



WWF

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SAFEGUARDING THE ANNAMITES: THE THREATENED JEWEL OF INDOCHINESE BIODIVERSITY

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The rugged Annamite Mountains stretch along the Vietnam and Laos border and shelter some of the planet's most spectacular, mysterious, and highly threatened biodiversity. As a glacial refugia the forests covering the valleys and mountaintops of the Annamites acted as an evolutionary laboratory, creating a myriad of unique life forms and spectacular landscapes.

Prime among them is the Saola – an ancestral species of wild cattle whose majestic horns have earned it the nick-name **The Unicorn of Asia**. Unknown to science until 1992 the species' description, from horns found in ethnic villagers' houses in a remote corner of Vietnam, was the last great zoological discovery of the 20th century. Amazingly at least three other species of large mammals, including a striped rabbit and a giant barking deer, were also described from the Annamite Mountains during the 1990s. In recent times no other place on earth has produced so many new species of large mammals.

However the biodiversity of the Annamites is at a tipping point. Increasing demand for wild meat from the growing urban middle classes in Vietnam and China has disrupted the natural balance and thousands of years of sustainable hunting by ethnic tribes. Intensive snaring for the restaurant trade, facilitated by easier access to remote mountain forests, is wiping out entire communities of Annamite mammals. Tragically Saola, and other endemic



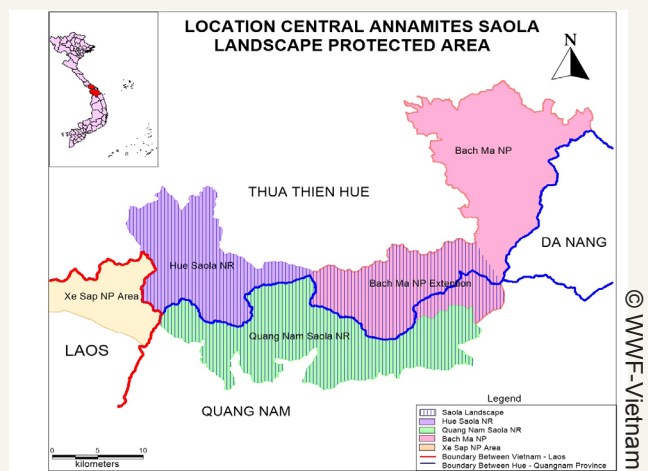
A baby saola, an endemic species of the Annamites

species of the Annamites, are not targets for hunting; they are simply caught as by-catch from snares set for more widespread species such as wild pig. However, without action indiscriminate snaring will erase the millions of years of evolution which have lead to unique species such as Saola, Annamite striped rabbit and crested argus – a spectacular terrestrial pheasant whose males dance to attract mates.

THE WWF APPROACH

In two protected areas in the central Annamites, Hue and Quang Nam Saola Nature Reserves, WWF-Vietnam is supporting an innovative approach to the problem of snaring through the Carbon and Biodiversity (CarBi) Project, creating a conservation economy lead by locally employed Forest Guards. Working with the Vietnamese government, but under the supervision of WWF CarBi project managers, 40 local villagers are employed to patrol the rugged forests and mountains to remove the snares which are killing Saola. Saving Saola lives is now also

creating opportunities for local communities to enhance their own livelihoods.



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The results have been spectacular. Since the start of CarBi, up to June 2013, 2,656 patrol days removed 28,419 snares and destroyed 577 illegal hunting/logging camps. More than 28,000 fewer chances for Saola to go extinct, and almost 16,000 days of providing several families with an additional livelihood opportunity.

Already we are seeing signs of biodiversity recovery with increased sightings of threatened species including the beautiful, yet critically endangered, grey-shanked douc monkey. Populations of key species are being robustly monitored through surveys which use newly developed methodologies, at the cutting edge of science, including sampling of mammal's DNA fingerprints from the blood inside the crops of leeches... **watch this space!**

THE NEED

Despite the observable progress made through the boots-on-the-ground law enforcement approach of the Forest Guards, there remains a short-term gap in funding for supporting these passionate defenders of forests. The monthly costs of one Forest Guard team, including salaries, equipment, training, operational costs, insurance and government support, is around 140,000 USD per year. To maintain the current momentum of high impact law enforcement, Thua Thien Hue and Quang Nam Saola Nature Reserve need at least one team each.

LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY



WWF Vietnam's CarBi vision is: The biodiversity rich central Annamite mountain area and its high levels of endemism, is well conserved with healthy ecosystem services supporting sustainable livelihoods for local communities, with high levels of resilience and integrity of forests to successfully facilitate climate change mitigation and adaptation for the well being of current and future generations.

The Forest Guards, although essential for safeguarding biodiversity, are only a component of the conservation work WWF-Vietnam is leading across the Central Annamite Landscape. Other activities, necessary for the long-term sustainability of biodiversity protection across the landscape:

- Community outreach and education awareness across schools and in local communities to ferment behavioral change and further strengthen the conservation economy.
- Enriching government capacity in protected area management and creating career opportunities beyond forest guards within both WWF and the local government.
- Leading forest restoration and support for sustainable NTFP harvesting and linking producers with green markets.
- Piloting community based Payment for Ecosystem Services models in partnership with

the Vietnam government through promoting watershed conservation and investment back into protected area management and law enforcement.



By creating livelihood resilience and building a conservation economy we are also reaching for a brighter future for Annamite biodiversity. Your support will make this possible.