



## Over 150 Asian Giant Softshell Turtles Returns to the Wild

WCS in collaboration with Fisheries Administration and the Turtle Survival Alliance released 150 Endangered Asian Giant Softshell Turtle hatchlings into their natural habitat along the Mekong River.

The hatchlings are part of a community protection program designed to increase the wild population of the species, and had been collected from nests that were guarded by local communities.

The Asian Giant Softshell Turtle (*Pelochelys cantorii*) is listed on the IUCN Red List as globally Endangered. It was thought extinct in the Cambodian portion of the Mekong River until re-discovery in 2007 in a 48-kilometer stretch of the river between Kratie and Stung Treng Provinces.

“The purpose of this release is to increase the wild population of the Asian Giant Softshell Turtle,” said Mr. Sun Yoeung, WCS’s Asian Giant Softshell Turtle Conservation Project Coordinator. “As the project pays local people as guardians and rangers, the release will also increase local incomes and encourage the support and involvement of local communities in conserving the species.” [Read full story](#)

## Can Cambodia's Rice Farmers and Bengal Floricans Co-exist?

Commercial dry-season rice cultivation in Cambodia's Tonle Sap floodplain increasingly threatens the Critically Endangered Bengal Florican, a new study says. This and other threats put the species at high risk of extinction in the near future, unless it is managed appropriately.

"Dry season rice cultivation increasingly encroaches on Bengal florican breeding areas, disturbing the birds during key breeding periods," said Imperial College of London's Harriet Ibbett, corresponding author of the study." In addition, dry-season rice cultivation is strongly associated with agro-chemical use that has potentially significant implications for florican food availability."

She added, "An estimated 20 percent of dry season rice fields are located within identified florican habitat, including formally protected areas. Forty-six percent of dry-season rice farmers cultivate two crops of rice per year, extending cultivation activities into breeding periods. This significantly reduces both the amount of time and habitat that floricans have to breed undisturbed and successfully." [Read full story](#)



*The Bengal florican is listed on the IUCN Red List as Critically Endangered, and has a global population of fewer than 800 individuals. © Jonathan C. Eames / WCS*

## Over 200 Local Community members in Tmatbouy village, Preah Vihear Joined the Cambodian Nature Film Screening

Fauna in Focus, a new environmental education and public awareness project, in collaboration with Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) screened the Cambodian Nature Film in front more than 200 people, including Ministry of Environment's Officials, local authorities, community members, teachers and young students at Tmatbouy Primary school in Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary, Preah Vihear Province.

This nature film shows the wonders of wildlife in Cambodia through various conservation projects from across the country. A section of this video highlights the unique dry forest ecosystem found around Tmatbouy Ecotourism Community Protected Area that is home to two species of Critically Endangered ibis, the White-shouldered Ibis and Cambodia's National bird, the Giant Ibis. [Read full story](#)



*Cambodian Nature Film screening in front of Tmatbouy villagers. © Fauna in Focus*

## WCS Conservation Hero: Khoehn Khea

WCS has recognized the hard work and commitment of Khoehn Khea who are committed to protecting wildlife in Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary.

“WCS employs me to guard the Lesser Adjutant nests so I inform other villagers not to come near the nest site as this would disturb their breeding. I also told my fellow villagers not to poach because conserving wildlife helps us make extra income through nest protection and eco-tourism,” said Khoehn Khea. “I am delighted to see so many Lesser Adjutants living and nesting in the forest near my house. I am proud to protect them and I hope they will continue to nest here in the future.”

For the second year running, Khoehn Khea, who grew up in this forest and is passionate about protecting the wildlife around his house, succeeded in protecting a Lesser Adjutant nesting colony. This year he successfully protected all 30 nests resulting in 60 new Lesser Adjutant chicks. [Read full story](#)



*Khoehn Khea came across a colony of 30 Lesser Adjutant nesting pairs whilst collecting resin in forest near his house. © Eng Mengey / WCS*

## Celebrating Environment Day 2017

WCS joined the Ministry of Environment, non-governmental organizations and other 400 local students and community members to mark the celebration of World and National Environment Day 2017 at Kulen High School, Preah Vihear Province.

WCS, with support from the European Union, participated in the event by displaying a series of key wildlife images found living in the Northern Plains of Cambodia, Preah Vihear Province. These species included the Critically Endangered Giant Ibis, White-shouldered Ibis, and three species of vulture that require collaborative conservation activities in order to conserve their populations within this unique habitat. During the event, WCS staff briefed local communities and students about the importance of wildlife protection and encouraged them all to help conserve those species by not purchasing or eating bush meat.



*WCS partner, Ibis Rice, displayed its rice product during the event. © Hom Sakuna / WCS*

## Cambodia's Ministries Come Together to Address Wildlife Trafficking



A first-ever milestone event brought together Cambodian officials and others today to discuss law enforcement options and responses to wildlife trafficking –an increasing threat to the world's wildlife species.

*Representatives from MoJ, MoE, MAFF, MoI, Military Police, Anti-Corruption Unit, diplomatic sector, and conservation NGOs. © Bo Raksmeay / WCS*

In attendance at the meeting were representatives from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Ministry of Interior, Military Police, Anti-Corruption Unit, the diplomatic sector, and conservation NGOs.

“This is the first time that all of the relevant ministries have met to discuss this important issue,” said Sarah Brook, Technical Advisor for Counter Wildlife Trafficking for the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). “We are pleased with the results of the meeting; a number of important recommendations were made by the participants on how to strengthen law enforcement and on the legal and regulatory issues around wildlife crime. We hope that the results of the meeting will be taken up by the respective ministries and we are committed to continue working with the government on this issue,” Brook said. [Read full story](#)

## Poaching for Traditional Medicine a Threat to Colorful Primate's Last Refuge



Two suspects have been sent to Mondulkiri Provincial Court after being arrested on suspicion of killing two Globally Endangered Black-shanked Douc Langur inside Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary (KWS).

*Two globally Endangered Black-shanked Douc Langur were poached inside Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary. © Hor Reaksmeay / WCS*

Black-shanked Douc Langurs (*Pygathrix nigripes*) are found only in Cambodia and Vietnam, with the largest known surviving population found in KWS. Sadly, these beautiful animals are hunted for their stomachs due to a mistaken belief that they are medicinally beneficial. They are also killed for meat, and in some areas adults are killed and their babies taken for the pet trade. They are listed on IUCN Red List as Globally Endangered. Under Cambodia's Protected Area Law, poaching endangered wildlife can result in a prison sentence of up to 5 years and a fine of 15-100 million riels. [Read full story](#)

**Conserving Cambodia's wildlife from extinction by not purchasing or eating wild meat!**



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