



# the WWF-Cambodia Newsletter

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WWF, the global conservation organization

## Country Director's notes



Dear Friends,

In the year 2009, I am very pleased to report that WWF-Cambodia achieved most of its conservation goals and targets as stipulated in the Greater Mekong Conservation Plan and Ecoregion Action Plans for the Lower Mekong Dry Forests Ecoregion and the Mekong Ecoregion. Our success is due to our dedicated staff and the regional team who put their heart and soul into conservation activities and worked extremely hard to produce these outstanding conservation achievements

for the WWF-Cambodia Programme. Also, I would like to thank our partners, both government and non-government, for their close collaboration to achieve one common goal - the conservation of Cambodia's biodiversity and sustainable development for her people. Last but not least, thanks to all the donors for their strong financial support which enabled WWF-Cambodia to implement its conservation mission in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Over the past year, I have also observed very positive changes within the Greater Mekong Programme; I have called it 'the year of building one team, one dream'. This past year all four country programme offices of WWF Greater Mekong Programme worked together on integrated strategies for landscape and riverscape conservation. This integration and collaboration strengthened our conservation work in Cambodia and enabled us to address ambitious regional issues such as wildlife trade, large-scale infrastructure development, and biological footprints.

WWF-Cambodia enjoys strong support from the WWF Network. The Greater Mekong is a priority place for WWF because of its extraordinary biodiversity and the presence of endangered species like Indochinese tiger, Asian elephant, and Irrawaddy dolphin. WWF recently announced that 163 new species were discovered in the Greater Mekong in 2008. Strong support from the WWF Network was a key to our success this past year.

Although much has been accomplished in the last year, great challenges lie ahead. For 2010, we will continue to strengthen our existing programmes and current partnerships. We will also implement new initiatives that address climate change by conserving forests (REDD) and the promotion of alternative energy sources such as biogas. We also will form new partnership with government agencies, the private sector, and development partners to maximize conservation outcomes that benefit local people and protect biodiversity.

Indeed, this is what makes WWF so effective – our ability to engage in high level policy work while at the same time making a difference on the ground – for ecosystems, for wildlife, and for the people of Cambodia.

Thank you for your continuing support and encouragement.

Teak SENG  
Country Director,  
WWF-Cambodia

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WWF-Cambodia Programme is part of the WWF Greater Mekong Programme, which works on environmental and conservation issues across Thailand, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam. Cambodia is regionally and internationally important for the conservation of terrestrial and aquatic habitats and threatened species of wildlife. Tiger, Asian elephant, wild cattle, large waterbirds, and other rare species of plants and animals are part of Cambodia's natural heritage.

In Cambodia, WWF focuses on two priority ecoregions: dry forests and Mekong River. WWF-Cambodia also works on development of a sustainable rattan industry through engaging rattan actors in sustainable rattan production, which contributes to the protection of forest ecosystems.

WWF-Cambodia's mission is to ensure that there will be strong participation and support from all people to conserve the country's rich biological diversity. Through the encouragement of sustainable use of natural resources, WWF-Cambodia will promote new opportunities for the benefit of all people, enhancing local livelihoods and contributing to poverty reduction in the Kingdom of Cambodia.

## Loggers could risk up to five years in jail

In late November, six men from across the north-eastern border were arrested for forest logging inside Mondulkiri Protected Forest (MPF), an important protected area on the border with Vietnam and under the management of Forestry Administration (FA) and WWF. The protected area's enforcement team, comprised of FA, border police staff, local rangers, and assisted by two domestic elephants, confiscated approximately 23 m<sup>3</sup> of timber, a tractor and a chainsaw.

Intensive investigations and patrols carried out by the enforcement team have increased awareness of what happens inside and around the protected area and have effectively reduced forest and wildlife crimes. In the current case, for example, the team had been aware of previous activities of this group of loggers in the border area. But difficult access ways to this remote area raised a big challenge for the team to perform a timely crack-down operation. This time, they were well prepared and effectively able to take control of the situation when the six loggers were trying to take the timber out of the forest to the Vietnamese side.



Behind the loggers is the confiscated tractor.

Following the arrest, the case was reported to the provincial authority who transmitted it further to the provincial court. At the moment, the loggers await to be sentenced. According to the Forestry Law, these loggers could spend up to five years in prison or be convicted to pay fine of up to 100 million riels for this kind of illegal act prohibited by the Law.



Some of the timbers found at the logging site.

Opportunistic forest and wildlife abuses can always happen any second the chance arises, especially in remote areas where ranger outposts are not present. This current arrest proves that the enforcement effort is fully operational and effective.

## First project for wild elephant DNA analysis

To estimate the total population of Asian elephant in the dry forest plains of north-eastern Cambodia, WWF research team recently finished collecting 300 samples of the animal's dung for genetic (DNA) analysis. All samples have been packaged and are stored in proper condition awaiting permission from relevant government authorities to be shipped to India where analysis will be conducted at the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research. The result of the DNA analysis is expected after 6-8 months time.

The WWF elephant survey, which began in December 2008, also focuses on studies of situation, movements, and distribution of the animal throughout two important protected areas, namely Mondulkiri Protected Forest and Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary.



Until now, there is evidence from camera-trap photos that a healthy population is beginning to thrive in the landscape. The current survey project also aims to promote the importance of Cambodia's Eastern Plains Landscape in supporting a significant population of this globally endangered species.

## Staff's corner of expression

What was the year 2009 like for you? What plans do you have for 2010? What is the most important wish in general or for your family? These are the questions that were asked by the communications team to selected WWF staff. Read their answers below.



**Mrs Amy Maling, Community Extension Technical Advisor, Eastern Plains Landscape project (EPLP)**

The year 2009 was a good year for me because the communities we worked with really supported our environment work, and their involvement increased a lot. I was happy to see that WWF local staffs were willing to work with the communities with heart and strong commitment.

2010 is an uncertain year for me because it is the last year of my contract with WWF Cambodia. I really love my work here and am worried about leaving because local staffs still need some guidance in the broader perspective.

Wish: May the environment in Cambodia and the world be supported louder and stronger, especially with more people caring about a green world.



**Mr Ly Saveth, IT Officer**

2009 was a good year because I achieved many goals in terms of reaching sustainable family economics.

In 2010, I will find effective methods to educate my child, increase family happiness, love wife and children, and to take more leisure time. At the workplace, I will try my best to make organizational work become more standardized and improve server usability.

Wish: The most important happiness is my family life, loving wife and children, having no domestic violence, and thinking of family as the top priority.



**Mr Khorn Sophoeun, Community Extension Team Leader, EPLP**

2009 was a successful year for me because the community's capacity improved a lot. Community members learned to face authorities to protect their land, and communities were motivated to learn more. Before, I had to go early and collect them one by one for our meetings, but now they already wait for us when we arrive.

For 2010, I will try to finish the community setup and help communities get support from government and forestry administrations. Personally, I am getting married on 26<sup>th</sup> of February in Phnom Penh, and I also plan to improve my communication and leadership skills.

I wish to become a good husband; I have already quit cigarettes and reduced drinking alcohol, and I now plan to buy a parcel of land in Phnom Penh to build a house for our future family. **Read more on the next pages...**



## Cooperation strengthened for community fishery in Mondulkiri

In October, WWF's Community Fishery Project organized a workshop with local fishermen from the Sen Kangha Community Fishery along the Srepok River in northeast Cambodia and with provincial, district and commune authorities to promote the existence of the Sen Kangha Community Fishery as a legally established entity under Cambodian fishery law. WWF had called for this meeting because there had been illegal fishing in the conservation zones of the Community Fishery, and it was important that all stakeholders understand the conservation and enforcement provisions of the law. Stakeholders gained awareness about the importance of community fisheries and the benefits to local communities. As a result of the meeting, all stakeholders agreed to cooperatively manage fisheries in the Srepok River for the long term benefit of local communities.

H.E. Svay Sam Eang, Deputy Governor of Mondulkiri, who also attended the meeting, strongly supported the approach of establishing community fisheries to sustain fishery resources. The workshop also provided an opportunity to clarify which types of fishing gear permitted by law.

In conjunction with its government partners, WWF began working in 2007 to establish community fisheries in two villages along the Srepok River, Koh



At the workshop, Mr Moul Phath, WWF representative, left, and H.E. Svay Sam Eang, Deputy Governor of Mondulkiri, middle.

Myeul Leu and Koh Myeul Krom, to ease the pressure on natural fish stocks and to help sustain this resource for the benefit of local people.

Community fisheries involve setting-up a voluntary group of community members who cooperate in order to conserve and sustainably manage fishery resources. Community fisheries protect the access rights of community members to the resource, while at the same time introducing a program of sustainable management to ensure the long term survival of fish stocks.

Indigenous people living in Koh Myeul Leu and Koh Myeul Krom villages have for many years lived in harmony with their environment relying on rice farming, forest products and family scale fishing to survive. Community fisheries are one approach to ensure their long term subsistence.

## WWF's research team on the look-out for Siamese Crocodile

In January of the current dry season, a team of WWF rangers and local fishermen in collaboration with conservation specialists have started a four-month survey of the critically endangered (IUCN red list) Siamese crocodile (*Crocodylus siamensis*) along the Srepok River within the Mondulkiri Protected Forest, a protected area in North-eastern Cambodia jointly managed by the Government's Forestry Administration and WWF. Photos from camera-traps had previously documented this species in the area, but more information is needed for efficient conservation of this formerly widespread but now quickly declining reptile.

Siamese crocodiles are known to prefer deep river pools, and the research team has targeted nine such pools along the



Srepok for their study. Results from the first two pools have been encouraging with 15 to 20 crocodiles observed.

The study will help researchers not only gain critical data on numbers of the crocodile population, but also identify core areas for future protection of this species from hunting and disturbance.

## Staff's corner of expression

**Mrs Tat Sophorn, Senior Officer Finance**

The year 2009 was very smooth because more staff understood better about finance processes.

In 2010, I plan to visit the sites in Kratie and Mondulkiri more often to train the local finance teams on finance processes and guidelines.

Wish: For my family, I plan to bring my son to Phnom Penh to live with me and send him to kindergarten school.



**Ms Lun Somphos, Eco-club Team Leader, EPLP**

2009 was a most improving year for me because I learned new skills while setting-up the Eco-club. Eco-club students were very interested to learn about environment protection, mask making, script writing, and role play acting. They even performed in public.

For 2010, I plan to add two more schools to the Eco-club activities and will cooperate with ICC to integrate environmental subjects into literature training.

I wish to look for a good boy friend in 2010.



**Mr Phan Channa, Research Officer, EPLP**

2009 was a very good year for me because I got a lot of data for my research such as elephant dung collection, wildlife photos from camera-trapping, and my salary was also increased. Another good news was that numbers of gaur, banteng, leopard, and elephant have increased in 2009.

For 2010, I plan to do a tiger population survey in Mondulkiri Protected Forest and to continue my camera-trap surveys. I also plan to train elephants to find tiger scat instead of using dogs. For my personal plans, I want to improve my English to communicate more easily and to later consider a PhD in environmental conservation.

Wish: For my love life, I am going to get the answer from a woman who I fell in love with whether she will accept me as her life partner or not. She is studying abroad now but will come back in May 2010.



**Mrs Bun Thidamoneth, Receptionist**

Compared to the previous year, I think my work and responsibilities have much improved: In 2008, I just responded to phone calls, connected these calls to different departments of WWF, and did some work on the desk. But in 2009, I have experienced many new administrative tasks, such as assisting in the arrangement of workshop facility, accommodation and traveling for staff and visitors.

In 2010, I plan to prepare my parcel of land for farming and crop growing, so that I can work on it when I am old.

Wish: The greatest happiness for my family is to have enough nutrition and good health.

# Notes from the Field

## Environmental education can be entertaining

In October, WWF's communications unit conducted a two-day drama play training for 28 school students of Sre Huy commune in Koh NgeK district of MondulKiri province. The objective was to teach the students the ability to express ideas about their environment and other conservation issues using drama play as a tool. The course was delivered by Mrs Kim Thida Kallianey, communications officer, and was part of a week-long eco-club workshop organised by the Eastern Plains Landscape Project (EPLP). This workshop covered lectures on the environment and nature, poster painting, animal mask making, and bird sighting.

To warm-up the reflection of the students aged from 12 to 17, Mrs Kallianey introduced them to the definition of drama play and important principles for developing stories. Since this subject is new, it took some time for students to understand the concept of the play and how it works. Mrs Kallianey patiently and carefully explained all related aspects and provided many examples to help illustrate the concept.

The course involved the students in gathering ideas and information about their surrounding environment and nature in order to turn these into drama scenarios where good conservation messages are included and many characters are involved. While the

students could successfully collect and write many good stories, the most difficult part was when they learned about the characters of their stories such as tiger, wild rabbit, banteng, hunters, or forest spirits.

"In drama play, good acting requires full understanding about the profile of the character; the students had to work on understanding each character's behaviour, emotion, attitude, ability, etc and on applying these characteristics when they performed their acting," Mrs Kallianey said. "And they did a good job," she added.

One of the students, Chorn Srey Nuth, says that she truly enjoyed the course because she learned new things that she had never done before. She concluded that acting brought her a lot of fun and gave her and her colleagues the ability to communicate to other people about the protection of wild animals and forest.

The workshop ended with magnificent spectacles of drama play and the winning performance was selected to bring their drama play up on stage at the ecotourism community homestay inauguration held in November and attended by government officials, provincial



**Mrs Kim Thida Kallianey, in black t-shirt, pays attention to the presentation by students about their individual drama characters.**

authorities, journalists, representatives from private sector and WWF.

Initiated in early 2009, the EPLP's eco-club is a community awareness approach, which aims at educating school children living in and around MondulKiri Protected Forest about the natural environment including forest and wildlife, and the importance to protect these for the benefit of local community's livelihoods and conservation of Cambodia's unique dry forests landscape.

Until now, the project is working with three village schools in Sre Huy, Koh Myeul and O Te, but is set to expand in the coming year.

## Staff's corner of expression



**Mr So Socheat, Community Fisheries Officer**

In 2009, I successfully built capacities of local people, improved living standards of fishery communities, and increased local awareness of fishery and environmental law. I also faced difficulties such as unsafe transportation because target sites are far and difficult to access.

In 2010, I plan to establish community fisheries in more areas, to buy a boat for each target site, to buy motorbikes for project staff in the province, and to improve staff internal capacities.

Wish: Happiness for my family is to separate time between work and family and especially to support family health care.



**Mr Phann Phakta, Admin and Finance Manager**

In 2009, my work advanced gradually and I was sometimes very busy with it. For my family, I tried to balance the time between work and my family members.

In 2010, I plan to make the organization's work much better than previous year, especially to make it move forward and to have more funds in order to avoid staff resignations.

Wish: The great things for my family are increasing salary, good health, and harmony.



**Mrs Chan Neath, Cleaner**

2009 was a good year because my family's living standard has become better because of the income of my husband and me, and I tried hard to keep good hygiene at the workplace.

In 2010, I will try to learn English to communicate with foreigners who come to visit WWF-Cambodia. During Water Festival of next year, I will go to visit my grandmother in Kampot province with my family.

Wish: The happiness for my family is to stay together on holiday, especially to have the opportunity to go out with the family.



**Mr Gordon Congdon, Freshwater Manager**

There were big changes in my life in 2009 because me and my wife moved from the US to Cambodia to start a new job with WWF. I found it very interesting and challenging to live in a new place and culture with a different language.

In 2010, there is a lot of work to do on the Dolphin project, to protect biodiversity on the central section of the Mekong and to improve the trans-boundary conservation and fishery management. Also, my wife and I hope to become more proficient in Khmer.

I am expecting another grand child in the spring, and that is a very happy moment.



**Mr Kim Sangha, Policy Manager**

My first year with WWF was a good time because I learned new things and had opportunities to meet relevant government agencies to build good relationships with. But in my duties, I also faced challenges because it was difficult to engage the government's commitment for some policy goals.

In 2010, I will continue to determine workable goals relating to policy advocacy and will also strengthen cooperation with government and private sector to achieve long term goals.

Personally, I plan to help both my parents and parents-in-law with their livelihoods. And I will also assist my wife in finding a job.

Wish: The happiness for my family is to understand and trust each other.

**Continue reading this section on page 8.**



# Notes from the Field

## Photographing Leopard in the Cambodia dry forests becomes a reality

Encouraging results of a healthy Leopard population were obtained during the recent wildlife survey conducted in the middle of the rainy season of Jul-Sep in the Monduliri Protected Forest (MPF), a protected area in north-eastern Cambodia co-managed by the Forestry Administration (FA) and WWF. The preliminary analysis of 99 photographs of Leopard obtained during the survey suggests a result of 13 adults, among which three females and four males were identified.

The photographs were triggered by the animals themselves as they approached the camera-traps already set-up by the survey team, which is comprised of FA counterparts, community rangers, and WWF staff. The team set-up 100 camera-traps over a 150km<sup>2</sup> area within the Srepok Wilderness Area of MPF to estimate the population density using capture-mark-recapture method.

Dr Tom Gray, WWF's Biodiversity Monitoring Advisor, describes that it is one of the biggest camera-trap studies of its kind ever conducted in southeast Asia and that while studies elsewhere in the region generate less data, the current survey provides a wealth of information on the status, habitat preferences, and distribution of Leopard and other key species within the protected area.

"The results of the camera-trapping survey also confirm the presence in the area of the globally threatened species of Asian Elephant, Sun Bear, Dhole, Banteng, Gaur, Eld's Deer and Green Peafowl".

The survey team is now analysing the results in order to obtain a scientifically rigorous population estimate of Leopard as well as to measure the impact of conservation efforts in the whole Eastern Plains dry forest landscape.

The project team has been conducting a series of wildlife surveys since November 2008 when WWF acquired the new capacity of 160 camera-traps for



© Keo Sopheak / WWF  
**The protected area's enforcement team follows the signs of a truck inside the dry forests landscape.**



**Two leopard cubs in the dry forest landscape of eastern Cambodia.**

monitoring of large carnivores such as Tiger and Leopard as well as Asian Elephant in the entire Eastern Plains landscape.

Mr Craig Bruce, former Eastern Plains Landscape Project (EPLP) Manager, says that the same monitoring effort is devoted and continues in Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary (PPWS), another WWF-supported protected area within the landscape and under co-management with the Ministry of Environment. There, Leopard and Asian Elephant are also regularly captured on film.

"The Leopard is the commonest large predator and the presence of a healthy population of this species also explains the availability of prey in the landscape," he says, continuing that species such as Muntjac and Wild Pig are important prey for Leopard but are being hunted for meat and trade.

Regularly photographing wild animals with their cubs in this dry forests region suggests that they are in good health, losing fear from hunters, and are now reproducing.

The data of the landscape wildlife records will be used to promote ecotourism while the area starts to increasingly provide safety for animals to recover. The Cambodian government and WWF have opted for ecotourism as a financial strategy to co-finance the management of protected areas and provide incentives for landscape conservation.

### **Effective protected area management enables wildlife recovery**

WWF and its Government partners have been managing MPF and PPWS over a total area of 6,000km<sup>2</sup> for seven years now. The aim is to protect the forest

habitat and wild animals so that Cambodia's natural heritage is conserved for the next generations, while ensuring that the local communities living in the surrounding plains continue to benefit from conservation through promotion of improved livelihood opportunities.

The foundations for protected area management have been set up. Constructions of outposts and a headquarter, access ways, patrolling and enforcement systems, transportation and material supplies all help ensure that day-to-day on-ground activities are operated fully and effectively, and especially make sure that threats to wildlife and habitat are reduced.

"Illegal animal hunting and forest logging for precious timber have been and are still problems occurring in and around MPF as well as in other areas across the landscape, and our enforcement team is working to address these," says Mr Keo Sopheak, Senior Officer with EPLP.

Patrolling activities are a crucial part of protected area management carried out by WWF community rangers and the Government authorities on a regular basis. All direct sightings and spotted tracks of animals, as well as encountered illegal wildlife activities occurring inside and around protected areas are recorded in ranger's event books and documented in a database system managed by the project.

Mr Sopheak says the efforts of patrolling and law enforcement in the past years as well as increased community understanding about forest resource protection and grassroots participation in conservation have certainly reduced pressures on wildlife and brought stability to the protected landscape.

# Notes from the Field

## Community honey entrepreneurs from across Cambodia meet to explore national level cooperation

In December, community honey collectors and entrepreneurs from Mondulkiri, Ratanakiri, Koh Kong, Kratie, and Preah Vihear provinces attended a two-day meeting organized in Phnom Penh by the Non-timber Forest Products Exchange Programme for South and Southeast Asia (NTFP-EP) and WWF. The purpose was to explore the benefits and opportunities for establishing a national network of honey collectors and their NGO technical partners. A networking and marketing representative from Dian Niaga Jakarta\* was the main resource person at the event. The event also included a half-day program for honey collectors and their partners to interact with invited guests from government ministries and representatives of the private sector.

Ms Femy Pinto, Cambodia Facilitator of NTFP-EP, said during the meeting that the idea of establishing a Cambodian wild honey network had been proposed as a mechanism to help strengthen the bargaining power of honey collector groups, particularly in the national market.

"I am really happy to participate in this meeting because I can share knowledge and gain new experiences among participants," said Mr Pich Phony, Head of Prey Rodang Community Honey Group of Mondulkiri province.

"I am very interested in the idea of setting up a Cambodian honey network because it will help explore potential opportunities of sale in markets of Phnom Penh and other provinces for our honey product, thus we run no risk of competition," he added.

Currently, community-based honey enterprise initiatives are emerging and are being supported separately by different donors and NGOs. In the meantime, honey collectors have been voicing their fear of competition among community honey brands. However, some of these community-based initiatives have the same vision, which is to improve the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities while at the same time promoting the sustainable management and protection of the forests. In particular, these initiatives see the need to improve the quality standards of the honey collected and marketed by community-based honey groups. These groups' intention is to take their honey products preferably to markets outside of their own villages in



**The community honey collectors in Mondulkiri respect and follow the quality standards for processing: for example in this picture, wooden knife and gloves are used.**

order to earn a bigger profit margin from the sale of their products.

"Becoming connected with each other will provide them with the ability to seek assistance among themselves or from external parties such as government, NGOs and private sector. They can also seek legal recognition and protection for the forest areas from which they collect wild honey," Ms Femy said.

Community enterprises will benefit from having a network where mechanisms for information sharing and provision of technical assistance can be systematized.

"With the formation of a honey network, more honey collectors will be able to learn and understand about sustainable honey harvesting if they all become part of the same network. The quality of the honey products can also be better monitored through a network mechanism," said Mrs Amy Maling, WWF Advisor for the Community Extension Team, Eastern Plains Landscape project.

She continued that when more people know about sustainable honey collection, it means more areas of forest can be protected.

Mr It Bun, Head of Community Honey Enterprise in Preah Vihear province, asked for support from NGOs and government in an eventual establishment of the proposed honey network saying that the communities have very little knowledge and understanding about the subject and are not aware of any procedures.

"The technical partners of the communities who will be part of this honey network can all work together to assist the communities in the process of

setting up the network, as well as providing business and other technical advice, especially about sustainable honey harvesting and quality standards of wild honey products," Ms Femy said.

Based on the successful model of sustainable honey enterprise initiative in Mondulkiri supported by WWF and NTFP-EP, Mrs Amy said that WWF and partners are ready to support the honey network by providing technical inputs related to sustainable forest protection and education, livelihoods development, and sustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products such as wild honey.

The Centre d'Etude et de Développement Agricole Cambodgien (CEDAC), a long-standing sustainable agriculture NGO and an important buyer and distributor of honey products from Mondulkiri and Koh Kong, welcomed the setting up of a Cambodian wild honey network because it will help standardise Cambodian honey products and its quality.

The meeting went well. Participants exchanged experiences, they achieved a boost in their efforts to engage in more enterprising activities around wild honey collection, and they learned about the opportunities to improve and expand their livelihoods. All parties agreed to meet again in late January 2010 to discuss in more detail the requirements and procedures of network establishment. They also anticipated coming to a consensus about honey product standards. Unlike in other countries, Cambodia does not yet have generally accepted quality standards for Cambodian wild honey.

\* Dian Niaga Jakarta is a social enterprise established in 1991 in Indonesia, that has been instrumental in the establishment of the Indonesian Forest Honey Network, which has a membership of some 350 honey collectors from the Indonesian islands of Kalimantan, Sumbawa, Sumatra and Sulawesi.



# Notes from the Field

## Ecotourism and forest protection go side by side

Dressed-up in traditional costume, a group of the ethnic minority people called Phnong from Dei Ey in Mondulakiri province chanted in their mother tongue as they were drinking traditional rice wine to show respect to the spirits of the forest and the land. With pride, they cheered for the area's first community-run homestay, officially inaugurated in November to promote wildlife ecotourism in the dry forests of north-eastern Cambodia. Government authorities, representatives of the private sector, journalists, WWF staff, and local communities together formed an approximate total of 100 participants at the celebration that excited first of all the members of the community ecotourism group.

"The villagers are enthusiastic to become involved in this ecotourism project because it can help the community earn extra money to improve their living conditions," said Mr Dam Nyam, a local Phnong and Chief of the Dei Ey Community Ecotourism Group, continuing that his group is committed to properly run and manage the activities and services so that all members can receive the benefit for a long term.

At one particular part of the ceremony agenda, an entertaining role-play took the stage. A message about preserving wildlife and forest habitat through ecotourism was sent across to the audience as 12 eco-club students between 7-12 years old, with blue and pink outfits, turned themselves into wildlife, hunters, and tourists to present an incredible performance.

Mr Dam said the villagers and their children understand the importance of protecting their surrounding forests that has already for many generations provided them with the necessary goods for their everyday consumption.

"The forest is our life, and we must protect it so that it continues to provide our community with benefits that are sustainable, like the wildlife ecotourism



**Eco-tourists can enjoy such a beautiful forested landscape once they arrive in the dry forest plains of Mondulakiri's protected landscape. The semi-evergreen forest patches in the dry forests are critically important for maintaining the habitat mosaic. Semi-evergreen forest patches also provide sheltering habitat for large mammals.**

we are now involved in," he added.

When delivering his speech at the inauguration, His Excellency Svay Sam Eang, deputy-governor of Mondulakiri province, said that ecotourism is a strategy that helps reduce the community's dependence on forest-based livelihoods.

"The establishment of the community homestay project increases the understanding of local communities about the importance of ecotourism to their environment and livelihoods, and therefore promotes their participation in natural resource protection."

Addressing the audience at the same inauguration, Mr Men Phymean, Director of Wildlife and Biodiversity Department of Forestry Administration, emphasised the value of forest and wildlife in Mondulakiri in attracting tourists and the need to preserve these assets for the benefit of conservation and people's livelihoods.

He stressed that Mondulakiri's forest has high potential for wildlife ecotourism because of its beauty and diversity. It contains many forest types, such as dry forest, bamboo, evergreen and semi-evergreen forest. It is home to significant endangered wild animals such as Banteng, Gaur, Eld's Deer, Wild Elephant, Wild Water Buffalo, Siamese Crocodile, Primates, as well as diverse bird species.

The community homestay itself lies within Mondulakiri Protected Forest and is adjacent to Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary. This geographical

characteristic maximizes the chance for sighting wild animals and plants in both protected areas.

The community homestay is a pilot project involving 13 community members from Dei Ey of Chong Phang village and serves as a start to establish an ecotourism mosaic within the country's Eastern Plains dry forests landscape. This project will provide accommodation, traditional food, and a diversity of entertaining activities, including forest and elephant trekking, animal observation from hides, mountain biking, and gaining insight into local culture and traditions in nearby villages.

### **Protected area needs long term financial mechanism**

The WWF's Eastern Plains Landscape Project works with the Cambodian government on protecting two important protected areas - Mondulakiri Protected Forest and Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary - with a total area of 6,000km<sup>2</sup> and home to many endangered and globally significant wildlife species. The project's goal is to keep the last wilderness of Cambodia intact and connected, helping people protect their wildlife while sustaining their livelihoods.

Since 2003, the foundations for protected area management have been established. WWF and its supporters have been continuously providing funds and scientific expertise into the effective operation of conservation activities within the protected areas. However, in the long term, the future of Cambodia



**The house of the community homestay in the dry forests landscape.**

# Notes from the Field

## Ecotourism and forest protection... (continued)

protected areas depends on their ability to be financially self-sustaining.

Mr Seng Teak, Country Director of WWF Cambodia, says funds are needed for the management of the habitats of plant and animal species, as well as for ensuring the well-being of the communities living around the protected areas.

Population growth puts increased pressure on the natural resources adjacent to and within the protected areas. These natural resources support the livelihoods of local people and are also vital in maintaining the integrity of the protected areas.

"Community-based ecotourism is seen as a strategy to provide incentives for local communities to support conservation, and therefore help reduce pressure on natural resources," Mr Teak says.

In 2007, the Forestry Administration, provincial government, and WWF began a strategy to develop ecotourism projects as a financial contribution to support the protected areas' on-site management and to provide incentives for landscape conservation.

The aim is to co-finance protected area management and provide the local community with the opportunity to gain additional income.

The results of a provincial stakeholder workshop and a feasibility study on ecotourism done in 2007 have led to the selection of three target villages in and around Monduliri Protected Forest, namely Koh Myil Leu, Krangteh and the Dei Ey area of Chong Phang for developing ecotourism activities.

### Promoting community ownership in ecotourism

For ecotourism to be better perceived as a means of improving local livelihoods, an active participation of the community in the overall process of tourism development is required.

"While this is a WWF-supported project, it is very important for the long-term aim to promote community ownership in the development and management of ecotourism," says Ms Olga van den Pol, WWF's Ecotourism Team Leader.

The community's direct involvement in planning processes creates a sense of ownership which enables communities to retain control over the growth of tourism in their area. The community is therefore responsible for identifying members to represent its interests, especially when dealing with private tourism agents to establish agreements and guidelines prior to actual operations.



**Eco-tourists can gain insight into local tradition and culture of minority ethnic Phnong people such as traditional dancing.**

While tourism plans are proceeding, capacity building and training needs have been assessed in order to equip the community with skills needed to run the business by themselves when the right time comes. For the time being, the WWF ecotourism team is assisting the community ecotourism group in developing a business plan that respects the principles of environmentally-friendly tourism.

Ms Olga says the members of the ecotourism group have received training in guiding, hospitality, cooking and hygiene. Now, they are ready to welcome tourists to stay in the community homestay, and take them out to explore the surrounding forest.

## Staff's corner of expression



**Mr Ratanak, Rattan Project Manager**

In 2009, we improved community management in 20 villages by providing training on key topics like sustainable rattan management and rattan processing. We also successfully helped rattan entrepreneurs establish the first rattan association of Cambodia, increased community participation in forest resource protection through sustainable management of wild rattan, and organised study tours in and outside of the country as well as to rattan target sites in Kampot and Preah Sihanouk provinces.

In 2010, among other things, we plan to establish model rattan plots for community management and to assist the rattan association in developing a website. There is plan to introduce to community processors a model market for their products. Personally, I plan to visit Ratanakiri, Monduliri and Vietnam with my family.

The things that make me and my family happy are having enough time for each other, spending time for the work that I have always wanted; and that my family also supports.



**Mr Keavuth, GIS Manager**

In 2009, all things were good and I achieved many tasks. I prepared maps for projects in Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam and Laos, as well as developing maps of conservation and land use issues in Cambodia.

In 2010, I plan on mapping to compare forest monitoring from 2002 to 2009 and to do more work on the Eastern Plains landscape.

My best wish is to have a daughter in our family.



**Mr Sopheak, Senior Officer with Eastern Plains Landscape Project**

There was plenty of work in 2009 regarding team management, and we received good results in cracking down on forest logging, wildlife crimes and other illegal activities. However, we faced the issue of short staffing, especially skilled staffs. Thus, it consumed more time than it normally should and caused delays in our work.

In 2010, I will strengthen law enforcement; will work on reducing or stopping wildlife and forest crimes as well as other activities prohibited by the Forestry Law. I will also work on building capacity of staff related to patrol and enforcement.

I wish to spend enough time with my family.



**Mr Somany, Senior Officer with Cambodian Mekong Dolphin Conservation Project**

In 2009, we successfully conducted research on causes of dolphin mortality and increased community awareness about protection of dolphins and other Mekong plains and aquatic lives.

Major conservation actions for the recovery of dolphins in 2010 will include law enforcement, day and night time patrols, as well as continuing to conduct community education and awareness raising. Personally, I will pursue my master degree on natural resource management and spend time for family trips during Cambodia's public holidays.

The greatest things for me and my family are good health and balance between work and family.

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# Notes from the Field

## Rattan Association of Cambodia 'hit the road'

The newly elected chief of the Rattan Association of Cambodia, Mr Lip Cheang is excited over his new leadership role in the association. As one of its founders, and also owner of one of the important rattan enterprises in Cambodia, he is committed to successfully meet the goals of the association.

"I will devote my time and work hard with the other members for the successful operation of this rattan association," he said. "If the association runs smoothly and effectively toward its goal, it will be very advantageous as it will create more work opportunities, help reduce the country's poverty, maintain the sustainability of rattan resource in the forest, as well as eventually increase government's income via collection of tax from rattan product export," he added.

In late October, a meeting to elect the head of the association was organized in Phnom Penh with support from WWF and its partner Artisans Association of Cambodia (AAC). A few weeks before, the rattan association of Cambodia had been established with the goal to put in place and maintain a sustainable system of rattan production and supply.

The management of the association is working on planning necessary activities to be implemented during a six-month period. Important actions include legalising the newly formed association, working with the ministry of commerce to obtain licenses for small and medium enterprises members of the association, and establishing a rattan business plan.



**Mr Lip Cheang in the hot seat with a journalist from National Radio of Kampuchea after he was selected as Head of the Rattan Association.**

"WWF's rattan project, co-financed by EC and IKEA, and AAC will work with a business consultant to support the association in the development of its business plan," said Mr Ou Ratanak, WWF Rattan Project Manager. He continued that a good business plan for effective implementation should take into account some key elements including strategic marketing, market information,



**Here in this Rattan Factory 'Koy Meng', the biggest processing enterprise in Preah Sihanouk province, south-western Cambodia, 30 people are employed and the monthly revenue represents an approximate of US\$ 5,000 net. An average volume of sales of 210 units is being supplied to markets in Preah Sihanouk, Kampot and Siam Reap provinces, as well as in the Phnom Penh capital.**

forecast and analysis, capacity in production and supply, and management of workers.

According to Mr Ratanak, a series of visits is to be organised for members of the association to the homes of wild rattan in 20 villages supported by WWF in the provinces of Kampot, Preah Sihanouk, Koh Kong, Kampong Thom, and Preah Vihea. "The rattan entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to gain insight into wild rattan and the sustainable model of resource management already in place, while building up relationships with the communities in order to eventually establish a mechanism of supplying rattan for processing in factories," he said.

In the matter of relationship building, the association also serves as a link between rattan handicraft and furniture produced by the communities and the market in Phnom Penh, as well as in Siam Reap and Preah Sihanouk provinces.

"The association has plans to buy the community's semi-processed and processed products for further selling in Phnom Penh market," Mr Lip Cheang said. "This helps enlarge markets for the products by the communities and encourages them in processing work, while continuing to sustainably manage the resource in the forest," he added.

The association is also working with WWF and AAC to generate greater awareness among other groups in the rattan sector of the existence of the association and the benefits of becoming members. Mr Ratanak said one of the approaches would be for the association to seek an opportunity to sit down and discuss with the Government to establish a better

environment promoting the rattan sector in Cambodia and motivating its competitiveness.

"There are plans to develop a series of promotional tools including a website and other print materials to inform a wider audience about the association and its goals of green and sustainable production," Mr Ratanak said.

According to Mr Thibault Ledecq, WWF Regional Rattan Project Manager, Cambodian rattan processing companies will be able to acquire necessary knowledge and skills by becoming members of the association group in order to respond to the needs and requirements of the international market.

"WWF will facilitate the link between the association and the regional and international markets by identifying potential buyers who are looking for sustainable and green rattan products," he said.

Go to [panda.org/cambodia](http://panda.org/cambodia) to read the press release on the rattan association when it was established.

### Learning by seeing

Earlier in the year, a mixed delegation of governments, associations and WWF from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam benefited from a 10-day visit to different parts of the Indonesian rattan industry, from wild rattan in Kalimantan to retail-shops in Jakarta. The visit was co-organised by WWF's Regional Rattan Project and NTFP-EP as part of an exchange programme to provide the opportunity for all participants to learn new ways of rattan management, processing and design, as well as rattan trade and related policies, while also establishing connections between the rattan sectors of the three countries and Indonesia.

A similar visit to Vietnam is likely to be organised for Cambodian rattan actors for exchange of knowledge and technology and for strengthening relationships in the rattan sector.



# Photos from the Field



Leopard is the commonest large predator within the Cambodia's Eastern Plains Landscape. Camera-trapping demonstrates the presence of a healthy population and that reproduction is taking place.

160 camera-traps are set across Monduliri Protected Forest and Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary within the Eastern Plains Landscape to monitor the status and densities of Tiger, Leopard, Asian Elephant, as well as large mammals and birds.



The largest population of Asian Elephant in Cambodia may occur in Monduliri province. Camera-trap photos and sign surveys indicate a healthy population with reproduction occurring. However, given the encroachment of human settlement and agriculture into forest areas, human-elephant conflict is likely to become a serious problem in the future.

Research is important in collecting and documenting information about animals and plants as well as other aspects related to ecological biodiversity and people's livelihoods. Wildlife survey activities involve recording animal signs, collecting animal samples such as dung of Elephant, setting camera-traps and using the global positioning system.



Sambar is the largest deer in Cambodia and an important prey species for Tiger and Leopard. However, populations are much reduced due to hunting. Recovery of populations of this species and other prey is essential for conserving Tiger in the landscape.



# Photos from the Field



Patrolling activities are crucial to ensure the effectiveness of protected area management. Patrols are carried out regularly across the landscape to strengthen law enforcement. All forest and wildlife crimes occurring in and around protected areas are punished with measures of law.

Banteng is globally endangered and restricted to southeast Asia. The world's largest population occurs within the Eastern Plains Landscape of Cambodia.



Environmental education is a crucial component to conservation. It aims at raising awareness of the community about the importance of protecting wildlife and forest habitat. It also educates community members about the value of preserving natural resources for the benefit of their own and their children's livelihoods through promotion of community-based ecotourism and sustainable collection and use of forest-based products.

Green Peafowl is a characteristic bird of the dry forest of Mondulkiri. Classified as globally endangered, this species is threatened by hunting and habitat loss. As for Banteng, the Eastern Plains Landscape is the global stronghold for this majestic species.



To experience trekking inside the dry forests of the Eastern Plains Landscape is one of the recreation activities of the community-based ecotourism project in Mondulkiri province. Community-based ecotourism is a strategy used to provide incentives for local communities to support conservation. It also serves as a financial contribution to the management of protected areas within the landscape.



# Photos from the Field



Globally more widespread than Banteng, Gaur is scarcer in the Eastern Plains Landscape and prefers semi-evergreen and evergreen forests.

Travelling throughout the Eastern Plains Landscape is very difficult in the wet season. The project team needs to be resourceful to get around.



Signs of Sun Bear are often visible in the evergreen and semi-evergreen forests. This species has declined considerably in Cambodia, and the Eastern Plains Landscape, together with the Cardamom Mountains, are the national strongholds of bears.

Two US scat detection dogs and their handlers are currently undertaking an extensive tiger survey in Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary and Monduliri Protected Forest in Monduliri province. The team has now collected over 100 scat-samples. Later, genetic analysis techniques will be used to identify individual tigers from their scat, thus providing the first accurate estimate of tiger numbers in the protected Eastern Plains landscape.



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Encouraging regional cooperation at the Laos-Cambodia transboundary dolphin pool, WWF-Cambodia is working with WWF-Laos, local government agencies and communities to initiate collaborative dolphin conservation management strategies at this site.



# Photos from the Field



The Irrawaddy dolphin is a proud symbol of the Mekong River and its biodiversity. This freshwater species is regarded as a sacred animal by both Khmer and Lao people and is an important source of income and jobs for communities involved in dolphin-watching ecotourism initiatives. The latest population estimate, which does not include calves and juveniles, is between 64 and 76 dolphins. Irrawaddy dolphins once ranged widely in the Mekong and were also found in Tonle Sap, but now they are only found on a 200km stretch of the Mekong River between Kratie and the Laos border.

Integrating local monks into environmental education is an information outreach approach that ensures local communities' awareness about the values of a healthy Mekong River and environment and the importance of preservation of the remaining Irrawaddy dolphins. In Cambodian culture, Khmer people listen to and obey monk's advices.



These beautiful dolphins were photographed by the Cambodian Mekong Dolphin Conservation team in Steung Treng deep pool area during the project's dolphin population abundance research. This freshwater mammal displays interesting playful natural behaviour in areas where they are less disturbed.

To compete in international markets, Cambodian rattan producers and entrepreneurs cooperate with the government, NGOs, and other partners in the rattan sector to improve the quality of products and promote the image of Cambodian rattan. The compliance with the requirements of quality standards and the principles of 'green production' is the goal Cambodian rattan entrepreneurs need to achieve by the year 2011.



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During his second visit in December to Prek Thnot Community Protected Area in Kampot province, a site of sustainable rattan and forest management supported by WWF since 2007, His Excellency Dr Chan Sarun, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, was impressed by the work and results of applying the model of sustainable harvest and production developed by WWF. Today, 150 local community households in provinces of Kampot, Preah Sihanouk, Koh Kong, Kampong Thom and Preah Vihea are processing rattan for their livelihoods.