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PROJECT SNAPSHOT

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DEMONSTRATING THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF A FOREST ZONE BY USING CAMERA TRAPS



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Skilled community research rangers deploy camera traps along known animal traps

Aided by the USAID Supporting Forests and Biodiversity project, WWF-Cambodia assists the Forest Administration to protect Mondulkiri Protected Forest by providing state of the art camera traps, utilized to conduct surveys.

The 3,729 square kilometer Mondulkiri Protected Forest (MPF) maintains connectivity of the Eastern Plains Landscape, one of the largest extents of lowland forest in Southeast Asia. MPF is a globally significant protected area and is home to several threatened species.

This fragile eco-system is under threay from a proposed Vietnam border checkpoint and road that would pass trough 19 kilometers of MPF's Special Ecosystem Zone. This road will come to within 2 kilometers of MPF's Core Zone. To assist the Forest Administration to demonstrate the significance of wildlife and biodiversity in the area, WWF-Cambodia conducted an intensive survey.

To assist WWF-Cambodia's survey, the USAID Supporting Forests and Biodiversity project, implemented by Winrock International, provided more than 83 camera traps. These camera traps were deployed at 1 to 2 kilometer intervals for at least one month, to update knowledge on a wide array of species in the area.

“Previous surveys have confirmed the global significance of the Special Ecosystem and Core Zones. These zones contain threatened species such as the Giant ibis, Cambodia’s national bird, Asian elephants, leopards, and the world’s largest population of Banteng,” said Rachel Crouthers, WWF Biodiversity Monitoring Technical Advisor. “The surveys conducted by the FA and WWF have indicated that the Banteng population is currently stable.” Both WWF and FA are concerned that a new road could impact animal populations.



A happy elephant family filmed by a silent and well-hidden camera trap

WWF is currently analyzing the photographic data from a 2,837 nights of camera trapping. Preliminary results indicate that 1,097 images captured wildlife. These images reveal that at least 10 mammal species, including the endangered Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*), banteng (*Bos javanicus*) and peafowl (*Pavo munticus*), as well as other globally-threatened species, such as leopards and jungle cats, inhabit these two important zones.

WWF is currently preparing a summary report and map that will be provided to government agencies to assist them with future forest landscape management decisions. “Without the gift of these camera traps from USAID, we would never have been able to gain an accurate understanding of species present and identify the threats to the wildlife populations within this area. We are very grateful for the assistance of USAID to better manage our forest”, said Prum Sovanna, Deputy Chief of MPF Administration Cantonment.

	<p>Why we are here To stop the degradation of the planet’s natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.</p> <hr/> <p>panda.org</p>
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