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## SURVEY FINDS REVOKED ECONOMIC LAND CONCESSIONS STILL PROVIDING CRITICAL HABITAT TO ENDANGERED SPECIES



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*To prepare for the survey, participants received training at Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Center on how to identify wildlife by examining animal tracks and waste.*

**Aided by the USAID Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project, WWF-Cambodia assisted the Cambodian government to conduct a survey to assess critical biodiversity in land formerly registered as an economic land concession.**

The 2,225 square kilometer Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary (PPWS), located in Monduliri Province's Eastern Plains Landscape, is one of the largest extents of lowland forest in Southeast Asia. This unique forest landscape provides critical resources and important habitat to support 18 endangered and critically-endangered wildlife species.

Within PPWS there are many Economic Land Concessions (ELC), with most located along the Vietnamese border. In the latter part of 2014, the Ministry of Environment (MoE) revoked the status of two ELCs in the southwestern section of PPWS. This revocation represents a significant success for Cambodia's forest and biodiversity conservation.

The forests formerly listed as ELCs had never previously undergone biodiversity assessments, so it was difficult to determine if any deterioration in forest quality occurred. In 2015, the USAID *Supporting Forests and Biodiversity* (SFB) Project implemented by Winrock International, through partner WWF-Cambodia, conducted an assessment of the two revoked ELC forests.

*"To prepare for the assessments and to ensure we collected essential and high quality data, in July 2015, 22 community researchers and 6 government officers participated in a wildlife identification workshop at Phnom Tamao Zoological Park and Wildlife Rescue Center." stated Rachel Crouthers, WWF Biodiversity Monitoring Technical Advisor. "We learned how to identify indirect signs of wildlife, such as footprints, to assist us to record wildlife and other biodiversity, especially for the rare and elusive species," she added.*



The positive findings concluded that the two former ELC forests are still very healthy and remain a haven to Banteng, Eld’s deer, Sambar, Black-shanked douc, Leopard and Giant ibis. *“In the past, we could record a wide array of wildlife using well-hidden camera traps, but it has become difficult to obtain photos in many areas due to increased human activities. Using camera traps often takes several months to gather and collate the data. By funding this research, USAID is helping Cambodia record and preserve wildlife for future generations,”* said Mr. Mai Samorn, a participating government officer working at the Ministry of Environment.

*“This USAID-funded survey will help us make important forest management decisions and help us conserve Cambodia’s globally threatened species,”* added Mr. Samorn.

	<p><b>Why we are here</b> 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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