

Welcome

During the past quarter, all three components of the SOS Programme were implemented successfully in dozens of secondary schools in Ho Chi Minh City. Curriculum content on wildlife protection was officially integrated into Biology Subject Grade 7 for all children of Binh Thanh, Tan Phu and Binh Tan Districts. Education managers, teachers and students visited Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station and the SOS Exhibition is continuing its busy journey within the city. Never before, has WAR released such a big number of native fish back into the wild while this and other rescue activities continue to receive great support from the public.

We are grateful for the ongoing support and donations from individuals and organisations.

Please enjoy this issue of What's Up.

Nguyen Vu Khoi

WAR's CEO

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Shot and killed endangered species, listed in index IB of the Decree 32/2006 ND-CP of the government on endangered wildlife management, could mean imprisonment from two to seven years.

Last January, four poachers of three Indochinese Silver Langurs on Phu Quoc Island in August 2013, were sentenced between two years and two years and six months imprisonment.

Continued release of native fishes

During the past quarter, approximately 1000 individuals of native fishes, including Fighting Fish (*Betta splendens*) and Rasbora (*Rasbora paviana*) were released to three different tributaries of the Sai Gon River.

In January, approximately 40 students from Le Van Tam Secondary School of Binh Thanh District released over 200 individuals of native fishes to the canal under the Cau Son Bridge. This is the first time secondary school students have joined this WAR programme. The teachers and students enthusiastically participated in the activity. This programme will be conducted in other secondary schools in Ho Chi Minh City.

Also in January, over 200 individuals of Fighting Fish and Rasbora were released to the canal under Cau Do Bridge, Binh Thanh District by WAR staff.

In March, students from different universities of Ho Chi Minh City released more than 600 individuals of native fishes to another tributary of the Saigon River at Rach Don 1 Bridge, Can Gio District.



University students releasing fishes at Can Gio district.

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All these activities are part of the programme entitled "Breeding and releasing native fishes back to the wild", which aims to recover the population of native fish in the wild and call for the public to use native fishes for aquariums.



Students from Le Van Tam Secondary School releasing native fishes.

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Survey on biomass and CO2 volume

Last January, a survey on changes in biomass and carbon dioxide (CO₂) volumes was conducted at U Minh Ha National Park, Ca Mau Province by WAR's experts. During the survey, seven permanent plots monitored the growth of maleleuca forest and thus its biomass and CO₂ volumes were established. WAR's experts also developed a formula to calculate the estimated biomass and carbon volume for the plots. A manual was also developed for U Minh Ha Park's staff to continue monitoring the future biomass and CO₂ volume of the plots.

Results of the survey, together with regular monitoring of the plots in the future, will be used to design suitable dike systems at artificial canals within the forest. It is hoped that this will keep water running during dry season, and to protect the maleleuca forests from inundation during the rainy season.

The survey was funded by ENRICH and U Minh Ha National Park.



WAR's experts and local staff

©WAR

Rescues and releases of the quarter

During the first quarter of 2014, 21 individuals of 11 endangered wildlife species were rescued including Yellow-cheeked Crested Gibbon, Pygmy Loris, Sunda Slow Loris, Asian Palm Civet, Leopard Cat, Burmese Ferret-badger, Common Pheasant, Barn Owl, Green Sea Turtle, Hawksbill Turtle, Elongated Tortoise and Asiatic Softshell Turtle.

Also during this period, one individual of endangered Green Turtle was released back to the sea.



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Upgrading facilities

In the past quarter, Cu Chi WRS has upgraded its facilities to include a new rescue tank for Arowana Dragon Fish, a new enclosure for Binturong, and more staff rooms in order to welcome more volunteers who work at the station. The Display Center is also under construction.

Trạm Cứu hộ Động vật hoang dã Củ Chi

Rescue Burmese Ferret-badger

This Burmese Ferret-badger (*Melogale personata*) weighing 1.5 kilograms is now living healthily at Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station (WRS). It was handed over voluntarily by Hoang Phap Pagoda on 23 February 2014. At that time, it was exhausted from being captured and held for a long time at a local household. The animal will be released back to the wild soon.

In the past 18 months, Hoang Phap Pagoda has handed 41 individuals of endangered wildlife to Cu Chi WRS. The pagoda also donated cash raised by local Buddhists for feeding rescued species. WAR highly appreciates and thanks them very much for this kind contribution.



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Training course on Wildlife Care and Rescue



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Staff of Chu Mom Ray National Park practicing on tortoises at Cu Chi WRS

March 2014 – WAR conducted a seven-day training course on Wildlife Care and Rescue for four staff of the Rescue Station of Chu Mom Ray National Park, Kon Tum Province. Participating in the training course, participants were equipped with adequate knowledge and skills on how

to care, adequate knowledge and skills on how to care, rescue and treat diseases. The training course was funded by the Douc Langur Foundation (DLF).

Participating in all aspects of the day's work at Cu Chi WRS, the participants learnt about wildlife behavior and the rescue process. They practice how to prepare food and feed the wildlife, and also how to clean their enclosures. WAR's veterinarian at Cu Chi WRS did training on how to treat diseases for different species. Working with WAR's staff at Cu Chi WRS over the week, Chu Mom Ray National Park staff not only learnt practical knowledge and skills but also were inspired for their job. Previously these staff had participated in a five-day training course at Chu Mom Ray National Park in September 2013.

These training courses raised their ability to rescue wildlife and contribute to wildlife conservation in the area.

Hon Me Wildlife Rescue Station



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Enrichment for primates

Last February, four large, round, acrylic mirrors were hung inside the Yellow Cheeked Crested Gibbons and Silver langur enclosures at Hon Me and Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Stations.

Other than human beings, few species are able to recognise their own image in a mirror. However chimpanzees, orangutans, bonobos, elephants, dolphins, and even European magpies can. Not all gibbons are capable of mirror self-recognition, but the Yellow Cheeked Crested Gibbon does.

At Cu Chi and Hon Me WRS, the Gibbons are excited to see themselves in the mirrors and have fun playing with the mirrors. This means that the species is able to recognise themselves; otherwise, they would be frightened of the mirror. The mirrors enrich the lives of the rescued primates at Cu Chi and Hon Me WRS. In the future, more enclosure enhancements for bears and otters will be implemented.

These activities were kindly donated by the International Primate Protection League (IPPL).



Rescue of Slow Loris for the first time

This Slow Loris (*Nycticebus bengalensis*) was saved from a dog attack by local people and then handed over to the Hon Me WRS on 18 February 2014. The serious injuries on the loris' forehead were treated immediately by WAR's veterinarian. The loris has now totally recovered and will be released to its home forest. This is the first time a Sunda Slow Loris has been rescued at Hon Me WRS. Another species of Loris i.e. the Pygmy Loris (*Nycticebus pygmaeus*) has also being rescued here.

©WAR/Nguyen Van Doan

Release of Green Turtle

WAR staff tagged a Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) weighing 14.5 kg before releasing it back to the sea at Hai Tac Island, Ha Tien Town, Kien Giang Province on 23 February 2014. The Green Turtle was handed over to the Hon Me WRS last January by local people. The tag details include WAR's email and other information that helps anyone who recovers it to know the origin of the Green Turtle and how to contact WAR. Since July 2013, WAR has been tagging all rescued sea turtles before releasing them back to the sea.



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SOS Programme

SOS Travelling Exhibition



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Over 26,000 students from 19 secondary schools of Tan Phu and Binh Tan Districts have enjoyed and benefitted from the SOS Travelling Exhibition since September 2013. The SOS Exhibition is now being operated at the secondary schools of Go Vap District till the end of the academic year 2013-2014.

SOS volunteer students discover mangrove forest of Can Gio

Approximately 20 volunteer students of the SOS Travelling Exhibition enjoyed a study tour to discover the nature of Can Gio Mangrove Biosphere Reserve on 9th March. The trip is an award from WAR to encourage volunteer students for their great effort and contribution towards the operation of the SOS Exhibition.

The volunteers were excited to learn about the beauty and values of the mangrove forest ecosystems as well as the threats to its survival. Various entertainment and team-building activities were also organised in order to help the volunteers understand the vital role of mangrove forests and to encourage them in nature conservation and wildlife protection.

Teachers and education managers visited Cu Chi WRS

Last February, approximately 70 people including representatives of two district Department of Education and Training (DOET), school managers, and teachers of Biology Subject Grade 7 from all secondary schools of Tan Phu and Binh Tan districts visited Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station. They learned about the endangered species rescued at Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station, as well as the current situation of wildlife consumption in Vietnam. They were inspired by what WAR is doing to rescue endangered wildlife in Vietnam and to show their positive attitude toward wildlife protection.



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"This is the first time I have participated in such an impressive programme. I am thrilled at the beauty of the bountiful nature here. The trip provided me with adequate knowledge on the mangrove forest and unforgettable experiences", shared Tam Lam Hong, a student from Ton Duc Thang



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Integrating wildlife education into Biology Subject grade 7

February, 2014 – Wildlife protection content was integrated into Biology Subject Grade 7 for all students of Tan Phu and Binh Tan Districts. The integration plan was discussed and agreed by approximately 70 leaders and teachers from Tan Phu and Binh Tan Districts respectively at the two district meetings organised at Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station.



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Teachers at Binh Tan Department of Education and Training studying the supporting materials.

At the meeting, all participants enthusiastically discussed and gave constructive comments on the supporting materials that are included in supported photos and video clips.

Since the sample lesson for students of Truong Cong Dinh Secondary School, Binh Thanh District on 6th December 2013, 12 secondary schools of Binh Thanh District have been integrating wildlife protection content into five lessons forward of Biology Subject for Grade 7. The integrating programme will be continuously applied to all secondary schools of Binh Thanh, Tan Phu and Binh Tan Districts in the second semester.

Conserving Dugong and endangered species



Play and learn to save Dugong

Six Marine Conservation Clubs "My Sea Clubs" were set up at six secondary schools on Phu Quoc Island last October. Since then, each club with approximately 50 children each aged 12-15 years old, has been meeting regularly once or twice per month.

In each meeting, the children are able to learn about Dugong and endangered marine species in a relaxed atmosphere through creative activities such as games and quizzes, and practical activities. Participating in those clubs, the children not only get better knowledge and skill of Dugong protection and marine conservation but also are inspired to appreciate marine resources, and be willing to take action to conserve this indispensable resource in the future.

In addition, each club also has organised several school meetings in which, all students of the school get together to learn about Dugong and other marine species through quizzes and talks from members of the clubs.

Activities of the My Sea Clubs as well as knowledge on Dugong and marine conservation are also broadcasted through the kid's broadcasting stations three to four times per month to get further attention of all students of each school.

Each club is managed by two teachers who were carefully trained by WAR. My Sea Clubs will continue its activities till the end of this school year. The activities are a part of the project entitled "Conservation of Dugong and endangered marine species of Phu Quoc and Tho Chu Islands" conducted by WAR and Phu Quoc Marine Protected Area.

Who is the victim?

Take a look at the photo and guess which species is victim.

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WAR is grateful for the generous support from the following groups:

Since April 2012, **Hoang Phap Pagoda** has handed over to Cu Chi WRS more than 40 individual endangered species and donated cash for their food. We would like to express our sincere thanks to Hoang Phap Pagoda for joining us save Vietnam's endangered wildlife.

Volunteers and tourists from different countries have visited and worked at Cu Chi WRS and helped us take care of rescue wildlife.

©WAR/Bui Huu Manh



Vietnam's Tree Frog Postcards

One set of ten postcards entitled "Vietnam's Tree Frogs" was published by WAR in cooperation with Vietnam National Museum of Nature in February 2014. The postcard, sized 15cm x 10.5cm introduces live photos and the names of ten endangered or endemic species of tree frogs in Vietnam. Highlight of the postcards is the Horned Bubble-nest Frog (*Gracixalus supercornutus*), an endemic species to Vietnam.

The postcards aim to raise awareness of the public on wildlife protection, especially conservation of tree frogs. The postcards also suggest some action that everyone should take to protect tree frogs including (1) stop de-forestation, (2) do not consume tree frogs, and (3) take only tree frog's photos.

Please contact WAR for the postcards.



Tree frogs leaflet

A bilingual leaflet sized 14cmx20cm was also released by WAR and Vietnam National Museum of Nature last February. The leaflet includes live photos of some endangered species and concise information on tree frogs as well as what a person should do to protect tree frogs. The leaflet is available at WAR's office.





Green Water Dragon

Green Water Dragon (*Physignathus cocincinus*) is a reptile that seeks for food during day time and lives on trees. It can grow up to 2.4 meters in length from head to tail. Their tail that is over two-thirds of the entire body length is used for fighting or to keep balanced when swimming.

This colorful lizard feeds on insects, millipedes and earthworms. It lives in any forest close to fresh water. It can live up to 12 years.

The Green Water Dragon usually forms groups of one male and several females. The female lays about six to 15 eggs sized about 2.5cm long and after 60 to 75 days the eggs hatch.

Green Water Dragon is often hunted illegally for food. It is categorised as Vulnerable (VU) in the Vietnam Red Book. The species population is rapidly decreasing due to habitat loss and illegal hunting for pets and meat.

