

**Cambodia
Central Cardamoms Protected Forest Project
News from the Field**

**February 2017
Conservation International**

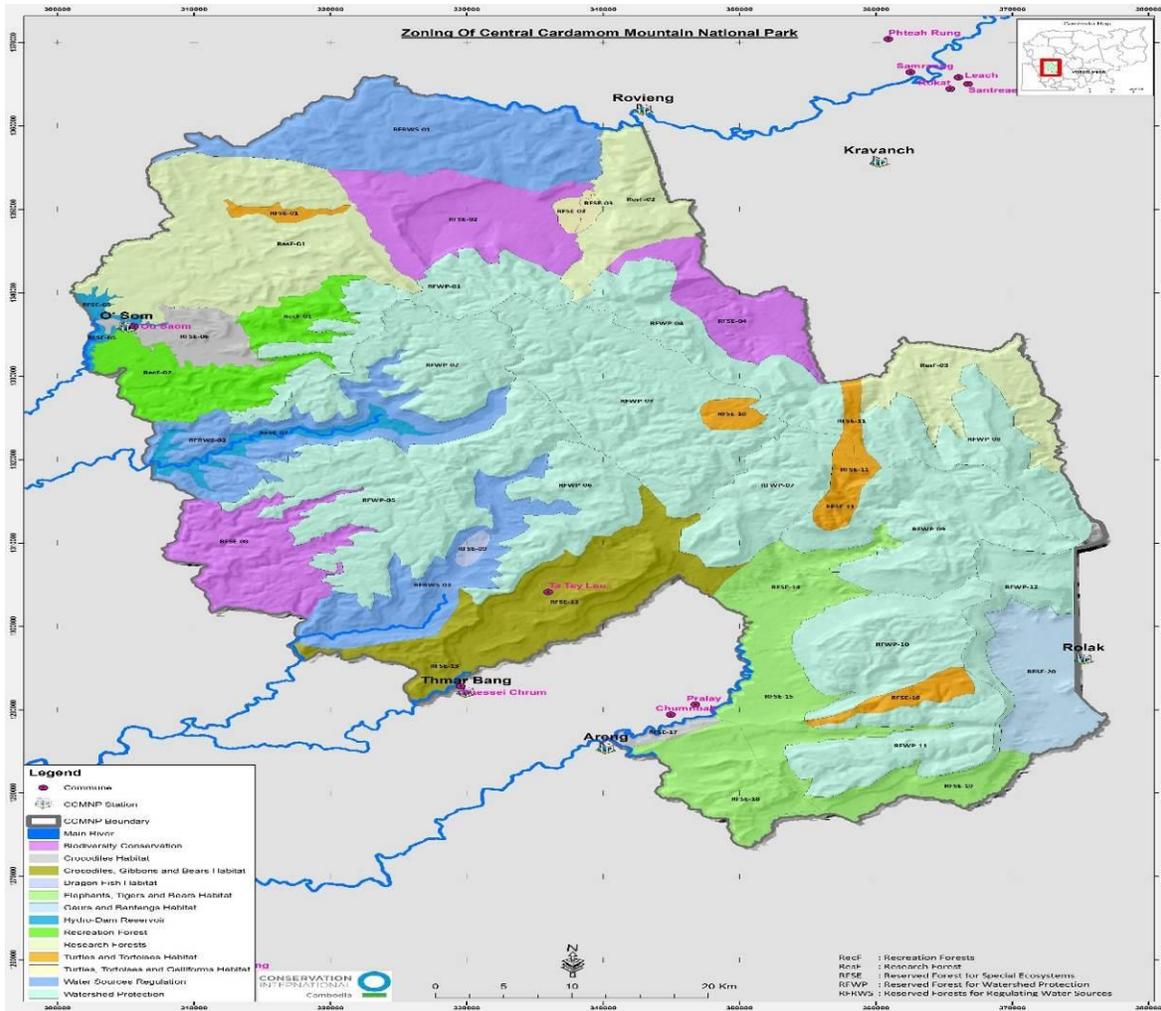


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Management of the Central Cardamoms Mountains National Park

The Ministry of Environment (MoE) deepened its management of the Central Cardamoms National Park (CCMNP) over the reporting period. All former Forestry Administration (FA) rangers are now officially MoE rangers. Mission orders allowing the MoE rangers to patrol were issued in October 2016, and the rangers were able to restart their patrols on a wider range. A six-month workplan was developed, covering 1) finalization of the CCMNP's management plan 2) completion of ranger and station safety protocols and the training of rangers on community engagement 3) use of technology, especially SMART, for efficient data collection, 4) working with the MoE on zoning, and 5) station-level planning, needs assessments, and improvements.

In preparation for efforts to zone the CCMNP as part of the development of the management plan, an initial Draft Zoning map of agro-ecological areas was created, as below.



Trust Fund

A Trust Fund Committee meeting was held on December 19 and attended by 12 board members. The six-month workplan and budget was presented at the meeting. Important steps were taken in finalizing the establishment of a Finance Advisory Committee (FAC). Composed of board members and advisors, the FAC will strengthen the financial management of the fund, improve coordination with the Singapore bank overseeing the fund, and support fund-raising efforts more generally. During the meeting, potential candidates for the FAC were discussed and their CVs reviewed.

At the meeting, the status of the fund was presented. The fund currently has \$2 million. \$70,000 will be withdrawn from the fund to support activities over the next six months, which include paying salaries and providing support for logistics, infrastructure, and capacity building. This is a significant event since it is the first time funds have been drawn and used from the Trust Fund.

Patrolling and enforcement

The rainy period restricted movement for much of the reporting period, meaning that there were fewer long patrols. However, the ranger teams were able to close an illegal yellow vine factory, which had the potential to cause significant ecological damage to the surrounding area. This achievement was featured in The Cambodia Daily.

New roads have been built into the southern part of the CCMNP. While this is expected to bring benefits to communities, it also poses a real challenge to law enforcement since the area is now more accessible to more kinds of people.

The Thmar Bang station was refurbished and the O'Som station was completed.

Four partner organizations and the MoE are working together over the next six months to develop a station-by-station budget of operations.

There were 308 patrols undertaken, covering 317 man-days and nine nights. The total distance travelled was 4,110 kilometers. The patrols achieved the following results: 15 people were warned over land clearing, 76 pieces of timber were confiscated and/or left at the scene, one air gun and one muzzle loader were confiscated, two illegal camps were destroyed, 207 Snares were confiscated (204 nylon snares and three rope snares), seven chainsaws and one machete were confiscated, and 17 hectares of land clearance was stopped.





Scenes of patrols; some of the items confiscated (© Peov Somanak)

Training

Mr. Manak, CCMNP Manager, travelled to Thailand for training conducted by USAID on the topic of the wildlife trade. Six station managers received training on wildlife health surveillance. Group training for MoE rangers was conducted at the Samkos Wildlife CCMNP.



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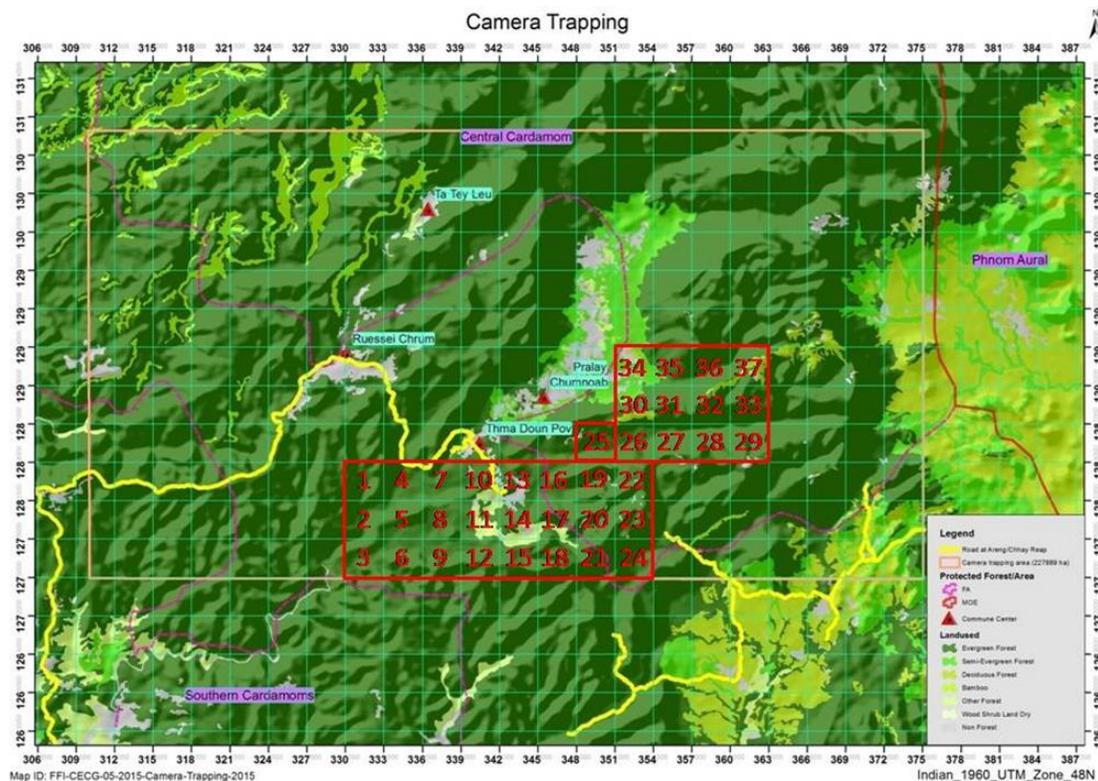
Biodiversity research: Camera trap data

There were a number in biodiversity research successes over the reporting period. Based on collaboration with the MoE and Fauna and Flora International (FFI), CI consolidated its camera trap data in a CCMNP camera trap report.



Better understanding of the presence or absence of animals, primarily large mammals, is critical to assist decision makers on the priority areas for conservation management.

Camera traps were laid out in a 3-km² grid across specific target areas. One camera was placed in each grid section. A training session on camera trap setting was conducted for all team members. A safety briefing was given and all teams were equipped with first aid kits and radio communications before field work began. Video cameras and still cameras were installed in equal numbers. The camera traps were set at such a height as to capture the types of animals whose tracks were observed before camera placement.



Map showing location of camera trap grids in the southern part of CCMNP

A total of 4,233 still photos and 56,912 video clips were taken. Sixty-five vertebrate species were observed. Video images of a pregnant elephant were captured. Additionally, video captured images of Asian Black Bears (*Ursus thibetanus*), Asian Golden Cats (*Catopuma temminckii*), and Gaurs (bison) (*Bos gaurus*).



A pregnant elephant captured by a joint FFI, MoE, and CI camera trap

Community-based Eco-tourism (CBET)

The CBET programming has grown rapidly over the reporting period. Most recently, a company, JJ-SEA (based in Singapore) sent volunteers to the site to help with the construction of specific infrastructure and to assess the quality of the project. The volunteers participated in a number of eco-tourism activities in order to better understand their quality.



JJ-SEA volunteers painting the information center

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