



Issue No.13 | Jan – Mar 2011

Welcome

Welcome to the first newsletter in 2011, the year of the cat.

This quarter, in memory of the deceased Javan Rhino (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*) in Cat Tien National Park, Wildlife At Risk (WAR) launch the drawing contest to conserve the Rhino and other Vietnamese endangered species. WAR also conducts various activities and trainings to educate children of Ho Chi Minh City and Phu Quoc Island on the nature and wildlife protection.

The staff at the Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station (CCWRS) and Forest Protection Department of Ho Chi Minh City have been working tirelessly to combat the illegal wildlife trade, confiscating more than 15 individuals and released 40 animals back to the forest.

WAR would like to thank the ongoing supports for our work by the international school community and encourages everyone to take a stand to protect Vietnams' native wildlife and their habitats.

Nguyen Vu Khoi – CEO, Wildlife At Risk (WAR)



This is one of the two Orangutans rescued 3 years ago, from illegal capture at Thanh Canh Tourism Park in Binh Duong province. They were then successfully repatriated back to their home forest in Indonesia.

Thanh Canh Tourism Park is one of eight private zoos and establishments in Vietnam that keep tigers. The owner of Thanh Canh Tourism Park and fourteen people linked to illegal trading of tigers have just been sentenced to prison ranging from 18 months to three years, and fined more than 70,000 USD. This is an outstanding progress of the local authority in mitigating and end illegal wildlife trade.

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Survey on Dragonflies conducted for the first time in U Minh Thuong National Park

Wildlife At Risk (WAR) have recently conducted a short survey focusing on dragonflies in U Minh Thuong National Park, Kien Giang Province.

This is the first time such a survey on dragonflies was conducted in the park. At least 11 species of dragonfly were recorded with one new species for Vietnam. WAR plans to return to the Park during the rainy season to conduct a more comprehensive survey on dragonflies.

The new dragonfly species will be announced soon in April 2011.

Damselflies mating at U Minh Thuong National Park
©WAR/Nguyen Vu Khoi



The Northern Mountain Slug Snake recorded on Phu Quoc Island
©WAR/Nguyen Vu Khoi

One more snake species recorded for Phu Quoc National Park

The Northern Mountain Slug Snake (*Pareas margaritophorus*), was recorded for the 1st time on Phu Quoc island which expanding the species distribution to further South-Western area of Vietnam. The snake was found asleep in dry leaf litter roughly 600m above sea level.

Since 2008, WAR has conducted two reptile and amphibian surveys and successfully recorded 65 different species including 26 snakes, 21 lizards, 16 frogs and 2 turtles highlighting the importance of conservation of this unique habitat and its wildlife.

Rescue and Release

In the past three months, WAR has rescued 20 individuals of endangered animals including Yellow-Cheeked Gibbons, Northern White-Cheeked Gibbon, Otters, Loris, Black-shanked Douc Langurs, Snakes, Monitor Lizards, Leopard Cat, and Fresh Water Turtles.



At the same time, over 40 individuals were successfully rehabilitated and released back to the wild, including monitor lizards, water dragons and freshwater turtles. These animals were released into national parks such as Lo Go Xa Mat, Cat Tien and U Minh Thuong in Southern Vietnam.

Release endangered species to U Minh Thuong National Park

9th March 2011- Staff from the Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station took the long drive south to U Minh Thuong National Park to re-release successfully rehabilitated wildlife including: Common Palm Civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*), Asian Short-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinerea*) and Javan Pangolin (*Manis javanica*).



©WAR/dohuyen

Javan Pangolins are shy reclusive animals that are being pushed towards extinction by the illegal wildlife trade in South-east Asia. This strange looking nocturnal mammal is found in dry-leaf forests often burrowing or climbing trees.

Local citizen donated four baby Otters, a “very special” primate and more

Four young Smooth-coated Otters (*Lutrogale perspicillata*) were registered to the Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station (WRS) on the 11th February 2011. These Otters were kindly donated to the station by Mr. Nguyen Xuan Linh, a resident from Pham Ngu Lao, HCMC. Linh also donated a water monitor lizard; all are endangered species in Vietnam.

Linh said “*The otter original from Can Gio District and the monitor lizard was given to him as a present from a friend in Dong Nai Province*”. After a month he heard about Wildlife At Risk, and his family were very happy to donate these animals, the otters are growing from day to day and very healthy.

Also in February, a baby Black-shanked Douc Langur (*Pygathrix nigripes*) was handed to Cu Chi WRS by Mr Nguyen Van Khanh, District 11, HCMC. This special and endangered primate is now being cared for at the rescue station and doing extremely well.



Pygmy Loris needs new facility

Over the last two years, the Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station (WRS) has expanded and created more wildlife holding facilities for many species including: Sun Bears, Moon Bears, Otter Training Yards, Primate Isolation and Reptile Quarantine Building.

With increasing wildlife being confiscated by the Forest Protection Department (FPD) and arriving at this unique facility. Cu Chi WRS is looking at building a brand new holding facility for Pygmy Loris (*Nycticebus pygmaeus*) for ongoing quarantine, rehabilitation and socialisation.



©WAR/ Nguyen Vu Khoi

We are looking for your supports to save this unique nocturnal primate that is being pushed to extinction in Vietnam.

Help save the Pygmy Loris

Launch the drawing contest to conserve Javan Rhino and other endangered species.

Ho Chi Minh City, 23rd March to 12th May 2011- WAR cooperated with Khan Quang Do magazine to launch a drawing contest titled “Treasures of the Forest” for all children aged 11 to 15 years old throughout Vietnam.

The contest aims to raise awareness of local children and the public on the beauty and value of Vietnam's wildlife, such as threats to the Javan Rhino and actions we should take to protect endangered species so that they are not pushed to the brink of extinction in Vietnam. The best drawings will be displayed at the award ceremony, which will be held on World Biodiversity Day 2011.

For more information about this contest, please visit: www.wildlifeatrisk.org

Secondary school students write articles about nature



Planning to writing articles to support for the contest “Treasure of the forest”
©WAR/Do Thi Hong Hoa

Ho Chi Minh City, 13th March 2011 - Twenty children aged 11 to 15 years old learnt how and practiced writing articles about nature. These children come from the “Young Media Club” and “I love nature Club” of Khan Quang Do Magazine. This is a joint effort between WAR and Khan Quang Do Magazine to teach these children with important journalist writing skills so that they are able to write articles, focusing on nature and conservation.

In the coming months, these trained young journalists will practice what they have learnt in the course by writing articles to support the drawing contest titled “Treasures of the forest” with a focus on “Conservation of the Javan Rhino and other endangered wildlife”. The qualified articles will be published in the Khan Quang Do magazine, together with the drawing contest.

The children are now ready to write articles about nature. They are excited to make their small contribution to the conservation of Vietnam nature through their pens.

Five Green Clubs set up on Phu Quoc Island

Phu Quoc Island, March 2011- Under the cooperation among WAR, Phu Quoc National Park and Phu Quoc Department of Education and Training, five Green Clubs were set up in five secondary schools including Cua Can, Cua Duong, Bai Thom, Bai Bon, and Ganh Dau.

Green Club is a playground for secondary school students to learn and to contribute to the conservation of Phu Quoc National Park. Members of each Green Club meet twice per month from now to the end of this school semester, to learn about the nature of Phu Quoc through games and interactive activities, in an exciting atmosphere. They will also have an opportunity to enjoy the forest of Phu Quoc through a field trip.

WAR expects that the green clubs will contribute to the green and pristine of the island.



Game to learn about threats to the nature at a Green Club at Phu Quoc
©WAR/Do Thi Hong Hoa

New program for students to discover the forest of Phu Quoc

Phu Quoc Island, 6th March 2011 - A program called "One day in the forest" was successfully developed for secondary school students to visit Phu Quoc National Park. This one-day trip is an opportunity for the students to experience the beauty of nature and to appreciate the forest values. The trip helps the students become aware of threats to the valuable forest of Phu Quoc Island and encourage them to take actions to protect nature.

Different from traditional tours to the forest, during this program, the students are guided and motivated to learn and enjoy the forests in a joyful way. They

seek for animal tracks with a magnifier, learn about tree barks by tracing it on paper with a pencil, listen to the Park staff and find endangered species in the forest, close their eyes and meditate to learn about the water cycle, and create models and paintings to show functions of the forest by using natural materials at a natural spring such as stones, sand, earth, dry branches and leaves. Games and warm up activities are included to make the trip more fun and exciting. At the end of the trip, each student decorates a postcard using natural materials and brings the postcard home as a reminder of what they commit to do to help protect the forest.

The trip was successfully tested with about 40 students aged 12-15 years old and eight teachers from four secondary schools on Phu Quoc Island.



Each student decorates a postcard before bringing home
©WAR/do Huyen

"This is the first time I've have enjoyed beautiful forest of Phu Quoc National Park. I love the nature more and will take part in protecting the nature from today", said Do Quang Truong, 14 year-old boy from Ganh Dau Secondary School.

Development and implementation of the trip is a part of the training course called "Skills on nature interpretation" for Environment Education Group of Phu Quoc National Park from 2nd to 7th March 2011. In the next three months, the trained environmental education staff from Phu Quoc National Park will conduct this trip for approximately 200 members of the five Green Clubs at the Park's buffer zone.



Seeking for animal traces in the forest of Phu Quoc National Park
©WAR/Ho Van Phu



Illustrate a function of the ecosystem using natural materials
©WAR/do Huyen

Teenagers implemented environment communication activities at secondary schools

Ho Chi Minh City, February to March, 2011 - Sixteen members of the “I love nature” Club, Khan Quang Do magazine has formed three groups to initiate and conduct four environment communication projects for more than 3,500 students in four secondary schools of Ho Chi Minh City. This is an opportunity for the children aged 11 to 15 years old to practice communications skills they learnt during training last year. One or two volunteer students who came from Ho Chi Minh City Universities supported each group of children.

The projects includes organizing a quiz show titled “Discovering the Wildlife World”, taking photos and make photo collections to show the nice and ugly behaviours of the human toward nature, maintaining the clean classes and decorating dustbins.

At the end of the program, the best students who made great contribution in each project in the three secondary schools were selected to join a study tour to the Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station.

This activity is operated under the cooperation between WAR and Khan Quang Do Magazine that aims to create the generation of secondary school students who care for the environment and be able to make right decision towards environmental protection and wildlife conservation.

Decorating dustbin at Phu My Secondary School (left) and quiz show at Ngo Quyen School ©WAR/Ho Thi Kim Lan, Do Thi Hong Hoa



International School of Ho Chi Minh City sponsors “Endangered” Sun Bear

The Wildlife Awareness Group of the International School of Ho Chi Minh City (ISHCMC) lead by senior students Gemma Chatwin and Adam Hilton have worked tirelessly hard throughout the year to raise vital awareness and funds, a total of about 1,000 USD and decided to sponsor an endangered sun bear at the Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station.

The students organised several bake sales, where they baked animal shaped cookies and muffins to sell during lunch hours. They also organised a free dress day where students were able to either dress up as bears or wear brown and green. Other activities included ‘guess the number of gummy bears in a jar’ and through sponges at the teachers (dressed as poachers).



Students from ISHCMC highlighting “Bear Bile Trade”

Gemma and Adam said “*Not only did we raise money, we also used these opportunities to raise awareness about the current wildlife situation in Vietnam. During several school assemblies, the WAR member at ISHCMC put together presentations to inform our students about the endangered species in Vietnam, and how WAR helps these animals.*”

The wildlife awareness group decided to sponsor a sun bear because of a local restaurant located close to the school that is believed to be a “wildlife restaurant”.

British International School students act for wildlife

This quarter has again been extremely busy for WAR spreading its conservation message to the International Schools across HCMC, especially the British International School (BIS).

WAR has been delivering informative talks to Year 2, Year 4 and Year 8 students from BIS.

Year 4 students visited Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station again during February to learn about Wildlife Enrichment focusing on Sun Bears, Moon Bears and Otters. The students prepared nutritious snacks with experienced keepers to see how the wildlife reacted to certain treats.

Meanwhile, Year 8 students visited the Bear and Wild Cat Rescue Station in Cat Tien National Park, Dong Nai Province to learn about the rescued Moon & Sun Bears. 135 students visited the park and spent several hours preparing exciting food enrichment items with the help of park staff. The student's learnt how important it is to use enrichment as part of a healthy diet and why enrichment plays a vital part of rehabilitation of captive wild animals.

WAR staff is supporting Year 4 students from BIS in their unique eco project "Green Garden Project". The project focuses on creating an eco garden led by the student Garden Committee. They plan to grow fruit trees, vegetables, herbs and jungle plants alongside water features, and log piles. Invertebrates, bird and bat boxes will also be created. Plus, the garden will have an outdoor art gallery and sitting areas.

This special community project connects with other environmental projects that BIS are conducting including the work of the new Eco-Committee, a select group of 'green' students. This group will take An Phu Primary School through the Eco-Schools award scheme and prepare for Environment Week that will happen on the 4-6th May.



BIS students visiting WAR's Bear and Wild Cat Rescue Station



Year 8 students presenting education ideas
©WAR/Ho Thi Kim Lan

More visitors to Cu Chi WRS

In the last three months, the Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station (WRS) has received over 650 visitors including over 400 Vietnamese visitors and 250 International visitors. You can visit the Cu Chi WRS seven days a week, from 8.30AM to 4.30PM.

WAR has been implementing a "paid volunteer scheme" to give the public a unique chance to work closely with trained wildlife staff and learn about some of Vietnams' Endangered Wildlife. Since January the station has been extremely busy with International volunteers from Australia, UK, Canada, USA and China.

If you are interested in volunteering at the rescue station, please contact us at info@wildlifeatrisk.org





Malayan Snail-eating turtle (*Malayemys subtrijuga*)

The Turtle is a vulnerable species in Vietnam. Up to 10,000 tones of freshwater turtles are being illegally traded each year for the traditional Asian medicine trade.

Due to habitat lost, and illegal hunting and trading, this freshwater species is being exploited and is causing numbers to decline steadily throughout its range. Habitat deterioration due to pollution and accidental capture in fishing nets are also contributing to this species' vulnerable status.