

## Press Release

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### Three Bear Cubs Rescued in Dien Bien

**(Hanoi) June 11, 2007** Customs officers at the Tay Trang checkpoint along the Vietnam-Laos border in Dien Bien Province confiscated three bear cubs from a man who was attempting to smuggle the animals in to Vietnam where he intended to sell them.

Working closely with the Dien Bien Forest Protection Department (FPD), staff of the ENV Wildlife Crimes Monitoring Unit coordinated the transfer of the confiscated bear cubs to the new bear rescue facility at Tam Dao National Park run by Animals Asia (AAF), an international organization specializing in rescue and long-term captive management of bears.

At the time of their transfer to the Bear Rescue Center, the bears weighed a little over 2 kilograms each. Experts at the center estimate that the cubs were only about two months old when they were confiscated at the border on May 6. As is commonly the case with baby bears caught up in the trade, the bears' mother was most likely killed so that the hunter could capture and sell the cubs.

"While it is unfortunate that these young bears ended up in the trade, at least they will not end up victims in the bear bile industry, which is almost certainly where they were headed," says Nguyen Van Anh, coordinator of ENV's Wildlife Crime department, which operates a National Wildlife Crime Hotline aimed at encouraging public participation in stopping wildlife crime.

"Thanks to the excellent efforts of the Dien Bien Customs Department and Forest Protection Department, these young bears were spared a miserable and torturous life in the hands of bear bile traders," says Van Anh.

There are about 4000 bears in captivity in Vietnam, according to government estimates. Experts suggest that there may be more bears in captivity in Vietnam than in the wild.



Annemarie Weegenaar of Animals Asia, Van Anh, ENV Wildlife Crime Unit coordinator, and case officer, Tran Thu Hang had an opportunity to visit the baby bears in Tam Dao

## About Education for Nature - Vietnam

Education for Nature-Vietnam (ENV) was established in 2000 as Vietnam's first non-governmental organization focused on conservation of nature and wildlife. Our mission is to foster greater understanding amongst the public about the need to protect Vietnam's rich natural heritage and the living world around us. Through our creative and innovative approach to addressing key conservation and environmental issues, we aim to influence attitudes and behavior, and encourage greater public participation in this important and challenging task.



## Stop Wildlife Crime

If you see wildlife in restaurants or other business establishments, contact your local Forest Protection Department or the ENV Wildlife Crime Hotline

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

**You can make a difference!**