

WAR Newsletter

Issue 11: July – September 2009

Trustee: Dominic Scriven, OBE
CEO: Nguyen Vu Khoi

FUNDRAISER IN MELBOURNE

The big news in this edition of our Quarterly Newsletter is about the huge success of the recent fundraising function in Melbourne on 8 Oct 09. Some \$15,320 gross takings were raised. All funds netted from the night will go direct to developing the Cat Tien Wildlife Rescue Station. No money will be spent on travel or administration costs as this was covered by individual sponsors. Every dollar raised will go direct towards 'the cause' of preserving Vietnam's endangered wildlife.



Fig 1. Centre Picture: WAR Ambassador for Australia, Jules Cronin-Guss (left) and Michelle Christoffersen with Some of the Donated WAR Silent Auction Prizes



Fig 2. Auctioneer, Simon Derham, and Auctioned 'Victim' (White Shirt in the Background)

The Event was organized by the WAR Ambassador for Australia, the lovely Ms Jules Cronin-Guss. Jules was ably assisted by a team of willing, ready and able volunteers, including Michelle Christoffersen, Emma Connell, Rosalba Renzella, Jodie Holkner, Kate Hayes, Kristen and Bryana Christoffersen, Peter Raff, Anne Tindall and Tendency from Electric Ladyland.

MacCormack Associates Consultants was the major sponsor for the night. Celebrity Suzie Wilks hosted the Event with lots of charm.

Chris Jones from the WAR Board in Vietnam represented the Trustee, Dominic Scriven, OBE. On behalf of himself, Chris would like to extend his personal thanks to Margaret and

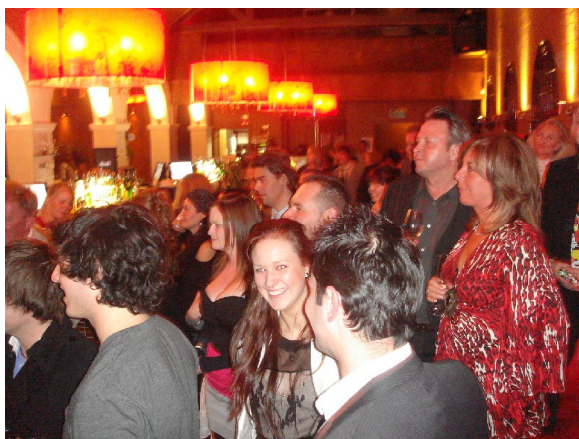
Michael Miller for their very kind hospitality while he was in Melbourne for the Event. On behalf of Dominic Scriven, OBE, the WAR Trustee, and the WAR staff (some of whom come

from Melbourne), Chris would like to extend heartfelt thanks to Jules and her team of volunteers, the various prize givers and the individuals who contributed so generously towards the cause of preserving the wildlife of our world. This Event shows that people do care and every person and every contribution, no matter how big or how small, counts.

Jules arranged for an excellent venue at the Electric Ladyland, Capel Street, Prahran. This was a very suitable choice. The night consisted of drinks and a silent action and then a live auction. WAR would like to extend its grateful thanks to Mr. Simon Derham from Marshall White Real Estate for his really excellent services as the Event auctioneer.

A highlight of the live auction included the 'auctioning off' of 'a lucky lad' to some poor unsuspecting young lady (it's said his mother was glad to see the back of him). They are off to Vietnam together on a trip soon: good luck!

However, the biggest fundraiser of the night was the \$3,000 paid for the privilege of naming a bear recently rescued from the perils of a crocodile farm by WAR's Technical Advisor, Wildlife, Matt Wills and his field team, including Simon Faithfull, Manager for WAR's Cu Cu Wildlife Rescue Station (CCWRS).



Figs 3 and 4. Some of the Very Generous Attendees at the Fundraising Event in Melbourne



Well done to all concerned! Same again next year, but this time even bigger and even better!

Help Us Fight the Good Fight!

BECOME A WAR SPONSOR

Contact WAR Today!

CONSERVATION NEWS FOR PHU QUOC ISLAND.

Biggest Population of Flying Foxes Recorded on Phu Quoc Island

WAR's specialists spent a full day in a flooded Melaleuca forest under a beating sun looking

for the biggest bat species in the world, popularly known as the 'flying fox' (*Pteropus spp.*)

Results recoded at the site with the assistance of GPS coordination rewarded the efforts of the exploration team. The findings included an estimated 1,500 plus bats at this roosting site.

According to Vietnamese bat experts, this is the biggest population of the species to be recorded in Vietnam.

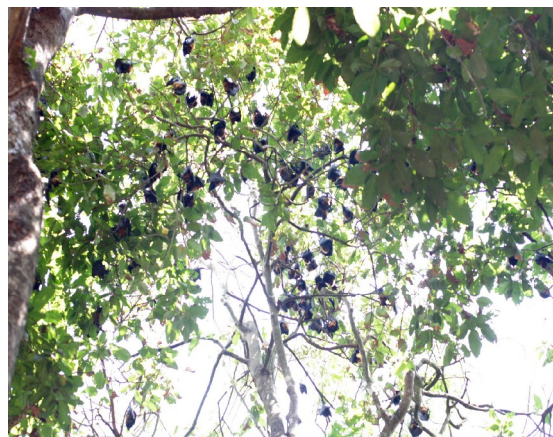


Fig 5. 'Flying Foxes' in Phu Quoc

The species is found only in the Mekong Delta region in areas such as Soc Trang Province, the U Minh area, and in the southern-most Provinces of Kien Giang and Ca Mau.

The species is often caught illegally for food by local residents, a practice that has brought them to the 'threatened' status.



Fig 6. *Pteropus spp.* in flight

The finding is welcome news for conservationists, as it shows that a few more of the bat population has survived on the ground than originally thought. The pressure is now on for local managers and decision makers of the protected area on the Island to ensure this roosting site remains safe from

poachers. Information about the new site and the need to protect it has been released to the local public newspapers.

Discovering More New Orchids for Vietnam

Besides undertaking their field surveys at Phu Quoc, WAR experts also provide training for the technical staff of the Phu Quoc National Park. A training course on orchids has yielded positive initial outcomes and Park staff can now recognize some additional new species for the Island.

The new species identified by the WAR botanist includes: *Habenaria humistrata*; *Peristylus lacertiferus*; *Cleisostoma subulatum*; *Galeola septentrionalis*; *Grammatophyllum speciosum*. Among the new species the *Habenaria* sp. is a terrestrial orchid that is difficult to find and record in the field.

JOIN WAR's 'GREEN TEAM'!

Learn and act with WAR's 'Green Team'. Future generations can become more familiar with nature by working with our experts. Would you like to join WAR's 'Green Team' and give us a hand? Please contact the WAR Office at: info@wildlifeatrisk.org

Record of a Population of Jungle Cat Living on Phu Quoc Island

In August 09, WAR brought a leading expert on carnivores in Vietnam to Phu Quoc to check the status of the ingenious wild jungle cat. Some initial information on the jungle cat was earlier recorded at the beginning of this year.

The latest 10 days' intensive survey within the Phu Quoc National Park has confirmed 3 to 4 sites of the species.

The jungle cat has been recorded as living in Vietnam up to the Central Highlands from the most southern areas in the Country. The status of the species is very rare. The latest findings have further reinforced the extreme biodiversity to be found in the Park. WAR extends its thanks to all experts and staff involved in the latest survey with several field trip at midnight.

Overall, to date, WAR has had a very successful year with its conservation work on the Island, with several new species findings both for Vietnam, and for the Island.

WAR explores the environment and trains local staff, who are the real owners and wildlife warriors of the beautiful and rich biodiversity of Phu Quoc.

Would you like to join our work? You can help us directly or indirectly by any kind of support. Please visit our website for further results to be released soon that will stem from our ongoing analysis of our most recent field surveys.

Enforcement Work on Phu Quoc Island

A task force team on the 'Protection of Endangered Marine Species' has been formed by a decision of the Phu Quoc People's Committee. WAR passes its thanks to the local authority for this appropriate action towards helping to protect the endangered wildlife of Vietnam.



Fig 7. The Beautiful Phu Quoc Island

WAR has contributed a small effort to help the team by sending it information on marine species such as booklet of the illustrated

marine species and a Dugong Fact Sheet. Hopefully this will all go towards ensuring that more sea turtles and Dugongs, along with other endangered species can be better protected in Vietnam in future years.

WAR is rapidly becoming a resource of expertise and experience to help the staff at the Phu Quoc National Park and the local people on technical issues concerning the conservation of the biodiversity in the region.

WAR MOBILE PATROL

Enforcement in HCMC

The Mobile Patrol is now taking on the additional task of visiting restaurants in HCMC to promote public awareness about the need to protect the local wildlife. This activity is reflected by a campaign known as 'Post the Poster' at restaurants, each of which is also asked to sign a commitment between restaurant owners and FPD-HCMC to commit not to serve 'bush meat' in the restaurants. The commitment will be displayed at each restaurant visited.

Beside this campaign, the normal enforcement patrol action on the street remains the main activity. Most hotspots of wildlife meat trade on streets have been eradicated by the Mobile Team. This brings a better image to the City and protects more endangered species.



Fig 7. Photo of Poster and Commitment Between FPD-HCMC and Restaurant Owner

If one finds any street site where wildlife is being illegally traded or displayed, please call

the WAR hotline number on 08 3 9106126, or email WAR at info@wildlifeatrisk.org and inform us about this practice. Please give WAR staff as many details of the site and the activities as possible to help our Mobile Patrol to respond quickly and effectively.

OUTSTANDING RESCUE OF MALTREATED BEARS BY THE CCWRS TEAM

Late in September 09, the staff of the CCWRS achieved yet another successful bear confiscation under very stressful conditions. The enclosure where WAR staff found the three bears it rescued was extremely inadequate. The bears had spent the last 12 years of their lives in these tiny and filthy cages.



Fig 8. One of the Recently Rescued Bears

During the rescue, the WAR staff had only one option open to them: this was to dart and anesthetize all 3 bears at once. The enclosure had a massive open sewerage pit in one corner so the staff had to try to keep the bears away from this area. If one of the bears had fallen into this pit there would have been very few options in trying to save it.



Fig 9. Saved from 12 Years of Horrific Conditions by the WAR CCWRS Team

The staff had to guess the weights of the bears for the anaesthetic leading to a lot of uncertainty and worry particularly when administering the correct anaesthesia dosage. The staff then had to wait until all the bears were well asleep before they could enter the enclosure.



Fig 10. Which Sponsor Can Provide WAR with a Second-Hand Vehicle to Move the Rescued Bears? Not Cheap at \$10,000, We Know, But Think of What You Will Achieve



Fig 11. Another of the Recently Rescued Bears.

The whole process took nearly three hours before all three bears (combined total weight of approx 550kgs) were secure in their

transport cages and on the costly hired truck. (WAR is in desperate need of a donated second-hand vehicle for such purposes.)

The rescue team was led by the WAR Technical Advisor, Wildlife, Matt Wills. Matt reports that he was very proud to say that this confiscation (even though the most risky yet undertaken), went extremely well. Each staff member's duties were well defined and each person performed those tasks in an efficient and professional manner throughout the entire rescue operation.

Matt goes on to say that he and Simon Faithfull are both very pleased with the level of skill now being shown by local husbandry and vet staff alike at the CCWRS. The Forestry Protection Department staff also lent a hand in the rescue.

The three bears are now safe and sound in their new environment at the CCWRS and are slowly adjusting to their new home. These bears will be introduced to a good food regime which will enable them to gradually and increase their health and activity.

CU CHI WILDLIFE RESCUE STATION (CCWRS) ACTIVITIES

Work at the CCWRS has been progressing at the usual fast pace, with the management staff now starting to get to the end of the Expansion Plan. (Next stop will be the Expansion Plan of the Cat Tien Wildlife Rescue Station – CTWRS.)

CCWRS Tours

CCWRS has hosted a number of tour groups over the past month including Intrepid Tours, Pacific Tours, Exotissimo, CET academic programs, and received visitors from the ISHCMC. The Station is continuing to sell merchandise and take donations towards the 'good cause' of preserving the endangered wildlife of Vietnam.

New Staff at the CCWRS

We have also had a recent new arrival to the CCWRS team as well with Mr. Thai, a recent vet graduate. Mr Thai is showing some real potential and conducting some great work with all the species at the Station. He has also developed some new reporting techniques that are enabling the CCWRS team to manage the treatment of the animals at the Station much more effectively.

Construction Work at the CCWRS

Construction on the new Reptile Quarantine Facility (RQF) has begun at the Station. This facility will enable staff to manage and maintain all new reptile arrivals in a way that will greatly reduce the chances of viral and bacterial transmission. This facility will also enable the team to house approximately 200% more reptiles, enabling the Station to rehabilitate and re-release more animals. Construction is nearing 65% completion. All work should be finished by the end of October 09.



Fig 12. 'Home Safe' at the CCWRS after a Tiring Trip from Hell

Repairs to the café area are now also completed.

Wildlife Arrivals and Releases

New arrivals at CCWRS in the past month include: 3 Black Bears, 2 Pygmy Loris, 5 Yellow-Cheeked Gibbons, 3 Water Monitor lizards and 11 more Pangolin. Some of the Pangolins have arrived in extremely poor condition. Unfortunately, so bad was the condition of some of the Pangolins, they had to be euthanized. All the newly arrived wildlife will remain in quarantined environment until all disease testing can be completed.

Wildlife species that have been released from CCWRS back into the wild recently include: 14 Water Monitor Lizards, 4 Pygmy Loris, and 1 Hawksbill Turtle. The water monitors were released into the nearby Cat Tien National Park (CTNP), in a location approximately 6 kms north of the main office. The 4 Pygmy Loris have been handed over to the 'Endangered Animals Species Trust' (EAST) on Dao Tien in CTNP.

EAST has already released other Pygmy Loris and they are being tracked every night by the

keeping staff in an effort to monitor the effectiveness of their release. The 4 new arrivals will be released in a few weeks time where they will also be radio tracked. These new releases could be the start to a new semi-wild population in Vietnam. Some very interesting information is being developed from the release program. WAR is proud to be supporting this conservation program in conjunction with EAST.



Fig 13. A Caring WAR Day Volunteer at Work at the CCWRS

The Hawksbill Turtle was confiscated by the WAR Mobile Team from a local restaurant in HCMC and was housed temporarily at the WAR HQ in HCMC before being relocated to CCWRS for rehabilitation and medical examination. The animal was deemed to be in good health and was promptly released back into the ocean off the Mui Ne coastline.

Wildlife At Risk (WAR) Rescue Facilities and Wildlife Support Resources

- 1.- **Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station** – Road Tinh Lo 15, An Nhon Tay Commune, Cu Chi District – Ho Chi Minh City. Tel: 08 3 7947045
- 2.- **Cat Tien Bear Station** – At Cat Tien National Park, Tan Phu District, Dong Nai Province. Tel: 0933628037
- 3.- **Mekong Delta Bear Station** – Hon Me Village, Tho Son Commune, Hon Dat District, Kien Giang Province. Tel: 077 3 706403

HON ME WILDLIFE RESCUE STATION (HMWRC)

Animal Movements at the HMWRS

The past two months has been an interesting time for HMWRC. With the completion of the core building and the first bear house, WAR

finally got approval to begin operating the facility primarily as a rescue station for bears.

The first bear house is located at the front of the site and is currently home to 9 Black Bears. The initial shipment of bears to this site included two separate shipments from CTNP.

With a 13 to 14 hours' drive from the CTNP to the HMWRS, it was an exhausting task for both humans and bears. However, after the four day transfer, all six female Black Bears from CTNP arrived safely and soon began to settle into their new southern home.



Fig 14. So, Who Likes the Dentist Anyway?

The third shipment came from the CCWRS with the transfer of 3 more Black Bears. These bears arrived a few weeks after the Cat Tien Bears and have now settled in to their new home as well. Under the professional guidance of Nev Broadis, the Station Manager, the local HMWRS staff is now gaining invaluable experience on how to look after bears in captivity and how to introduce bears to each other.

Construction Activity at the HMWRS

Now that the first bear house is already full, construction on the second bear house is moving along at a brisk pace. The new bear house is being built south of the core building and will house up to 20 bears. From the bear house there will be a number of large forested enclosures that will enable the bears to begin a semi-wild life once more confiscations are undertaken by Vietnamese Government authorities. The second bear house is approximately 60% complete with the walls up and the roof erected. Works on the enclosures are also almost finished. Final work will include electrics and plumbing. The house could be complete as soon as end of October 09.

The 'paying volunteer' house is nearing completion as well. All of the construction has

been finished; just some finishing touches and plumbing needs to be done. It's at about 95% completion stage.

Work on the huge perimeter wall is ongoing.

PAYING VOLUNTEERS

Interested in being a paying volunteer at a WAR Rescue Station? Contact Matt Wills, Coordinator, Wildlife Rescue Stations:

matt.wills@wildlifeatrisk.org

WAR IS NOW ON FACEBOOK

Go to www.facebook.com

Go to search for friends

Use: truonglam@warlifeatrisk.org

CAT TIEN WILDLIFE RESCUE STATION (CTWRS)

Animal Movements at the CTWRS

Over the past two months there has been a large amount of work from the Cat Tien staff to introduce bears together and move bears around to suit the facilities.

With all of the six large female Black Bears now transferred to HMWRC, the focus has been to introduce all of the males together.

With the large one hectare of forested enclosure now in full use everyday the introductions have gone very smoothly with little or no aggression among the bears. All of the Sun Bears have now been relocated to the newly transformed round yard. Three Sun Bears are utilizing this area during the daytime, while the two large males are timesharing the enclosure at nights.



Fig 15. A Big Effort is Made by the WAR Managers to Train Local Staff, Who Now Have an Increasing Input into Husbandry Work at the CTWRS

There have been some animal treatments also underway at the HMWRS as well. 'Nicky' (female Sun Bear) is starting to progress very well. She has put on over 10kgs since her initial treatment started and her demeanour has also calmed down a lot. She is still receiving mineral supplements, but she has recovered remarkably well considering her very poor condition on arrival. 'Mitza' (16 year old male Sun Bear) is also receiving treatment for lesions on his back inside left leg. Upon last inspection his treatment was seen to have been very effective and his condition is almost back to normal.

Construction Activity at the CTWRS

Construction is almost complete on the second bear house at Cat Tien, with 90% of the main building completed. Some minor alterations still need to be made to the sliding doors and cementing work. The bear house is a small development being built onto the north perimeter of the training yard to replace the six bile cages that were previously in place.

Four large 2.5 x 2.5m cement and iron dens are replacing these six cages. The dens are user friendly and will enable the bears to be maintained in a much more ethical manner. They are airy and light and enable the bears to see around them that will come in handy when receiving stressed animals.

Once money is received from the recent Melbourne fundraising, Matt Wills and Chris Jones will draft an Expansion Plan for the CTWRS. Hopefully some funds will also be received from past major corporate sponsors, such as the Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) and the British Business Group of Vietnam (BBGV), to assist with the successful implementation of this Expansion Plan.

Animal Arrivals and Releases

The Crested Serpent Eagle and the Burmese Python that arrived at the CTWRS after being confiscated from a private landowner have now been released back into CTNP after being checked over by Dr Hinh. Both animals were healthy and had eaten a number of times while in the care of the husbandry team at the Rescue Station.

One new addition to the collection is a juvenile pigtailed macaque that unfortunately has an old, but healed, injury to its left front leg. It is eating well and improving.

Future Wildlife Husbandry Work at the CTWRS

The next step for CTWRS will be the relocation of two hybrid freshwater crocodiles from their holding area and the subsequent expansion of the bear holding facilities. The two crocodile areas can easily be converted into bear holding facilities. This expanded area will increase the efforts towards more confiscations and enable bears to socialise with other individuals of their own species.



Fig 16. 'Hey, I'm the New Guy on the Block at the CTWRS!'

Work being planned for next month will see the planning and development for the new leopard enclosure to be built in CTNP. This will include a 750 square meter semi-forested enclosure and will signify the start of the conservation of big cats for WAR.

It should be noted that the benefit of any expansion of a WAR Wildlife Rescue Station is not only that it can care for more animals prior to re-release back into the wild, or for on-going care if this is not possible. The benefit is also in that they act as major centres of education. They serve to make the many hundreds of visitors who come each year AWARE of the threat to the endangered wildlife of Vietnam. And, as every thinking person already knows, 'prevention is better than cure'.

REPTILE SURVEY U MINH THUONG NATIONAL PARK, KIEN GIANG PROVINCE

This Survey was held in the period 7 –21 September 09. I was the first such survey carried out by WAR Staff at the U Minh Thuong N.P since the devastating fires of 2002 /2003.

WAR staff was aided by Damian Goodall (Melbourne Zoo), Ryan Hart (Melbourne Zoo) and Peter Ellen (Free the Bears – Cambodia) for the duration of the Survey.

Over the two weeks, staff was working around the clock collecting live reptile specimens including snakes, lizards, frogs and turtles to photograph and record.

WAR is very happy to announce that a total of 43 different amphibians and reptiles were recorded and photographed including species that have not been recorded since the forest fires. Species included: Monocellate Cobra (*Naja kaouthia*), Banded Krait (*Bungarus fasciatus*), Tentacled Snake (*Erpeton tentaculatum*) and Malayan Snail-eating Turtle (*Malayemys subtrijuga*).



Fig 15. Members of the U Minh Thuong N.P Reptile Survey Team. Left to Right: Ryan Hart (Melbourne Zoo), Su Huu Song (Parks and Wildlife Staff), Hoang Van Chinh (Parks and Wildlife Staff), Nyugen Thanh Thai (CCWRS Vet), Simon Faithfull (CCWRS Manager), Peter Ellen (Free The Bears – Cambodia), Nyugen Vu Khoi (WAR CEO), Matt Wills (WAR Technical Advisor), Damian Goodall (Melbourne Zoo)

Remember, amphibians and reptiles form also form an important part of our natural habitat and also need our help to remain off the endangered species list.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

The aim of WAR is to provide Protection, Enforcement and Awareness to conserve the endangered wildlife of Vietnam.

YES!!!

I would love to become a member of WAR and fight to save the endangered wildlife of Vietnam!

I wish to receive a WAR hat and T-shirt and the Quarterly WAR Newsletters updating me about WAR's work.



Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

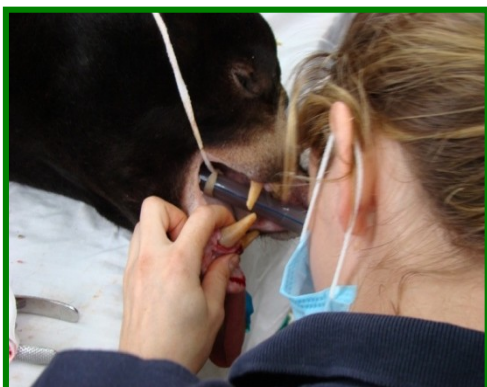
- I would like to become a member for ONE year for USD50.

Bankers' cheques are accepted in USD, AUD, GBP

Please make them payable to 'Wildlife At Risk (WAR)'

Address: Minh Dao House, 161/1A Nguyen Van Thu Street, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Or contact Ms Lien, WAR Coordinator, at lien.huynh@wildlifeatrisk.org if you'd like to register on line and pay via electronic transfer.



Hey Mum, do I need braces?



Great! Back to the wild! Ladies look out!



CORPORATE SPONSOR OPPORTUNITY

The aim of WAR is to provide Protection, Enforcement and Awareness to conserve the endangered wildlife of Vietnam.

YES!!!

I would love to become a WAR Corporate Sponsor and fight to save the endangered wildlife of Vietnam!

I wish to have my company listed in the Sponsor's Page of the WAR Website and in the WAR Quarterly Newsletter.

Contact Ms Lien, WAR Coordinator at lien.huynh@wildlifeatrisk.org for details of sponsorship opportunities.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!



Get your whole company involved!