



Quang Ninh Environmental Police Raid Major Bear Bile Tourism Operation

On October 2, Environmental Police in Quang Ninh raided the Viet Thai Tourism Company bear farm near Ha Long City and caught bear farm managers preparing to extract bile from a captive bear for a group of Korean tourists. Police briefly detained both tourists and staff from the farm and confiscated more than 200 bottles of bear bile, as well as ultrasound equipment and other instruments used in the extraction process.

Quang Ninh Police have appealed to higher authorities to hand down tough punishment to the offending farm owners and staff, which included at least one Korean national who is believed to be managing visits by Korean tourists to the farm and the sale of illegal bear products to foreign visitors.

ENV has been working for more than a year to bring an end to 'bear bile tourism' a practice which involves bringing organized groups of Korean and other Asian tourists to farms where they witness the bile extraction process, taste bile, and are then offered to buy bear bile and other products in direct violation of the law.

ENV has conducted a number of surveillance operations outside some of the most active of six farms in Quang Ninh, in some cases working with police, and infiltrating the farms to witness the illegal operation first hand. Efforts to gain support from the Korean Embassy proved unsuccessful, and so ENV sought support from key members of the National Assembly and leaders within relevant ministries. Korean advertisements were also

made available at major hotels where Korean tour groups commonly stay, while at the same time, continued surveillance, checks at airports of Korean passengers, and other enforcement activities aimed to keep pressure on the issue.

The October 2 raid was the first of its kind involving one of the Quang Ninh bear bile tourism operations. ENV is hopeful that the raid marks the beginning of a sustained enforcement campaign that will put an end to the bear bile tourism industry for good.

LINK to Vietnam TV News story (Vietnamese language):
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vxhbx-rdqAw>



ENV Working to End Bear Farming and Illegal Trade

Bear Bile Tourism Story Breaks in Korea

On October 28, Joong Anh Daily, a major Korean newspaper, broke the story about Korean tourists visiting bear farms in Vietnam and purchasing bear products which they then smuggle back to Korea. Coverage of the issue in Korea was largely on account of the work of a new organization, Bear Necessities in Korea, which aimed to build public pressure on the Korean side of the issue and support government action in encouraging Korean tourists to enjoy their visit to Vietnam but warning them not to visit bear farms or violate the law while they are there.

LINK to News English language article:
http://envietnam.org/library/Articles%20for%20news%20media%20section/Vietnamese_urge_Koreans_not_to_travel_for_bear_bile.html

ENV Completes Third Major Attitude Survey on Bear Bile in Da Nang

ENV completed its third major bear bile attitude survey, this time focusing on residents in the central region of the country. The telephone survey is aimed at establishing baseline information on public attitudes toward consumption of bear bile as ENV expands its campaign to put an end to the illegal bear bile industry in Vietnam. Similar surveys have been carried out in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, and results are expected to be made available through a comprehensive report later in the year.

Say "NO!" Pledge Count: 17,037 and rising!

Last year, ENV obtained more than 20,000 pledges from the public at campaign events held throughout the country. This year, ENV has expanded its pledge campaign to include an online pledge on our Vietnamese language website. Since August, we have collected nearly 2,500 electronic pledges from people all over the country. Combined with our ongoing pledge campaign at public events, we are well on our way to reaching our 2009 target of 25,000 pledges.

ENV bear bile pledge: I commit not to use bear bile or products made from bears.
Pledge online (Vietnamese language):
<http://www.thienhien.org/>



Pledge card which reads: "I am opposed to the use of bear bile and pledge not to consume bear bile or products made from bears"

Mobile Bear Exhibit

ENV's mobile wildlife awareness team was busy this month with two major campaign events in Hanoi focused on protection of bears.

In early October, the team hosted a three-day exhibit at the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology and during the last week of the month, events were held at Hanoi National University and Phuong Dong University. Both events, which focused on protection of bears and other wildlife featured information panels, activities for children, our ENV mascot, Ranger Bear, and the 'bear torture chamber', a small darkened room behind an iron gate where visitors watch a bear bile extraction on TV and use a torch to view artwork by children depicting the horrors of a captive life for bears in Vietnam.

Since 2007, ENV's mobile Wildlife Awareness Program has hosted wildlife trade seminars at 31 universities and more than 30 public events in urban centers throughout Vietnam.



A university student presents his ideas during one of ENV's Wildlife Trade Seminars. Seminars include a presentation and exhibit on the wildlife trade, performances, films, and active discussion and debate amongst students on the issue. Wildlife Trade Seminars have been hosted at 31 universities throughout Vietnam since early 2007

Vietnam Bear Taskforce Unifies NGO Efforts to End Bear Farming

NGOs actively working on bear protection and conservation issues have banded together to form the Vietnam Bear Task Force (BTF). The BTF was established to strengthen and unify NGO efforts to end illegal bear farming and trade in Vietnam and includes representatives from Animals Asian Foundation, Wildlife at Risk, Free The Bears, the World Society for the Protection of Animals, and Education for Nature-Vietnam.

In October, the group met to develop a unified response to the October 2 raid by Environmental Police on a bear bile tourism operation in Quang Ninh. The BTF produced a letter to the government urging functional agencies to confiscate bears from the business and administer harsh punishment to owners, sending a strong message to other bear bile tourism operations occurring in the province.

LINK to joint BTF letter:

http://envvietnam.org/library/Law%20articles/Bear_Task_force_Letter_to_Govt_24_bears_QN_Oct_15.pdf



Major Tiger Farming and Trade Investigation Highlights Vietnam Role in Trade



There have been 18 major trade and smuggling cases involving tigers since 2006. Tigers like these found in Hanoi are destined for 'chop shops' where their bones are used to make traditional medicine

Preliminary results of two major investigations on tiger farming and trade in Vietnam that began in March 2009 show that there are 79 tigers currently being kept in captivity at six registered farms and private zoos, and another 13-14 kept at two state zoos. The results show

that there are serious potential opportunities for tiger farmers to circumvent the law and engage in illegal trade of tigers and tiger products due to ineffective monitoring of these tiger breeding operations. Moreover, there have been large numbers of deaths at some farms (28 at one farm) without clear and appropriate disposal of the remains, while births have not been reported on other farms, and tiger cubs have been seen by investigators at farms where the owner claims that there have been no births.

Through the tiger trade component of the investigation, ENV has made tentative connections between tiger trade and farming operations, at the same time documenting cases where tigers are reportedly sourced from trade through or originating in Laos. A total of 18 tiger smuggling and trade cases have been documented since 2006. An additional 56 tiger consumer trade cases have been reported in the course of monitoring in 19 Vietnamese cities and provincial towns, and by way of public reporting using the hotline.

ENV intends to report to the government on the tiger farming and trade situation in Vietnam later in the year. A public version of the report will be available at about the same time. The tiger trade investigation was completed in cooperation with the National Environmental Police and other important partners.



Kathmandu Conference Aims to Build Political Will and Prevent Tiger Extinction

ENV Wildlife Trade Program manager Nguyen Thi Van Anh had the unique opportunity to be invited to represent ENV at the Global Tiger Workshop in Kathmandu, Nepal from October 27-30, 2009. The meeting brought together more than 250 experts and representatives from governments in 13 range states to formulate a concise set of recommendations to prevent the further decline of tigers and help wild populations recover.

The recommendations will be formally presented at a ministry-level meeting of range state governments scheduled for January 2010 in Thailand.

One of the greatest concerns expressed by tiger experts is the demand from consumers in China and Vietnam, and a trend toward the development of 'tiger farms' in some range states and legalization of trade from these farms, which opponents say will increase demand for tiger products by making them readily available to the public, cause confusion amongst law enforcement agencies in differentiating between legally sourced and illegal products, and most importantly, will not reduce pressure on wild tigers, but may indeed increase pressure, as wild sourced animals are far more profitable than costly captive raised animals.

"The Kathmandu meeting is about increasing political will in range states," says Van Anh. "What is needed most is not money, equipment, or training, but a serious determination on behalf of range state governments to act and take measures to protect tigers seriously."

Van Anh notes that she is proud about the way law enforcement agencies in Vietnam have sought to combat illegal trade and smuggling of tigers over the past few years, but she notes that she remains concerned by the growth of tiger farms in Vietnam, some of which she suspects are involved in selling tigers "out the back door".

"Dealing with these farms is a political issue, as the farmers are rich and influential, and in some instances, authorities appear to be afraid to take action in dealing with the problem" Van Anh says. "However, although we only have a few farms today, the problem is like a cancer as the number of tigers increases. If we don't deal with the problem now when it is small, it will grow in size and eventually kill us."

ENV's national tiger strategy focuses on:

- Strengthening law enforcement;
- Building interest and support amongst key members of government to strengthen laws and arrest the potential development of commercial tiger farms;
- Raise awareness amongst consumers through TV, radio, and public campaigns;
- Encourage public participation and support in reporting tiger crimes.

ENV's tiger program is supported by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation.

Local Partnerships Focus on Protection of Most Critically Endangered Primates

ENV educators spent a week in Pu Huong Nature Reserve in Nghe An province training nature reserve staff on how to carry out a new lesson plan developed by ENV focusing on primates. Following trials of the lesson plan earlier in the year, the ENV education team has been on the road working with protected area staff at several priority sites where some of the world's most critically endangered primates remain in the wild.

Pu Huong Nature Reserve is home to what experts believe is the most important population of the northern white-cheeked gibbon remaining in the wild. Following consultations with primatologists working at the site from Conservation International, ENV developed a lesson plan specifically focused on the white-cheeked gibbon. Following the training of nature reserve staff in October, ENV and local partners carried out the lesson plan for 14 classes in local schools bordering the nature reserve. The Pu Huong Nature Reserve educators plan to continue with the program in the buffer zone. ENV has also supported additional adult focused awareness activities in the buffer zone through a Green Grant earlier in the year.



Students in Quy Hop Middle School in the buffer zone of Pu Huong Nature Reserve (Nghe An) participate in a primate lesson at school. The focus species for Pu Huong is the northern white-cheeked gibbon

Similar species specific lesson plans have been developed for the Delacour langur (*Trachypithecus delacouri*), Cat Ba langur (*Trachypithecus poliocephalus*), and gray-shanked douc langur (*Pygathrix nemaeus cinerea*), and three other priority primates species native to Vietnam that are listed amongst the world's top 25 most critically endangered primate species.

In August, training was carried out for staff of Cuc Phuong National Park and Van Long Nature Reserve in Ninh Binh province, two important sites for the Delacour langur.

ENV's efforts to enhance protection for Vietnam's most endangered primates include strengthening law enforcement efforts through the work of the Wildlife Crime Unit and Capitol Group, enhancing public awareness through radio and television, and protected area-focused awareness campaigns in local communities in partnership with protected area staff. The program is supported in part through a generous grant by the Houston Zoo, USA.



A gray-shanked douc langur, one of the world's top 25 most critically endangered primates, is endemic to the provinces of central Vietnam

Photo by: Tim McCormack

Gia Lai Mission to Support Educators

An ENV networking and environmental education training team visited Kon Ka Kinh National Park and Kon Chu Rang Nature Reserve in October to help protected area staff develop a new program focused on adult residents in communities bordering the protected areas, along with additional lesson plans for local nature clubs. The visit was part of an ongoing support program that followed training of local teams from both protected areas in early 2008.

Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade

New Da Nang Wildlife Crime Office to Strengthen Central Vietnam Operations

In late October, ENV opened the doors to a new office in the city of Da Nang where a satellite operation of the Wildlife Crime Unit will operate from as ENV heightens attention on trade and consumer crimes in Central Vietnam.

The new office is staffed by three officers, who will head up a series of surveys at protected areas in four provinces of central Vietnam aimed at investigating hunting and trade sourced from these protected areas. The team will also establish

monitoring programs in four central Vietnam cities including Hue and Da Nang, aimed at documenting consumer crimes, investigating suppliers, and mapping out trade networks.

In addition to coordinating reporting and tracking of crimes in central Vietnam with the Hanoi Wildlife Crime Unit, the local team will also work with the ENV's mobile awareness unit to recruit volunteers to carry out monitoring, and facilitate a range of activities carried out by ENV Central focused on building public support in the region, and working with local decision-makers.

The team received a week of training in early October and will soon undergo additional training in November and December as surveys get underway.

ENV plans to further expand its base of operations to Ho Chi Minh City in 2010, opening a third office there to handle local reporting of crimes, monitoring, and volunteer coordination.

The program is made possible thanks to a grant from the MacArthur Foundation.



Da Nang Volunteers prepare to begin a survey. In addition to conducting hunting and wildlife trade surveys in communities bordering priority parks and nature reserves, the Da Nang team will urge business owners to comply with wildlife protection laws in five cities, recruit volunteers, and establish regular monitoring programs to ensure compliance in five cities in Central Vietnam

Environmental Police Take a Look at Wildlife Crime on the Internet

Environmental Police attended a two day hands-on workshop at ENV on investigating wildlife crime on the internet with a US Fish and Wildlife Service Special Agent and Freeland Foundation law enforcement advisor. The internet crime investigation session was organized by Freeland Foundation in partnership with ENV as part of ongoing efforts to strengthen Vietnam's commitment to the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (WEN). It was the second training session carried out for Environmental Police this year. An earlier course in March focused on investigation planning in preparation for a national tiger trade investigation conducted by Environmental Police and ENV.

Two Tigers Seized in Hanoi



Two frozen tigers seized from traders on October 16 in Hanoi. ENV investigators suspect that these tigers may have come from a registered tiger farm in Thanh Hoa

On October 16, Hanoi Environmental Police made another important tiger bust, seizing two frozen tigers (129kg total) from a taxi and arresting four suspects. The tigers were reportedly being transported from Thanh Hoa province where suspects claimed they were purchased from a well-known tiger supplier. According to ENV investigators, the Thanh Hoa trader resides in the very same village as one of the country's five 'tiger farmers' that were recently registered to keep illegal tigers found in their possession for conservation breeding purposes.

ENV is working with authorities to clarify links between the recent seizure and the Thanh Hoa farm where ENV investigators believe the tigers originated, and if confirmed, will urge authorities to shut down the Thanh Hoa farm, confiscate tigers there, and prosecute the farm owner.

Another Bear Confiscated

In October, a Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*), was confiscated from a petrol station in the southern province of Hau Giang after efforts over many months by ENV's Major Crimes Officer, Nguyen Ngoc Diep and countless correspondence and discussions with authorities aimed at getting the unregistered and illegal bear turned over to authorities. The case marks another positive example of a provincial government acting decisively in their dealing with illegal bears that are found. In the past, other provinces have chosen to allow owners to keep illegal bears, interpreting the law lightly, and thereby setting a poor precedent to others that might choose to buy and keep an illegal bear. However, recently, a number of provinces have demonstrated their conviction to end illegal bear trade by confiscating illegal bears that they find. Hau Giang joins the ranks of Yen Bai, Dien Bien, Can Tho, and Hanoi in setting a positive example for other provinces to follow.

The Hau Giang bear was transferred to Wildlife at Risk's Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Center in Ho Chi Minh. The case was first reported to ENV by a foreign advisor to Wildlife at Risk.

New Advisories Alert Frontline Enforcement Agencies

ENV launched a new program aimed at enhancing law enforcement efforts around the country on specific wildlife crime issues. This month, advisories were sent to Customs agents at all three international airports recommending that Customs screen Vietnamese passengers returning to Vietnam from trips which included travel in Africa in search of rhino products being smuggled from southern Africa. The advisory follows a string of cases involving passengers arriving on connecting flights from Hong Kong and Singapore that were found to be smuggling rhino horn in their luggage.

A second advisory was issued concerning a rash of hunting and trade incidents involving black-shanked douc langurs (*Pygathrix nigripes*). In 2009 alone, at least 66 dead langurs have been recovered by law enforcement agencies and at least ten people arrested. The langurs are usually dried and sold for use in traditional medicine. The langur advisory was issued to police and Forest Protection Departments in provinces where the langurs are known to occur in the wild.

Under the new program, ENV uses information documented in our Wildlife Crime Database to analyze trends and identify areas where critical attention is needed to address illegal trade. The information is summarized in the form of short advisories or briefings, which also include urgent recommendations, and are sent directly to key functional agencies at the working level.



The new Wildlife Trade Advisories will help focus attention by law enforcement agencies on critical trade issues such as the poaching of black-shanked douc langurs. ENV has documented 66 dead langurs being recovered during trade cases in 2009 alone

Wildlife Crime Statistics

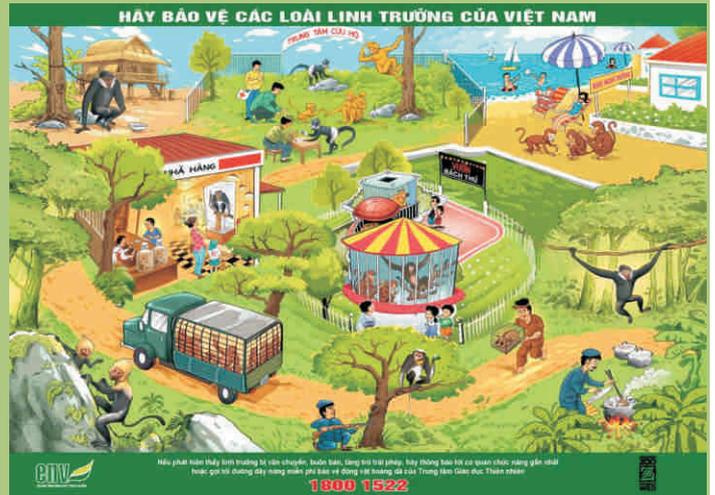
It has been another busy month for the Wildlife Crime Unit with 78 new cases. Top of the list were a tiger seizure in Hanoi, a bear confiscation in Hau Giang, and a police raid on one of six major bear farms in Quang Ninh province. As of the last day of the month, a total of 566 cases have been documented in 2009, bringing the total to 2105 for the number of cases since the WCU became operational in January 2005.

Reporting Period	Trade Operations	Smuggling	Selling	Advertising	Possession	Other	Total
October 2009	1	16	10	37	11	3	78
January-October 2009	23	98	189	97	133	26	566
Since January 2005	117	445	848	171	485	100	2105

Photo gallery



Students complete 'species cards' detailing what they have learned about white-cheeked gibbons during a primate lesson at Pu Huong Nature Reserve



A poster depicting many of Vietnam's primate species in various captive and wild circumstances. Students use the poster in class to identify crimes before engaging in a role-playing exercise, pretending to report the crimes that they have identified to local authorities. One of the main messages of the lesson is to 'take action' and 'get involved' to help protect Vietnam's primates



Children participate in a lesson in the buffer zone of Kon Chu Rang Nature Reserve (KCR) in Gia Lai province where ENV is working with local partners to implement a community-based awareness program



Children construct a map of KCR Nature Reserve, placing animals and key features on the map as part of the year's first introductory lesson

Contact us



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Stop Wildlife Crime



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

Hotline: **1800-1522** Email: Hotline@fpt.vn