



Photo: Nguyen Vu Khoi

Welcome

In this newsletter we will take a look at our new wildlife education programme and discover how secondary school students in Ho Chi Minh City and Phu Quoc Island engaged in this new programme. The enforcement programme is incredibly accelerated with successes at different wildlife rescue stations: Cu Chi, Cat Tien and Hon Me. With strong support from the government, WAR will extend its initiatives in Can Tho Province.

Entering the "Tiger" year, WAR would like to address its long term commitment to protect the nature of Vietnam by transferring its mission to the younger generation and calling for more people to cooperate for protecting endangered wildlife and their habitats.

This new formatted newsletter is especially dedicated to you for your great supports to WAR and wildlife conservation work through the year 2009.

We hope you enjoy it!

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Biodiversity surveys in Phu Quoc Island

In the past four years, WAR has cooperated with Phu Quoc National Park (NP) to conduct surveys on different species: including fresh water fish, plants, butterflies, bats, reptiles and orchids.

Currently, the fresh water fish survey is still on-going with numerous new species for Phu Quoc and possible new species for Vietnam. The final survey result and list of new species will be announced soon.



Lute-shaped Lip Calanthe is one of 99 wild orchid species in Phu Quoc described by WAR
Photo: Nguyen Vu Khoi

Improve native forest trees in Phu Quoc National Park

Dipterocarpus intricatus, an indigenous timber tree of Phu Quoc NP is endangered due to illegal logging for its high economical value and forest fires. WAR supports the park to nurse the trees from wild seeds and plant its seedlings in the NP.



A Park staff is planting one *Dipterocarpus* seedling in a bare land
Photo: Nguyen Vu Khoi

The development of this species not only contributes to improve forest quality but also generates economical values for local people in the future.

Phu Quoc National Park staff learnt to identify bats

A training course on bat identification was conducted successfully to ten technical staff and rangers of Phu Quoc NP. The training enabled them to identify bats in the field and thus be able to monitor bat species on the island. The training course included a practical session where participants identified bats in the forest. Applying knowledge from the course, the participants have recorded one new bat species for Phu Quoc that adds up to total 30 species of bat on this island.



Lesser short-nosed fruit bat from Phu Quoc
Photo: Nguyen Vu Khoi

Before 2009, there was little information and knowledge about bats in Phu Quoc Island. For the first time, WAR's survey on bats in 2009 recorded more than 80% of bat species in this island.

Wildlife Rescue Stations on the run

Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station (CCWRS) has been inundated by endangered wildlife during March. In 2009, CCWRS has received and rescued over 500 endangered animals. This WRS is also successful in recovering the wildlife and releasing them back to the wild. Cu Chi WRS is open for free for all visitors and volunteers. Hundreds of students and volunteers have been visiting this WRS and giving a hand to WAR in wildlife conservation.



A view of Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station
Photo: Simon Faithfull



This Moon bear is relaxing at the Cat Tien Bear Rescue Station
Photo: Do Thi Thanh Huyen

Cat Tien Bear Rescue Station is situated in Cat Tien National Park. This is home to 16 sun bears and moon bears. The comfortable semi-wild area makes this station one of the best Bear Rescue Stations in the south of Vietnam. Due to its good reputation, Cat Tien Bear Rescue Station keeps receiving bears from the neighbouring provinces. WAR is supporting Cat Tien NP to upgrade the rescue facilities so that it is able to rescue other endangered wildlife.

Hon Me Wildlife Rescue Station is situated in Hon Me district, Kien Giang province. The total area of this WRS is 3 ha. Currently, this WRS is being constructed to accommodate 50 bears maximum. All basic infrastructures have been completed last year. 9 bears have been rescued and have been relocated to this comfortable rescue station. Beautiful landscape, rocky terrain plus finely design and skilful construction make this station one of the most beautiful WRS in the south of Vietnam.



Moon Bears enjoying the new Rescue Station in Hon Me
Photo: Nev Broadis

Release wildlife back to the wild

In the last three months, about 180 wildlife individuals including pangolins, brush-tailed porcupines, water birds, fresh water turtles and snakes have been released to Cat Tien and U Minh Thuong NPs. After spending sometime at Cu Chi WRS, these animals were deemed healthy and released back to the wild. The release of these animals helps to enrich wildlife in those national parks.



WAR staff and government rangers release turtles into U Minh Thuong National Park

In 2009, more than 300 animals were also successfully released to Cat Tien and Lo Go Xa Mat NPs, and the Sai Gon River.

Mobile team visit city restaurants and confiscate endangered species

Last March, more than 60 animals of endangered species including Pangolin, King Cobras, Clouded monitor, Loris were confiscated by WAR's mobile team, HCMC Forest Protection Department and HCMC Environment Police. Currently, these individuals are being taken care by WAR staff at the Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station (WRS).

In the last three months of 2009, this mobile team also confiscated approximately 350 individuals of endangered species.

WAR's mobile team also visits restaurants in HCMC regularly. In each restaurant, the team checks the menu and kitchen to ensure that no wildlife meat is sold. The restaurant owners were also requested to sign a commitment not to serve any wildlife dishes.

The mobile team is currently struggling in persuading some temples in Ho Chi Minh City to hand over the "prayed turtles" to the WRS for rehabilitation and potential release.



Mobile team hand over the confiscated pangolins to Cu Chi WRS

Expanding enforcement activities in Mekong delta

In 2009, WAR started to work with Can Tho Provincial Forest Protection Department in order to improve situation of illegal wildlife trade in this biggest city of the Mekong delta. To start, a training course on wildlife identification was conducted for the rangers to help them in identifying traded endangered wildlife. Sets of materials including poster and identify books were also provided. Further cooperation programmes will be developed and implemented in near future.

Based on the awareness programme, WAR has just upgraded this area to a new level where behaviours are targeted. The wildlife education component not only aims to raise awareness but also fosters attitude, enhances and encourages positive behaviours towards wildlife conservation. The stakeholders of this component will learn to make educated decisions in order to protect the nature of Vietnam. For more information about wildlife education news, please contact the Wildlife Education Coordinator at huyen@wildlifeatrisk.org

Wildlife contest ceremony for HCMC secondary school students and leaders

More than 400 students, leaders from different departments of HCMC, university teachers and professors, international organizations, donors and media attended this highlight ceremony at Ben Thanh Theater, on 2 April. WAR cooperated with HCMC Forest Protection Department to organize this event in order to raise awareness of the students and the public on nature conservation, and to call people to "Take part in protecting Vietnam's unique wildlife".

The highlight of the ceremony is an exciting contest for secondary school students on Vietnam's wildlife. Participants of the ceremony also enjoyed a photo exhibition and showed their commitment to nature conservation by signing a big canvas. The event drew incredible attention from students and leaders to wildlife conservation.

This is a start for other educational activities for the city students on wildlife protection.



Students and the game "Who am I"



Leaders and students sign to commit to nature protection

Talks to international school kids on nature protection

Talks, presentations and games were conducted voluntarily to over 200 kids aged from 6 to 10 from the British International School (BIS). These talks aimed to raise awareness of these school kids on wildlife conservation during Environmental Week and what WAR is doing to conserve Vietnam's precious wildlife.

WAR is also providing information and other technical supports for children from other international schools so that they can complete their school tasks related to wildlife.



Students raised a lot of questions towards WAR and conservation

Serial activities to educate students of Phu Quoc Island on nature conservation

Serial activities were conducted for more than 1000 secondary school students aged from 12 to 15 and leaders of Phu Quoc Island in order to educate them about the precious resources of Phu Quoc NP.

To start, more than 500 students from three secondary schools, Phu Quoc Island participated in a contest titled *"Get to know the nature of Phu Quoc National Park"* last November. During the 90 minute contest, students were extremely excited to answer questions, participating in games and discussions related to the value and threats to nature as well as what a student could do to protect the Phu Quoc NP.



Students were totally excited by the contest.

After that, a drawing contest called *"Protecting the natural resources of Phu Quoc National Park"* was launched from Nov to Dec 2009. More than 1000 secondary school students sent their paintings to the contest. The sixteen best paintings were chosen to go into the grand final. First prize went to Lam Thi Cam Nhung for her colorful painting, which expressed the impact of humans on nature and student's action to protect the precious value of Vietnam's ecosystems.



First prize painting by Lam Thi Cam Nhung, class 8th, Duong Dong 1 Secondary School

To conclude, a ceremony to celebrate: Vietnam Biodiversity Day on 29 Dec was organised. More than 160 people on Phu Quoc Island, including secondary school students, teachers, leaders, local people and

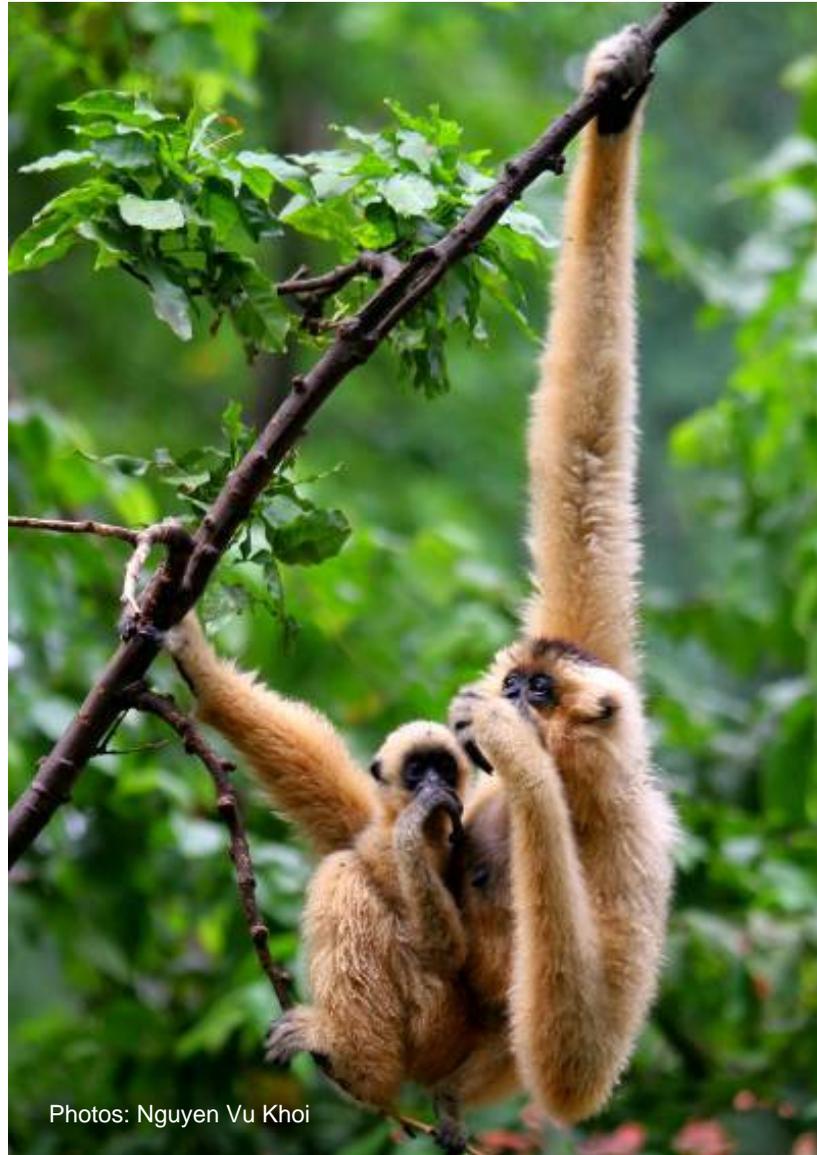


Mr. Dzung, Head of Science and Technical Department, Phu Quoc NP talked at the ceremony
Photo: Bui Huu Manh

local media attended the event and showed their commitment towards nature protection. In this ceremony, participants learnt about Vietnam's biodiversity, enjoyed the student's play and a photo / painting exhibition. Winners of the drawing contest were also awarded during this ceremony. Participating in the ceremony from the early morning, Mr. Ngo Rang Dong, the vice president of the Phu Quoc's People Committee showed his great attention to the event and quoted:

"I hope that from now on, each of you are more aware of the precious biodiversity of Vietnam and are ready to conserve it. I myself will definitely be with you in this difficult task".

The book entitled “**Wild Orchids of Phu Quoc – A guide to field identification**” has just been published in Vietnamese. This pocket book is a useful tool for both professionals and amateur horticulturists in orchid identification and thus contributing to the development and conservation of wild orchids. The book was published based on the results of a two year survey on wild orchids on Phu Quoc Island. This 229 paged book illustrates over 300 coloured photos of 99 orchid species. Information about each species is arranged in a convenient and attractive way for the audience. The book is available at the HCMC WAR office.



Photos: Nguyen Vu Khoi



Yellow-cheeked crested gibbon

Mother and child (left) and mature male (above)

Interesting Fact: Female and young Gibbons are golden before the males turn black.