

Feature

Guarding Empty Forests

How effective are we at protecting our wildlife? Are we losing the battle to protect our natural heritage? Unfortunately, it seems that our efforts today may not be enough, and that unless we are prepared to take a stronger stand, we may soon find ourselves guarding empty forests.

Hunting and trapping constitute a major threat to wildlife in most protected areas throughout Vietnam. While some parks have established regular enforcement initiatives, including patrolling and monitoring of core areas, these efforts have on the whole proved ineffectual in preventing the steady decline of wildlife, and reports from hunters in some areas confirm declines in the wild populations of even common wildlife species.

On the roads, efforts by enforcement agencies to protect wildlife are generally successful in intercepting only an estimated 5% of the trade. However, enforcement efforts focused on the roads alone come too late to benefit the animals concerned, which have already been removed from their habitat, with little likelihood of return, even if their specific origin were known.

The volume of wildlife exported from Vietnam that comes from our own forests has probably decreased since the mid-1990s due to over-hunting. At the same time, smuggling of wildlife into and through Vietnam from



Dozens of snare traps collected from the forest at a nature reserve in central Vietnam. Protection starts in the forest. If we can not protect wildlife in the wild, we will soon have empty forests.

neighboring countries continues unabated. When wildlife traders are caught, they are often slapped on the wrist with light fines. Few go to jail.

In recent years as the economy has grown, consumer demand for wildlife has risen dramatically. The proliferation of wildlife restaurants, shops, and



A bear with an injured paw at a bear farm outside of Hanoi where customers meet on Sunday to buy bear bile and witness the extraction process. Selling bile from bears is illegal, even if the bears are registered with local authorities.

businesses selling and advertising wildlife has only made the job that much tougher for those tasked with enforcement.

In the market and at the consumer end of the trade, enforcement efforts range from seizures of wildlife to warnings and the eliciting of promises from business owners not to engage in illegal activities. However, enforcement agencies often seem reluctant to impose the full force of the law on violators, particularly when the crime is considered small. Except where enforcement is consistent and determined, most business owners nod their heads and sign commitments, take a break, and then return to continue violating the law.

While both the laws and the quality of enforcement efforts have improved remarkably over the past 15 years, these improvements have been unable to keep pace with developments in the trade. Agencies tasked with enforcement often lack either the motivation or effective strategies for dealing with wildlife crime. There are also few incentives for frontline law enforcement officers to improve their performance or to take a more pro-active stance in dealing with trade issues. Punishment is weak and not an effective deterrent for criminal traders or others that might become involved in illegal activities. Moreover, wildlife is viewed as an economic commodity in the eyes of many provincial-level decision-makers, and the endangered status of the confiscated species rarely has an impact on critical decisions regarding the fate of the animal. Somehow, our focus on enforcing the law for the purpose of "protecting wildlife" has been lost during our rush into the future toward economic growth and prosperity.

If we are to stop the plundering of our wildlife and bring an end to the illegal trade, and avoid a future comprised

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of empty forests, extirpation, and extinction, we need to make some serious changes in the way we work.

We need to start by making a personal commitment as forest rangers, law enforcement officers, and decision-makers to do something about the problem. Unless there is a genuine interest in putting a stop to the destruction of our wildlife, the law on its own and functional authorities going through the motions of "doing their job" cannot succeed. Personal commitment and a desire to bring change are pre-requisites for success.

As we have seen in efforts to encourage the public to wear motorcycle helmets, an informed public combined



A tiger cub at a private zoo and adult entertainment center in Binh Duong province. Patrons at the center can see animals, order bear bile from one of the center's dozens of bears, or order wildlife specialties at the zoo's restaurant. Photo by Tim McCormack

with strong and effective enforcement deterrents can result in change overnight. However, like this miraculous transformation, we must share a common commitment; toward ending the illegal trade, and enforcing the law vigorously, so that current and would-be-violators receive a clear message that wildlife crime will not be tolerated. Cease and desist or face fines and punishment.

Protected area management must improve. Managers must set their sights on ending hunting in their respective

nature reserves and parks, by managing and motivating their forest rangers and staff to achieve this goal. Protection of wildlife starts in its habitat.

We also need to stop treating wildlife as an economic commodity to be bought, sold, traded, and auctioned. Enforcement actions resulting in confiscated wildlife should not simply end in the administration of fines and punishment, and a contribution to the state budget. Local decision-makers need to consider the conservation status of the species. Endangered species must be fully protected and must never be sold back into the trade or allowed to remain in the hands of farmers and traders.

The law is intended to prohibit trade of species that are threatened with extinction, and for which unregulated exploitation poses a serious risk to the species' survival in the wild. We must use the law to set an example, and focus our efforts on deterring wildlife crime. Rigorous monitoring and swift enforcement action, followed by strict punishment will soon turn the tide toward respect for the law.

Ultimately, we must also gain the respect of the public in our efforts if we are to succeed. The public must both understand and respect the law. Moreover, we should encourage the public to become involved in helping protect wildlife. With an informed and active public, illegal wildlife traders cannot thrive as they do so today.

Stopping the illegal trade of wildlife is a seemingly impossible task from the perspective of a single ranger. However, success is within our reach if we take it upon ourselves to act, and make a difference, however small. Some of the best results can be attributed to a few motivated people, and as our numbers grow, we will quickly turn the tide against the traders and bring an end to an illegal and destructive business that, if unchecked, will empty our forests forever.

Consult your National Forest Protection Department

If you are having difficulties dealing with a case involving Group 1B protected species because the subject of the case seems to be protected in some way, or if you wish to report corruption relating to forest crimes, please contact the new National FPD Forest Crime Task Force for assistance.

In The Corner

Dong Xuan Market in Hanoi has remained wildlife free for more than a year following a campaign launched in September 2006 with market authorities. A similar campaign by FPD and market management at Hanoi's Mo market has also yielded similar results after six months of monitoring. Success at these two markets can be attributed to initial efforts by authorities to inform shop keepers about relevant laws, followed by aggressive and regular monitoring, as well as swift enforcement action on the one or two occasions when wildlife resurfaced following the campaign.

The methodology used was simple, effective, and well within the existing capacity of the functional agencies involved, requiring only time and motivation to succeed.

Less successful however have been efforts to shut down wildlife restaurants in Ha Tay. In October, forest rangers, police, and local authorities gathered together 27 restaurant and hotel owners in the hopes of raising awareness

about the laws and to implement a campaign aimed at stopping illegal activities.

According to provincial records, all 27 establishments had previously signed commitments not to sell wildlife. However, as if to finally prove the ineffectiveness of "commitments" as a tool on its own to elicit compliance with the law, monitoring carried out in early December indicated that only five of the 27 restaurants had honored their commitment not to sell wildlife. The remaining 22 restaurants had continued to sell and advertise wildlife, including species protected under Decree 32 Group 1B.

The example of Ha Tay and other similar cases should send a clear message to the functional authorities responsible for enforcing wildlife protection laws: Commitments don't work unless they are followed by monitoring and strict enforcement, as they were in Hanoi market closures. Thanks to the efforts of Dong Xuan and Mo market authorities, as well as Hanoi FPB, we know that success is possible, and within our reach, given the right approach.

Crime Log: July - December 2007

Trade Seizures

Hai Phong: In late June, Hong Bang District police confiscated 63 pangolins weighing 332 kg from a bus heading for Mong Cai Town. All of the pangolins were dead or died soon after the confiscation, and their remains were subsequently incinerated. (WCU Ref. Case 609).

Hanoi: Mobile rangers from Ngoc Hoi District FPD confiscated a shipment of 8 kg of monitor lizards on Thang Long Bridge. The monitors were placed at Soc Son Rescue Center and the subjects received financial fines of 15,400,000 VND (WCU Ref. Case 646).

Ho Chi Minh: Customs officers at Tan Son Nhat Airport confiscated 21 birds that were hidden in a passenger's luggage. The birds were incinerated and the trader was given a fine of 750,000 VND. (WCU Ref. Case 637).

Kon Tum: In July, border guards from Ngoc Hoi District confiscated two Sunda pangolins (*Manis javanica*) totaling 6 kg, two impressed tortoises (*Manouria impressa*) weighing 4 kg and a clouded monitor (*Varanus bengalensis*). All the confiscated animals had reportedly originated from Cambodia. The authorities released the animals and issued a total fine of 15,400,000 to the subject. (WCU Ref. Case 643, 644).

Quang Nam: Wildlife officers from Hoi An Town seized a shipment of eight pangolins weighing 33 kg from a public bus. The pangolins were later released and determination of the punishment is pending. (WCU Ref. Case 649)

Quang Binh: In June and July, the provincial FPD mobile team confiscated two wildlife shipments including 15 kg of turtles, 314 kg of common rat snakes and 138 kg of monitor lizards destined for the north. The subjects of two cases were issued a fine of 79 million VND. (WCU Ref. Case 652, 717)

Hai Phong: Cat Hai District FPD confiscated six keeled box turtles (*Cuora mouhotii*) that were for sale at a shop. The turtles were then released into Cat Ba National Park. (WCU Ref. Case 695).

Lao Cai: The Bac Ha District FPD, working in cooperation with ENV's Wildlife Crime Unit, raided a



A leopard cat skin for sale in the Bac Ha tourist market in Lao Cai province. Shortly after this photo was taken, Lao Cai rangers arrived at the scene and confiscated the skin.

stand in Bac Ha Market and confiscated a stuffed leopard cat that was for sale. (WCU Ref. Case 682)

Tay Ninh: Mobile rangers and police confiscated 153 kg of monitor lizards and 46 kg of common rat snakes from a resident's house in Tay Ninh Town. The subject of the case received a fine of 30 million VND. During the same month, an additional 72 kg of pangolins and four long-tailed macaques were confiscated as they were being transported to Ho Chi Minh City. All of the animals were released into Lo Go Xa Mat National Park. (WCU Ref. Case 711, 722).

Dong Thap: The police confiscated a total of 766 kg of snakes from a truck heading to Ho Chi Minh City from An Giang Province. (WCU Ref. Case 716)

Quang Binh: In August, mobile rangers working in cooperation with the police confiscated one black bear, 30 kg of pangolins, 12 kg of common rat snakes and nearly 100 kg of wild pigs, porcupines and civets from two public buses. The subject in the case involving the bear was prosecuted while the subject in the second case received a fine of 25 million VND. (WCU Ref. Case 723, 730).

Dong Nai: Wildlife protection officers from Vinh Cuu District FPD confiscated 41.5 kg of gaur meat being transported by motorbike. The meat was reportedly from a gaur killed in Vinh Cuu Nature Reserve. The two

Crime Log continued

subjects were temporarily held in custody pending further investigation. (WCU Ref. Case 767)

Hai Duong: Traffic police from Hai Duong province, working in cooperation with the Nam Sach district police, confiscated an illegal shipment of 180 long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*) hidden in a truck heading for the Chinese border. The dead animals were incinerated, and the remaining animals were transferred to Soc Son Rescue Center. The subject was issued a fine of 30 million VND. (WCU Ref. Case 795)

Ho Chi Minh: In two separate incidents (August and September), police from District 9 and authorities from Cu Chi District confiscated a total of 22 pangolins, weighing 100.3 kg, from a public bus and a motorbike. All of the animals were transferred to the Cu Chi Rescue Center. The driver of the bus was issued a fine of 13 million VND but the motorbike driver reportedly escaped. (WCU Ref. Case 814, 816)

Ho Chi Minh: Police from Cu Chi District, working in cooperation with the market management board, confiscated five pangolins (*Manis* sp.) weighing a total of 16.3 kg from a local resident in Cu Chi. All the pangolins were transferred to the Cu Chi Rescue Center (WCU Ref. Case 814)

Hai Phong: Rangers confiscated a total of 80 crab-eating macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*). The animals were then transferred to Bai Tu Long National Park in Quang Ninh Province. (WCU Ref. Case 732).

Hai Duong: Police confiscated 29 pangolins weighing 101 kg and 180 macaques originating from Hanoi destined for the Chinese border. (WCU Ref. Case 753)

Ha Tay: Wildlife officers from Dan Phuong District FPD Province confiscated a black bear being illegally kept in captivity at a resident's house. The bear was then turned over to the Soc Son Rescue Center. (WCU Ref. Case 754)

Hanoi: Police raided a resident's house in Thanh Xuan District and confiscated two tigers that had reportedly been slaughtered to produce tiger bone glue, as well as



One of two tiger carcasses seized at a house in Hanoi during a raid on September 5 by police and the National Forest Crime Task Force. Photo by Pham Tuyen

two tiger skins, four elephant tusks, five bear paws, a large pot of primate bones, and some unidentified ungulate horns in the house. Investigation into the case continues. (WCU Ref. Case 735)

Quang Binh: Police confiscated a total of 177 kg of wild pigs, civets, and porcupines destined for Quang Ninh. The subject was issued a fine of 30 million VND. (WCU Ref. Case 758)

Quang Nam: Rangers confiscated two civets weighing 6 kg and 16 porcupines totaling 51 kg that were found in a public bus on the Ho Chi Minh Highway. All of the animals were subsequently released and the subject reportedly escaped. (WCU Ref. Case 759)

Lam Dong: Rangers from the Dam Rong District FPD confiscated one stump-tailed macaque being transported by motorbike. The macaque was released and the subject received a fine of 750,000 VND. (WCU Ref. Case 760)

Lao Cai: FPD confiscated an impressed tortoise and one keeled box turtle that had been collected by a resident. The turtles were subsequently released. (WCU Ref. Case 761).

Ho Chi Minh: Customs officials at Tan Son Nhat Airport confiscated three pieces of rhino horn totaling 5.44 kg from two passengers who reportedly intended to take the rhino products abroad. Settlement of the case is pending. (WCU Ref. Case 793)

Quang Ninh: Traffic police confiscated a wildlife shipment of 108 kg of turtles, 947 kg of monitor lizards and 55 kg of common rat snakes. The shipment was on the way to Mong Cai from Thai Binh Province. (WCU Ref. Case 687)

Da Nang: Traffic Police from Lien Chieu District confiscated 41 turtles and four pangolins from a truck destined for Mong Cai. The turtles and pangolins were transferred to the Turtle Conservation Center and the Asian Pangolin Conservation Program respectively, both located at Cuc Phuong National Park. The driver was issued a fine of 15 million VND. (WCU Ref. Case 688)

Ninh Binh: Wildlife officers confiscated 44 pangolins from a car with a Laos registration number. Two of the confiscated pangolins were subsequently transferred to the Asian Pangolin Conservation Program of Cuc Phuong National Park. (WCU Ref. Case 689)

Kon Tum: In August, wildlife officers confiscated a 10 kg wild pig, an additional 30 kg of wild pig meat, as well as a mouse deer from a resident's house in Kon Tum Town. In the same month, rangers also confiscated another wild pig that was being transported in Sa Thay District. The live animals were released and the meat was incinerated. (WCU Ref. Case 692, 694).

Khanh Hoa: Rangers from Van Ninh District FPD confiscated a shipment of 90 long-tailed macaques weighing 250 kg from trade. All the macaques were released and the driver was issued a fine of 18 million VND. (WCU Ref. Case 764)

Crime Log continued

An Giang: Police working in cooperation with the FPD confiscated 100 kg of common rats snakes and 10 kg of monitor lizards. All the animals were released and the subject was issued an administrative fine of two million VND. (WCU Ref. Case 768)

Dong Nai: The Tan Phu District FPD confiscated 30 kg of deer meat from a man on a motorbike which allegedly came from deer hunted within Cat Tien National Park. The driver of the motorbike was issued a fine of 3.5 million VND. (WCU Ref. Case 769)

Ho Chi Minh: The FPD, working in cooperation with Binh Thanh district police raided a resident's house in Binh Thanh District and confiscated a large amount of wildlife including 22.5 kg of turtles (*Unidentified*), two Burmese pythons (*Python molurus*) weighing 5 kg, 35 common palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*) weighing 77 kg, 27.3 kg of snakes (*Unidentified*), 19 kg of monitor lizards (*Varanus sp.*), 40 kg of Asiatic soft-shell turtles (*Amyda cartilaginea*), 3.8 kg of Chinese water dragons (*Physignathus Cocincinus*), 11 bamboo rats (*Unidentified*) weighing 13 kg, and one long-tailed macaque. All the animals were placed at the Cu Chi Rescue Center. Settlement of the case is pending. (WCU Ref. Case 788)

Nghe An: Police from Quynh Luu District seized 140 kg of monitor lizards and 92 kg of turtles from a truck destined for the north. The owner of the shipment and the driver were issued a total fine of 40 million VND. (WCU Ref. Case 778)

TRADE ALERT

Cuora mouhotii is considered an endangered species (IUCN Red List) while *Mauremys annamensis*, a Vietnam endemic, is listed as critically endangered as well as being ranked one of the world's top 25 most endangered turtles species.

Current conservation programs exist for protection of both species in the wild (in Quang Nam and in Ninh Binh), and the Turtle Conservation Center at Cuc Phuong National Park (bordering Thanh Hoa province) has established conservation breeding programs for all three species that were confiscated in Thanh Hoa since 2000. Considering the conservation importance of these species, none of them should ever be auctioned off following a trade seizure.



The Vietnamese pond turtle (*Mauremys annamensis*) is one of the world's top 25 most critically endangered turtle species. It is also native only to central Vietnam. If you see *Mauremys annamensis* in the trade, please contact our hotline 1800-1522. Every turtle counts!

Quang Ninh: Police confiscated a shipment of 91 long-tailed macaques from a truck that was headed for the border at Mong Cai. The macaques were transferred to the Soc Son Rescue Center and the subject in the case is facing criminal prosecution. (WCU Ref. Case 770)

Ha Tinh: The Ha Tinh FPD confiscated a shipment of 200 pale-capped pigeons (*Columba punicea*), hidden on a public bus that was stopped on Highway 1A. The birds were released into Ke Go Nature Reserve and the driver issued a fine of 17,000,000 VND (WCU Ref. Case 782)

Thanh Hoa: The Mobile Team of the Thanh Hoa FPD confiscated 920 wild cuckoos from a truck on Highway 1A. The subject in the case was fined 40 million VND. (WCU Ref. Case 783)

Thanh Hoa: The mobile Team of the Thanh Hoa FPD confiscated 130 kg of monitor lizards and 181 kg of turtles from a container truck. According to local authorities, the shipment comprised a range of species including keeled box turtles (*Cuora mouhotii*), elongated tortoises (*Indotestudo elongata*), and Vietnamese pond turtles. (WCU Ref. Case 789)

Ha Tinh: The FPD, working in cooperation with the police, confiscated 32 kg of wildlife including common rat snakes and civets. The animals were released into the Ke Go Natural Reserve (WCU Ref. Case 791)

Quang Binh: The mobile Force of the Provincial FPD confiscated five pangolins (*Manis sp.*) weighing a total of 25 kg on Highway 1A. (WCU Ref. Case 794)

Hai Phong: A patrol team from the Tien Lang District Police in Hai Phong City, working in cooperation with Kien An-An Lao District FPD stopped a car and confiscated 56 pangolins, weighing a total of 248 kg, that were destined for Mong Cai on the Chinese border. The four subjects involved the case face criminal prosecution. (WCU Ref. Case 809)

Ho Chi Minh: HCM FPD raided the Vuon Dua Restaurant in Tan Binh District and confiscated two monitor lizards (*Varanus sp.*), five black marsh turtles (*Siebenrockiella crassicollis*), one yellow-headed temple turtle (*Hieremys annandalii*), and four water snakes (*Colubridae*). All the animals were turned over to Cu Chi Rescue Center and the restaurant owner received a fine of 1.5 million VND. (WCU Ref. Case 817)

Ho Chi Minh: The customs department of Tan Son Nhat airport in Ho Chi Minh city confiscated a total of 34 wild birds from two passengers, identified as U.S citizens, who had intended to take the birds to America. All the birds were subsequently released and the passengers were each issued 750,000 VND fines. (WCU Ref. Case 827, 828)

Quang Binh: FPD confiscated 640 kg of Indochinese rat snakes, turtles, civets, and porcupines from a public bus. (WCU Ref. Case 832)

Quang Ninh: The police raided a resident's house in Mong Cai Town and confiscated 150 kg of wildlife

Crime Log continued

including monitor lizards and rat snakes. Settlement of the case is currently pending. (WCU Ref. Case 834)

Nghe An: Traffic police stopped a car and confiscated two elephant tusks weighing 9.7 kg. The tusks are currently being held by the police, case settlement pending. (WCU Ref. Case 841)

Nghe An: Provincial Police confiscated 300 kg of pangolins heading north from Ha Tinh Province. The owner of the shipment and the driver were issued fines totalling 43 million VND. (WCU Ref. Case 842)

Kon Tum: Sa Thay District FPD confiscated one wild pig (*Sus scrofa*) weighing 45 kg, two big-headed turtles (*Platysternon magecephalum*), two water lizards (*Varanus salvator*) and 53 kg of wild pig meat (*Sus scrofa*). The turtles and the lizards were released into Chu Mom Ray National Park and the wild pig meat was incinerated. The subjects involved in the confiscation were given an administrative fine of nearly 8.5 million VND. (WCU Ref. Case 847)

Nghe An: Traffic police working in cooperation with Dien Chau District police confiscated 250 kg of pangolins from a tourist car. The subject involved in the case apparently escaped during the incident. (WCU Ref. Case 848)

Phu Yen: Provincial FPD confiscated 27 kg of wildlife including turtles, civets, monitor lizards and cobras from the trade on Highway 25. All the confiscated animals were released into Krong Trai Forbidden Forest. (WCU Ref. Case 829)

Kon Tum: Sa Thay district FPD confiscated a 45 kg wild pig as it was being transported to a restaurant for sale. The animal was released into Chu Mom Ray National Park. (WCU Ref. Case 847)

Quang Nam: The Phu Ninh district FPD of Quang Nam Province confiscated 114.5 kg of Sambar deer meat (*Cervus unicolor*) from a resident's house in Tam Thai Commune. The meat was reportedly hunted locally. Two subjects involved in the case were issued a fine totalling 10,992,000 VND. The meat was subsequently incinerated. (WCU Ref. Case 864)

Thanh Hoa: Provincial Police confiscated a large shipment of wildlife including 66 kg of cobras, 50 turtles (*Unidentified*), ten masked palm civets (*Paguma larvata*), 14 brush-tailed porcupines (*Atherurus macrourus*), three Rhesus macaques (*Macaca mulatta*), three Malayan porcupines (*Hystrix brachyura*), nine wild pigs and other animals.

Thai Nguyen: Mobile rangers from Thai Nguyen FPD and Pho Yen District FPD confiscated two shipments comprising 257.5 kg of snakes from trade. The dead snakes were incinerated. The subjects of the shipment were issued administrative fines of more than 35 million VND (WCU Ref. Case 872, 873)

Lam Dong: Rangers from Dam Rong district FPD of Lam Dong Province confiscated 73 kg of Sambar deer meat from trade. The wildlife meat was then incinerated and

the two subjects were issued a total fine of 4 million VND. (WCU Ref. Case 904)

Lam Dong: Rangers from Dam Rong district confiscated 25 kg of wild pig meat from several local people. The meat was incinerated and the FPD issued a warning to the subjects. (WCU Ref. Case 917)

Thanh Hoa: Traffic police stopped a car and confiscated two complete rhino horns and four pieces of rhino horn, as well as two bear gallbladders. The illegal contraband reportedly originated in Laos and was headed for Hanoi. (WCU Ref. Case 932)

Binh Phuoc: Wildlife protection officers from the FPD confiscated seven pig-tailed macaques from trade. One of the macaques died and the other six were released into Bu Gia Map National Park. (WCU Ref. Case 942)

Stop selling endangered wildlife!

Following a confiscation, make an effort to identify the species that has been confiscated. Get help with identification if you need to. Differentiate between endangered species (not necessarily protected by law) and more common species. NEVER auction off endangered species.

Endangered species should be placed in rescue centers or zoos, but NEVER back into the trade. Some examples of endangered species include tigers, bears, langurs and gibbons, lorises, a variety of tortoise and freshwater turtle species, marine turtles, king cobras, gaur and serow, and any parts of these animals that are used in medicines, wines, or trophies.

See the ENV national species list to determine the status of species that you have confiscated. If you do not have a list, let us know and we will send one out to you! Contact: hotline@fpt.vn

Ho Chi Minh: Rangers from Ho Chi Minh FPD in cooperation with Environmental Police confiscated a frozen tiger and a frozen bear from a taxi registered to Vinasun Company. The tiger and the bear had reportedly been purchased in Dak Lak Province and were being transferred to Ho Chi Minh City at the time of the seizure. The case is currently pending settlement. (WCU Ref. Case 912)

Thanh Hoa: Wildlife protection officers confiscated three shipments, including 92 kg of porcupines, civets, wild pigs, 114 kg of turtles and 17 kg of pangolins from trade. The subjects involved were issued a total fine of 138 million VND. (WCU Ref. Case 914, 915, 916)

Binh Phuoc: Rangers from Bu Gia Map National Park discovered a hunter in the park in possession of a dead black-shanked douc langur. The langur was confiscated and subsequently incinerated, and the hunter now faces criminal prosecution. (WCU Ref. Case 944)

Khanh Hoa: The management board of the Ea Kongru protective forest in Ninh Hoa district uncovered the dead bodies of two black-shanked douc langurs (*Pygathrix nigripes*) left in the forest by hunters. (WCU Ref. Case 948)

Crime Log continued

Ha Noi: Customs officials from Noi Bai Airport, working in cooperation with the police and National FPD confiscated a shipment of 700 kg of cobras from a Thai Airways flight from Bangkok. Authorities familiar with the case stated that the shipment originated in Indonesia. The snakes were reportedly dead and were subsequently incinerated. The police are currently investigating the origin and intended destination of the shipment. (WCU Ref. Case 949)

Quang Nam: Economic police from Phuoc Son District confiscated more than 200 kg of wild pigs, civets, turtles and porcupines. All of the confiscated animals were released. Settlement is currently pending. (WCU Ref. Case 950)

Bac Giang: Police working in cooperation with the FPD of Viet Yen District stopped a car on Highway 1A and confiscated 61.6 kg of snakes, turtles, monitor lizards and 29 kg of wildlife bones. The driver and the owner of the shipment reportedly escaped. (WCU Ref. Case 954)

Sentencing Updates

Lang Son: The driver of a vehicle that was transporting 10 lorises in Lang Son province in January was sentenced to six months imprisonment. (WCU Ref. Case 844)

Tien Giang: Nine subjects prosecuted in a 2006 case involving the theft and killing of a tiger at the Research and Aquaculture Center for Medicine of Military Zone Nine were sentenced to prison terms or received fines. Prison sentences ranged from seven to nearly 12 years while several accomplices received suspended sentences and fines ranging from 3 - 8 million VND. (WCU Ref. Case 252B).

Hai Phong: A man apprehended in March 2007 with a cargo of 75 kg of pangolins was sentenced to two months probation and issued an additional fine of two million VND. (WCU Ref. Case 427B).

Public Participation in Stopping Wildlife Crime:

July - December 2007

The following cases involving public participation in efforts to stop the wildlife trade occurred or were resolved during the second half of 2007:

Binh Dinh: In late June, an FPD team inspected a hotel in Quy Nhon City after ENV received information from a local resident about a binturong being kept at the site. Rangers subsequently confiscated the binturong and transferred it to the Small Carnivore Conservation Center at Cuc Phuong National Park. (WCU Ref. Case 606)

Vinh Phuc: FPD officers discovered an unregistered bear being kept at a company in Phuc Yen town after a local student reported the case to the ENV hotline. The FPD is currently working to seek cooperation from provincial leaders in dealing with the case. (WCU Ref. Case 631)

ALERT

Possession of an unregistered bear is illegal. According to Decision 02 of 2005, all bears had to be registered by February 28, 2005. Any bear found to be unregistered after that date is considered illegal and the owner subject to full penalties in accordance with the law.

Hanoi: A resident voluntarily turned over to ENV a big headed turtle that he found walking near a lake in Hanoi. The turtle was transferred to the Turtle Conservation Center of Cuc Phuong National Park. (WCU Ref. Case 611)

Lam Dong: After ENV received a report from a foreigner about a macaque being kept by a company in Da Lat, FPD rangers inspected and confiscated the animal. It has since been released. (WCU Ref. Case 632).

Ha Giang: Following a report by a local informant to the ENV Hotline, FPD inspected a local residence in Bac

Quang District and demanded the owner remove a signboard advertising bear bile. (WCU Ref. Case 633)

Hanoi: A tourist voluntarily turned over a soft-shell turtle to ENV after contacting the ENV Wildlife Crime Hotline. The turtle was transferred to the Turtle Conservation Center of Cuc Phuong National Park. (WCU Ref. Case 638)

Dong Nai: A resident contacted the ENV Wildlife Crime Hotline and reported a restaurant keeping three gibbons and one python in captivity. Dong Nai FPD is currently working (as of November) with the restaurant owner to have the animals transferred to a rescue center (WCU Ref. Case 565)



One of three yellow-cheeked gibbons at a restaurant in Dong Nai province. FPD plans to transfer the animals to a rescue center shortly.

Public Participation in Stopping Wildlife Crime continued

Hanoi: A shop voluntarily removed a signboard advertising bear bile following discussions with ENV. The case was initially brought to ENV's attention by a Hanoi resident. (WCU Ref. Case 640)

Thanh Hoa: Following a case first reported to ENV through the hotline, Thanh Hoa authorities have issued a 30 million VND fine to a resident in Tho Xuan District who was found to be keeping ten tigers illegally. The controversial case gained national attention after Thanh Hoa authorities allowed the resident to keep the animals rather than confiscate them in accordance with standard requirements under the law. The final settlement of the case is pending. (WCU Ref. Case 653)

Binh Thuan: A ranger voluntarily turned over three gibbons to the Cu Chi Rescue Center in Ho Chi Minh City after having kept them in captivity for six years. (WCU Ref. Case 656)

Ha Tay: A local student voluntarily turned over a blackbreasted leaf turtle (*Geoemyda spengleri*) to ENV. The turtle was then transferred to the Turtle Conservation Center of Cuc Phuong National Park. (WCU Ref. Case 661)

Nghe An: A resident reported to the ENV Hotline about a gibbon that was being kept at a private house in Anh Son District. Nghe An FPD reportedly carried out two inspections but failed to observe the gibbon. With further assistance from the informant, an additional visit resulted in confirmation that the gibbon was still present at the site. However, following another inspection by FPD, the gibbon was no longer there. The informant later learned that the owner had reportedly sold the animal to another person. (WCU Ref. Case 642)

ALERT

All four of Vietnam's gibbon species are fully protected under the law and listed under Decree 32 Group 1B. As with other cases involving Group 1B species, possession of a gibbon of illegal origin is a serious crime with the law.

Thua Thien Hue: A red-shanked douc langur was voluntarily transferred to the Bach Ma National Park District FPD by a local resident. The langur is now being kept at Bach Ma National Park prior to a planned release. (WCU Ref. Case 662).

Ho Chi Minh: Three local residents voluntarily turned over two lorises and an otter to Cu Chi Rescue Center after contacting the ENV Hotline. (WCU Ref. Case 663, 702, 731)

Ho Chi Minh: After receiving a report from a student on the sale of some birds at a pet food shop in District 5, the Ho Chi Minh FPD promptly inspected the site and confiscated five parrots (*Unidentified*) and four swiftlets (*Unidentified*). The shop owner was issued a fine of 500,000 VND (WCU Ref. Case 690)

Ha Tay: After receiving a tip-off through the ENV Hotline,

the National FPD's Mobile Force inspected a farm in Ha Tay and found 27 bear cubs being kept illegally at the farm. However, before further action could be taken, the illegal bears disappeared. National authorities promptly launched an investigation on the case in cooperation with Environmental Police and other functional agencies. The investigation reportedly led authorities to Quang Ninh province where, of 281 bears inspected on local farms, 80 were found to be unregistered. While final settlement



Two of 27 unregistered bears being kept illegally at a farm in Ha Tay. These cubs and the other bears disappeared shortly after an inspection by authorities. The search for the missing bears eventually led to Quang Ninh where 80 illegal bears were discovered in the possession of farmers.

of the case is pending, authorities expect the bears to be turned over to rescue facilities as part of a broader enforcement effort aimed at preventing more bears from being illegally caught and placed into farms in the future. (WCU Ref. Case 657)

Thua Thien Hue: Following a tip-off from a concerned resident regarding a macaque being kept at a café in Hue City, the FPD inspected and confiscated the animal. It was then released. (WCU Ref. Case 599)

Hanoi: The owners of two restaurants and one private home in Hanoi voluntarily removed menus advertising wildlife and signboards advertising bear bile following discussions with ENV. Another restaurant voluntarily removed menus advertising pangolins, bear and common barking deer. (WCU Ref. Case 597, 496, 452, 640)

Thanh Hoa: The owners of a restaurant and guest house voluntarily removed signboards advertising bear bile following discussions with the ENV Wildlife Crime Unit (WCU Ref. Case 505, 603)

Lao Cai: Four restaurants and hotels in Sa Pa voluntarily stopped advertising wildlife on their menus and removed wildlife wines following a meeting with ENV's mobile wildlife awareness unit in July. (WCU Ref. Case 665, 667, 669, 673)

Ho Chi Minh: Rangers raided the Phi Long Restaurant in Go Vap District after ENV monitors reported that the restaurant was selling wildlife. The raid resulted in the confiscation of 6.8 kg of snakes and the removal of wildlife menus and a signboard advertising wildlife. The FPD also issued a fine of 2.2

Public Participation in Stopping Wildlife Crime continued

million VND to the restaurant owner. (WCU Ref. Case 417).

Quang Nam: A local resident in Dong Giang District voluntarily turned over a gray-shanked douc langur to the authorities. The langur was transferred to Cuc Phuong National Park's Endangered Primate Rescue Center. (WCU Ref. Case 765)



A gray-shanked douc langur turned in to Quang Nam FPD by a local resident in September. The langur was later transferred to the Endangered Primate Rescue Center at Cuc Phuong National Park
Photo by Tim McCormack

Hoa Binh: A tip-off from a concerned resident on wildlife being caught and kept at a local resident's house in Luong Son District resulted in an inspection by the FPD. As a result of the inspection, the authorities confiscated 20 kg of snakes and eight porcupines. The house owner was issued a fine of 7 million VND. (WCU Ref. Case 740)

Quang Tri: A restaurant voluntarily stopped selling bear bile and removed signboards advertising bear bile following warnings and efforts to increase public awareness by ENV. (WCU Ref. Case 771)

Nghe An: A resident in Vinh City agreed to stop selling bear bile and to remove a signboard advertising bear bile following discussions with ENV urging the owner to comply with wildlife protection laws. (WCU Ref. Case 532)

Dong Nai: A cultural house in Dong Nai Province voluntarily turned over one black bear, five black gibbons, four yellow-headed temple turtles, 12 porcupines and two crocodiles to the FPD. All the animals were transferred to the wildlife rescue center at Cat Tien National Park. (WCU Ref. Case 712)

Lam Dong: A bear cub being kept illegally at a resort in Da Lat city was transferred by Lam Dong FPD to Animals Asia Foundation's bear rescue center at Tam Dao National Park after the case was reported to the ENV Wildlife Crime Hotline by a foreign visitor. (WCU Ref. Case 572)

Ho Chi Minh: The FPD inspected a pet shop in District

10 and confiscated 32 turtles following a report to the ENV hotline. The turtles were transferred to the Cu Chi Rescue Center. (WCU Ref. Case 822)

Lai Chau: The Lai Chau FPD raided the Muong Thanh Hotel and confiscated a loris after a tourist reported the animal on display to the ENV hotline. The loris was subsequently transferred to the Endangered Primate Rescue Centre at Cuc Phuong National Park (WCU Ref. Case 866)

Hanoi: After hearing about ENV's animal rescue efforts, a Hanoi resident voluntarily turned over a loris to ENV that she had been keeping in captivity. The loris was later transferred to the EPRC. (WCU Ref. Case 863)

Ho Chi Minh: In line with a directive issued by the Ho Chi Minh City's People Committee, which aims to enhance the implementation of measures relating to wildlife protection and development in Ho Chi Minh city, the Can Gio Communist District Party turned over a black bear to the FPD. The bear was later placed at the Cu Chi Rescue Center (WCU Ref. Case 818)

Hai Phong: A tip-off to the ENV Wildlife Crime Hotline by a foreign tourist resulted in an inspection and the subsequent confiscation of two macaques and one loris from a hotel in Cat Ba town. The macaques were transferred to the Soc Son Rescue Center while the loris was received by the Endangered Primate Rescue Center at Cuc Phuong National Park. (WCU Ref. Case 820)



Two stump-tailed macaques confiscated from a hotel on Cat Ba Island await transfer to Soc Son Rescue Center.

Binh Thuan: After a foreigner made a report to the ENV Hotline about a resort in Mui Ne keeping a range of wildlife species, an FPD inspection team confiscated a northern white-cheeked gibbon (*Hylobates concolor leucogennys*), two monitor lizards (*Varanus sp.*), two pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca leonina*), a masked palm civet (*Paguma larvata*), and two porcupines. All of the wildlife was later released and the resort owners were issued a fine of 15,615,000 VND. (WCU Ref. Case 636)

Binh Thuan: A python was confiscated from a restaurant in Phan Thiet City after an ENV Wildlife Crime Officer reported the case to the FPD. (WCU Ref. Case 901)

Public Participation in Stopping Wildlife Crime continued

Kon Tum: The ENV Hotline received a report from a local resident about a restaurant serving wildlife in dishes in Sa Thay District within the buffer zone of Chu Mom Ray National Park. An inspection by FPD resulted a confiscation of a wild pig, which was later released back into Chu Mom Ray National Park. The restaurant was fined a total of 300,000 VND. (WCU Ref. Case 937)]

Thanh Hoa: Thanks to timely report to the ENV Hotline by a local resident, the Thanh Hoa FPD inspected the Huong Rung restaurant in Ngoc Lac District and confiscated 1 kg of wild pig meat and 0.3 kg of porcupine meat. (WCU Ref. Case 939)

Hanoi: Thirteen restaurants and residents' houses have stopped violating wildlife protection laws following discussions and several months of close monitoring by ENV's Wildlife Crime Unit. The restaurants, many of which were initially reported to the ENV Hotline by Hanoi residents, were found to be committing a range of offenses including offering wildlife on menus, displaying wildlife and wildlife products including bear paws, snakes, and monitor lizards in wine, as well as advertising bear bile on signboards. ENV representatives continue to conduct regular monitoring of the restaurants to ensure that owners remain in compliance with the law. (WCU Ref. Case 496, 640, 621, 622, 623, 624, 619, 651, 461, 628, 658, 727, 729)

Ho Chi Minh: A restaurant in Can Gio District voluntarily turned over six otters to the FPD in compliance with a directive released by the Ho Chi Minh People's Committee on strengthening the implementation of measures relating to wildlife protection and development. (WCU Ref. Case 807).



A small-clawed otter (front) turned over voluntarily to the Cu Chi Rescue Center in August. All of Vietnam's five otter species are fully protected under group 1B of Decree 32 prohibiting any form of trade.

Crime Statistics

The ENV Wildlife Crimes Monitoring Unit has logged a total of 955 cases since January 1, 2005.

Period	Trade seizures	Selling	Advertising	Possession/display	Other	Total *
July 2007	11	16	8	16	0	51
August 2007	14	37	3	15	1	70
September 2007	25	28	3	8	2	66
October 2007	18	13	3	16	2	52
November 2007	8	31	5	11	0	55
December 2007	15	19	4	12	1	51
Total 2007	128	269	35	123	15	570
Total 2005–2007	246	388	51	205	65	954

* These statistics represent only a small fraction of the active trade in wildlife in Vietnam, and only account for those cases that are reported to ENV.

Regional Crime News

Singapore Bear Crimes Yield Stiff Penalties

Recent enforcement activity by authorities in Singapore has yielded some interesting results. Following undercover surveys carried out earlier in 2007, 14 traditional medicine shop owners were cited for crimes involving the advertisement and sale of bear products such as gall bladders and powdered bear bile. Of the 14 shop owners, two were cited for possession of genuine bear products and each fined between 33 and 55 million VND. Twelve other shop owners were found to be selling fake bear products, and were each fined between 5.5 and 11 million VND.

The Singapore case is important in that it demonstrates the serious position the government there has taken in efforts to eliminate wildlife crime, including administering harsh financial penalties to persons selling or advertising bear products, including even fake products.

Source: Animal Concern Research and Education Society (Acres), Singapore

Alerts

CITES permits and stamp stolen in Malaysia

The CITES Secretariat reported that CITES permits and a security stamp were stolen from the CITES Management Authority in Sarawak, Malaysia. If permits reflecting the permit numbers listed below are observed in use, the Vietnam National CITES Management Authority should be contacted immediately. The permit numbers are: 005600, 005649, and 005650. The security stamp number is 0064180.

Slow Loris Up-listed to Appendix I

During the CITES Conference of Parties in June, Vietnam's two native loris species (*Nycticebus pygmaeus* and *Nycticebus bendalensis*) were up-listed to Appendix I of CITES. The new listing prohibits trade of either species, including parts or products made from these species, across international borders without CITES permits issued by the authorities from both the sending and receiving countries. If customs officers observe a loris in trade on the border, at a port or at an international airport checkpoint, they are requested to please contact the national CITES management authority.



A brush-tailed porcupine is gutted at a restaurant in Ha Tay specializing in wildlife dishes.



A loris confiscated from a hotel by Cat Hai district FPD (Hai Phong) after a tourist reported the case to the Wildlife Crime Hotline. The loris was later transferred to the Endangered Primate Rescue Center at Cuc Phuong National Park

Photo Gallery



A pangolin in wine at a restaurant in Nha Trang. Most pangolins are probably exported to China, though some end up in wine or on the menu of specialty restaurants here in Vietnam. Both pangolin species are protected under Group IIB of Decree 32.



Two stuffed leopards in the lobby of a hotel in Quy Nhon city. Possession of protected species, even specimens for display, such as these leopards, is illegal.



A Malayan sun bear confiscated from traders by Nghe An authorities at Pu Mat National Park.

About the ENV Wildlife Crimes Monitoring Unit

Established in January of 2005, the ENV Wildlife Crimes Monitoring Unit runs the national Wildlife Crimes Hotline, a toll-free number that was established to provide a mechanism for the public to report wildlife crimes. Reports are quickly passed on to the appropriate functional agency by ENV, after which the monitoring unit tracks each case through to its conclusion with special attention focused on the disposal of the animals or animal parts, and the punishment administered to the perpetrator in each case. Sources are contacted and advised in detail as to the outcome of the case that he/she reported. Cases are then documented and filed, and recorded on ENV's Wildlife Crimes Database.

The main aims of the program are to:

- * Encourage public participation and support in efforts to combat the illegal trade of wildlife
- * Support enforcement efforts by government agencies
- * Document crimes and identify factors that contribute to the wildlife trade

The ENV Wildlife Crimes Monitoring Unit is jointly funded by the Humane Society International, Conservation International, and The Whitley Fund for Nature.

Wildlife Crimes - Vietnam is produced monthly by Education for Nature Vietnam in Vietnamese language and is distributed to Provincial People's Committees, functional agencies tasked with wildlife protection, and protected area managers and rangers in 64 provinces.

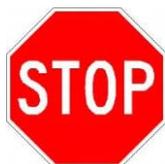
An English language version of the bulletin is also produced and distributed within the conservation community.

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Your Voice and Ideas or Questions are Welcome!

If you have a question about some aspect of the wildlife trade, email us and we will do our best to find you an answer. Your question might also be selected for the community voice section of our monthly wildlife crimes radio show on the Voice of Vietnam. Email: Hotline@fpt.vn



Stop Wildlife Crime

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

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

You can make a difference!