

Welcome

Wildlife At Risk (WAR) has experienced a busy first quarter of the year. All three wildlife rescue stations were busy with numerous rescues and release. The highlight of this quarter is the cooperation of a local pagoda in rescuing endangered wildlife. The conservation program successfully conducted an in-depth biodiversity survey in Quang Ngai province and revealed important discoveries. At the same time, the SOS travelling exhibition has been moving to more than 30 secondary schools and attended by a large number of students and teachers.

We would like to thank everyone for their supports from business companies, organisations, schools and individuals in playing their part in saving Vietnam's endangered wildlife.

Nguyen Vu Khoi – WAR's CEO

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This March, Mr. Thich Tam Hue - President of Hoang Phap Pagoda, Hoc Mon District, HCMC who is a superior Buddhist monk along with other Buddhist monks voluntarily handed a Siamese Crocodile and a King Cobra to the Station. WAR highly appreciates the cooperation of pagodas and temples in donating wildlife to the CCWRS that will eventually be released back to the wild.

Biodiversity survey in Quang Ngai forest

March 2012 – WAR conducted a biodiversity survey in the dense forest of Ba To District, Quang Ngai Province from 9th to 24th March 2012. More than 100 species of butterflies, four species of fresh water fishes, and four species of bat and other small animals was recorded for the first time in this area. Some of them could be a first record for Vietnam.

Highlights of the survey results were the discovery of a mole species (*Euroscaptor parvidens*), two butterfly species (*Mandarinia regalis* and *Ragadia critias*) and two frog species (*Leptobrachium mouhoti* and *Ophryophryne gerti*) that are listed on the IUCN Red List. This species are recorded for the first time in this area.

Participating in the survey were WAR's experts on butterfly, bat and fresh water fish and an expert on bat from Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources (IEBR) . In order to conduct the survey, the scientists had to take a hard one-day trek to the campsite deep in the forest roughly 1000m above the sea level.

The scientists are now analysing the results of the survey. Further results will be revealed later. WAR would like to thank "Osprey" for partially supporting the survey.



Frog species *Ophryophryne gerti*

The mole species discovered for the 1st time in this area



The survey camp site is deep in the forest and at about 1000m above sea level

Photos: Nguyen Vu Khoi



Butterfly species *Ragadia critias*



More than 200 native fishes released back to the wild

Ho Chi Minh City, 3rd March 2012 – More than 200 native rasbora (*Rasbora paviana*) and fighting fish (*Betta splendens*) were released to Cau Do canal, a tributary of the Sai Gon River. The volunteer students who released fish also received rasbora and fighting fishes to raise at home.

This is the fifth time, WAR has released native fishes back to the wild, helping repopulate native fish species and encouraging local people to use native fishes for aquariums. More than 750 individuals of rasbora sp and fighting fishes have been released to different tributaries of Sai Gon River.

The program titled “Breeding and release native fishes to the wild” is partly supported by LIN (Center for Community Development). WAR is now conducting research and captive breeding of other species of native fishes in order to release to the wild.

Beginning of 2012, our Wildlife Rescue Stations were extremely busy with many wildlife species being transferred, rescued and released. Many individuals was rescued and released in the same quarter, such as Barn Owl, Hawksbill, Elongated Tortoise and other fresh water turtles and tortoises. This is to ensure that the species are not kept too long and get used to the captured conditions.

In this quarter, **146 individuals was rescued** including Crocodile, King Cobra, Moon Bear, Yellow-cheeked Crested Gibbon, Oriental Small-clawed Otter, Leopard Cat, Loris, Barn Owl, Hawksbill, Elongated Tortoise and other fresh water turtles and tortoises; **118 individuals were released back to the wild**, including Leopard Cat, Barn Owl, Merlin Bird, King Cobra, Burmese Python, Hawksbill, Elongated Tortoises and other fresh water turtles and tortoises.

Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station

King Cobra finds its freedom

This King Cobra was rescued eight months ago from an illegal trader in Ho Chi Minh City in August 2011. At that time, the King Cobra was quite weak due to long time capture and transportation. It's weighed about 7.5kg. After getting proper care from WAR staff at Cu Chi WRS, this King Cobra now weighed about 10kg. It's very healthy and be able to hunt and consume for food itself. This King Cobra was released to the thick forest of Lo Go Xa Mat National Park in the end of March 2012.



Over 80 endangered turtles back to the wild

March 2012 – WAR cooperated with Cuc Phuong Turtle Rescue Center to release 83 individuals of fresh water turtles and tortoises including Elongated Tortoise, Giant Asian Pond Turtle and Asian Box Turtle. After four days travelling by train and car from Cuc Phuong Turtle Rescue Center to CCWRS, these turtles remained at CCWRS for a few days before being released to Lo Go Xa Mat National Park, Tay Ninh province.

“This is the first time CCWRS has cooperated with Cuc Phuong Turtle Rescue Center to save endangered turtles. We are looking forward further cooperation's with other rescue stations throughout the country in order to save more endangered wildlife”, said Mr.Lam Le Xuan, Manager of CCWRS.



Crocodile rescued for the first time.

This Siamese Crocodile measures 2m length and weighs roughly 30kg is rescued for the first time from Hoang Phap Pagoda, Hoc Mon District, HCMC this March. Two years ago, a local person living in District 7, HCMC bought this crocodile in Dong Thap province and kept it at home. She decided to donate the crocodile to the Hoang Phap Pagoda for "good-luck releasing". After a discussion with Ho Chi Minh City Forest Protection Department, Hoang Phap Pagoda decided to hand over this crocodile to CCWRS.

Siamese Crocodiles are the world's fourth most endangered crocodilian species and are classified as "critically endangered". They are also listed in the Vietnams' Red Book. Although Siamese Crocodiles have been raised successfully in several farms throughout Vietnam, it's only found in one location in the wild, Cat Tien National Park.

WAR does not encourage the purchasing of endangered wildlife for good-luck releasing, or even to donate to any rescue station.

Buying endangered wildlife, for any purposes will create stronger demand for illegal wildlife products and thus pushing these animals to the brink of extinction.



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Special update from Cu Chi WRS

You may remember from our last newsletter that three Oriental Small-clawed Otter (*Aonyx cinerea*) were born at the Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station in November 2011.

We would like everyone to know that the endangered otters are doing extremely well and growing up exceptionally quickly and are very playful.

You can do something amazing: sponsor an otter to help save this playful friendly mammal.



©WAR/dohuyen

Hon Me Wildlife Rescue Station

In this quarter, Hon Me Wildlife Rescue Station continues to have its facility improved and be ready to receive different species for rehabilitation. The water supply system of Hon Me WRS has just been upgraded to ensure fresh water resource in dry season for more rescued animals. An extra building for staff was also constructed for better human resources in taking care of the rescued wildlife.

Currently, the Station has rescued 20 Moon Bear and Sun Bear, four Loris, ten Gibbons, five fresh water turtles and tortoises, and one macaque. All are endangered species. Most of them were transferred from Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station and Cat Tien Bear and Wild Cat Rescue Station.



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Cat Tien Bear and Wild Cat Rescue Station

Visit Cat Tien Bear and Wild Cat Rescue Station

Visiting Cat Tien Bear and Wild Cat Rescue Station today, you will have opportunity to see 28 Moon Bears and 7 Sun Bears climbing trees and enjoying their new lives in the semi-wild area of about 1ha.

You can also join our staff prepare food and enrichment for the bears. In some special cases, you can also help us upgrade the bear facilities and implement other daily tasks at the Station.

In addition, you might see a female leopard stretching its gorgeous body on a giant tree or walking quietly through the grass within her captive facility. You will also see three peacocks dancing in their house or the two Siamese Crocodiles sun bathing at the Station.

You are welcome to visit us any day of the week from 8AM to 4PM.

Please contact our Cat Tien Bear and Wild Cat Rescue Station Manager, Mr. Nguyen Van Cuong at cuong.nv@wildlifeatrisk.org, or cuongtct3@gmail.com Mobile: 0973125787.

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Rescue 7 Moon Bears

28th February - Seven Moon Bears weighing from 150kg to 300kg were transferred to Cat Tien Bear and Wild Cat Rescue Station.

These moon bears had been kept for a long time since they were cubs and weighed only 3-4kg. The owner no longer wanted them and handed it to Dong Nai Provincial Forest Protection Department before it is transferred by WAR staff to Cat Tien Bear and Wild Cat Rescue Station.

These bears are now receiving the proper care they deserve and we hope that they will soon be playing with other bears in their new home.



©WAR/ Simon Faithfull



More than 12,000 students and teachers visit SOS Travelling Exhibition

Ho Chi Minh City, 31th March 2012 – More than 12,000 students and teachers from 31 secondary schools in Ho Chi Minh City participated in the “SOS Travelling Exhibition – Education on wildlife consumption” that was launched in the beginning of December 2011 by WAR, in cooperation with the HCMC Department of Education and Training and HCMC Forest Protection Department.

With the slogan, “Say No to illegal wildlife products”, the SOS travelling exhibition educates the students about the illegal wildlife consumption throughout Vietnam. The students are able to watch interesting video clips about wildlife product consumption, touch and interact with the exhibits, listen to endangered wildlife calls, and participate in exciting games to win gifts from WAR.

“I promise that I will not use illegal wildlife products in order to conserve our precious wildlife. I wish that the SOS travelling exhibition would travel to more secondary schools so that many children like me could visit this interesting and impressive exhibition”, said Hoang Long, a 13 year old boy from Huynh Khuong Ninh Secondary School, District 1.

After being successfully operated in District 1, Phu Nhuan and Binh Thanh District, currently the SOS travelling exhibition is now being operated in secondary schools throughout District 3, HCMC.

WAR would like to thank the organisations and individuals who have sponsored the SOS Travelling Exhibition. WAR is currently looking for further support in order to travel to other secondary schools in Ho Chi Minh City.

If you would like to support this exhibition, please contact Ms.Huyen Do Thi Thanh – Wildlife Education Manager at Huyen.dtt@wildlifeatrisk.org.



The Arboretum of Mendel contest finds its champions



Ho Chi Minh City, 30th March 2012 – The final round of the Arboretum of Mendel contest was organised successfully. The five young and talented students from class 09CS, Faculty of Biology, University of Sciences rose over the 1600 candidates of the contest to win the 1st prize and become the new champions of the contest.

The Arboretum of Mendel Contest, year 2012 is an academic contest that provides a playground for any high school and university student who are interested in studying biology. This contest is organised annually by the Faculty of Biology – Ho Chi Minh City University of Sciences – Vietnam National University. This year, the contest was attended by more than 1600 candidates of 323 teams from 19 universities and high schools in Ho Chi Minh City. This year WAR is one of the key sponsors of this contest.



The contest includes four rounds and tackles a vast knowledge in biology field. In this final round, the four teams compete against each other on a big stage and were judged by a judge board including biology experts and professors in related aspects. Also attend the final round were more than 500 students, professors and donors.

Prior to the final round, the four teams visited Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station in one day to learn about Viet Nam wildlife, the situation of illegal wildlife trade and the actions that students should take to conserve the unique wildlife. The candidates also joined WAR staff prepare food and feed the wildlife, and clean wildlife cages. It's a practical experience for the candidates in helping endangered wildlife at Cu Chi WRS.

On this occasion, WAR also awarded three scholarships to three biology students who achieve good study results and be enthusiastic in wildlife conservation activities.

British International School goes green

WAR has been offering technical support to Year 4 students of the British International School (AP1 campus) in designing and making a "community eco-garden" that incorporates a pond, native plants and vegetables. This garden makes use of recycled materials that the students could find around their campus, such as old car tires which is re-painted and now act as planters for growing potatoes, onions and garlic.

The aim of this project is to raise awareness and appreciation of where your food comes from, to eliminate unwanted waste and most of all to re-use and recycle materials.

Year 4 student Maika Pederson said that *"I think the garden will make the school more environmental friendly and a better place to be. It gives people somewhere green to go at break times"*.



This quarter, WAR continues to receive precious supports from companies, organisations, international schools and individuals. We would like to express our sincere thanks for your kind donation and dedication to Saving Vietnam's Endangered Wildlife – your help does make a difference.

International students help Vietnam Wildlife

Students from the International School of Ho Chi Minh City (ISHCMC) have set up an environmental group called "Wildlife At Risk" to discuss about Vietnam's ecosystems and amazing wildlife. This year, the WAR group led by senior students, Seth and Amy have actively raised more than 1000\$ for WAR's work and are looking forward to sponsoring a bear at Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station. Their fundraising activities included cake bake days, fancy dress days or non-uniform days and also getting their own back on the teachers with water based activities.

Foreign volunteers help Vietnam's wildlife

In the past three months, 14 foreign volunteers from Poland, USA, UK, Australia and Singapore came to support endangered wildlife at the Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station. All of them were very happy to have an opportunity to help wildlife and to work with our friendly staff in daily tasks at the Station. They all wish to come back and provide further supports to the station in the future.

Group M staff help save Vietnam's Endangered Wildlife

24th February 2012 – More than 70 staff and CEO of Group M – a media investment company based in Ho Chi Minh City visited Cat Tien Bear and Wild Cat Rescue Station. They spent one day to assist WAR's staff in daily work at the Center and donated materials to upgrade the bear's enclosures.

"Every year Group M supports local charities by doing practical hands on work and also financially supports these charities. This year we choose to support WAR and Cat Tien Bear and Wild Cat Rescue Station because we all feel WAR's work is fantastic and we all need to play our part in Saving Vietnam's Endangered Wildlife", said Tim Scott-Hunter, Group M CEO.

Tim went on to explain that many of his colleagues had never heard of WAR or visited Cat Tien National Park, but after seeing the work WAR is doing, they want to become more involved in order to stop the terrible practice of bear bile farming.



Issue Bear stamps and Bear postcards

1st April 2012 - A set of four stamps covering endangered bears including Moon Bear (*Ursus thibetanus*) and Sun Bear (*Ursus malayanus*) has just been issued by the Department of Post and Telecommunications – Ministry of Information and Communications under the technical support of WAR. The stamps provide an opportunity for the public to learn about this endangered species and thus promoting bear and endangered wildlife conservation. You can get these stamps at any post office in Vietnam.

On this occasion, a set of six postcards on Moon Bear and Sun Bear is also published by WAR. Please contact WAR for these postcards.



Posters on Tiger and Elephant conservation



January 2012- WAR cooperated with CITES (Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species) agency in South Vietnam to produce two posters on illegal wildlife trade.

The posters tell sad stories of the elephants and the tiger. These two species are facing extinction in the next decade. The posters call people to act immediately to save the two species and the wildlife before it's too late.

The posters were distributed widely to all forest protection bodies throughout Vietnam, and 40 secondary schools in Ho Chi Minh City, together with WAR's SOS travelling exhibition.

This **Moon Bear** with one lost paw was rescued last February at Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Station from a local person in Binh Duong province. This paw might be lost due to illegal trap in the forest, or being removed while capturing for medicinal purposes. Many people believe that alcoholic drink that is made from bear paw is good for health. However, there is no scientific proof for this effect.

Moon bears are being pushed to the brink of extinction due to illegal capture for their bile, gall bladders and habitat lost. If you stop using bear bile or any bear product, you are saving our endangered bears.

Correction

In Wildlife Zoom section of the What's Up-Issues 16 in Dec 2011, the discovery year of the Rhino is 1988, not 1998. We are apology for this typing mistake.

