress.net. The three-part advertisement appearing on Dantri.com tells viewers that bear bile is not a magic medicine, to “Say No” to use of bear bile and products made from bears, and urges the public to visit the ENV website and pledge to protect bears.

ENV's online pledge campaign started in July 2009 and by the end of the year had collected 3,523 pledges from the public while an additional 21,132 pledges have been signed during ENV public events and activities for a total of 24,655 pledges in 2009 compared to about 21,000 in 2008.

### NEW resource: Fact sheet on bears

ENV has produced a new fact sheet on bears that is available in PDF form in Vietnamese and English. The facts sheets can also be found on our website:

Bear fact sheet English link:

<http://envietnam.org/img/gallery/ENV%20Bear%20Factsheet.pdf>

Bear fact sheet Vietnamese link:

<http://www.thiennhien.org/userfiles/file/ENV%20Bear%20factsheet.pdf>



## Combating tiger trade

### Tiger farming and trade investigation digs deeper

What started as a simple investigation aimed at working with law enforcement agencies to learn more about the cross-border trade of tigers and assess the current situation on tiger farms has grown into a major operation spanning dozens of provinces and linking trade between farms and tiger “chop shops”, where bone glue is made and sold on to Vietnamese consumers.

The investigation started in March of 2009 and has been underway for more than ten months as investigators turn up new links in the trade and more information becomes available. ENV has amassed hundreds of pages of documents detailing the results of comprehensive investigations on 23 trade cases and seven tiger farms or private zoos, some of which are linked directly to illegal trade of tigers.

ENV has also followed up on more than 100 documented tiger cases ranging from smuggling of live or frozen tigers to possession or selling of tiger products since 2005.



A dead tiger confiscated by police in Hanoi from a private home. Most tigers are processed at ‘chop shops’ where their bones are made into glue for traditional Chinese medicine

The ten-month investigation was carried out in cooperation with several law enforcement and government agencies. A summary of the principle

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findings will be produced for the public in January of 2010, while the full comprehensive investigation report is due to be delivered in March when ENV plans to host an inter-agency coordination meeting that will bring law enforcement agencies together and encourage cooperation in arresting the trade and sale of tigers and tiger products.

ENV will also provide copies of the investigation to key members in senior government as part of an ongoing campaign to strengthen legislation aimed at protecting tigers, and prevent the growth and development of tiger farms in Vietnam.

ENV has been pressing the issue for more than a year at the policy level with some successes, and is working closely with the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MONRE) to ensure that new legislation coinciding with the country's new Biodiversity Law

(effective July 2009), leaves no loopholes that would permit the commercial trade of tigers or other fully protected species.

A new criminal law that came into effect January 1<sup>st</sup> calls for harsh punishment of criminals involved in trading protected wildlife with fines of up to 500,000,000 VND and jail sentences of up to seven years.

The results of the 10-month investigation is intended to help bring focus on the issue at the policy, legislative, and enforcement levels of government, and strengthen the hand of key law enforcement agencies and government decision-makers in efforts to arrest the development of tiger farming and combat illegal tiger trade.

Highlights of the investigation will be reported in the next newsletter.

## Spotlight: Van Anh on tigers and trade in Vietnam

**“Vietnam is at the center of the tiger trade in this region. Tigers are being smuggled into Vietnam from Laos and other countries, and being processed and consumed here,” says Nguyen Thi Van Anh, ENV's Wildlife Trade Program Manager. “Consumption appears to be on the rise as the economy grows and disposable income increases.”**

**Van Anh warns that the greatest threat to tigers in Vietnam is the growth of tiger farming. “Some of these guys think that they can't be touched and can bend the law as they see fit,” says Van Anh. “They pretend that they are conserving tigers but in fact they are hiding their real intentions; selling tigers out the back door and making money.” Van Anh noted that one of the tiger farmers that has been the subject of investigation has an arrest record that clearly implicates him in past illegal wildlife trade transactions.**

**Van Anh goes on to say, “We may not have more than a dozen or so tigers in the wild here in Vietnam, but we have a responsibility to do our part and help protect the species across its range, including where it is threatened in other countries too. If their tigers are ending up here, it is our responsibility to stop that, and cooperate with others to put an end to the trade regardless of**



Van Anh (center on right) and the delegation from Vietnam discuss tiger protection at the Kathmandu tiger meeting in November

**where the tigers may come from.”**

**Van Anh is optimistic about the future for tigers in Vietnam. “We believe that we can protect tigers through support for law enforcement efforts, encouraging decision-makers to support effective policy and measures to protect tigers and punish criminals, through public support and involvement, reducing consumption, and actively assisting to combat illegal activities.”**



## Raising awareness and inspiring public action

### Mobile awareness team on location: Hue City

ENV's mobile wildlife awareness unit spent more than a week in Hue city carrying activities at universities and holding public events. Wildlife trade seminars were held at the Hue University of Science and the Hue University of Education. Students at both schools prepared and performed the ENV skit, Especially for Bears, and participated in lively debate on wildlife trade and farming issues amongst other activities in the seminar.

During the Hue visit, bear pledge campaigns were held at the Hue University of Science and the Hue Agriculture and Forestry University where more than 2100 pledges were signed by visitors promising not to use or consume bear products.

A total of 62 volunteers signed up to assist with wildlife trade monitoring of consumer establishments. Thirty two students participated in three separate surveys that involved basic training on survey technique before practicing in the field. Eighteen priority sites where crimes were reported previously were checked for compliance, and 21 new establishments were inspected resulting in a total of nine new violations reported.

The volunteers join the ranks of a growing national wildlife volunteer network of 1,796 volunteers in 22 provinces that assist ENV with compliance monitoring and reporting of new crimes.



#### Seminar series at a glance

- Presentation on the wildlife trade in Vietnam
- Discussion and debate on wildlife trade and farming
- View bear bile extraction film
- Student attitude survey
- View the ITC (ENV) tiger farming film
- Volunteer recruitment introduction
- Tour the mobile exhibit on wildlife trade

## Is the restaurant really especially for bears or for bear specialties?



Especially for Bears features Ranger Bear stopping in a restaurant to eat after a long day and discovers that he is on the menu. When the restaurant owner calls in the local doctor to extract bear bile for a restaurant full of patrons, the doctor accidentally injects himself with anesthesia and is knocked out cold. Ranger Bear, suddenly realizing what was happening, fills a bile bottle with nuoc mam (fish sauce) and leaves. The owner

returns to the kitchen and finds the doctor asleep, no doubt intoxicated. But fortunately, he has succeeded in collecting bile. She returns to the dining room and greets visitors, mixing bear bile and wine in their glasses. They taste and it is a miracle. The substituted fish sauce gives them strength, soothes an ache, makes them feel fresh and young again. Ranger Bear concludes to the audience that bear bile is not a magic medicine, and urges students to help protect bears.

Students love performing the skit and the room is always full of laughter as the quacky doctor is summoned to perform the extraction, and the restaurant owner adds an occasional unscripted line.

The skit was developed by ENV in 2005 and has been performed at universities throughout Vietnam as part of the mobile team's regular university seminar series.



## Environmental education training in Kon Ka Kinh National Park

ENV conducted a short five-day training course for eight participants from Kon Ka Kinh National Park and from neighboring Kon Chu Rang Nature Reserve, focusing on raising awareness about the protection of the critically endangered grey-shanked douc langur (*Pygathrix nemaeus cinerea*). The grey-shanked douc langur is a native resident to both protected areas and is endemic to the provinces in central Vietnam and is locally threatened by hunting and trade.

The training was aimed at preparing ENV's local partners at both protected areas to integrate a primate lesson plan specifically focusing on the grey-shanked douc langur that was developed by ENV into their community-based awareness programs, currently administered in schools bordering both protected areas.

The training involved two days focused on learning the new lesson plan followed by a day in the field teaching the new program in schools. The remaining two days were spent working on sharpening specific

environmental education communication skills of some of the participants.

ENV has carried out similar training focused on some of Vietnam's most critically endangered primates at Cuc Phuong National Park and Van Long Nature Reserve (Delacours langur focus areas), and Pu Huong Nature Reserve in Nghe An province (white-cheeked gibbon focus area).

The Kon Ka Kinh National Park and Kon Chu Rang Nature Reserve community-based awareness programs were established in partnership with ENV in 2007. ENV provides training and technical support to the local program. In 2009, ENV's local partners carried out a total of 42 club meetings in local schools and nine meetings focused on adults in local villages.

The primate-specific training was carried out thanks to a grant from the Margot Marsh Biodiversity Foundation and the Houston Zoo.



Students pretend to call rangers and report the illegal hunting of langurs during a game organized as part of the endangered primate lesson at their school

env GO GREEN TOYOTA

### Cat Ba campaign

Cat Ba National Park hosted six meetings in local communities and produced 4,000 leaflets and posters to distribute to Cat Ba residents promoting environmentally friendly waste disposal and environmental protection. The project is part of a campaign funded through the ENV-Toyota partnered Green Grant program focused on addressing environmental pollution in communities bordering Cat Ba National Park.

*là vấn nạn của các đô thị*  
*đàn trên đảo Cat Ba*

Vì môi trường Cat Bà سالم, sạch đẹp mỗi tháng bà Mỹ  
Hãy đến các cơ sở tuyên truyền để lấy các  
vở và tờ rơi đúng nơi quy định.



## ENV Releases 30th issue of popular student nature magazine: **Green Forest**

In December, ENV released its latest issue of the popular student nature magazine, *Green Forest*, which is distributed widely to school children in rural communities bordering more than 40 parks and protected areas throughout Vietnam. This most recent issue features facts and information about two critically endangered species; the white-cheeked gibbon and the Vietnamese pond turtle, an endemic freshwater turtle species found only to the central provinces of Vietnam.

In our Green Living section, readers also have the opportunity to learn about what students at eight schools in Ha Long city are doing to make their schools “environmentally friendly” or join in a new competition hosted by ENV, Boo Skate shops, and Karibon Facemask Company to promote clean air.

Additional features in this issue focus on dry forest ecosystems, the protection of groundwater resources, river otters, pollution in craft villages,

and Chu Mom Ray National Park.

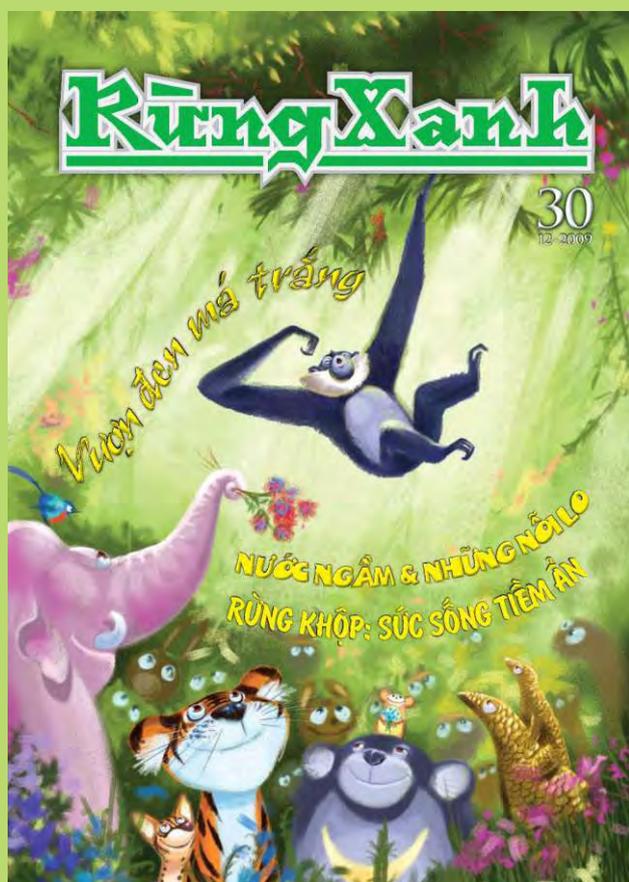
As usual, *Green Forest* includes contributions from student readers throughout the country who wish to share their ideas and experiences through poems, stories, and other contributions to the student forum.

Through *Green Forest*, students have the opportunity to discover nature and the environment through stories, games, and activities that are designed to make learning fun.

*Green Forest* is produced twice each year and is distributed free of charge. Each issue is estimated to reach about 300,000 students nationwide.

If you wish to have a topic covered in an upcoming issue of *Green Forest* and additional copies printed in support of a specific nature or environment project that you are working on, please contact:

[Quyenvu75@gmail.com](mailto:Quyenvu75@gmail.com)



### **This Issue at a Glance**

#### **Feature stories**

White-cheeked gibbons  
Underground water  
Craft villages and pollution  
Ecosystems: Dry forest habitat  
The endemic Vietnamese pond turtle

#### **Regular Sections**

Nature works: Rainbows  
Amazing animals: Otters  
Adventure nature: Chu Mon Ray National Park  
Green living: Eco-schools in Ha Long City  
Nature news section  
The Adventures of Ranger Bear  
Wildlife Trade: Protecting bears

#### **Student contribution section**

If I were minister...  
Poems by students  
Expert come



# Combating wildlife crime

## Hunting and trade around Song Thanh Nature Reserve in Quang Nam province

During early December, the Da Nang-based ENV Wildlife Crime Unit carried out a two week rapid assessment of hunting and trade in and around the Song Thanh Nature Reserve in Quang Nam province. The team interviewed a total of 68 local hunters, traders, and owners of consumer establishments as part of an effort to map out local trade networks and identify key players in advance of combined enforcement and awareness activities carried out by ENV.

The findings indicated that both local and hired 'professional' hunters from outside the area are actively hunting and trapping wildlife in the reserve.



Local hunters show Da Nang crime unit team-leader Hoang Van Chuong crossbows and other tools used to hunt and trap animals in the Song Thanh

Sambar deer, wild pig, serow, and muntjac are processed in the forest and sold in local and regional markets and restaurants through a network of local traders operating on the fringes of the reserve, while live animals such as civets, pythons, turtles, and porcupines are mainly sold on to restaurants in Da Nang and other urban centers, or purchased by major traders operating in the region that export the animals to Hanoi or on to China. Pangolins are almost exclusively sold live into the trade pipeline to Hanoi and China.

Hunters noted that some species such as bears were becoming rare in the reserve, and that major hunting operations, which sometimes involved spending weeks in the forest, were forced to move deeper into the reserve to catch animals. None of those surveyed could provide any information about tigers.

A full report will be published shortly on the team's detailed findings.

The survey is part of a three year project by ENV with support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation aimed at identifying hunting and trade networks in five central provinces of Vietnam, and utilizing the success of ENV's combined enforcement, awareness, and policy approaches to address critical wildlife trade issues in the region.



One of four gibbons that were turned over to Cat Tien National Park by the managers of a vocational center in Dong Nai province. Also handed over were three peafowl and a registered bear. The case was first reported to ENV in August thanks to one of ENV's many Wildlife Protection Volunteers

## Pangolin trade summary 2005-2009

Since January 2005, ENV's Wildlife Crime Unit has documented 248 cases involving pangolins. These cases include 129 smuggling and trade cases, 114 cases involving selling or advertising pangolins, and five hunting or 'other' cases.

The smuggling (transport seizure) cases accounted for a total of 47.5 tons of pangolins or approximately 11,000<sup>(1)</sup> pangolins based on an average weight of a trade specimen, 4.3 kg<sup>(2)</sup>.

Trade seizures occurred mainly in seven provinces; Ninh Binh (16 cases), Thanh Hoa (15 cases), Nghe An (13 cases), Ha Tinh (10 cases), Hai Phong (9 cases), Quang Ninh (8 cases), and Hanoi (7 cases). Trade seizures were reported in 16 other provinces (between 1-3 cases each).

There is substantial evidence that a major route for the pangolin smuggling is through the Cau Treo border gate in Ha Tinh province where shipments are processed and sent onward to Hanoi and the border of China. Border crossings in Quang Binh and Quang Tri have also been named as major smuggling points for pangolins and other wildlife being brought into Vietnam from Laos.

Several major shipments involving as much as 25 tons of pangolins and scales were also seized at ports in Hai Phong and Quang Ninh.

The pangolin trade through Vietnam's ports has been linked to sources in Indonesia, while overland trade routes through Laos from Thailand through Ha Tinh and some neighboring provinces are suspected to be a major conduit for the live pangolin trade destined for markets in China.

Pangolins are also still sourced from the wild in Vietnam, though wild populations are thought to have diminished greatly as a result of hunting and trade. The bulk of the trade in Vietnam is believed to be foreign sourced.

There are two species of pangolins found in trade in Vietnam; the Sunda pangolin (*Manis javanica*) and the Chinese pangolin (*Manis pentadactyla*). Both species are native to Vietnam.



More than five tons of frozen pangolins and scales confiscated at Quang Ninh port shortly before being destroyed in early 2009.

Pangolins are listed on Group 2B of Vietnam's principal wildlife protection law, Decree 32. Pangolins are also listed on CITES Appendix II, prohibiting trade across international borders without a permit from the national CITES Management Authority.

Note: The trade figures for pangolins represent only those cases documented by ENV through the Wildlife Crime Unit and may not necessarily represent all seizures made by law enforcement agencies in Vietnam during the period of 2005-2009.

Seizures are also thought to represent only a small fraction of the illegal wildlife trade suggesting that actual pangolin shipments through Vietnam may be substantially larger than what ENV has documented.

- (1) The quantity of animals is an approximation based on the total weight of 47.5 tons divided by the average weight of a trade pangolin. The actual number of pangolins may differ slightly given that some shipments included only scales or pangolins without scales, which could not be separated from the total volume traded.
- (2) Average trade weight calculated by dividing total weight of pangolins seized (for cases involving whole animals only) divided by number of pangolins where the number of pangolins was known.



## Crime Unit figures this month

The Wildlife Crime Unit logged a total of 47 new cases this month. As at the end of the month, a total of 663 cases have been documented in 2009, bringing the total to 2202 for the number of cases since the WCU became operational in January 2005.

Period	Trade Operations	Smuggling	Selling	Advertising	Possession display	Other	Total
December 2009	2	12	15	5	10	3	47
Total 2009	28	117	227	106	155	30	663
Total since January 2005	122	464	886	180	507	104	2202



## Home page

### The KOTO connection

In December, ENV carried out its fourth special seminar on the environment since 2008 for street children in partnership with the KOTO Center.

The KOTO Centre was established in 1998 as a registered charity by a team of Australian volunteers to help disadvantaged youth and children living on the street in Vietnam.

The young people in KOTO study hospitality skills and English, and take part in an essential life skills program. Armed with new skills, graduates have the opportunity to find good jobs in the hotel and restaurant industry.

ENV has been working with KOTO since 2008, teaching groups of students about general environmental issues such as waste disposal, water pollution, and Vietnam and the global environment. The aim of the partnership is to assist KOTO in providing its graduates with basic



A group of Koto students pose for a photo with ENV educators following a study program on the environment

knowledge on environmental protection that they can apply in their future work.

For more information on the KOTO Centre at <http://www.koto.com.au/>

### This month's links

**A collection of ENV films and PSA's on YouTube:**

My Linh PSA 2004: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7z93p8Vlbzo>

"Say No!" Bear Bile PSA 2006 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FgkkQ84kmmk>

Tam Biet (Goodbye) Turtle short film : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFJdONb0OqM>

Bear Bile Ogilvy-ENV PSA (2008) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QaZEZBPt9Gc>

Bear bile café PSA (2009) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7R8DJTjCqtY>



# Wanted

We are a small Vietnamese organization with only about 25 staff throughout Vietnam that are working to protect our wildlife.

As part of our efforts to build a stronger base of support both inside and outside of Vietnam, we are working to develop our membership.

If you would like to support ENV or can contribute your time or expertise, please consider becoming a member. Visit our [membership page](#) or contact Ms. Binh at [Membership.env@fpt.vn](mailto:Membership.env@fpt.vn)

Thanks for your consideration.  
Ms. Nguyen Phuong Dung

Become a member of ENV and help us succeed in our mission to protect Vietnam's wildlife!

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Title: Mr/Ms/Ms

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Business name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mobile number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Individual Membership**

- Individual silver Vietnam 1500
- Individual overseas 5000

**Corporate Membership**

- Silver 15000
- Gold 30000 - 120000

**Area of Interest:**

- Tropical forests
- Marine & coastal environments
- Urban environments
- Wildlife
- Environmental education
- Other

Payment options

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**Together we can protect nature & the environment**

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## Thank you!

ENV wishes to thank the following major organizations and institutions for their support:

- World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA)
- Humane Society International (HSI)
- The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
- Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- The Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation
- Toyota Motor Vietnam
- SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund
- Boo Skate shops Hanoi



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ENV English Website: [www.envvietnam.org](http://www.envvietnam.org)  
Wildlife Crime Gallery: [www.savingvietnamswildlife.org](http://www.savingvietnamswildlife.org)  
FacebookEnglish:  
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?grid=47162312016>



## Stop Wildlife Crime!

If you observe wildlife being kept, sold, transported, traded, consumed, or advertised, contact your local authorities or call the ENV Wildlife Crime Hotline

Hotline: **1800-1522** Email: [Hotline@fpt.vn](mailto:Hotline@fpt.vn)