

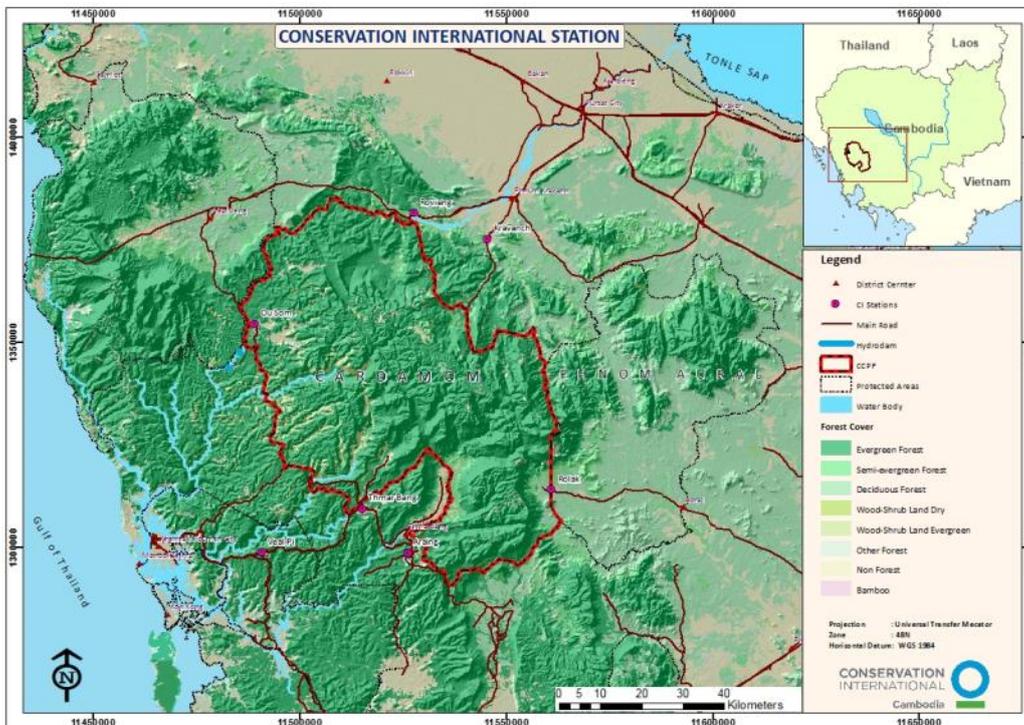
Cambodia Central Cardamom Protected Forest Project

News from the Field

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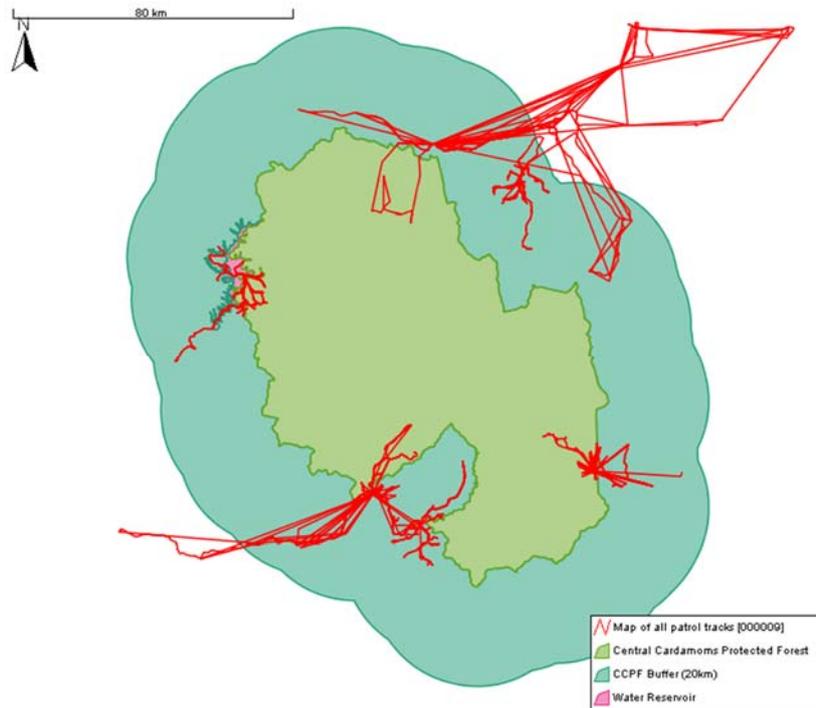
Central Cardamom Protected Forest

The Cardamom region in the southwestern part of Cambodia is a wilderness paradise and one of the last remaining old-growth forests in Southeast Asia. The region has the country's heaviest rainfall, and the waters that flow through here support the livelihood of tens of thousands of people. In the heart of the Cardamom region is the approximately 400,000-hectare Central Cardamom Protected Forest, which we are working with the indigenous people and the government to protect.



Forest Patrols

Patrols are indispensable to protecting the forest. There is still much illegal logging and wildlife poaching, so we are working with the Cambodian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, local residents, and forest rangers to crack down on these illegal activities. The green part of the inset map above is the Central Cardamom Protected Forest. The patrols extend as far as the surrounding 20-kilometer area. For the three months of July to September, a cumulative total of 1,325 man-days were conducted, covering more than 6,000 kilometers represented by the red line, with participants often camping overnight on their patrols.



Seizing Illegally Logged Timber

In July, patrols investigated areas where illegal logging was taking place, seizing a total of 16 m³ of high-end wood (equivalent to about 80 drums full) that had been hidden under dried grass. The Central Cardamom is rich with valuable trees, and many illegal logging operations work deep in the forest to cut down trees that they can sell for high prices. These criminal activities are often well organized, so the forests must be policed thoroughly and carefully.



Small Unmanned Airplanes

The Central Cardamom Protected Forest is huge. At 400,000 hectares, it is approximately twice the size of Tokyo. To allow ourselves to quickly find out about changes in even the most remote parts of the forest, we have begun a trial using reconnaissance drones for patrol purposes. These small, unmanned airplanes fly along preprogrammed routes and take video of the forest situation with built-in cameras. We are hoping they will provide the rangers with valuable assistance in patrol duties.



Towards Better Forest Management

Four rangers went to neighboring Thailand to take part in training on forest management. For two weeks, they received thorough training on how to prevent illegal activities across international borders. In a landlocked nation like Cambodia, forests stretch over countries regardless of borders, and illegally poached animals and logged trees are carried across country borders. Therefore, management of protected forests requires taking into account such crimes as these.



Ecotourism

Under the project, development of ecotourism is conducted by the community to generate its own income. This year, we discussed the system and necessary equipment with the community groups. The next step is to open an ecotourism office to promote the ecotourism that can be experienced in Central Cardamom.



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