

Cambodia
Central Cardamoms Protected Forest Project
News from the Field

October 2016
Conservation International

Management of the Central Cardamoms Mountains National Park (CCMNP)

Over the reporting period, CI worked closely with the Ministry of the Environment (MoE) to ensure the smooth transfer of FA rangers to MoE management. This ensured that the rangers continued their duties and there was no gap in law enforcement over this time. All Military Police (MPs) were also retained, ensuring that the full complement of law enforcement has been continuously in place. As part of efforts to strengthen enforcement across the CCMNP, the rangers were rotated between different stations, ensuring they are constantly exposed to different circumstances and mixed with different ranger groups.

Efforts to strengthen the management of the CCMNP continued with the completion of a new ranger station at O'Som with support from the Embassy of Japan. The new station has a wider range of functions and will be able to accommodate a larger number of personnel. The new station is located near a critical transit route, which will make enforcement activities more effective.

Meetings were conducted with the MoE chief of security for O'Som province in order to resolve land encroachment issues. In another meeting with the MoE, CI and Wildlife Alliance (an NGO operating in a nearby region), an agreement was reached to stop the illegal timber harvesting activities of a construction company that had been operating in the CCMNP. The company has since stopped working. At a national policy level, CI continued to actively participate in the design of the Environmental Code which is intended to offer a supportive framework to the laws governing natural resources. This important effort has been complemented by continued support to the MoE for the design of conservation corridors within the CCMNP and connecting the CCMNP to other protected areas.

Also over this reporting period, a study team from the Maddox Jolie Pit (MJP) foundation visited the Thmar Bang ranger station and the TaTai Leu community. This exposed the participants to new enforcement approaches and to the successful eco-tourism project in Tatai Leu.

As part of continued monitoring efforts, CI, partners and the MoE collected all of their camera traps in the CCMNP. The camera traps had been in the field for almost a year and accumulated a significant amount of data-including the capture of 64 species, of which 14 remain unidentified. Collaboration with research institutions continued, with a researcher from a New Zealand university conducting research on micro-hydro units in the CCMNP. His research found that the region has the highest number of such units in the country.



Micro-hydro unit



Researcher studying the micro-hydro unit, Tatoi Leu

Photographs by La Pengly ©

In late September, CI worked with the MoE to create an action plan and budget for the CCMNP in the second half of the year.

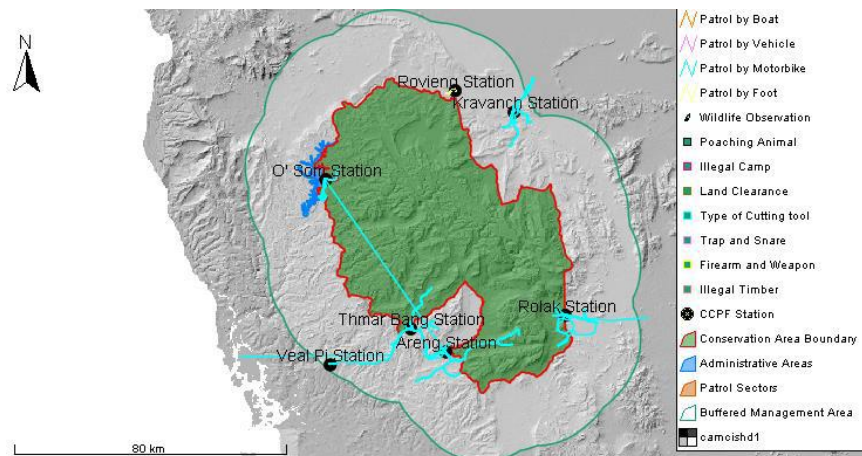
Trust Fund

The Trust Fund Committee meeting is scheduled for the next reporting period.

Patrolling and Response to Illegal Activities

The rangers continued their patrols over the reporting period and completed the process of transferring from the FA to the MoE.

At present, activities are conducted from six ranger stations. 137 patrols (including nine night patrols) were conducted over a period of 146 days covering 1,850 km.



The CCMNP Management team meets regularly. Discussions are focused largely on how to transfer rangers from the FA to the MoE, how to strengthen the relationship with the MoE and how best to manage the situation of the transfer. Patrols continued to focus on highly endangered species, including dragon fish pools and Siamese crocodile sanctuaries.

Training

A variety of training was conducted both within Cambodia and outside. WildScan (smartphone app) training was conducted for all rangers at the stations and again in Phnom Penh. This app increases the speed and accuracy of information around illegal activities. In addition, CI conducted training for Grandis timber. The training focused on building the capacity of the company's ranger force on SMART (a tool for utilizing geographic information while on patrol) and patrolling techniques. Grandis Timber own a land concession that borders the CCMNP and it is believed that by working with them, we are able to strengthen our relationship with the private sector and protect the buffer zone in the southwest corner of the CCMNP.

Training was also conducted to familiarize rangers with the use of radios, GIS and GPS.

Mr. Manak, CCMNP Manager, undertook an Advanced Wildlife Trafficking course in Bangkok, Thailand from August 29 through September, 2 2016. The course was provided by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The course provided an overview of various wildlife trafficking investigative topics, which are reinforced through field exercises. The curriculum covered Wildlife Trafficking, Case Management and Report Writing, Sources of Information, Ethics & Corruption, Undercover Investigations, interviewing and vehicle and border inspections.

Camera Trap Data

Significant camera trap data was collected and is currently being analysed. Some stunning footage of a pregnant elephant was captured on camera.

Video links:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B6NcrxjWde7wZmdIYm9qNEstajQ/view>

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B6NcrxjWde7weVU0bU90dWhDbGs/view>

Community Based Eco-tourism (CBET)

Although CI significantly advanced its development of CBET in Tatai Leu, for the past several months Cambodia has been in the rainy season, thus few tourists came to the area. CI used this time to strengthen community organizations for the hosting of eco-tourism, purchase bicycles for tourists to rent and to improve infrastructure. Local home stay facilities and sign boards were also completed.



Example of sign board for Tatai Leu eco-tourism



In front of the CBET information office with new bicycles

Photographs by Sokhorn Kheng©

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