



"Year of the Tiger" - A time to take action for tigers

Education for Nature-Vietnam (ENV) urged the Vietnamese public to take action to protect the world's remaining tigers at a press conference on March 15 in Hanoi, marking the release of preliminary findings from a twelve-month investigation of the tiger trade in Vietnam.

The ENV investigation revealed links between some tiger farms in Vietnam and illegal trade and provided significant insight into the mechanics of the trade, including the smuggling of tigers across borders and potential criminal networks operating in Vietnam that may be responsible for much of the tiger trade.

Since 2005, there have been 16 documented seizures of tigers in trade involving 29 animals. ENV believes that this is only a small fraction of the number of tigers that are illegally sourced either from farms in Vietnam or smuggled into Vietnam each year to produce "tiger bone glue", a form of traditional medicine (TM) believed to strengthen bones, increase vitality, and treat a range of other ailments.

The investigation, carried out in cooperation with investigators from several government agencies, profiled six known private businesses keeping live tigers and two state zoos. Interviews were conducted with a range of people knowledgeable about the trade, including suspects involved in smuggling cases, tiger bone glue makers, traditional medicine shop owners, and informants.



"While we celebrate the many successes of the Environmental Police in investigating and seizing tigers in trade, we recognize the need for the government to strengthen monitoring of tiger farms in Vietnam and strongly recommend that farms that are engaged in illegal activities be immediately closed," says Van Anh, ENV's Wildlife Trade Program Manager.

During the March press conference, Van Anh went on to highlight the need for Vietnam to develop more effective cooperation between law enforcement counterparts across borders. "The tiger trade is a regional, not just a national crisis, involving many countries," says Van Anh. "Our law enforcement agencies need to work with counterparts in Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and other countries with clear links in the trade to identify and prosecute the kingpins that control and finance the illegal trade."

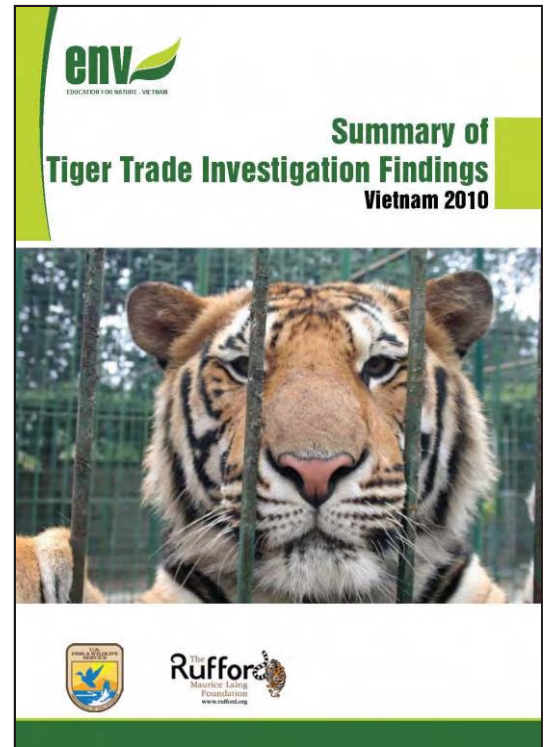
ENV plans to produce a confidential report to key law enforcement agencies and decision-makers in early May that will provide a more detailed review of the investigation's findings.

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Some of our key findings in the tiger trade investigation include:

- Since 2006, ENV's Wildlife Crime Unit has documented 104 crimes involving tigers. Sixteen of these cases involved seizures of tigers including frozen or unfrozen remains, or tiger bones. One incident involved live tigers.
- The tiger trade in Vietnam is specifically focused on supplying tigers for tiger bone TM production. Tiger TM products are intended for Vietnamese consumers, not exported.
- Consumers obtain tiger bone glue through personal contacts with brokers, witnessing the event to assure authenticity of the product, and less often purchasing products over the counter.
- Three of six of registered tiger farms are suspected of being involved in illegal tiger trade activities.
- Of 29 tigers seized in trade, most appear to have originated abroad from places such as tiger farms in Laos.



Link to the summary:

[http://envvietnam.org/library/Resource%20and%20Publication/Tiger%20summary%20\(ENfinal:%202013%20March%202010\).pdf](http://envvietnam.org/library/Resource%20and%20Publication/Tiger%20summary%20(ENfinal:%202013%20March%202010).pdf)



Ending bear farming and trade

ENV warns bear farm owners not to violate law

Bear farm owners throughout Vietnam received a letter from ENV in March that urges farmers to follow the law or face fines or possible confiscation of their bears. The letter, intended to reinforce the farmer's understanding of regulations in relation to the keeping of bears, warns bear owners not to extract bear bile from their captive bears or purchase new unregistered bears or cubs.

The letter goes on to advise that bear farm owners may face criminal charges if caught in possession of an illegal unregistered bear. In addition to the ban on selling bear bile, owners may not sell any part or product made from bears. This includes bears that have died in their possession, which must be destroyed in accordance with the law. Bear owners also cannot transfer bears in their possession to other farms or locations without permission from the Forest Protection Department.

There are approximately 4,000 captive bears on farms in Vietnam. A majority of these bears were registered in 2005 under a plan that involved



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inserting identification microchips into all registered bears. After the February 2005 cut off date, any bear found on a farm that was not registered would be confiscated, essentially freezing the growth of bear farms by preventing new bears from being taken into captivity on farms.

Although the growth of bear farms has greatly subsided since 2005, ENV has documented 44 cases involving 254 unregistered bears that have since been discovered in private hands. ENV continues to work to encourage local authorities to confiscate illegal bears when they are found. ENV's letter to bear farm owners is part of an ongoing campaign by ENV to end bear farming and trade in Vietnam.

Ranger Bear comic series released

ENV has released a new comic book featuring the full color series of Ranger Bear comic strips that have appeared in the last 14 issues of the popular student nature magazine, Green Forest. The educational series features Ranger Bear, a national hero, and his adventures as he battles to protect nature and the environment with the help of his human and animal friends.

The Ranger Bear comic series will be used by ENV to support ENV's various awareness activities, as well as distributed to environmental educators and programs at 46 National Parks and Protected Areas within the ENV Environmental Education Network.

Comic series titles at a glance

- Ranger School
- Saving rhinos at Cat Tien National Park
- Preventing forest fire
- Saving the last Hoan Kiem turtle
- Protecting the coral reef
- Migratory birds
- Bear specialty restaurants
- Battling poachers
- Protecting the forest
- Bear bile business in Ha Long Bay
- Bear cubs rescued and returned to Laos
- Street market wildlife campaign
- Protecting tigers
- Human and elephant conflict



A PDF version of the comic book is available at:

<http://thiennhien.org/userfiles/file/Ranger%20Bear%20final.pdf>



Turtle team to raise awareness in communities at priority sites

ENV hosted a week-long training course on environmental communication skills development for six staffs of the Asian Turtle Program (ATP). The course was aimed at preparing staff working on two critical turtle conservation projects to carry out turtle-focused awareness activities in schools and villages in their project areas. Following the instructional portion of the training, the group went out to Dong Mo Lake west of Hanoi and practiced their teaching skills in local schools and villages.

Dong Mo Lake, where the world's last-known surviving wild *Rafetus swinhoei* resides, is one of the critical project sites where the Asian Turtle Program will be carrying out regular awareness activities. ENV initiated an awareness program for local communities

there in 2008 and the recent training of Asian Turtle Program staff is intended to help ensure that awareness activities are carried out more regularly in the area.

A second awareness program will focus on areas in central Vietnam where the ATP is working to protect the Vietnamese pond turtle, a critically endangered species that is endemic to central Vietnam.

Link to Press release:

http://www.asianturtlenetwork.org/library/ATCN_news/2010_articles/EE%20training%20PR%2001Mar10.pdf

Link to Chelonian Interpretation Center photo gallery:

[Http://envietnam.org/gallery/latest-gallery.html](http://envietnam.org/gallery/latest-gallery.html)

New visitor center promotes conservation of Vietnam's tortoises and freshwater turtles

Cuc Phuong National Park opened its doors to the region's first visitor interpretation center focused exclusively on the conservation and protection of tortoises and freshwater turtles.

Located on the grounds of the park's Turtle Conservation Center (TCC), the new educational facilities incorporate a range of interpretive displays and exhibits including underwater viewing tanks, a turtle egg incubation and hatchling room, and a mock hunting camp and forest trail.

This new educational component of the park's turtle conservation center was developed by the park in partnership with ENV in order to promote efforts to protect turtles amongst the park's approximately 80,000 annual visitors.



Journalists watch turtles in underwater viewing tanks at the Cuc Phuong Turtle Conservation Center's new visitor interpretation facility that opened March 10.

Link to Press release:

<http://envietnam.org/library/Press%20Release/PR%20VIC%20Opening%20March%2009,%202010.pdf>



ENV in Action!



ATP communications staff member Nguyen Thu Thuy works with local residents from a village near Dong Mo Lake as part of practical training on environmental communication carried out by ENV.



Kids in Cuc Phuong commune middle school play the Lucky Turtle Board Game as part of a lesson administered by ENV and our Asian Turtle Program partners.



A young boy looks at one of the information panels at an ENV Bear Exhibit in Vinh City. ENV's mobile wildlife awareness team has carried out dozens of similar exhibits throughout Vietnam since 2007.



Kids from a school in the buffer zone of Kon Ka Kinh National Park in Gia Lai province pretend to notify authorities after discovering an endangered primate in the hands of hunters. The game is part of a lesson plan focused on protecting Vietnam's primates.



Hanoi schools receive booklets and posters

ENV distributed 2,450 copies of the Sam Cam Green Club Booklet and air pollution posters to 73 secondary schools in nine districts of Hanoi. The club booklets and posters were developed by ENV to support environmental education activities in urban schools. The booklets, designed specifically for Hanoi, feature information, games, and activities about nature and the environment in Hanoi.

Crime Unit: Building investigation planning and interview skills

A week-long training course on investigation planning and interview technique was held for staff of ENV's Wildlife Crime Unit as part of an effort to strengthen the unit's capacity to investigate and track wildlife crime. Law enforcement trainer and former policeman Justin Gosling hosted the course, which involved a combination of classroom discussion and practical experience in the field.



Wildlife crime investigator Justin Gosling provides training to staff from ENV's Wildlife Crime Unit on investigation planning and interview methodology during a March training session in Hanoi.

VTV training course

ENV co-director Dang Minh Ha participated in a training course hosted by VTV for environmental reporters aimed at building skills in filming and reporting on environmental issues. The field training course was held at Xuan Thuy National Park in Nam Dinh province, an important RAMSAR wetland site and migratory pit stop for the black-faced spoonbill. One of Ha's main responsibilities at ENV is to produce short educational films and public service announcements in support of ENV's work and new skills in film-making will come in handy!



Combating wildlife crime

Street vendors beware: Wildlife volunteers are watching you

A new campaign launched in December 2009 has focused on addressing the problem of street vendors selling wildlife in Ho Chi Minh City. Unlike violations recorded at restaurants and shops, street vendors enjoy the advantage of mobility, moving between locations and quickly closing up shop when the authorities are about. These vendors sell a variety of live wildlife including lorises, macaques, raptors, turtles and snakes.

Working in cooperation with the HCM Forest Protection Department, ENV established an aggressive monitoring program in December involving 15 wildlife volunteers, trained by ENV, who checked, have been checking 25 popular street vendor locations three times a week from mid-December to the end of January. Crimes involving live animals were reported immediately to the HCM mobile team of the Forest Protection Department. As a result of this monitoring and enforcement campaign, the number of

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A red-shanked douc langur confiscated by authorities in Hanoi after it was reported by a member of ENV's Wildlife Volunteer Network.

locations selling wildlife was reduced to only four, as street vendors have either switched to unknown new locations or reduced activity during what might appear to them to be a period of intensified enforcement.

ENV plans to carry out another six-week monitoring campaign in HCM beginning in April, and is discussing with HCMC authorities about how to strengthen efforts to deal with the problem of live animal trade on HCMC streets.

ENV has recently established a Wildlife Crime Unit in the central Vietnam city of Da Nang and plans to open a third office in Ho Chi Minh City. Campaigns are currently planned or underway to address consumer wildlife crime in five major cities.

Wildlife crime statistics

The Wildlife Crime Unit logged a total of 34 new cases this month. Top on the list were:

Tiger and black leopard seized on border

On March 7, Border guards in Quang Tri province stopped a vehicle passing through the Lao Bao Border Gate from Laos and confiscated the body of a 95kg tiger and a 27kg black leopard. Also confiscated were more than one ton of unidentified bones. The shipment was reportedly headed for Quang Binh province.



The frozen remains of a tiger confiscated at the border gate in Quang Tri province as it was being smuggled into Vietnam from Laos along with a black leopard and more than 1000kg of unidentified bones.

Pangolins seized at airport

Authorities seized 33 pangolins hidden amongst crates of soft-shell turtles at Tan Son Nhat Airport in Ho Chi Minh City. The pangolins, two of which died during transportation, were destined for Hanoi and reportedly onwards to China. The surviving animals were transferred to the WAR Cu Chi Rescue Center.

Ivory headed for border

On March 19, five suspects were arrested on Highway 18 heading for the Chinese border after a routine traffic stop resulted in the discovery of nearly 150kg of intact and pieces of elephant tusk in their vehicle.

As at the end of the month, a total of 113 cases have been documented in 2010, bringing the total to 2318 for the number of cases since the WCU became operational in January 2005.

Period	Trade Operations	Smuggling	Selling	Advertising	Possession display	Other	Total
February 2010	1	4	12	4	11	2	34
Total 2010	5	15	62	6	21	4	113



ENV activities at UNIS Spring Fair

On Saturday the 10th of April 2010, the annual UNIS Spring Fair will take place at the UNIS campus in Ciputra, from 10am to 2pm. The fair will provide a fantastic forum for the ENV Mobile Awareness Team to carry out their ongoing public awareness activities. Besides displaying informative exhibit boards on bear trade issues and wildlife confiscated during wildlife trade seizures, visitors can go inside the "Torture Chamber" to experience a darker side of bear hunting and trade. "Bear Speciality", a short comedy about Ranger Bear visiting a restaurant specialising in bear dishes and almost being served to the patrons, will be another attraction. Children will be welcomed into the ENV area and have the opportunity to create their own artwork.

Be sure to mark the festival on your calendar and not miss this exciting event!



A major trade seizure? No, they are boxes of stuffed toy bears and langurs produced by ENV to help raise support for ENV's wildlife protection and awareness activities. Stuffed toys include grey and red shanked douc langurs, Delacour's langur, the Cat Ba langur, Asiatic black bears, rhinos, and elephants.



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Wildlife Crime Gallery: www.savingvietnamswildlife.org
FacebookEnglish:
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?grid=47162312016>

WANTED!

A new poster developed by ENV depicts wildlife traders as wanted criminals and urges the public to take action.



Stop Wildlife Crime!

If you observe wildlife being kept, sold, transported, traded, consumed, or advertised, contact your local authorities or call the ENV Wildlife Crime Hotline

Hotline: **1800-1522** Email: Hotline@fpt.vn