

# WILDLIFE CRIME

Education for Nature - Vietnam

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# WHERE DO YOU STAND?

Commercial farming and trade of endangered species is a serious threat to our biodiversity.

*Rising affluence in urban areas of Vietnam has brought increased demand for wildlife products from consumers. Contradictory government policies have sought to encourage farming and the commercial trade of wildlife while trying to protect those very same species in nature. Furthermore, some policies have been implemented without serious consideration for the impacts that legal trade can have on Vietnam's biodiversity.*

Proponents of the commercial farming and trade of wildlife claim that it contributes to economic development, reduces pressure on wild populations of species and secures a genetic resource for conservation. Many private farmers keeping endangered species like tigers and bears claim that they are doing so for purposes of “conservation”.

Those opposed to commercial farming and trade of wildlife argue that commercialization of endangered wildlife in Vietnam is a serious threat to endangered species and will soon result in the extirpation of these species both in Vietnam and its neighboring countries. Based on our extensive experience working with law enforcement authorities across the country over the past 11 years, ENV strongly supports the prohibition of commercial farming and trade of endangered species. ENV's position is derived from the following points:

- ▶ Another common practice for consumer establishments (i.e restaurants) is to repeatedly re-use a permit while it is still valid to enable the trade of many more animals than originally permitted.
- ▶ It's very difficult to manage and supervise establishments that supply to consumers because they often store and pack discreetly wildlife products during transport and at business premises, and the products are only available upon request. As a result it is a challenge for authorities to keep track of the trade, hunting and transfer of wildlife and wildlife products.



ENV Case no. 6200

*Selling papers showing that animals are from legal origin at registered farms has become a business of sorts, resulting in widespread laundering of wildlife through legal facilities.*

## ENFORCEMENT

### Market control

- ▶ Law enforcement agencies cannot distinguish between legal and illegal products in the marketplace during their inspections leading to confusion and uncertainty, and ultimately opportunities for criminals to circumvent the law.

## Management of farms

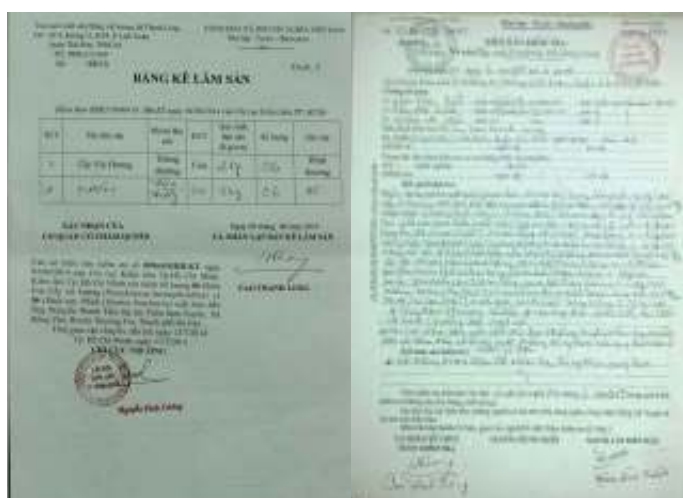
- During ENV's recent investigation of a sample of wildlife farms in Vietnam, both laundering of wildlife and abuse of regulations were widespread problems, involving both farmers and local law enforcement authorities.



ENV Case no. 8716

A common palm civet with a snare wound being kept at a registered farm clearly shows that this animal originated from the wild and was not born on the farm as declared.

- Lack of accurate records and management of numbers of animals were commonly found at farms including records of births and deaths, in addition to the widespread forging of transportation papers (Note: A transportation paper is a list of forest products approved by the Forest Protection Department (FPD). It also serves as the permit showing the legal origins of animals).
- Effective management of wildlife farms is presently well beyond the capacity of responsible agencies. This is best illustrated in recent cases involving licensed farms laundering pangolins, selling bear cubs, and convicted tiger traders being issued legal permits to keep tigers.



Investigators posing as traders that had been caught with a shipment of wildlife were able to purchase these papers showing legal origin for the fictitious shipment from a farm in the south.

## MARKET DEMAND

- By making formerly prohibited products available in

Results of ENV's investigation on 26 wildlife farms in Vietnam from 2014-2015

- 100%** (26/26) of surveyed farms showed signs of laundering wild animals from nature
- 55%** (16/26) of farms openly admitted that they laundered wild animals
- 76%** (14/18) of farms revealed that FPD officials reportedly received bribes from farm owners
- 89%** (17/19) of farms claimed that they sold transportation papers showing that animals of unknown origin were raised on their farms
- 91%** (10/11) of farms bought transportation papers from other farms or from FPD officials
- 100%** (18/18) of farms purchased wild animals without legal papers
- 100%** (14/14) of farms sold wildlife without legal papers

the market, consumption of those products will likely increase.

- Proponents of legalizing the trade of wildlife products like rhino horn argue that rhino horn produced from legal sources can meet market demand. However, once a legal trade is established, the availability of rhino horn on the market would most likely stimulate demand from people who currently do not use, and would not otherwise purchase, rhino products. This increase in demand could easily exceed legal production resulting in accelerated hunting and poaching of rhinos from the wild.

## IMPACT ON CONSERVATION

- There is an inherent conflict between conservation of endangered species, and commercial farming and trade of these species. Conservation seeks to preserve biodiversity for the future benefit of all. In contrast, commercial farming is intended to operate as a business and seek profit. In order to achieve their goal, farmers must select species that are economically viable (can breed successfully, have generally fast growth rates, and are profitable in the market when investment costs are considered). However in Vietnam, the reality is that few farmers have an understanding of the species they seek to farm nor are they prepared, or intend, to invest in the facilities and management needed to operate a legitimate business in the legal farming and trade of wildlife.





*Photo courtesy of Jenny Daltry*

*Was the species saved by farming as some claim or did farming perpetuate the decline of the Siamese crocodile across its range as farmers scrambled to purchase founder animals?*

More than often, lack of knowledge of proper breeding methods results in inbreeding or cross-breeding between subspecies producing offspring with no value to conservation. Likewise, captive born animals lack basic survival skills that would permit them to exist in nature in the event that reintroduction should become necessary. Most of today's licensed wildlife farmers, especially owners of large farms, opt for the maximum profitable approach of illegally obtaining or supplementing captive populations with wild caught animals.

Vietnamese wildlife farmers are neither scientists nor conservationists. Their priority is making money, not conserving wildlife.

- The above point is illustrated by the commercial farming and trade of the Siamese crocodile. The development of Siamese crocodile farming is widely credited with the extirpation of the Siamese crocodile

in Vietnam, and the drastic reduction of wild populations in neighboring Cambodia and Laos. Despite the successful growth of crocodile farming in Vietnam, wild crocodiles continue to be hunted and killed to support a parallel illegal trade of the species. The recent introduction of crocodiles at Bau Sau in Cat Tien National Park has been successful but with an enormous price. The reintroduction of captive bred animals is very challenging, costly and almost guarantees failure, especially with mammal species like bears and tigers.

- Endangered species should be fully protected under the law and should never be commercially farmed under any circumstances. This is due to the fact that the remaining wild populations of these species are very low, and that exploitation of wild-sourced animals for initial breeding stock alone may lead them to extirpation.
- Conservation breeding of endangered species, if necessary, should be limited to specific conservation projects and facilities, staffed by scientists and experts, run under the oversight of the government, and prohibited from any form of commercial trade of animals or their parts and derivatives.

In summary, any policy relating to the loss of biodiversity needs to be carefully and seriously considered before being approved. Farming of even common species should be restricted to species for which scientists have concluded that commercial farming of the species will have no detrimental impact on wild populations. Permits should only be issued for farming of species for which an impact assessment has been completed and for which legal exploitation for breeding stock and some margin of expected and continued illegal hunting are considered sustainable.

“ Report corruption: If you are aware of authorities accepting money or gifts from individuals involved in wildlife trade or wildlife farming, please report the incident to the National Anti-corruption Department at 080 48 228 ”



# ALLOWING CONVICTED TIGER TRAFFICKERS

## to keep tigers for “conservation”

In the middle of this year, Vietnam CITES Management Authority, the state authority responsible for enforcement of the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in Vietnam, issued permits to the Bach Ngoc Lam Co., Ltd. to import nine tigers from Europe. While the owner, Ms. Nguyen Thi Lien may not have been accused of wrongdoing by law enforcement authorities, her husband, Pham Van Tuan, is a twice-convicted tiger trafficker with known ties to organized criminal networks.

Earlier this year, the People's Committee of Nghe An province issued permits allowing the company owned by Tuan's wife to keep tigers for “conservation purposes”. This company also reportedly received 15 tigers from the Muong Thanh Wildlife Co., Ltd. in Nghe An province, a private zoo owned by a well-known businessman Le Thanh Than.

The decision to license the farm and allow Tuan to keep tigers was not completed in accordance with the law as the company does not have permits to operate as a “conservation facility” as required under the existing law.

Besides the argument that the company was not under Tuan's name, and that Tuan's wife has the right to obtain permits and keep tigers, the real questions are: what was running through the minds of Nghe An provincial authorities and representatives from the CITES Management Authority that would lead them to issue permits to the wife of a recently twice-convicted tiger trafficker? Was the decision made in the best interests of tiger conservation...and the best interests of Vietnam? Who benefited and will continue to benefit from this business deal? How can a responsible agency justify their decision in putting tigers, a critically endangered species, into the hands of a convicted tiger trafficker for “education purposes”?

The law is written to achieve an aim and help guide society in the best interests of all. Protecting our few remaining tigers in the wild, and contributing to global tiger conservation is a priority shared by all of us, and a mission in which we expect responsible authorities to successfully demonstrate their true leadership.

The growth of tiger farming in Vietnam is a serious problem that



must be urgently addressed through responsible actions of authorities, civil society, and the public, working together.

Out of 14 private zoos and farms, criminal activity, including laundering and selling tigers and their parts, was documented at six establishments, and violations in relation to the management of tigers were found at three other private zoos.

Moreover, uncontrolled breeding of tigers on farms has led to a steady increase in captive tigers in private hands from 81 in 2010 to 189 by last count at the end of July 2016 (may not include cubs born after ENV inspection dates).



Report wildlife crime to  
1800-1522

hotline@fpt.vn

Android App ENV -  
Report Wildlife Crime







ENV Case no. 9356

*Is tiger farming the next disaster in the making? More than 4,300 illegal bears accumulated on farms under the noses of authorities prior to 2005. Efforts to correct this substantial failure of wildlife protection authorities continue today with at least 1,300 bears still on bile farms.*

### An extremely expensive lesson has not been learned

By early 2005, more than 4,300 illegal bears had accumulated on private farms in Vietnam while no action was taken by the authorities. Efforts to shut down the industry have made significant progress since then with about 1,200 animals remaining on farms. However, it has taken 12 years to achieve this progress at great cost financially, and the battle is still not over. Sadly, it does not look like the lesson has been learned as the same problem is happening with tigers.



ENV Case no. 2136

*Giving tigers to criminals. Two tigers at Tuan's farm in Nghe An that will likely become the breeding stock and cover for trafficking of tigers through this facility.*

At the moment, there are 189 captive tigers in private hands in Vietnam. Next year, will it be 250, 500, 800, 1200, 4500? Will we wait again until several thousands of tigers are accumulated on private farms before launching another 20-year-long, expensive and exhausting campaign to close down tiger farms? Unfortunately unlike bears, tigers do not have 20 years. We need to shut down tiger farms NOW when the problem is still somewhat manageable, and before the last tiger is hunted in the wild. We ought to learn the lesson of the recent past

#### TUAN'S SHADY PAST

*In June 2006, Tuan was sentenced to nine months in prison (he received a suspended sentence) for the theft and killing of a tiger at the Dong Tam Snake Farm in Tien Giang province.*

*In June 2010, Tuan was implicated in the case involving the seizure by police in Nghe An of a frozen tiger, tiger bones, and parts from other wildlife. In November 2010, he was convicted and sentenced to 30 months in prison, which was suspended with five year's probation.*

“Tigers, gibbons, langurs, elephants, and many more species are following rhinos down the path of extinction. It's up to you to stop this before it's too late.”

involving bears, and make a better decision for tigers and other endangered species.

We can start by making smart and responsible decisions including:

- We do not license tiger traffickers to keep tigers, ever.
- Tiger farms engaged in any sort of commercial trade of tigers or their parts should be closed and their tigers transferred to legal establishments with reputable education, conservation, or scientific programs in place.
- Breeding of tigers in private zoos and farms should be contained and stopped where there is no clear conservation plan associated with the breeding. Only zoos with a clean history of no violations and having a strict commitment prohibiting commercial trade of the endangered species or their parts should be permitted to breed tigers or any other endangered wildlife.

It is time to correct past mistakes and take action to prevent further damage. Whatever decision we make today, we will have to live with it the rest of our lives. The future of our country's biodiversity is priceless; it cannot be exchanged for money.



In the midst of global rhino crises, the Kingdom of Swaziland has recently submitted a proposal to CITES for legalization of international trade of rhino horns. Swaziland's anti-poaching body believes selling their 330kg stockpile of horn collected from naturally deceased animals and poachers could raise close to \$10 million USD to help protect Swaziland's 73 remaining white rhino from poachers. In addition to selling the stockpile to the traditional medicine markets of the Far East, Swaziland is also pushing for the sale of a further 20kg on an annual basis, raising \$600,000 by harvesting horns from living herds and re-growing horns from dehorned rhinos.

ENV strongly believe that the idea of selling rhino horns to fund anti-poaching measures is seriously flawed. It is because the coexistence of legal and illegal rhino horn will make enforcing the law impossible, and the availability of rhino horns will likely spark increase of consumer demand, especially in countries like Vietnam and China. The proposal is being voted on at the 17th meeting of CITES Conference of Parties in South Africa and ENV is calling for the Vietnamese government to oppose the proposal.

#### Flaws in the legal trade of ivory and rhino horns

- *Compromise law enforcement:* The legalization of trade in rhino horns will create a situation where both

legal and illegal products from this species exist on the market. There will be a huge challenge for law enforcement officers in distinguishing between legal and illegal products, leading to confusion and demotivation amongst authorities in investigating (now much more complex cases that might lead to nothing) and enforcing the law. Ultimately, the new situation will provide great opportunities for criminals to circumvent the law, and further promote corruption, leading to more illegal trade in rhino horns and the further poaching of these species.

- *Stimulate demand:* Demand will never decrease when international policies encourage the trade and consumption of wildlife products. If the trade in rhino horns is legalized, it would ignite fresh consumer demand for rhino horns since they can be legally purchased. Consequently, the size of the consumer market for rhino horns will become ever larger. This would also be a risk to the wild rhino populations on an international scale where the stimulated demand may lead to the acceleration of poaching rhinos for production.

#### What should Vietnam do?

Vietnam has long been considered a major consumer market for rhino horns as well as a significant link in the

## VIETNAM'S RESPONSE TO SWAZILAND'S PROPOSAL

# to open the legal trade of rhino horns







illegal supply chain network for these products. Therefore, if the government votes “Yes” for Swaziland’s proposal, it not only tarnishes Vietnam’s reputation but also undermines all of the efforts undertaken thus far by the government, civil society, and members of the public to reduce consumer demand for

rhino horn in Vietnam. Moreover, the following actions should be urgently taken in Vietnam to help prevent the world’s rhinos from extinction:

#### Official commitment

Representatives of the Vietnamese Government should stand up and officially oppose the proposal from Swaziland in the upcoming CITES meeting, followed by a “No” vote. This will send a clear signal to delegates from other countries that Vietnam intends to contribute to the conservation of this species as well as address our involvement in tackling international trafficking of rhino horns.

#### Enhancement in addressing violations regarding ivory and rhino horns

The current legal loopholes, which have caused 26 cases (recorded by ENV) involving smuggling rhino horns into Vietnam since 2010 to be suspended and subjects were not prosecuted, must be closed in order to ensure that

all the criminal subjects caught trafficking rhino horn are prosecuted, and the law intended to protect these species is enforced.

In addition, the 2015 Penal Code should become effective as soon as possible because it contains a range of important changes in support of law enforcement agencies in their battle against wildlife crime. The Penal Code had been scheduled to become effective earlier this year (2016) but was postponed due to technical errors.

#### Destruction of illegal rhino horns

In order to strengthen Vietnam’s commitment to protecting the world’s rhinos, illegal rhino horns must be destroyed, apart from a small amount of horn reserved for research and educational purposes.

#### Improving public awareness

Vietnam should continue to invest and expand efforts to raise awareness amongst the public, encouraging the public to use alternatives to traditional medicines like rhino horn and refrain from any form of consumption or use of rhino horns.



**“IF YOU ARE NOT PART OF  
THE SOLUTION,  
YOU MAY BE PART OF  
THE PROBLEM.”**



# INTERNET VIOLATIONS ON THE RISE

While a recent stiff sentence for a convicted wildlife trafficker is great news in our uncompromising battle against wildlife violations, alarm bells are ringing over the growth and prevalence of illegal trading on the Internet.

## GET TOUGH ON INTERNET CRIME

ENV routinely works with law enforcement agencies all over the country to combat internet crime resulting in seizures of hundreds of animals, confiscation of wildlife products such as rhino horn and pangolin scales, and arrests of online traders. ENV's internet crime campaign has also resulted in the removal of approximately 80% of all advertisements reported to our Crime Unit and agreements with a dozen or more website and forum hosts to ban advertising of wildlife on the sites they administer.

## SOME INTERNET CRIME-BUSTING HIGHLIGHTS

Likewise in May 2016, Pham Minh Hung, a subject advertising a leopard cat online, was fined 20 million VND after being caught red-handed selling the leopard cat by the provincial Environmental Police of Thua Thien – Hue.

However, a majority of internet crime cases do not end in arrests or animal seizures. One great example of a law enforcement action targeting the simple act of advertising involved a Quang Tri resident advertising civets on his Facebook page. In this case, the subject was not caught with animals, but fined 1,500,000 VND under Article 15 of Degree 157/2013/ND-CP for advertising wildlife (case ref. 9179/ENV).

Another example illustrating how law enforcement is getting tough on wildlife crime on the internet occurred in July in Bac Lieu province where the subject was advertising a hawksbill marine turtle for sale on Facebook. After the subject sought to sell the marine turtle to ENV undercover officers, authorities were alerted and successfully confiscated and released a live hawksbill fining the subject 10,000,000 VND (case ref. 9991/ENV).

ENV calls upon law enforcement agencies throughout the country to follow the example of Ho Chi Minh, Hue, Quang Tri, Bac Lieu and other provinces to take more aggressive measures to address wildlife crime on the internet as part of broader efforts to suppress and eliminate illegal trade of wildlife. ENV believes that the only way to effectively suppress internet crime is to make a tough example out of violators, like Mr. Khoa, that will deter illegal activities by others.

A trial on June 21, 2016 in the People's Court of Tan Binh District found Phan Huynh Anh Khoa guilty of illegally trading endangered species prioritized for protection (stipulated in Decree 160/2013/ND-CP). Phan Huynh Anh Khoa, also known as Khoa Xi trum (born in 1993, residing in Go Vap District) was consequently sentenced to five years imprisonment and an additional criminal fine of 50 million VND. These penalties stemmed from his arrest in late 2015 after he tried to sell endangered wildlife that he advertised on the internet to Ho Chi Minh Environmental Police in a joint operation conducted with ENV (case ref. 5294/ENV).

But Khoa's case also serves to highlight the growing threat to wildlife posed by online sellers using platforms, from personal websites to Facebook and forums that reach hundreds of thousands of Internet users on a daily basis. There is also a wide range of species – both common and endangered – and wildlife products being offered for sale.

In 2008, the Wildlife Crime Unit (WCU) of Education for Nature – Vietnam (ENV) recorded the first illegal online wildlife advertisement; and as of June 2016, a total of 2,028 similar violations have been uncovered. Bui Thi Ha, Vice-director and Head of Policy and Legislation Department of ENV, opined: "The number of Internet users, especially users of social media, is directly proportional to the development of information technology. Therefore, these online platforms are increasingly abused by violators to break wildlife protection laws."

Another obstacle lies in the perception shared by enforcement agencies that internet crime is both difficult to pursue because sellers are able to hide their identities and police must successfully capture both the subject and illegal contraband to make an arrest.

However Phan Huynh Anh Khoa's arrest is not the first in what is a growing understanding by law enforcement agencies in Vietnam that internet crime is the new marketplace for consumer-end wildlife sales, and this new and emerging form of crime must be taken seriously and aggressively pursued.

In another case in late 2015 in Binh Duong involved a trader with a prior record of selling lorises on his personal Facebook page. ENV passed along evidence to local authorities resulting in his arrest, which subsequently resulted in the arrest of his supplier as well (case ref. 7820/ENV).



Tay và chân gấu cho anh em ngâm rượu, alo 0916838639 để có giá yêu...



- Khám và điều trị các bệnh nội khoa, nhi khoa, phụ khoa.
- Đặc trị các bệnh về gan và thận.
- Tư vấn điều trị các trường hợp: Di tinh, hoạt tinh, mộng tinh, lãnh cảm, hiếm muộn con.
- Có bán các toa thuốc tần gà, ngâm rượu, bổ dưỡng sức khỏe.
- Có bán các loại: Sâm Ngọc Linh, Sâm Triều Tiên Đông Trùng Hạ Thảo.
- Có bán các loại Cao: Hồ Cốt, Ban Long, Ngựa Bạch, Trần, Qui Bản.

U TRỊ TẠI NHÀ

## ADVERTISING WILDLIFE IS A CRIME

According to Point c, Clause 2, Article 15 of Decree 157/2013/ND-CP (amended by Decree 40/2015/ND-CP), anyone committing any unlawful acts of advertising wildlife will be fined from one to two million VND.

Advertisement is completely prohibited with respect to species belonging to one of the following lists: (i) Group IB of Decree 32/2006/ND-CP, (ii) Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), (iii) the list of endangered species prioritized for protection under Decree 160/2013/ND-CP, (iv) the list of goods prohibited from being traded in Decree 59/2006/ND-CP (amended by Decree 43/2009/ND-CP), and (v) the list of goods prohibited from being invested in for business purposes under Law on Investment No. 67/2014/QH12. Anyone advertising any of the species in the aforementioned lists will be fined from 70 to 100 million VND, according to Clause 2, Article 50 of Decree 158/2013/ND-CP.

Anyone who illegally hunts, kills, transfers, rears or trades wildlife, or illegally transfers, trades, or keeps body parts or products of wildlife, depending on the list to which each species belong and/or the number of individuals and/or value of such species, will be subject to either administrative penalties or criminal punishments.

### Nhà Hàng Long Thành Cây hương (Đặt trước)

- Lông đuôi cây hương [Theo thời giờ]
- Cây hương hấp
- Cây hương nướng
- Cây hương xào tiêu
- Xương om khoai, măng
- Cây hương nấu dưa mận

### Tê tê (Đặt trước)

- Tiết canh tê tê [Theo thời giờ]
- Tê tê hấp
- Tê tê nướng
- Tê tê xào tiêu
- Xương om khoai, măng

Địa chỉ: 186 Đường Bà Thiên  
Ấp Xóm Bưng, Xã Nhuận Đức  
H. Củ Chi, TP. HCM  
Hotline: 0916.838.688 - 0916.838.688 - 0916.838.688  
Website: www.186.com.vn

### Đặc sản núi rừng



#### DON

- Tiết canh
- Lông nấu canh đắng
- Hấp xả nguyên con
- Nướng riềng nướng
- Xào lươn
- Nấu rượu nếp
- Canh khoai rau rút hoặc nấu măng

2.300.000d/Kg

#### CÂY HƯƠNG/CÂY VƯỜI 2.550.000d/Kg

- Lông hấp hoặc nướng
- Hấp xả nguyên con
- Nướng riềng nướng
- Nấu rượu nếp
- Canh khoai rau rút hoặc nấu măng

#### TÊ TÊ

- Hấp
- Tẩm thuốc bắc
- Nấu cháo
- Lông luộc (nướng)
- Lông xào

7.000.000d/Kg

### Trại Chăn Nuôi

## AN BÌNH

CUNG CẤP CÁC CON GIỐNG :  
HƯỚU - NAI - HEO RỪNG - NHÍM - GẤU

ĐC : 186 Đường Bà Thiên  
Ấp Xóm Bưng, Xã Nhuận Đức  
H. Củ Chi, TP. HCM

ĐT : 37.945.403

: 37.946.536

ĐD : 0945.92393



Minh Nho

2 tháng 2 · 0

Tại Cafe Nhật Nguyệt Garden.

Thích Bình luận Chia sẻ

21

Ha Quan Hang đẹp wa a oi  
Thích · Trả lời · 1 · 2 tháng 2

Minh Nho Thanks  
Thích · Trả lời · 2 tháng 2 lúc 17:

Han Anh Cat Tuong Ban re cho  
om oi  
Thích · Trả lời · 1 · 2 tháng 2

Vũ Duy Hiền Toan hang đẹp  
Thích · Trả lời · 1 · 2 tháng 2

Minh Nho  
Thích · Trả lời · 2 tháng 2 lúc 21:

Minh Nho OK a Han Anh Cat Tu  
Thích · Trả lời · 2 tháng 2 lúc 21:

Han Anh Cat Tuong Cat re nh  
Thích · Trả lời · 3 tháng 2 lúc 8:5

Minh Nho 0905907372





ENV Case no. 9812

## FOREST PROTECTION DEPARTMENT: “WILD ANIMALS ARE NOT PETS”

**T**hanks to reports to ENV from concerned members of the public, 63 macaques were confiscated or transferred voluntarily to authorities since the first day of the year. ENV commends the efforts of the authorities from provinces throughout Vietnam in enforcing the law which prohibits the possession of wild animals as pets without legal papers.

Forest Protect Departments around the country also assisted with the voluntary transfer of a wide range of wildlife from owners that contacted ENV expressing an interest in voluntarily transferring animals. In total, 44 cases involving individual animals were successfully handled by authorities, including 14 lorises. Lorises are particularly popular as pets. Other species ranged from hawksbill sea turtles to douc langurs, macaques, Malayan sun bears, monitor lizards, gibbons, pythons, leopard cats, and tortoises, sika deer and pangolins.

Of particular note is the case of a voluntary transfer of a Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*) by a family in Nam Dinh. The previous owner of the bear had recently died, and shortly before his death he had instructed his son to give the bear to a rescue center. The owner had known about the legal implications of keeping an unreg-

istered bear, and wished for his son to avoid future legal problems. ENV coordinated with the Tam Dao Rescue Center and with Nam Dinh FPD to have the bear transferred on August 18, 2016 (case ref. 10071/ENV).

ENV would like to remind the public not to buy or keep wild animals as pets, not only because it is illegal, but also because the act of buying a wild animal contributes directly to hunting and exploitation of more animals from the wild to meet market demand. It is not uncommon for ENV to receive a request for a voluntary transfer from a member of the public who specifically purchased a wild animal so that they could transfer it to authorities for a return to the wild. This again contributes to demand for wildlife. While we appreciate the voluntary action of citizens, it is always best for wildlife to leave it alone in nature, where it belongs, and where animals live and thrive in their homes.

**Note to authorities:** Allowing people to keep or display wild animals also contributes to others wanting to do the same, particularly if the animal is publicly displayed. It is important that live animal violations are acted on in a timely and efficient manner to send a clear message to the public that such acts are prohibited.

# PAGODA TURTLES: A SAD END FOR ENDANGERED WILDLIFE

ENV has transferred several cases to authorities over the years regarding the keeping of illegal wildlife at pagodas in Vietnam. Purchasing and releasing animals at a pagoda for religious purposes is not uncommon, and monks have been known to keep these animals as pagoda pets.

In one example, on February 15, 2016, ENV received a Wildlife Crime Hotline email from a volunteer reporting that an impressed tortoise (*Manouria impressa*) was being kept at a pagoda in Thai Binh. On March 15, 2016, the Thai Binh Provincial FPD confiscated the turtle (case ref. 9319/ENV). However, this is just one of many cases over the years, some of which have not resulted in successful outcomes.



Turtles in particular make poor inhabitants of pagoda ponds. Forest species like the impressed tortoise or the elongated tortoise do not live or spend much time in water. Sadly, most perish within weeks, if not days of being released into a pagoda pond. Moreover, many of the species are protected under law and in some cases, critically endangered. While worshippers may believe that they are doing a good thing releasing an animal into a Pagoda pond, in fact, they are ending the life of that animal. The best practice for Buddhist worshippers is to protect animals in nature and ensure that they do not reach captivity. Within the context of “doing something good to improve one’s karma” good fortune would far more favor the act of preserving animals in nature than committing them to death in a pagoda pond.

## KARMA BOOST

1. Do not buy turtles for release into pagoda ponds. Each purchase results in additional animals being hunted and taken from the wild.
2. Encourage the monks at your pagoda to end the practice of permitting worshippers to release wild animals into pagoda ponds
3. Report situations where wild animals are kept in pagodas to ENV and we will do our best to work with the monks and local authorities to put an end to the practice.

Each animal not purchased  
is an animal saved!

“Wildlife trade will end  
when the public  
realizes that the trade  
benefits only a few,  
while the rest of us  
share the cost of  
losing a precious and  
irreplaceable part of  
our natural heritage  
when a species  
becomes extinct.”



## ADDRESSING INACCURATE REPORTING

Question: When we respond to violations passed on to us by ENV, many times we do not find any violation. The information provided by ENV is not always reliable. Can you ensure that information is reliable before reporting it to us?

Answer: Information provided to ENV by members of the public cannot always be checked. However, we do our best to vet cases where we feel that the person reporting may not be telling the truth. In checking hundreds of cases reported by the public, we have not experienced a single case that was reported falsely. This leads us to believe that most, if not all, cases that we receive and vet before transferring to authorities are based on accurate information.

In your question, you noted that your teams often do not find any violations when they respond to reports from ENV. We are not having similar issues in other provinces and this would suggest that perhaps additional training may be required to ensure that the premises is inspected fully for the violation reported. Additional steps you can take would be ensuring that business owners are not tipped off by staff of the department prior to inspections. Law enforcement officials are often paid by business owners for protection, and while this may not be the case in your specific district, it is common in Vietnam based on the testimony of business owners.



ENV Case no. 9359

Photo courtesy of Phong Nha Ke Bang National Park

# CRIME LOG

January 1, 2016 - August 31, 2016

## BA RIA - VUNG TAU

On January 18, 2016, thanks to a report from a tourist to ENV's Wildlife Crime Hotline, Ba Ria Vung Tau Market surveillance team confiscated nine stuffed marine turtles which were being displayed for sale at a souvenir shop. The shop owner was fined VND 5 million (US \$230) (case ref. 9129/ENV).

On June 3, 2016, ENV received a report from WWF Vietnam that green sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) were being kept at a restaurant in Vung Tau city. ENV transferred the information to the Vung Tau Fisheries Department, who confiscated three marine turtles and released them into the sea (case ref. 9847/ENV).

## BAC GIANG



On May 21, 2016, 553kg of elephant ivory was seized from a pick-up truck by the Bac Giang provincial police and traffic police. According to Bac Giang Environmental

Police, traffic police inspected a vehicle and found 17 jute bags filled with 107 pieces of elephant ivory in Yen Lang District. The smuggler was transporting the ivory for a man from Lang Son province (case ref. 9811/ENV).

## BINH DUONG

In December 2014, a member of the public reported to ENV's Wildlife Crime Hotline that an online trader advertised many wildlife species for sale on his Facebook, including lorises, leopard cats, and macaques, among others. At that time, the subject ran his business from Ho Chi Minh City. ENV then set up a sting operation with HCMC Environmental Police. On Jan 21, 2015, the subject was arrested with one pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonine*) and one leopard cat (*Prionilurus bengalensis*). The subject continued his illegal wildlife trading in his hometown in Binh Duong thereafter. ENV continued monitoring the subject and transferred all his information to Binh Duong EP. On January 4, 2016, the subject was arrested with two lorises and was prosecuted by police (case ref. 7820/ENV).

## CAO BANG

On May 28, 2016, Cao Bang Environmental Police caught a smuggler transporting four live pangolins from Cao Bang city to Hung Quoc town. The smuggler was arrested. The case was prosecuted (case ref. 9833/ENV).

## DA NANG

On April 26, 2016, Da Nang FPD processed the transfer of a registered 170kg Asiatic black bear (*Ursus tibetanus*)



to the bear sanctuary at Tam Dao from a transportation firm in Da Nang province (case ref. 9560/ENV).

### DAK LAK

On July 12, 2016, ENV received information from the public reporting that they suspected that a gibbon was being kept at a house in Dak Lak province. ENV conducted an investigation, including the use of undercover calls and establishment monitoring, and determined that a yellow-cheeked gibbon (*Nomascus gabriellae*) was being kept behind the subject's house. ENV reported the gibbon to the Region 4 FPD on August 11. On August 29, 2016, the FPD confirmed that they had confiscated the gibbon, and placed it in Chu Yang Sin National Park (case ref. ENV/9981).

### DONG NAI

On August 3, 2015, ENV received a Wildlife Crime Hotline phone call from a member of the public who reported that a man was processing animal trophies and trading wildlife products in Dong Nai province including leopard cats, macaques and langurs. ENV reported the subject to the Dinh Quan FPD on August 5. On August 27, FPD officers searched the subject's house and confiscated two stuffed crocodiles. On February 3, 2016, ENV received a further report from the public that the same subject was producing leopard cat trophies for sale. ENV forwarded the information to the FPD. On May 9, 2016, the FPD searched the subject's house and confiscated 20 stuffed crocodiles and a stuffed monitor lizard. The subject was fined VND 750,000 (US \$40) (case ref. 8751/ENV).



ENV Case no. 9886  
Monitor lizards following capture by hunters await slaughter in Gia Lai province.

### HA NAM

On May 24, 2016, Duy Tien district Economic Police confiscated 72 turtles of seven species, including a number of critically endangered species, from a man on a motorcycle transporting two cases. The turtles were subsequently transferred to the Turtle Conservation Center at Cuc Phuong National Park and the subject was sentenced to 18 months in prison by Duy Tien district court (case ref. 9816/ENV).

### HA NOI

On January 28, 2016, Nam Tu Liem Economic Police

conducted a seizure of 45kg of pangolins which originated in Ha Tinh before being smuggled into Hanoi. The police had placed the subject under surveillance, and tracked his movements carefully before arresting him as he transported the pangolins. The Institute of Biological and Environmental Resources received all the pangolins and the subject was prosecuted (case ref. 9295/ENV).



On January 29, 2016, Noi Bai Airport Customs confiscated 180kg of Ivory from three Vietnamese nationals after landing from a flight originating in Angola. Noi Bai Customs confirmed to ENV that all three suspects confessed to smuggling ivory (case ref. 9300/ENV).

On April 1, 2016, Customs officers at Noi Bai Airport confiscated 97kg of ivory from a passenger returning to Vietnam from the Congo (case ref. 9542/ENV).

During the night of May 12, 2016, Hoan Kiem District Environmental Police confiscated over 47 turtles including six highly endangered three-striped box turtles (*Cuora trifasciata*) and 41 striped-neck turtles (*Mauremys sinensis*) from a Chinese man. All of the turtles were reportedly transferred to Soc Son Rescue Center (case ref. 9710/ENV).

On June 13, 2016, ENV received information from an ENV volunteer that someone was advertising a loris for sale on the internet. ENV identified the subject and then arranged a sting operation with the Ha Noi EP on the same day. One common slow loris (*Nycticebus bengalensis*) and four black-breasted leaf turtles (*Geoemyda spengleri*) were subsequently confiscated, along with a large quantity of frogs (case ref. 9870/ENV).

On July 18, 2016, Hanoi Environmental Police arrested two Nhi Khe ivory traders with 34kg of ivory. The arrests followed an investigation conducted by ENV in late 2015 after which evidence linking shop owners to the trade was provided to the city People's Committee. ENV commends the work of the Environmental Police on this case and urges action to arrest and prosecute other ivory and rhino horn dealers operating in the Nhi Khe area (case ref. 10139/ENV).

### HAI PHONG

On May 31, 2016, as a result of a report from a member of the public concerning a loris being kept at a house in Hai Phong city, Hai Phong FPD confiscated a common slow loris (*Nycticebus bengalensis*) and transferred it to the Endangered Primate Rescue Center (case ref. 9832/ENV).

## HOA BINH

On June 14, 2016, a day after ENV informed the Lac Son District FPD that a wildlife trader was operating from a restaurant in Hoa Binh province, the FPD confiscated two keeled box turtles (*Cuora mouhotii*), two live bamboo rats (unidentified) and three common palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*) from the restaurant. The subject was fined six million VND (US \$277) and the animals were released into a nearby forest (case ref. 9874/ENV).



ENV Case no. 9525

A python being kept at a lighthouse in Vung Tau province was confiscated by police in May following a report to ENV from a resident.

## HO CHI MINH

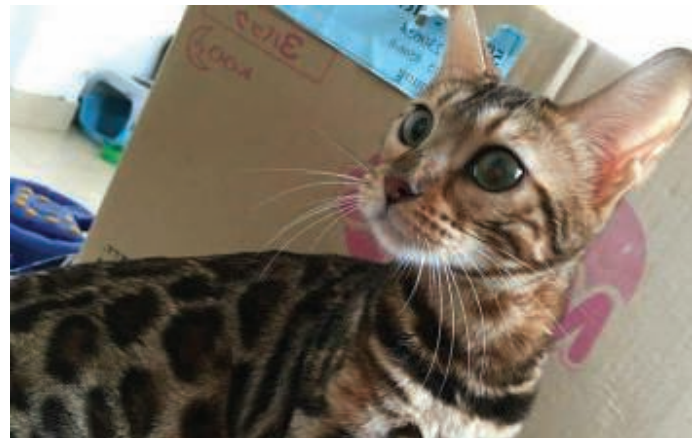
On August 4, 2016, as a result of a report from ENV concerning sea turtle trophies at a market stall in Ho Chi Minh City, HCMC Market Surveillance confiscated 17 sea turtle trophies and fined three subjects VND 6,500,000 in total. The trophies were incinerated (case ref. 5373/ENV).

On July 5, 2016, following an ENV report, two live green sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) were confiscated from a restaurant in Ho Chi Minh City by the HCMC EP and released into the sea (case ref. 6236/ENV).

On December 26, 2015, the HCMC EP arrested four individuals who had been running a pangolin trade operation and were caught with twelve live Sunda pangolins (*Manis javanica*). All four were sentenced on June 6, 2016. Punishments totaled 28 months in prison and 12 months of suspended sentence. Additionally, one subject transferred VND 32,000,000 (US \$1,450) to HCMC EP. The pangolins were all incinerated apart from a sole surviving pangolin which was released into nature (case ref. 8014/ENV).

On June 3, 2016, thanks to a report from a member of the public to ENV's Wildlife Crime Hotline, HCMC FPD confiscated squirrels and birds from a street vendor in Ho Chi Minh City. The seller escaped (case ref. 9829/ENV).

On July 31, 2016, Tan Son Nhat Customs and the HCMC Economic Police and National Anti-smuggling Police confiscated four pieces of rhino horn weighing two kilograms from a passenger's luggage. The subject was travelling from Africa via Qatar (case ref. 10037/ENV).



ENV Case no. 9583

A leopard cat advertised on Facebook. Use of Facebook to sell wildlife is a growing problem for law enforcement agencies as sellers and the location of animals are more difficult to identify

## HUNG YEN

On February 1, 2016, Hung Yen Provincial Economic Police apprehended a subject whilst smuggling 81 pangolins (311kg) from Ha Nam province to Hung Yen province. The subject intended to smuggle the pangolins into China. Subsequently the pangolins were confiscated and transferred to Soc Son Rescue Center. The subject was prosecuted (case ref. 9306/ENV).

## KIEN GIANG

On June 2, 2016, following a report by ENV that an elephant ivory statue was being displayed for sale at a shop on Phu Quoc Island, ENV received confirmation that the Kien Giang Market Surveillance Agency had confiscated five elephant amulets, two elephant necklaces, two hawksbill sea turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) trophies, and two green sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) trophies. The subject was fined VND 4,000,000 (US \$180) (case ref. 9454/ENV).

## KHANH HOA

On May 18, 2016, the Khanh Hoa EP successfully confiscated two live hawksbill sea turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) during a sting operation coordinated between the EP and ENV. The turtles were released into Nha Trang-Bay later that day (case ref. 9713/ENV).



ENV Case no. 9804

Photo courtesy of informant

Lorises are commonly sold as pets. They are fully protected under the law prohibiting any form of commercial trade.

On Saturday 27, 2016, ENV and HCMC EP cooperated in a sting operation in Ho Chi Minh City which resulted



in two subjects being apprehended by the EP with six lorises. ENV had received a report from a volunteer that a subject was attempting to sell lorises online, and ENV had convinced the subject to transport the lorises from Khanh Hoa to Ho Chi Minh City for sale. The lorises were later transferred to Dao Tien Rescue Center (*case ref. 10134/ENV*).

### KON TUM

On August 15, 2016, following a report from a member of the public to ENV, Tu Mo Rong District FPD confiscated a yellow-cheeked gibbon (*Nomascus gabriellae*) from a residential property and transferred it to a rescue center (*case ref. 10086/ENV*).

On August 17, 2016, Sa Thay District Police, in cooperation with the Kon Tum Environmental Police, confiscated two pangolins (*Manis javanica*), two civets and a porcupine from a car occupied by two subjects who were smuggling the animals to Sa Thay town. The animals were sent to Chu Mom Ray National Park Rescue Center (*case ref. 10132/ENV*).

### LAM DONG

On May 6, 2016, following a report from ENV, Da Lat FPD confiscated a yellow-cheeked gibbon (*Nomascus gabriellae*) from a shop in Da Lat and subsequently transferred the gibbon to a rescue center. The owner was prosecuted (*case ref. 9479/ENV*).

### LONG AN

On March 16, 2016, thanks to an ENV report, Long An FPD confiscated 18 common rat snakes, two slaty-breasted rails (*Rallus striatus*) and three coucals from market stalls at Thanh Hoa Market in Long An province. On March 22, 2016 the FPD also confiscated 10 Burmese pythons (*Python molurus*) sourced from a farm and fined the market stall owner VND 500,000 (US\$ 23) for not reporting the sale of a controlled species (*case ref. 8093/ENV*).

### NAM DINH

On May 1, 2016, Drug Enforcement officers and Economic Police apprehended a man transporting four frozen tiger cubs (weighing 0.5kg). The subject, residing in Ha Tinh province, was later sentenced to 42 months in prison, and is currently appealing the sentence (*case ref. 9606/ENV*).



### NGHE AN

On January 28, 2016, police in Dien Chau district of Nghe An province confiscated 14 turtles of three species and five Sunda pangolin (*Manis javanica*) from a private vehicle. The animals were reportedly smuggled into Vietnam from Laos and were to be later transported to the north, possibly China. All of the animals were subsequently transferred to rescue centers at Cuc Phuong (*case ref. 9299/ENV*).

On May 10, 2016, Nghe An Environmental Police seized 680 lion claws from a home in Dien Chau district. The claws were initially identified as tiger claws, but later confirmed to be from lions by the Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources (IEBR) (*case ref. 9633/ENV*).

On May 16, 2016, Nam Cam Border Army officers



stopped a man walking across the border from Laos into Vietnam and discovered 10 big headed turtles (*Platysternon megacephalum*) and two Chinese pangolins (*Manis pentadactyla*) in his possession. Both the turtles and pangolins were subsequently transferred to rescue centers at Cuc Phuong National Park (case ref. 9805/ENV).

## NINH BINH

On June 18, 2016, 22 Sunda pangolins (*Manis javanica*) were confiscated by Ninh Binh City Police from three subjects on a train at Ninh Binh train station. The pangolins were subsequently transferred to the Carnivore and Pangolin Conservation center at Cuc Phuong National Park (case ref. 9903/ENV)



ENV Case no. 9956  
A Japanese sparrow-hawk for sale in Dak Lak province.

## QUANG NINH

On December 30, 2015, Quang Ninh authorities confiscated 18 pangolins which were being smuggled on a 16 seat bus on the way from Hai Phong to Mong Cai City and arrested three subjects. Based on the papers that the subjects showed, the pangolins originated from a farm in Quang Binh province. According to ENV's Incident and Investigations Tracking System, the farm was also involved in a previous recorded confiscation of eight pangolins in Ninh Binh province. ENV inspected the farm and confirmed that pangolins were being laundered through the farm by the farm owner. Action was then initiated through provincial authorities to withdraw the license permitting the owner to keep or raise pangolins (case ref. 9218/ENV).

On March 25, 2016, 129 Sunda pangolins (*Manis javanica*) were confiscated at Dan Tien Wharf in Mong Cai city, in Quang Ninh province. According to Customs, two subjects were spotted smuggling the pangolins in a car. The

authorities gave chase to the subjects who crashed their car and ran on foot. One was caught. All the pangolins died after the confiscation, due to intake of flour intended to increase the weight of the pangolins prior to sale (case ref. 9440/ENV).

On April 4, 2016, Mong Cai city police and Mong Cai FPD intercepted a bus in Quang Ninh province and discovered 22kg of lion bones. After receiving further information from authorities, ENV noted that the smuggler was a member of the notorious wildlife trading family (case ref. 9466/ENV).

On April 23, 2016, Hai Ha District Police, in cooperation with traffic police, confiscated 14kg of tiger bones being smuggled via bus in Quang Ninh province. One subject was arrested and the case was prosecuted (case ref. 9546/ENV).

On May 13, 2016, the ENV Wildlife Crime Hotline received a phone call from a member of the public to report that a live green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) was being sold on a street in Ha Long city, Quang Ninh. ENV transferred the information to Quang Ninh Environmental Police. The EP tracked down the purchaser of the turtle and confiscated it on the same day. The turtle was released into the sea on May 16, 2016 (case ref. 9714/ENV).

On June 6, 2016, ENV received a Wildlife Crime Hotline email from a member of the public reporting that two sea turtles were being kept at a restaurant in Quang Ninh province. On the same day, ENV transferred the information to the provincial Environmental Police (EP) resulting in the confiscation of one green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) and one hawksbill sea turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*). The turtles were released into Ha Long bay on the morning of June 9, 2016 (case ref. 9854/ENV).

On June 8, 2016, Quang Ninh Customs officers seized 32 bear paws (58kg) in Mong Cai city following up on a tip from the public. The subject claimed that the owner was a Chinese man and ENV believes that the shipment may have originated in Nghe An. The bear paws were incinerated and the case was prosecuted (case ref. 9869/ENV).

On July 26, 2016, traffic police in Quang Ninh stopped a sleeper bus heading north toward Mong Cai and confiscated seven Sunda pangolins (*Manis javanica*). Two subjects were arrested (case ref. 10038/ENV).

On August 4, 2016, police in Quang Ninh stopped a refrigerated truck and confiscated 53 Sunda pangolins (*Manis javanica*). Authorities were alerted following information from Cau Treo Border station after which the vehicle was tracked north into Quang Ninh province toward the Chinese border (case ref. 10062/ENV).

## SON LA

On March 7, 2016, ENV was notified by Son La provincial authorities about a bear being illegally kept at a residential house in Song Ma district. ENV contacted Soc Son Rescue Center to facilitate the transfer of the bear which was secured and transported to the rescue center on March 17 (case ref. 9356/ENV).





### THAI BINH

On May 4, 2016, the ENV received a call from a member of the public reporting a 60kg loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) being kept at a church in Thai Binh province. ENV alerted the Thai Binh Fisheries Department and on the same day, the turtle was confiscated and released into the sea in Tien Hai district of Thai Binh province (case ref. 9565/ENV).



### THANH HOA

On July 26, 2016, the Thanh Hoa Traffic Police and the Thanh Hoa EP confiscated 18 bear paws from a bus

that was reportedly heading for Nghe An. An ENV investigation linked the case to an organized crime network operating out of Nghe An (case ref. 10025/ENV).

### THUA THIEN HUE

On May 9, 2016, the ENV Wildlife Crime Hotline received an email from a member of the public reporting about a leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*) being advertised for sale on Facebook. ENV contacted the seller, and was able to collect enough information to coordinate a sting with the Thuan Thien Hue Environmental Police. On May 10, 2016, the Environmental Police successfully confiscated the leopard cat and arrested the seller (case ref. 9607/ENV).

### VINH LONG

In October 2015, a member of the public reported to ENV about four yellow-cheeked gibbons (*Nomascus gabriel-lae*) being kept at a restaurant in Vinh Long province. The information was transferred to Vinh Long authorities and after considerable efforts, the gibbons were confiscated on Jan 27, 2016. The gibbons were subsequently transferred to the Phu Quoc Safari Park (case ref. 1836/ENV).



ENV Case no. 5294

A macaque advertised for sale on Facebook. In this case, the owner was identified and a “sting” operation carried out by police resulted in the arrest of the seller for selling several endangered species.

“The best place to protect wildlife is in their habitat where they belong, before they fall into the hands of hunters and traders.”

# THE ENV WILDLIFE CRIME UNIT

ENV's Wildlife Crime Unit (WCU) was established in 2005 to encourage greater public involvement in efforts to combat illegal wildlife trade, to strengthen the effectiveness of front line law enforcement agencies through support and cooperation, and to facilitate public reporting of crimes.

The WCU administers a national toll-free hotline for reporting wildlife crimes. Information reported through the hotline is passed on to the appropriate authorities. ENV then works closely with law enforcement agencies, tracking each case through to conclusion, and documenting the results on ENV's Wildlife Crime Incident Tracking System. Over 8,400 cases have been recorded since the WCU was established in 2005.

**The main aims of ENV's Wildlife Crime Unit are to:**

- Encourage public participation in efforts to stop the illegal trade of wildlife
- Provide support to law enforcement agencies tasked with combating wildlife crime
- Document crimes and work with authorities to identify and address factors that contribute to wildlife crime
- Provide law enforcement agents with timely alerts containing intelligence and analysis relating to criminal activities

ENV's efforts to combat illegal hunting and trade of wildlife are made possible thanks to the generous support of the following partners:

*Amnéville Zoo  
Awely, Wildlife and People  
Cleveland Metroparks Zoo  
Columbus Zoo and Aquarium  
Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)  
Four Paws  
Freeland Foundation (ARREST Program)  
Houston Zoo  
Humane Society International (HSI) of Australia  
International Rhino Foundation (IRF)  
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation  
Save the Rhinos International (SRI)  
Six Senses Con Dao  
The Body Shop Foundation  
The Rufford Maurice Laing Foundation  
United States Fish and Wildlife Service  
World Animal Protection*

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