

Impact Spotlight

Southern Cardamom REDD+ Project
Q3 2022



**EVER
LAND**



**WILDLIFE
ALLIANCE**



SPOTLIGHT SUMMARY

Rescue, Care & Release

Wildlife crime is one of the most significant threats to wildlife globally, endangering hundreds of species - thriving in regions of corruption and weak rule of law. In response to a long standing hunting and poaching crisis in the region, the Southern Cardamom REDD+ Project has developed an effective system of rescue, care and release to provide the best possible outcomes for traumatized and injured wild animals, and works with government authorities to ensure traders face justice for their crimes.

To halt wildlife poaching, a variety of measures are undertaken by the project, including three core activities: wildlife field rescue, rehabilitation and eventual release into the wild. This requires effective law enforcement patrolling across the Southern Cardamom REDD+ (SCRP) Project Zone, undertaken by a multi-agency law enforcement team of 148 rangers from 9 Ministry of Environment (MoE) enforcement stations and 3 sub-stations across the Cardamom landscape. Regular and effective boots-on-the-ground law enforcement patrol plays a critical role in the project's long-term strategy for achieving durable forest conservation whilst dismantling wildlife crime networks across Cambodia. Their ultimate goal is to make the SCRP Zone a safe place for the 35 IUCN Red List threatened species who live there, free of poaching, snares, and hunting nets.



IUCN Red List Vulnerable Sun Bear (*Helarctos malayanus*)





KEY ACTIVITIES

Map of key activities within the Southern Cardamom REDD+ Project area



Forest protection units (rangers) operate across the Project Zone removing snares from the forest floor, rescuing wild animals from snares and confiscating trafficked wild animals. Wild animals that cannot immediately be released back into safe habitat are taken to the Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Center (PTWRC), where they are given veterinary treatment and care for as long as required. All wild animals undergo rehabilitation, and appropriate species are released back into safe, wild habitats under strict protocols, either within the Phnom Tamao forest or at one of the project's managed released sites in Koh Kong.

During patrols, rangers remove snares which are used by hunters to catch wild animals for meat. They consist of traps made from loops of wire or string that catch and trap wild animals as they move along the forest floor. Hunters often set many snares at once, which can result in the death of a large number of wild animals in a short period of time. Rangers also remove wild animals who are still alive from snares and release them back into their natural habitat. Any individual who is wounded or young is handed over to the Wildlife Rehabilitation Station in Chi Phat or Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Center.



CARE & RELEASE

This program is designed to rehabilitate animals victimized by the wildlife trade and provide them with the support and care necessary to ready them for release back into the wild. Release is always the primary goal. Animals that fully recover, and those born at Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Center, are released back into the wild (under IUCN protocols) at one of the three primary release sites. The project has successfully released thousands of animals, including:



Sunda Pangolin
(*Manis javanica*)

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED



Binturong
(*Arctictis binturong*)

VULNERABLE



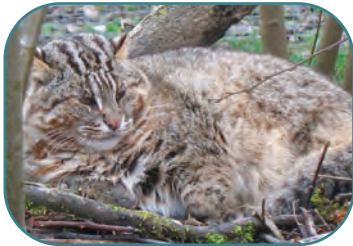
Bengal slow loris
(*Nycticebus bengalensis*)

ENDANGERED



Northern Pig-tailed Macaque
(*Macaca leonina*)

VULNERABLE



Leopard Cat
(*Prionailurus bengalensis*)

LEAST CONCERN



Malayan porcupine
(*Hystrix brachyura*)

LEAST CONCERN



Alexandrine parakeet
(*Psittacula eupatria*)

NOT THREATENED



Hill Mynah
(*Gracula religiosa*)

LEAST CONCERN

Animals that can survive in the wild are released under strict protocols following health checks and rehabilitation in natural enclosures. First, they are acclimatized in an enclosure built at the release site. After an appropriate period of time, a door will be opened to allow the animals their freedom to the forest. Supplementary food is provided for as long as necessary, and released animals are monitored using a combination of radio telemetry, camera traps, visual observation, or footprint identification to ensure they are making a successful return to the wild. Forest rangers on the ground patrol the area day and night, ensuring released wildlife are in a safe habitat, free from the dangers of being poached.



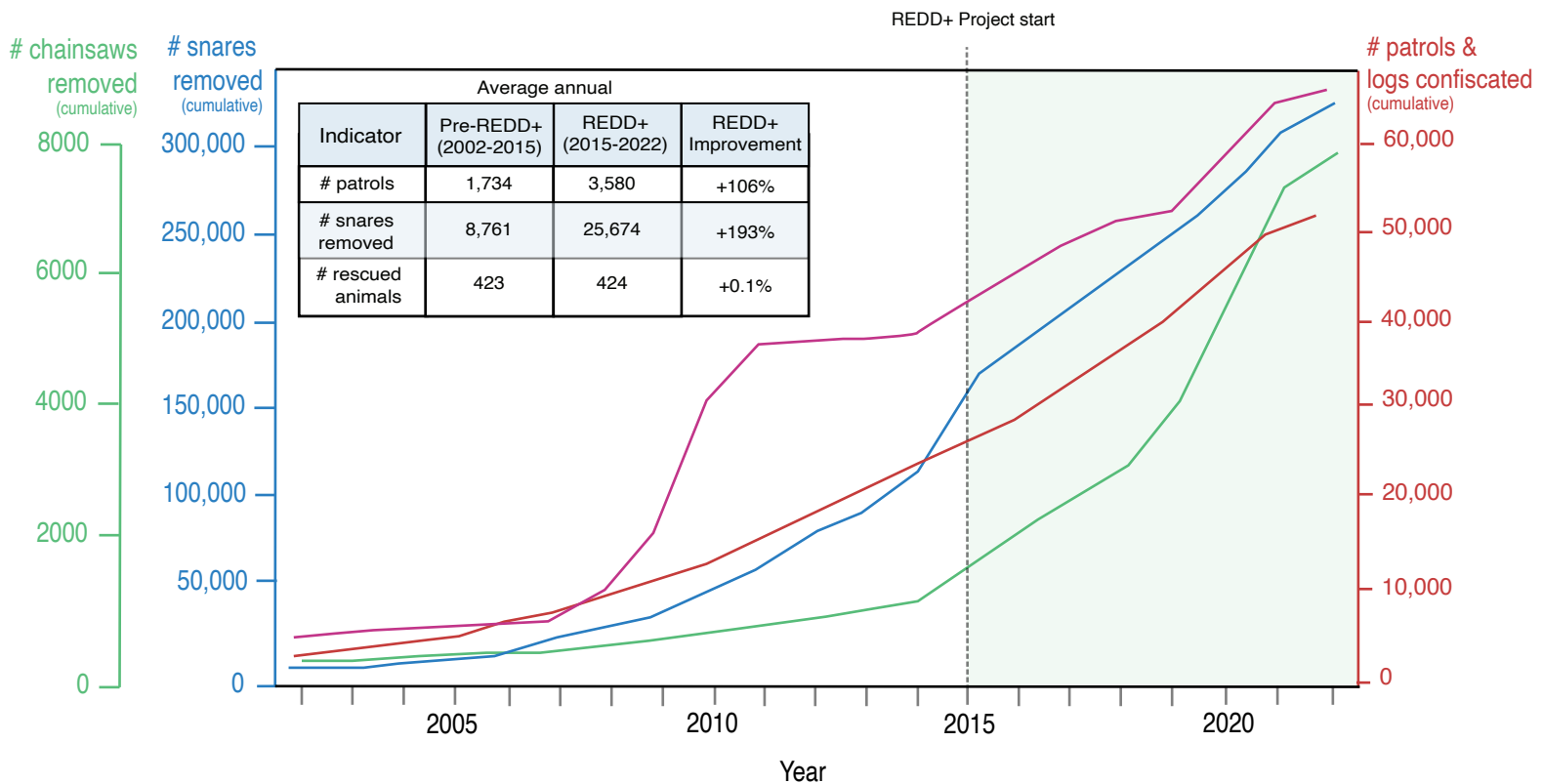
MILESTONES

Before the project started this area had no law enforcement, and logging and wildlife poaching were rampant. After a series of conservation interventions by Wildlife Alliance and subsequent support from the SCRП, regular and effective law enforcement patrols have enabled the stabilization of wildlife populations in the region.

Since the project began:

- ✔ 208,231 snares have been removed from the forest floor in the SCRП
- ✔ 3,255 live wild animals have been rescued from poaching and illegal wildlife trade and immediately released
- ✔ 582 homemade guns have been seized

The Project Zone of the SCRП has now become the safest habitat in the country thanks to effective law enforcement, with locations which used to be dense in wildlife snares, now snare free zones and considered a safe haven for wild animals.





CURRENT NEWS

In Q3 2022:

- ✔ 12,482 of hunting snares and 1,733 meters of hunting net were removed from the forest floor,
- ✔ 16 homemade guns were confiscated by rangers in SCRP
- ✔ 77 live animals (14 species) were rescued by removal from snares or by confiscation from wildlife poachers,
- ✔ 69 live wild animals were immediately released by the SCRP rangers into their natural habitat.

The releases were conducted in compliance with the Wildlife Release Protocol which was developed by the Project. The following 8 individuals who were young and with minor wounds were handed over to Wildlife Rehabilitation Station near Chi Phat commune for rehabilitation:

- ✔ 1 baby leopard cat
- ✔ 3 common palm civets
- ✔ 1 oriental pied hornbill
- ✔ 3 elongated tortoises

During this quarter, the project has also observed an increase in the awareness of local people in understanding the importance of wildlife protection and due to educational social media campaigns are now more engaged in the process. Local people have become informants of the Law Enforcement Patrol Units which demonstrates their active engagement in being part of the project's conservation efforts. With a bonus system set up awarding \$150 for every 500 snares removed, there is also now better collaboration among rangers.



A Leopard Cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*)
recovering at Phnom Tamao Rescue Centre

The IUCN Red List vulnerable Wreathed Hornbill (*Rhyticeros undulatus*)





THE FUTURE

The ultimate goal is to ensure that the SCRP is a snare-free zone, and maintaining good communication with existing informant networks and increasing the network and awareness of local community members is critical to achieving this. As for long-term ambitions, the SCRP will partner with the Ministry of Environment (who is the project proponent) to conduct a Zero-Snaring Campaign in Koh Kong in 2023. Through raising awareness of the danger of snaring and the damage that it can cause to wildlife, the campaign will work towards eliminating snaring in protected areas in Cambodia through:

- ✔ Outreach for public awareness and policy change
- ✔ Effective law enforcement and prosecution
- ✔ Closing down wildlife markets by ending bushmeat consumption
- ✔ Tackling demand reduction
- ✔ Ending the illegal wildlife trade

Coupling the Zero-Snaring Campaign with increased foot patrols by rangers will help mitigate the increasing and direct threats (particularly habitat loss and hunting) to IUCN Red List species in the project region, thus ensuring their long-term survivability and preventing public health risks from zoonotic diseases through illegal wildlife trade and bushmeat consumption...

The critically endangered Sunda Pangolin (Manis javanica) is considered the most trafficked mammal in the world (IUCN, 2014). Targeted for their scales for traditional medicine and for consumption as a delicacy, largely driven by the Chinese market. Wildlife Alliance has rescued over 400 live Sunda pangolins from the illegal wildlife trade since 2001.

