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*LAG-A-00-99-00048-00
SSO 1 (934-001-01)*

Forests of the Lower Mekong
Annual Report
10/01/2008 - 09/30/2009

for

World Wildlife Fund

September 30, 2008
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ADB	Asian Development Bank
BCI	Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative ¹
BMP	better management practices
CAN	Conservation Action Network
CaNDO	Cambodian NTFP Development Organization
CBEE	Community-Based Environmental Education
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource Management
CBRM	Community Based Resource Management
CEP	Core Environment Program
CET	Community Extension Team
CFI	Community Forestry International
CNRM	Community Natural Resource Management
CPF	Community Protected Forest
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DNCP	Dept of Nature Conservation and Protection, Cambodia
EN	Endangered
EPL	Eastern Plains Landscape
EE	Environmental Education
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPL	Eastern Plains Landscape
FA	Forestry Administration (MAFF), Cambodia
FLEG	Forest Law Enforcement Governance
FLM	Forest of the Lower Mekong
FPD	Forest Protection Department
FTN	Forest Trade Network
GFTN	Global Forest Trade Network
GMP	WWF Greater Mekong Programme
GMS	Greater Mekong Subregion
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Cambodia
MIST	Management Information System
MoE	Ministry of the Environment, Cambodia
MOMS	Management Oriented Monitoring System
MoT	Ministry of Transportation, Cambodia
MPF	Mondulkiri Protected Forest
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan
NR	Natural Resource
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NT	Near Threatened
NTFP	Non-timber Forest Product
PES	Payment for Environmental Services
PMB	Project Management Board
PPWS	Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary

¹ TA 6289–REG: Greater Mekong Subregion – Core Environment Program (CEP) and Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative (BCI) Phase 1 (2006 – 2008) - Cambodia: Eastern Plains Biodiversity Corridor; started in October 2006 and jointly implemented by WWF and WCS

PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PLUP	Participatory Land use Planning
REDD	Reduced Emissions from Degradation and Deforestation
SWA	Srepok Wilderness Area
VFTN	Vietnam Forest and Trade Network
VTV	Vietnam Television

Forests of the Lower Mekong

Project Overview

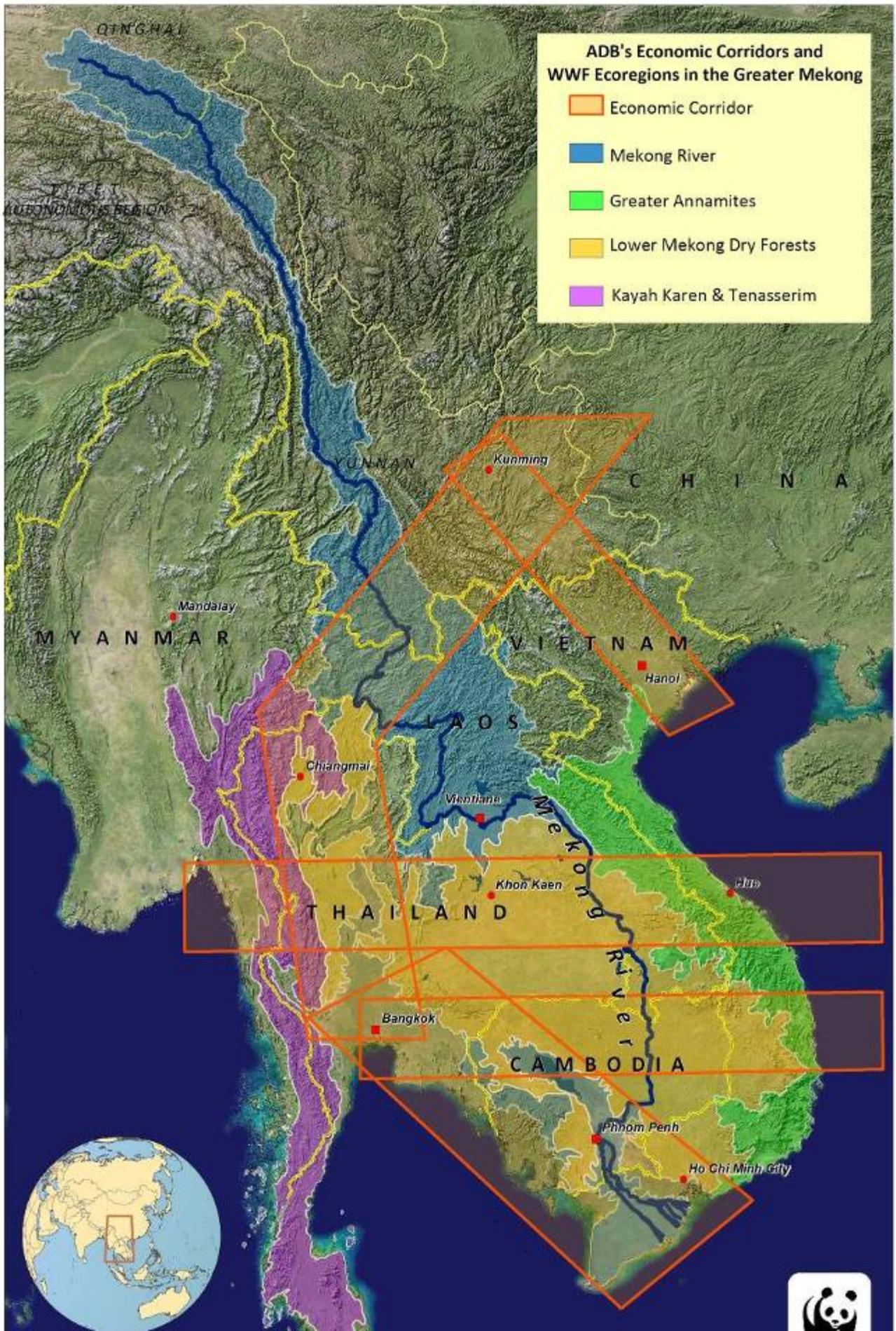
Description of Site

The Forests of the Lower Mekong refers to an ecoregion complex consisting of the Greater Annamites, the Lower Mekong Dry Forests, the Lower Mekong Floodlands and the Cardamom Mountains. All four of these are Global 200 ecoregions comprising an incredibly high diversity of habitats including deciduous dipterocarp forests, moist evergreen forests, karst limestone forests, open grasslands and savannas, upland plateaus, wetlands, and pristine riparian environments. WWF Greater Mekong Programme² focuses on two of these forest ecoregions as key priorities, the Greater Annamites and the Lower Mekong Dry Forests, both of which contain globally important ecosystems and support diverse, abundant, and rare wildlife populations. A remarkable indication of the unique status of these ecoregions is the fact that six new mammal species—the saola, large-antlered muntjac, Roosevelt’s muntjac, Annamite muntjac, grey-shanked douc and the Annamite striped rabbit—have been described in the Greater Annamites ecoregion alone within the last fifteen years.

These ecoregions are home to other mammal species of global conservation significance. These include the kouprey, Javan rhinoceros, tiger, Asian elephant, wild cattle species, and douc and Francois’ langurs. The region also contains important bird species, such as Edward’s pheasant, sarus crane, giant ibis, and white-shouldered ibis, as well as myriad species of reptiles (such as the Siamese crocodile—the rarest crocodile in the world), amphibians, fish, invertebrates, and plants. The aquatic biodiversity of the region is outstanding, with over 1300 species of fish catalogued so far, and recognized as the second most diverse river system in the world. The forests and associated ecosystems also have significant watershed value with westward drainages flowing into the lower Mekong basin, and eastern drainages flowing through Vietnam into the South China Sea.

The Forests of the Lower Mekong are home to hundreds of thousands of upland and lowland human communities who have cultivated the lands, utilized the water resources, and subsisted – from the forest products for hundreds of years. In both Cambodia and Vietnam, minority peoples—many of whom practice shifting cultivation—live mainly in the upland areas. The majority of ethnic groups in each country are traditionally lowland wet rice cultivators, though migration into the less densely populated uplands is occurring in some areas, most notably the central highlands of Vietnam.

² The WWF Greater Mekong Programme came together in 2005 with the merging of the WWF Indochina Program Office and WWF Thailand Country Office. The headquarters is based in Hanoi with country offices in each of the lower Mekong countries - Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam - and staff based in Yunnan Province, China.



Threats

- Commercial and unregulated logging is reducing primary and secondary forest cover.
- Hunting for local consumption—food, medicine and curio appeal—and for the wildlife trade is seriously impacting a wide range of species, and is exacerbated by increased human activities and shrinking habitat.
- Illegal trade in wildlife products, timber, and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) is increasing because of market demand, widening income disparities between rural and urban areas, and inefficient law enforcement.
- Habitat loss and fragmentation, primarily through land conversion for agriculture and logging, is creating increased pressure on many forest species.
- Commercialization of agriculture and a transition away from subsistence farming is decreasing the sustainability of land use practices and leading to agricultural expansion.
- Infrastructure development, such as proposed hydroelectric schemes and irrigation projects (which have the potential to flood habitat, change drainage patterns, and alter fisheries) and road construction, are opening access to natural resources in remote areas.
- Gold mining is responsible for direct destruction of natural habitat, while the associated processing of ore causes water and soil pollution that kills wildlife, degrades or destroys aquatic habitat, and poisons local people. These extractive industries also encourage in-migration that alters economic and social relationships, usually to the detriment of sustainable customary resource management systems.

These threats are all exacerbated by increasing population pressure, the resource demands of industrializing societies, uncoordinated policies and regulations, and more recently, an economic downturn that has drained government coffers and decreased family livelihood options.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

Increasing cooperation within the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), the regional economic plan designed by the Asian Development Bank, continues to drive national development strategies, the impact of which is increasingly more evident in the significant growth in regional investment in the agriculture, minerals, energy, and infrastructure sectors. The GMS is promoting economic activity and associated investments in infrastructure development, to be concentrated along three “economic corridors” that crisscross the subregion (from Mawlamyine, Myanmar to Da Nang, Vietnam; from Kunming, China to Bangkok, Thailand; and from Bangkok, Thailand to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam). Recognizing the potential negative impacts of economic corridor development on biodiversity and natural resources, the GMS has also established a Working Group on Environment (WGE), comprised principally of senior government officials from environment and natural resource ministries. WWF is also a participant in the WGE (with observer status).

In FY08, WWF Greater Mekong Programme responded to the emergence of regional threats and opportunities posed by GMS, by developing strategies for responses at the same regional scale, addressing mainly the issues of Infrastructure, Agriculture, Timber Trade and Wildlife Trade. In addition, we have added strategies to address Climate Change and Mining – key drivers of biodiversity loss in the region. The overall goal of WWF’s Greater Mekong Program (GMP) remains unchanged: *to conserve and sustainably manage biodiversity and natural resources of the Mekong region in order to ensure ecological integrity, to protect the natural assets base for*

the poor, and as a basis for poverty alleviation. WWF GMP pursues a twofold strategy: site level interventions address threats that are specific to the two countries (Vietnam and Cambodia) and interventions that address threats comprehensively at a regional scale. At the site level, threats are primarily driven by poverty and lack of enforcement. At the regional level, the threats are primarily driven by unsustainable and environmentally damaging economic development plans or market forces, exacerbated by conflict and lack of coordination among various institutions.

The key objective of the GMP at the regional level is to transform the region's most dominant forces threatening biodiversity in the Mekong, towards more sustainable and healthier trends. This will be achieved through international cooperation on illegal wildlife trade, regional coordination on infrastructure and hydropower planning, regional promotion of payment for environment services, and capacity building for environmental leadership. Initiatives include:

- Economic valuation of environmental services as a tool to influence resource use decision-making;
- Regional agreements and collaboration on international timber trade and wildlife trade;
- EIA adherence (coordination in dam planning and implementation, preventing migration);
- Coordination in GMS planning and construction of roads and dams.

At the site level, GMP pursues the following objectives:

- Community based forest and freshwater management;
- Integrated river basin management;
- Reforestation;
- Reduction of poaching and prevention of illegal wildlife trade;
- Community development and empowerment;
- Improved enforcement and governance.

The main sites are Quang Nam and Thua Thien Hue Provinces of Central Vietnam (Greater Annamites Ecoregion) and Mondulkiri Province in Cambodia (Dry Forests Ecoregion).

I. Greater Annamites

Collaborators/Partners

Government of Vietnam

- Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (MONRE)
- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)
- Electricity of Vietnam (EVN)
- Provincial People's Committees (PPCs) of Quang Nam, Hue, Quang Tri and Lam Dong
- Forest Protection Departments at the province level (FPDs)

Business

- The Coca Cola Company
- MARS
- CARGIL
- OLAM
- Hai's Café

Educational Institutions

- Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)
- Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry (HUAF)
- Vietnam National University
- Center for Research and Environmental Studies (CRES)

International Organizations

- World Bank (WB)
- Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- SNV Netherlands Development Organization

International NGOs

- International Policy Committee (IPC)
- Winrock International
- International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)
- Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)
- Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
- WildAid
- BirdLife
- CORRIN
- TRAFFIC
- Center for Research and Environmental Studies (CRES)

SUMMARY: Period 10/01/08-09/30/09*Greater Annamites Highlights*

In FY09, WWF:

- Removed more than 1500 snares from the four highest priority areas for conservation action within Bach Ma National Park extension and the new Saola Reserve. This has reduced overexploitation - the greatest threat to the core population of saola in the Hue-Quang Nam landscape.
- Implemented a range of conservation and awareness raising actions for the Bach Ma National Park extension, resulting in increased awareness of and support for the Park by local people.
- Was awarded a £300,000 grant in partnership with Durrell Institution of Conservation and Ecology (UK) to be carried out in Vietnam. The grant, entitled ‘Can hunting and conservation of endemic Annamite ungulates be reconciled?’, is expected to advance population research on the saola and to implement effective enforcement measures. Thus this partnership will help continue the saola and ungulate conservation work that GCP helped initiate.
- At the national saola event in Hanoi, handed over to key representatives of the provincial and national governments, signatures of more than 26,000 individuals from more than 150 countries, in support of saola protection. With more than USD 420,000 secured over the coming years, a programme was officially launched to enhance research on and protection of the saola (See Annex 1 for press release).
- Secured more than USD 4 million to initiate: a) a sustainable natural resources management programme (Quang Nam, Hue); b) a Hue-based project to effectively combat illegal wildlife trade; c) a research project to further develop the monitoring method for the saola and to establish more accurate population data; d) several species monitoring and enforcement projects (on gibbons, grey-shanked doucs, saola, Javan rhino).

Results by Objective and Activity**Objective I.1: Protect, restore, and sustainably manage biodiversity elements of high scientific and economic value in the ecoregion*****Activity I.1.1.: Protect key species*****Finalize short-term baseline survey and monitoring methods for saola.**

With WWF support, an international expert was hired to train five teams (10 people each) of local residents in the setting and maintenance of film camera traps within the Hue-Quang Nam Saola landscape. Forty-eight camera traps were set. One FPD ranger from each province (provincial coordinators) was trained in a newly designed data entry and storage system for

camera trapping data (designed by the project). Unfortunately, no pictures of saola were taken, but the systems and capacity for survey and monitoring of saola are now in place.

However, in addition to camera trapping, two other survey methods for determining saola occupancy were tested: wandering transects and point location survey methods. University students were trained in these survey methods at the time of undertaking the trials. The trial demonstrated that wandering transects are superior to point location sampling for sign-based ungulate occupancy surveys, habitat surveys and for assessing snare density. However, the problem with occupancy surveys is that saola and other ungulates are now so scarce within the landscape that the chances of detection are very small. This project has therefore highlighted the need to employ novel techniques, such as using specially trained detector dogs to assist in surveys for saola, that would increase the likelihood of detection. This option is likely to be more cost effective and efficient in the long-term than occupancy surveys by camera trapping, given the high number of camera traps that would be required to do this effectively. WWF is thoroughly investigating survey options and will be piloting the use of detector dogs in conservation in Vietnam for another species in FY10. If successful, this approach may be employed for saola in the near future, greatly increasing detection of saola, with the potential to greatly improve our knowledge of the species' distribution, abundance and ecology to better inform conservation action.

Develop spatially explicit interview methods to uncover and assess local people's knowledge of saola small-scale distribution and status and implement these interviews in villages across the Saola Landscape.

Map of saola distribution at 4 km² resolution prepared based on best available data for the Thua Thien Hue – Quang Nam Saola Landscape.

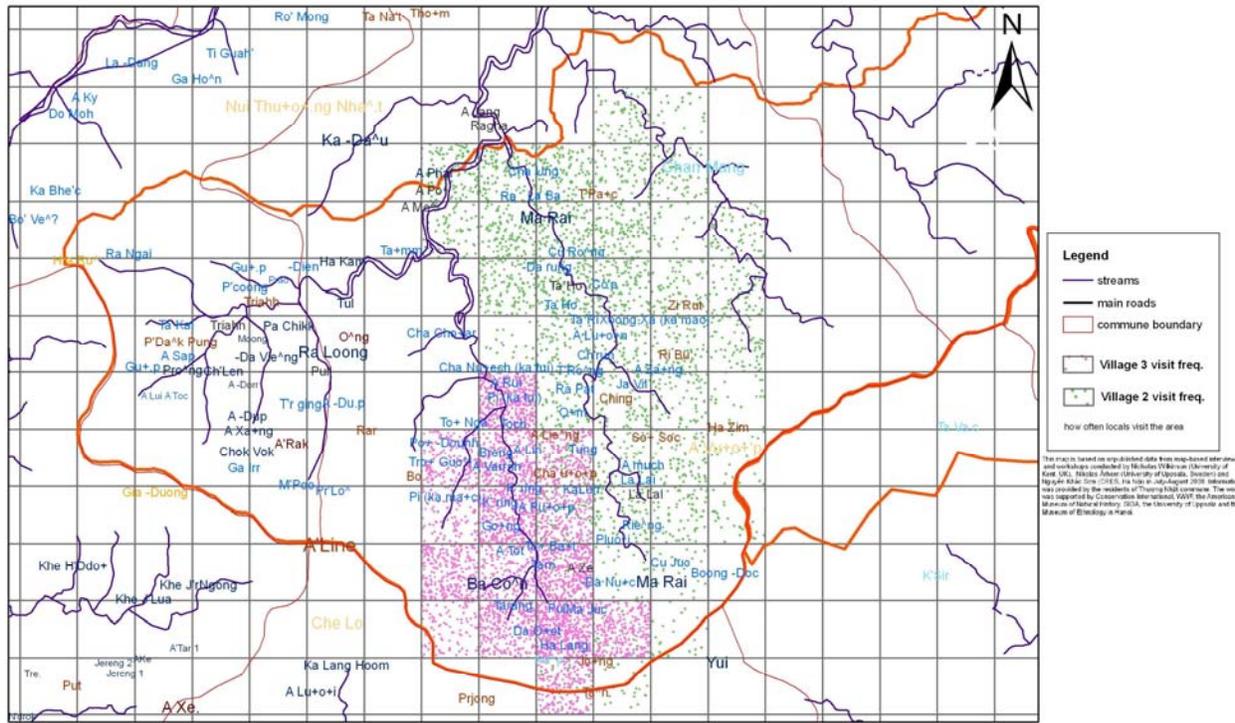
A reliable field survey method for Saola has yet to be developed and Saola densities may be too low for such a method to be possible. However a map is still needed to target snare removal patrols and other conservation efforts. Such a map must be based on two sources of information:

- 1) Information from local people on Saola sightings
- 2) Information from local people on which areas of forest they preferentially visit.

A comprehensive review of Saola sighting records in the Hue – Quang Nam landscape was conducted in 2007 by WWF. We are now working on formal ways to rank these data according to reliability of identification, location and date. The second source of information is important because, without it, we are in danger of overlooking areas which have good Saola populations but where Saola are rarely seen by the communities we have interviewed because they seldom visit the area. In 2008, a community mapping method was developed, allowing us to enquire which areas are more intensely visited. The map below shows this information for 2 villages in the area of the Bach Ma extension and we now have funding to expand this approach to other villages in the area.

For the moment, however, a map is still needed for targeting conservation actions. This must be based on an informal assessment of how many reliable recent Saola records have been received from an area, and on how often interviewed villages visit that area. The map below was derived in this way and used to plan snare removal patrols in 2009.

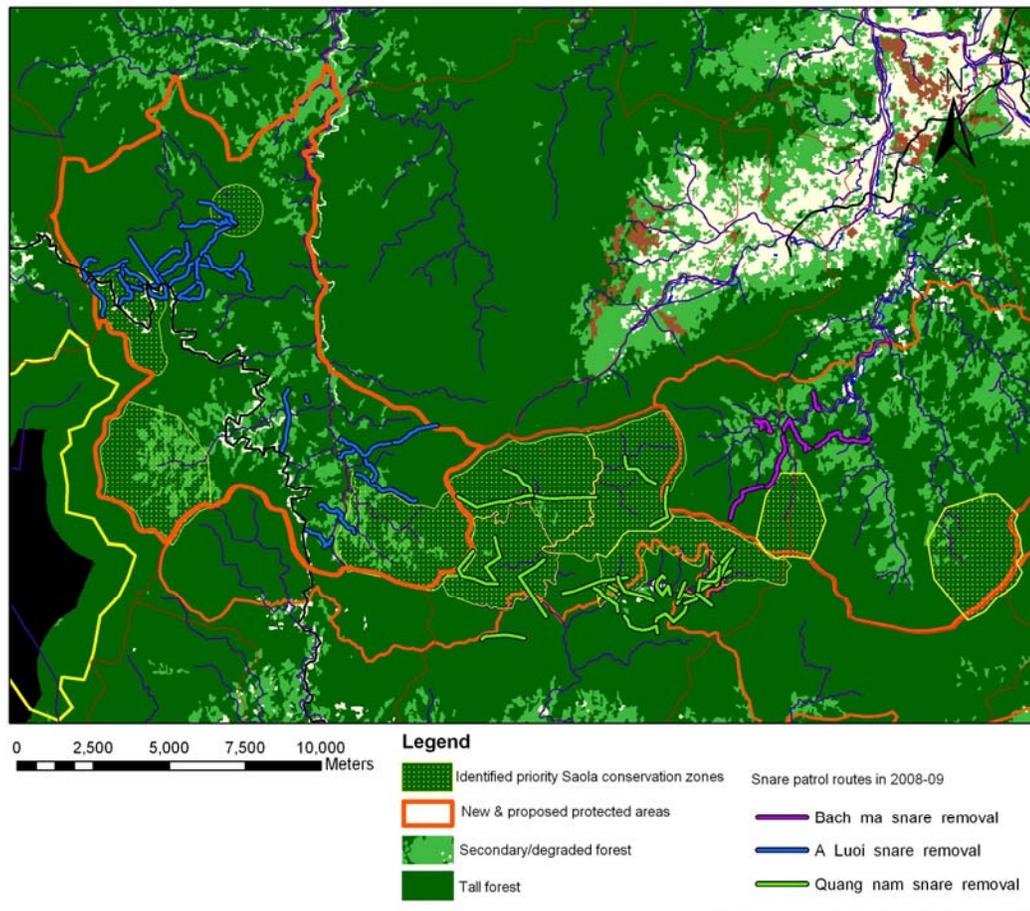
Forest areas used by residents of 2 villages (Th 2 & Th 3) of Thuong Nhat Commune



This map shows the answer of groups from two villages (in terms of beans placed on the map) to the question: "When people from this village go to the forest, where do they mostly go?" Data are only available for village 2 and village 3.

Strengthen law enforcement for saola protection in the newly established protected area through direct grants to the Forest Protection Department and National Park staff in Thua Thien Hue province

In FY09, WWF provided direct grants to the Forest Protection Department and National Park staff in Thua Thien Hue province to train and build the capacity of forest rangers and national park staff. Rangers and park staff were trained in systematic snare removal patrol methodology and data recording. As a result, more than 1500 snares were removed from the four highest priority areas for conservation action, within Bach Ma National Park extension and the new Saola Reserve, which were previously identified by this project. A similar exercise was conducted to determine priority areas for saola within the new Saola Reserve in Quang Nam, and snare removal will be undertaken within these areas through the rest of 2009.



This initiative will have reduced the greatest threat to the core population of saola in the Hue-Quang Nam landscape: overexploitation. However, this approach needs to be continued to ensure that snares are not re-set and the threat is reduced in the long-term. Consequently, recommendations will be made for these regular snare removal patrols to be conducted and funded by the FPD and/or National Parks, to ensure the sustainability of this work.

Activity I.1.2. Protect key sites

Through support for enforcement and awareness raising measures assist Bach Ma National Park with the implementation of its management plan, including the 2010 management plan for its new extension, and with the development of a follow up 2010 management plan for the Bach Ma NP extension.

WWF built the capacity of Bach Ma National Park by providing equipment to the community display house for building awareness of communities in the buffer zone and equipment to two new ranger stations to increase the effectiveness of their law enforcement patrolling in the extension area (Thuong Nhat and Dong Giang). The equipment provided to the new ranger stations included: 5 Global Positioning Systems (GPS Extrex H units); 2 binoculars; 2 digital cameras, 2 hand-held compasses; and 2 map packages 1:25,000. WWF also provided a copy of the book *Protected Mammals in Vietnam* to 10 ranger stations of the National Park. The

community display house has education facilities (for films, plays, and classes). To support the community house efforts to build community understanding and support for the 2010 Bach Ma National Park management plan, including the extension, WWF provided: 2 shop windows; 4 display shelves; over 10 items of ethnic culture from local communities; 1 television; 1 video



recorder; 1 amplifier; 2 loudspeakers; and 2 microphones.

With this equipment the Park was able to conduct a variety of activities to raise community awareness of the new Bach Ma extension area and the need to protect it. For example, two puppet show performances were organized in Thuong Lo, Thuong Long and Thuong Nhat communes, Nam Dong district. Over 100 people attended these puppet shows.

A 2-day training was conducted for 10 primary and secondary school teachers in Bach Ma extension area communes of A Ting, Song Kon, Tu and Talu, Dong Giang district. Training topics focused on the extension area of Bach Ma National Park, its role and significance for conservation as well as various activities, games and publications for practical application in extracurricular activities with pupils. An evaluation of the training and the teachers' information needs conducted at the end of the training showed that the majority of teachers are eager to visit the Park with their students.



Film presentations and informational meetings were convened for 10 villages: Cha Mang, Mu Nam, Doi, La Ho (Thuong Lo commune); Ba, Hui, Bin (Thuong Nhat commune); Bavia, Aphia, Cu Dong (Thuong Long commune) to inform local people about conservation of the Bach Ma extension area. The average number of participants was 20 people/village. One thousand of the above posters on wildlife conservation were distributed to local households and authorities in the extended Bach Ma National Park buffer zones, Nam Dong district.

Support Bach Ma National Park in the elaboration of a longer term financial model.

In order to improve the Bach Ma Park income generation, investment flows from the Government, and fundraising, the WWF US Conservation Finance team helped the park to develop a long term financial model based on its conservation and management needs. As a next step Bach Ma National Park will apply the model to develop different financial planning scenarios for the next ten years.

Assist Quang Nam Forest Protection Department (FPD) and Thua Thien Hue FPD with the development and implementation of management plans and management boards.

A recent feasibility study recommended that management plans and management boards be developed for new saola reserves in Quang Nam and Thua Thien Hue provinces. However, due to a temporary stop in funding by the Asia Development Bank (ADB) to the Biodiversity Corridor Initiative (BCI), progress towards this output has slowed. Some activities were still conducted. In order to achieve a sustainable way of conservation, WWF and FPD have initiated

a series of community consensus events to protect saola and other species of high biodiversity. This activity began in late 2007 and continued until early 2009 with the hope of strengthening conservation efforts. In 20 villages of A Vuong, A Tieng, Bha Lee communes there were at least twenty meetings for local people to sign a commitment for their community not to undertake animal trapping, hunting, as well to undertake measures to reduce the incidence of forest fire and logging. After the commitment was signed, each of the 20 villages held monthly meetings to review the implementation with FPD support and identified solutions to make it a better community based conservation model.

In addition, new funding was leveraged for saola protection to assure sustainability of the conservation approach. The Durrell Institution of Conservation and Ecology (UK) was recently awarded a £300,000 grant (by the Darwin Initiative) to be carried out in Vietnam, entitled ‘Can hunting and conservation of endemic Annamite ungulates be reconciled?’. WWF is the local partner for this project, which will begin in FY10. The purpose of the project is to establish more effective conservation of a globally important ecosystem by: i) conducting applied conservation research on the highly endemic Annamite ungulate community (including saola) and on threats posed by hunting; ii) strengthening the capacity of leading universities within the region to produce well-trained graduates in biodiversity conservation who value traditional knowledge ,and iii) influencing on-the-ground community and government forest management systems.

WWF also collaborated with the Saola Working Group, to achieve a coordinated approach to saola research and conservation, in Vietnam and Laos. This was motivated by the realisation that large grants for saola have not been forthcoming and work is largely carried out on an *ad hoc* basis, with insufficient coordination between organisations working on saola. Consequently, funding has been secured to hold a two-day technical workshop; preceded and followed by additional consultation with key experts. The final output of the workshop will be a rigorous prioritisation of the actions needed to ensure the survival of saola in accordance with the goals in the IUCN regional conservation strategy. Additional funding will then be sought for activities in priority order, with clearer responsibilities (to avoid duplication efforts), greater information sharing and coordination among conservation organisations in Vietnam and Laos.

Support provincial agencies in the effective implementation of the ‘Saola Sanctuary’ in Thue Thien Hue province through awareness raising, enforcement and development of staff capacity.

The Wildlife Trade Action Plan was proposed to the Thua Thien Hue provincial Government for approval, but is awaiting Government budget allocation to proceed. The new joint project, “Supporting Law enforcement to reduce illegal wildlife trade in the Central Annamites Bottleneck”, by the Forest Protection Department (FPD) , Environmental Police, TRAFFIC and WWF is expected to provide some support for the implementation of the Action Plan.

Objective I.2. Mitigate the most urgent, broad scale pressures on biodiversity in the ecoregion

Activity I.2.1: Address immediate and apparent threats to biodiversity at the national and regional levels in the Greater Annamites

Negotiate a partnership for large scale mining with one international mining company to ensure that their operations meet the highest environmental and social standards. A partnership was established with one international mining company active in the Greater Annamites to ensure that the company applies best practices at its production sites.

Specifically, a meeting was held between WWF US and Alcoa to explore opportunities for collaboration in Dak Nong Province where Alcoa has an interest in bauxite mining. Several project components were presented to Alcoa, including: 1) build community participation in protecting areas important to livelihoods through Community Natural Resource Management; 2) secure long term health of freshwater resources and watershed ecosystem services through Integrated Water Resource Management; 3) establish mechanisms for sharing benefits with communities through Payment for Ecosystem Services; and 4) pilot sustainable mining model in Vietnam through Best Management Practices. Since mining is currently an unregulated industry and a large conservation threat in the Greater Mekong, a partnership with Alcoa could help mitigate these larger impacts and set a benchmark for other companies to follow. Alcoa was unprepared to move forward with this at that time but could be approached again.

Work to improve agricultural practices by:

Ensuring the successful production of high grade, ecologically sound cocoa from the WWF/ACDI VOCA pilot plot in the Southern Annamites.

With the aim of extending sustainable agro-forestry practices and reducing conversion of natural forests, WWF organized Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and ‘cocoa clubs’ to train farmers in sustainable cultivation practices according to the ACDI/VOCA training program. It is expected that WWF will collaborate with ACDI/VOCA to establish another cocoa agro-forestry site of 30 ha in Da Huoai district by the end of 2009.

Promoting better management practices (BMPs) for cashew cultivation around Cat Tien National Park towards communities.

WWF has been working with with the Vietnamese Government to signing an MoU that would establish the Project Management Unit for the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)-funded project to promote better management practices (BMPs) for cashew cultivation by communities around Cat Tien National Park. Progress with the Vietnamese government has been slow, which delayed the implementation of activities. However, the project is now operational, and it is expected that draft BMPs for cocoa, cashew, and agro-forestry systems will be ready in 2010 and disseminated amongst farmers and key stakeholders for further consultation.

Objective I.3: Harness local, national, and international support for long-term conservation of the ecoregion

Activity I.3.1: Extend capacity to mobilize and manage large-scale conservation**Further develop WWF's presence in the Southern Annamites and replicate successful approaches pioneered in the Central and Southern Annamites.**

Two new project offices were established in the Southern Annamites. In Cat Tien Town in Lam Dong Province, a project office was established to work with farmers in two communes to improve agricultural practices in cashew, cocoa and agroforestry. Training of farmers has begun, and model farms and demonstration plots are established on project participants' farms. The other project office was established in Cat Tien National Park to assist the park in developing community based ecotourism that will benefit local communities and conserve biodiversity in the park.

Carry out biodiversity monitoring surveys in the WWF cocoa agro-forestry pilot in Madaguri.

The last biodiversity survey was conducted in April 2009. At the landscape level, the project remains successful in maintaining the forest canopy on the area of 40 hectares, especially notable for an area like Phuoc Loc where illegal logging is prevalent. It was observed that only a few big trees were illegally cut down in the plot during 2008, but the cocoa farmers immediately reported this event to the Project Management Board (PMB) to take preventive measures.

At the field level, in the areas where extremely thick canopy is believed to be the reason for the slow growth of cocoa trees, farmers cut down the shading trees, targeting only specific species (*Hopea odorata* and *Dipterocarpus alatus*). This decreased the density of flora in these areas. In addition, most households have started using herbicide without control. They believe that herbicide would make their gardens "beautiful" and clean. Consequently, the biodiversity of fauna, especially reptiles and insects, has decreased due to the lack of a nesting environment. To address the problem, the PMB trained farmers on the negative impacts of improperly applied herbicide on biodiversity, the environment, and cocoa growth. This problem is expected to be resolved within this rainy season.

Establish a baseline and monitoring system for tigers and gibbons in the Southern Annamites Landscape.

This activity was not carried out because match funding was not obtained from the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Start developing a model for sustainable tourism in the Southern Annamites landscape and its promotion at the national level.

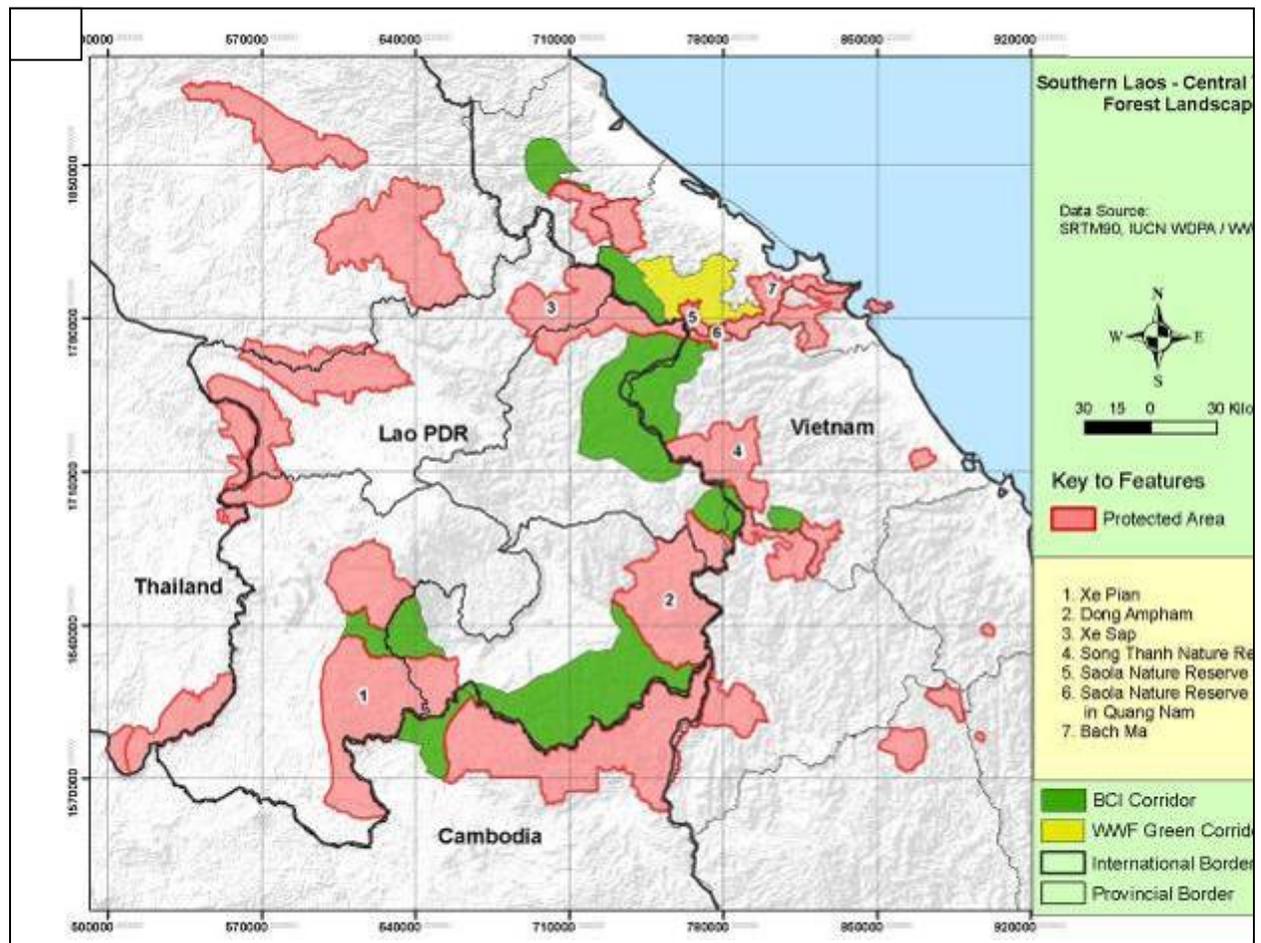
Funding for developing the sustainable tourism model has been secured through DANIDA. The project is being implemented at both the central and local levels. The main focus is to directly improve the livelihoods of local communities and contribute to nature conservation through ecotourism in and around protected areas, specifically the Cat Tien National Park. At the local level, the project is about to carry out ecotourism planning in and around Cat Tien NP through a participatory multi-stakeholder process and incorporate it into development plans at commune, district and provincial levels. A pilot model of community-based ecotourism will be developed to involve as many local people in the ecotourism activities as possible. At the national level, the project will be working closely with FPD and the Institute of Tourism

Development Research under the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism, the main government body in charge of tourism development in Vietnam.

Due to a 9-month delay in the approval process with the GoV, project implementation was delayed. The inception phase has since been completed and baseline data were collected.

Develop sustainable financing mechanisms for protected areas around forest carbon market opportunities and Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD).

A major effort went into developing a forest carbon programme for the Central Annamites landscape, focusing on a large forest block consisting of the new Bach Ma National Park extension, and the two new saola nature reserves in Vietnam and the adjacent Xe Sap National Protected Area in Laos. The objective is to establish sustainable income over the next 5 years for this large forest block in order to make protected area management more effective and to develop additional sustainable financing mechanisms, including piloting REDD instruments.



Map: Proposed forest carbon programme area

The programme framework has been developed. During the next phase, opportunities to set up the financing mechanism will be sought. Voluntary carbon markets are one option.

Activity I.3.2: Engage broader stakeholder support through advocacy-based communications in the Greater Annamites**Continue to display the photographic exhibition on communities, landscapes and forests under the Green Corridor project in Hue to inform the provincial Government counterpart, the local population, and the private sector.**

The photographic exhibition on communities, landscapes and forests under the Green Corridor project was displayed during the World Wildlife Week October 1– 5, 2008 in Hue which raised awareness on the relationship between the forest resources and local forest dwelling people. Local ethnic minorities gave performances and the inhabitants of Hue visited the exhibition during one week. The exhibition was again displayed in several districts in December 2008. Since January 2009, different government agencies at district and provincial levels, as well as the Bach Ma NP and Phong Dien Protected Area have also used the photos from this exhibition for their conservation events.

Organize a national event to hand over to key Government officials from Quang Nam and Thua Thien Hue as well as the national FPD, more than 26,000 signatures from citizens of more than 150 countries in support of saola protection.

The national saola event was held in Hanoi on 22nd September 2009, combined with the inception workshop of the new saola project (funded by Darwin Initiative), to attract greater publicity and trigger more government support to sustain efforts for saola conservation in the long term. Twenty-five workshop participants - from Thua Thien Hue, Quang Nam, and Nghe An Provinces as well as from Hanoi - represented government agencies, universities, research institutions and NGOs involved in saola conservation. The media also attended the event, and a press release has since been issued.

The workshop presented to the government the 26,000+ signatures of support and introduced the objectives of the new saola project. Government representatives presented progress on provincial saola conservation, and a member of the IUCN SSC Saola Working Group (SWG) provided feedback from the SWG recent meeting in Laos. The participants subsequently discussed the project methods and put forward suggestions on how to advance saola conservation.

The government representatives from Hanoi, Thua Thien Hue and Quang Nam were very responsive, positive, and actively engaged in the discussion. Participants seemed surprised and very pleased that the international community has demonstrated very clearly their support for the the Vietnamese effort to conserve the saola. We anticipate full government support for this project following more detailed consultations. It is too early, however, to determine whether the government will increase its level of support to saola conservation.



Photo: Presentation of 26,000+ signatures in support of saola protection to a representative of the Vietnamese Government. The world map illustrates that the signatories come from more than 150 countries.

Issue a global press release on the first camera trap photograph of a saola (assuming that the camera trapping is successful).

Camera trapping has so far not been successful in capturing a photograph of saola in Vietnam. More camera traps have recently been set in Quang Nam Province, where probable signs of saola were recently observed. Photographs and press releases will be published in FY10 if these camera traps are successful.

Distribute communications outputs to target audiences, including international donors, local communities and government officials at provincial and local levels to increase their support for landscape conservation.

More than USD 4 million new funds were secured from international donors:

- from the EC for a sustainable natural resources management programme (Quang Nam, Hue);
- from Aage Jensen Foundation for a Hue based project to effectively combat illegal wildlife trade
- from Darwin Initiative for a research project to further develop the monitoring method for the saola and to establish more accurate population data;
- from USFWS, Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, WWF Austria, WWF U.S., Asian Rhino Project for several species (gibbons, grey-shanked doucs, saola, Javan rhino) monitoring and enforcement projects.

II. Lower Mekong Dry Forests Ecoregion

Please note that no direct funding support has been provided to the Cambodian government.

Collaborators/Partners

Royal Government of Cambodia:

- Ministry of Environment (MOE); Administration of Nature Conservation and Protection (ANCP, formerly DNCP) and Mondulhiri Provincial Environment Departments;
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF); Forestry Administration (FA); Fisheries Administration (FiA); Provincial Department of Agriculture (PDA);
- Ministry of Urbanization, Land Management, and Construction (MULMC); Mondulhiri Provincial Department of Urbanization, Land Management, and Construction (PDULMC);
- Ministry of Rural Development (MRD); Provincial Department of Rural Development (PDRD);
- Ministry of Tourism (MOT); Mondulhiri Provincial Department of Tourism (PDTDoT)
- Ministry of Interior (MOI); Mondulhiri Provincial Government Office (PGO); Mondulhiri Provincial Department of Police.
- Provincial Rural Development Committee (PRDC)
- Commune Councils (CCs)

International NGOs

- Birdlife International (BI)
- Conservation International (CI)
- Oxfam America
- TRAFFIC Greater Mekong Programme (SE Asia)
- Wildlife Alliance (formerly WildAid)
- Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

Summary: Period 10/01/08—09/30/09

Lower Mekong Dry Forest Highlights:

Cambodia:

In FY09, GCP2 support helped to catalyze the following achievements in the Lower Mekong Dry Forests of Cambodia's Eastern Plains:

- Development of a pilot community-run guesthouse for tourists visiting the Eastern Plains - all part of the strategy to relieve pressure on biodiversity by improving the sustainability of natural resource use by local communities;
- Confirmation of significant recovery in health of populations of several key species in the landscapes, especially the wild elephant population, leopard, other carnivores, and important tiger prey species;
- Continued success of the newly established honey associations in increasing income generation potential through product enhancement and increased access to markets; also part of the strategy to support local communities by providing additional sources of income.

Communications and events in FY09 :

(Note: Although GCP funds were not directly used in these activities, they communicated results of the Landscape Program to a broader public.)

1. Launch of Mondulkiri wild honey; and NTFP fair in Cambodia

The Mondulkiri Wild Honey launch is the result of a forest based livelihoods project in Krang Teh and Pou Chrey communities, a by-product of the Lower Mekong Dry Forests Landscape Program (not funded by USAID). The project aimed to raise the value of forest resources as a means to improve living standards in the community, as well as to improve the community's commitment to sustainable use of forest resources. The communication article can be found on the following webpage:

http://www.panda.org/who_we_are/wwf_offices/cambodia/?161621/Mondulkiri-Wild-Honey-symbolises-the-communitys-commitment-to-sustainable-use-and-management-of-forest-resources

The Cambodia NTFP Working Group, an informal network of NTFP livelihood supporters, including WWF, NTFP Exchange Programme, CFI and CaNDO, participated in an annual "One Village One Product" exhibition organized by the Ministry of Commerce in Phnom Penh's Mondial Trade Center. The Working Group promoted sustainably harvested and community processed NTFPs, including wild honey, resins and rattan. The communication article can be found on the following webpage:

http://www.panda.org/who_we_are/wwf_offices/cambodia/news_cambodia/?152961/Communities-take-Non-timber-Forest-Products-NTFPs-to-trade-fair-to-draw-nationwide-attraction

2. News story on plan to use US-trained sniffer dogs to assist the tiger monitoring programme

WWF (non-GCP funds) has set up more than 165 camera traps in the Mondulkiri Protected Forest in Eastern Cambodia, and in a few months, two US-trained dogs, will be used to assist the

tiger monitoring programme. The communication article can be found on the following webpage:

http://www.panda.org/who_we_are/wwf_offices/cambodia/?166761/US-dogs-to-sniff-out-Cambodian-tigers

3. News on confirmation of importance of yellow-cheeked crested gibbon population

Recent surveys in Monduliri's Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary confirmed an estimated population of 275 groups, possibly more than 1,000 individuals, of yellow-cheeked crested gibbon. The survey confirms the 2nd largest protected area population of gibbon, indicating the global significance of the Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary for this endangered primate and that more conservation efforts must focus on the dry forest. The communication article can be found on the following webpage:

http://www.panda.org/who_we_are/wwf_offices/cambodia/news_cambodia/?153961/Saving-the-countrys-population-of-Yellow-cheeked-Crested-Gib

4. WWF Cambodia newsletter – 2008/2009

The newsletter for July to December 2008, highlights activities, issues and projects in Cambodia. The newsletter can be found on the following webpage:

http://assets.panda.org/downloads/wwfcambodia_newsletter_jul_dec2008_specialedition.pdf

Results by Objective and Activity

Objective II.1: Conserve species, habitats, and their interactions

The Eastern Plains is experiencing increasingly rapid changes through better road access and security that precipitate an influx of speculative “investments”. These changes will increase in scale over the coming decade. Much of the development is poorly planned with little or no consideration of local communities and environmental impacts. Land grabbing and speculation are rife and industrial land concessions and plantations are often issued bypassing provincial government. Such large-scale concessions (30+ applications in August 2008: unofficial data source) severely impact most of the Province's population and remaining natural habitats.

However, with careful planning based on sound science, consultation and collaboration, WWF believes that the Eastern Plains can sustain economic development while maintaining itself as one of the SE Asia's most important sites for wildlife conservation.

Activity II.1.1: Landscape-scale species conservation in the Eastern Plains Dry Forests Landscape

Implement the first phase of the tiger monitoring system in two protected areas (Monduliri Protected Forest and Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary) and adjoining corridors, in close collaboration with local government agencies (Forestry Administration, and Ministry of Environment), and the Wildlife Conservation Society.

In FY09, WWF successfully implemented the first phase of the tiger monitoring system in two protected areas (Monduliri Protected Forest and Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary). Significant changes were made to the original survey design due to local environmental factors (a very large area to survey and very low current tiger density) and also because funding from a partner NGO

fell through thus not allowing for a comparative and truly landscape-wide survey effort. Nevertheless, the initial results are very encouraging. Knowing that tiger densities (number of tigers per km²) are very low, there was no expectation to find many signs during the first year of surveys. Signs of other large carnivores, especially leopard, and tiger prey species such as wild cattle and deer species, have been slightly more than expected. For example, 0.29 leopard signs were recorded per km, and in just more than 3500 camera trap nights from more than 80 locations (including >2000 camera trap-nights within the CMR grid) across both protected areas. Although data entry is on-going, to date at least 19 large mammal species, including 8 globally threatened or near-threatened species, have been recorded (Table 1). An additional 3 IUCN-listed bird species – green peafowl *Pavo muticus*, white-winged duck *Cairina scutulata* (both EN) and Siamese fireback *Lophura diardi* (NT) – have been recorded. Camera-traps placed on the banks of the Tonle Srepok River have also photographed the Critically Endangered Siamese crocodile *Crocodylus siamensis*. Sixty-nine leopard encounters have been recorded within the CMR grid, including two encounters of mothers with cubs. Camera-traps have also recorded young Asian elephant *Elephas maximus*, banteng *Bos javanicus* and dhole *Cuon alpinus*, suggesting recovery and possibly healthy populations of these species.

In addition to the tiger monitoring, an elephant dung DNA sampling study started in FY09 that will enable a more detailed analysis of elephant population health in PPWS and MPF. The research team in the EPL has also successfully generated considerable data on the distribution, habitat preferences and status of the globally endangered yellow-cheeked crested gibbon within and around PPWS. A baseline population estimate for yellow-cheeked crested gibbon within the protected area has been established, and the project has highlighted the global significance of PPWS for this endangered primate.



Leopard is the most frequently recorded large predator in the two protected areas, with an average of 0.29 signs recorded per km (0.37 within MPF).



Sambar *Cervus unicolor*. Large deer are important tiger prey species, but populations of sambar and Eld's deer *Cervus eldii* have declined throughout Indochina. Although these species are extremely vulnerable to hunting, their populations are showing signs of recovery within the Eastern Plains Landscape.

Provision of technical and financial support in the establishment of a multi-agency anti-poaching team across the landscape (Mondulkiri province).

WWF has secured from a private US donor 3 years of funding for the anti-poaching team. A landscape (provincial) anti-poaching law enforcement unit was trained and deployed to reduce incentives for, and incidence of, illegal poaching and illegal land grabbing in Mondulkiri. The team was initially comprised of rangers from the Forestry Administration, along with Military Police, but now also includes Ministry of Environment rangers to form a multi-agency anti-poaching team. In operation since mid-2009, the team has had some early successes in confiscating some illegally poached timber and wildlife products. There are still some issues to be resolved with regard to overall management of the team, but this is a pilot programme that will be evaluated and adjusted on a regular basis.



Photo: mobile team checking road traffic along road through protected area



Photo: mobile team dismantling illegal fence in protected area

Activity II.1.2: Landscape-scale habitat conservation in the Eastern Plains Dry Forests Landscape

Continue to implement priority components in the Mondulkiri Protected Forest management plan.

Though still not officially approved by the Forestry Administration, the management plan guides the everyday operations inside MPF. The management plan for PPWS was to be developed and submitted to the central government for approval along with new community protected areas within PPWS. However the Ministry of Environment continues to debate the issue of how to approve zoning plans that may conflict with national interests, in this case mining potential. Nevertheless, WWF was able to secure the official designation of two Community Protected Areas (CPAs) inside PPWS in FY09, which is a major boost for local communities in empowering them to take a more active role in the management of natural resources in this landscape. Additionally, the provincial government will continue to implement the management plan with additional funds already secured as matching funds.

Undertaking a detailed assessment of forest carbon stocks in the key protected areas in the landscape is still considered a priority as the first step towards developing a sustainable mechanism for directing forest carbon market payments to local communities and government agencies to pay for forest protection, management, sustainable use, and economic development. Funding was not secured in FY09 for this assessment activity, therefore fundraising is ongoing for FY10.

In addition to the forest areas, WWF, in collaboration with the Fishery Administration and ExCom (PCPWG) established 3 community fisheries in Koh Nhèk district. The 3 communities cover a total of 7,187 hectares and include 540 families as beneficiaries.



Photo: WWF Country Director explains to provincial government officials where the newly established Community Protected Areas are located in relation to the overall landscape.

Objective II.2: Building capacity of local, national, and international stakeholders to plan long-term biodiversity conservation in the Dry Forest Ecoregion

Activity II.2.1: Extend capacity to mobilize and manage large-scale conservation across the Dry Forests

Work with the Ministries of Environment (MoE), Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries (MAFF), as well as other relevant ministries in Cambodia, to ensure that Dry Forests conservation and sustainable management concepts are reflected in government policies, including the delayed revision of the NBSAP.

Due to funding constraints at the central government level, the process for reviewing the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan was delayed again and for the foreseeable future. WWF will seek other opportunities to mainstream Dry Forests conservation priorities into provincial and national development strategies. One example is the Mondulkiri Provincial Strategic Development Plan that will be prepared in 2010. This will be a good opportunity to build local capacity to ensure environmental considerations are built into multi-sectoral planning processes, and WWF is well placed to provide this support. WWF is also working on a higher level strategy to advocate for a regional climate change adaptation agreement for all member countries of the Greater Mekong Subregion. Such an agreement would, among other things,

provide for the development of transboundary agreements to safeguard those landscapes such as the Eastern Plains that are vulnerable to climate change impacts .

Strengthen partnerships and improve coordination between provincial government agencies and NGOs through appropriate forums in Cambodia to facilitate implementation of the Dry Forests Ecoregion Conservation Plan.

Through the WWF- (and WCS-)supported Provincial Conservation Planning Working Group (PCPWG), government officials from a number of key government agencies have become more aware of conservation activities in Mondulkiri, particularly the processes towards establishing and approving the Community Protected Areas (CPAs) and Community Protected Forests (CPFs).

Continue to support the Mondulkiri Province ExCom/PRDC Permanent Working Group on Conservation and Development to facilitate information sharing between the relevant agencies and provincial line departments and integrated planning activities.

The aim to have Mondulkiri province's planning agencies include conservation goals and policies in commune development planning and provincial level development planning strategies will be a target for FY10. In FY10 the province will develop the next phase of its provincial strategic development plan, providing a good opportunity for WWF and other NGO partners to support government planning processes and ensure Dry Forests conservation goals are effectively considered and development plans are as sustainable as possible.

Further develop transboundary conservation cooperation dialogue between Mondulkiri's Provincial Conservation Planning Unit and Vietnamese provincial and protected area authorities.

The Mondulkiri provincial government has made several unsuccessful attempts to secure a meeting with the Vietnamese authorities with the aim of increasing the transboundary communication and cooperation between Cambodian and Vietnamese provincial government authorities. This was initiated by the Provincial Governor's office, with WWF technical support. The next step is to approach the national government. through the appropriate national ministries; this strategy may be more successful as a means of indicating a national, not just provincial priority.

Work with NGOs and CSOs to organize a training and strategic planning workshop on how to engage mining companies in responsible and equitable mining, and best management practices.

- Some initial informal meetings with NGOs and CSOs in Mondulkiri have been held to discuss challenges and opportunities around the future mining industry in the landscape. More comprehensive discussions and strategy development will take place in October 2009 and beyond.
- National level discussions have been initiated with government agencies and some companies to discuss the potential to develop responsible mining approaches.

Work with the Mondulkiri ExCom/PRDC and 4 line departments to develop a rapid land suitability assessment and mapping methodology and produce commune-level maps for all 4 communes of Pichreda District.

Commune-level land suitability assessments and maps, clearly showing compatible and incompatible land use options, were completed for all 4 communes in Pichreda District. Based on these initial results, the provincial government would like to use this process to assess land suitability in other communes in the province, indicating how invaluable a tool this is perceived to be for local government.

Activity II.2.2: Build awareness and effective communication on Dry Forests conservation

WWF continues to focus on building capacity and awareness to increase local understanding of sustainable natural resource use and management.

Regularly contribute provincial conservation and development messages to the ExCom/PRDC's existing quarterly newsletter (in Khmer) distributed among all line agencies and key decision makers in the Monduliri province.

WWF has shared with the local government the WWF quarterly newsletter issue dedicated to the Eastern Plains Landscape and Dry Forests. However, the regular formal and informal meetings are usually more productive in building and maintaining relationships with government partners as well as sharing information on project progress.

Translate into Khmer (and possibly Bunong) and disseminate key reports (impacts of large scale agricultural developments, biodiversity analysis, threats analysis, etc.) among provincial decision makers.

A report on 'The Importance of Conservation of Forest and Wildlife Conservation in Monduliri' was reproduced in Khmer language in 2009 and shared with all relevant local and national government departments (See Appendix 2). At the national level there now appears to be greater awareness among senior provincial government officials of the important role that Cambodia's Dry Forests (and other key forest and freshwater ecosystems) play in the conservation of the whole GMS region. Government agencies are also regularly participating in national, regional, and international fora on a range of environment-related topics.

Distribute regular media releases on the biodiversity and livelihoods value of the Dry Forests, and on progress being made by WWF and its partners in implementing strategic conservation interventions that support existing national strategies.

- Specific media stories include those reported above under communications highlights.
- USAID support for Cambodian Dry Forests conservation was communicated more generally whenever appropriate, generally on an informal basis.

Provide training for additional teachers to conduct EE, and carry out monitoring of those teachers trained in FY08 to assess effectiveness of the training and provide refresher training if required.

In partnership with International Cooperation for Cambodia (ICC), an organization working on a literacy program for the Bunong Indigenous communities, 25 Bunong literacy program teachers were trained in "Facilitating Community Environmental Awareness". These facilitators have been incorporating the different environmental modules into their literacy classes. The WWF project team conducted a post training evaluation as a follow up action to the environmental

education training given to selected elementary teachers in Mondulkiri. The evaluation showed encouraging results. The delivery of environmental education in the selected schools increased from 50% to 73% after the training. Understanding of basic environmental concepts among students increased from 15% to 47%.

Objective II.3: Protect priority landscapes and corridors through sustainable use of forest resources, sustainable agriculture, and forest restoration

Activity II.3.1: Increase community benefits from community-based natural resource management, contributing to the learning exchange within WWF on payment for ecological services

During FY09, WWF consolidated work with local communities in and around the key protected areas in Mondulkiri. This was partly because of close-out of some community support projects (ADB BCI) and also because it was important to focus resources to maximise potential benefits rather than spread the field teams too thinly. Most of the work this year focused on two main areas: 1). Formal establishment of community protected areas and community fisheries, and 2). Local community NTFP harvesting and marketing associations.

Work with local government and NGO partners to conduct a detailed assessment of forest carbon stocks and initiate steps for developing a transparent payment mechanism to pay for the recurring costs of forest protection and community development.

WWF was unable to establish a baseline for forest carbon stocks to facilitate the design of a payment mechanism. WWF is seeking funds for this activity to be completed in FY10.

Secure the community protected areas, establish and train community protected area/forest committees, and continue land use planning activities in key communities in high bio diverse forest areas within the landscape.

In addition to the Bunong facilitators trained in environmental education (see above), six officers from different community associations (CPAs and CPFs³) were also trained on facilitating community environmental awareness.

Develop the newly established, and establish one additional community tourism homestay in Pu Chrey communes; develop the pilot higher-end tourism infrastructure in the MPF through a 8-tent/16-person luxury tented camp.

In FY09, WWF constructed the first community-run guesthouse. The first tourists to use it are expected by the end of the wet season (November 2009). WWF has provided training in guiding, and other areas of hospitality, to more than 30 local community members. Part of the training was conducted by the hospitality school of the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP). Also this year, a South African design company prepared plans for the African-style tented camp to be built in the MPF. Delays in this construction are due to ongoing discussions with the Spain-based project donor about possible large scale investment in tourism in the area.

³ Community Protected Area and Community Protected Forests. These are the community-based natural resource management committees that WWF helped organize. Each committee has its extension sub-committee in charge of the awareness raising activities in their respective villages.



Photo: the new homestay in Dei Ei village.

Expand the number of honey and resin associations in target communities in the Eastern Plains, developing appropriate business and marketing plans, and making the connections to markets.

In preparation for the upcoming harvest season, WWF trained 50 people in 2 villages on the edge of MPF, in sustainable honey harvesting and proper honey handling. The project staff and honey leaders provided a refresher course on harvesting methods and proper honey handling to new members and other collectors who were to participate in a National Trade Fair sponsored by the Ministry of Commerce in Cambodia. Local honey associations sold 50 bottles of honey (around USD \$180) - a small amount, but nevertheless an important first step. In total, 400 liters of honey were market tested and sold for around US\$ 5,400. No new honey associations were formed; rather, the effort was concentrated on improving practice by current association members.

III. Learning Component

Objective III.1 Developing an understanding of impacts of conservation planning on landscapes, communities, and threat mitigation in the Greater Mekong

Planned activities for FY09 were designed to reflect the recognized importance of knowledge sharing. WWF planned to host regional workshops on landscape conservation and community-based natural resource management (CBNRM), to synthesize these lessons learned into a publication, and to conduct some capacity building for WWF and partners on mitigating large scale threats in the priority landscapes.

WWF made changes to these plans to reflect a concerted new WWF GMP regional policy advocacy strategy that has gained crucial momentum during FY09. The capacity building activities were undertaken, focusing on mitigating impacts of deforestation through REDD, and on assessing climate change vulnerability.

WWF worked internally to identify a means of getting commitment at the highest possible level, for the conservation of the key areas of biodiversity in the region. Climate change was identified as a key factor that could unify the countries of the region in a joint agreement to combat the impacts.

Climate change will amplify development pressures and their interaction with other global change drivers, to make this region one of the most vulnerable in the world. Governments face the challenge to devise climate-smart development strategies that also conserve the region's globally important biodiversity, including the Central Annamites and the Eastern Plains Dry Forests. This challenge can be met if the threats are addressed in an integrated and coordinated way within a harmonized regional legal framework. Asia's first regional climate adaptation agreement would provide that framework by forging innovative cooperation, incorporating sustainable solutions, and linking these solutions across all social, economic, and environmental sectors.

It was therefore felt that rather than a lessons learned workshop and publication, a more strategic use of the USAID funds to support this new policy advocacy approach would eventually lead to a larger scale benefit. Thus in FY09, in addition to the already planned activities to build capacity for threat mitigation capacity, USAID funds were used to support a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Expert Consultation Workshop and Proceedings (Activity III.1 below).

Activity III.1 Assess vulnerability of priority areas to combined effects of climate and non-climate pressures and identify options to enhance resilience and adaptation

A Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment Expert Consultation Workshop was held in Bangkok July 20-21, with over 100 regional experts. This workshop, was convened by the WWF Greater Mekong Programme in collaboration with Conservation International (CI), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Mekong River Commission (MRC), Southeast Asia START Regional Center (SEA-START-RC), and the Swedish Environment Secretariat for Asia (SENSA), and funded by USAID and the MacArthur Foundation aimed to: assess the climate change vulnerability of 6 high priority biodiversity conservation areas; develop preliminary adaptation strategies for these areas, and; to identify any knowledge gaps that hinder adaptation planning.

In particular the workshop developed the following:

- A summary of future change factors that will influence each priority biodiversity conservation area with emphasis on the combined effects of climate change and socio-economic factors.
- A qualitative assessment of the vulnerability of the priority areas that highlights the combined effects of climate and non-climate pressures on ecosystem attributes and services.
- A summary of technical and policy-relevant adaptation options that will help enhance the resilience and maintain the integrity and functions of ecosystems in the priority areas.
- An area-specific summary of (a) gaps that need to be filled for successful adaptation planning and implementation; (b) opportunities for resilience-enhancing actions based on existing knowledge; and (c) the functions and benefits that the priority biodiversity areas provide at the national and regional scale in terms of resilience and future adaptation capacity.

The workshop proceedings are being finalized in October and will be shared with a wide range of government agencies, academic institutions, donors, civil society organizations, and other NGOs.

Activity III.2 Capacity-building for large-scale threat mitigation

In addition to ongoing capacity building for WWF staff across the region and for our important partners in both priority landscapes, this year we have focused more on climate change impact mitigation and adaptation and Forest Carbon issues (i.e. REDD) as they relate to providing arguments for safeguarding important forest areas.

Training

In FY09, WWF conducted a regional workshop, including training on Climate Change and identification of REDD opportunities in priority landscapes and trained staff at the Asia-Pacific REDD workshop on technical aspects of carbon accounting, project design, and networking. In addition, a regional technical workshop was conducted to identify climate change adaptation strategies and solutions.

Mapping the conservation and development landscape of the Greater Mekong Subregion

WWF is advocating a regional sustainable development strategy as an alternative approach to the current headlong development rush. In efforts to highlight the underlying issues for conservation and development across the region, WWF is developing a regional atlas that highlights the current situation on the ground in respect to conservation and development. A Greater Mekong Atlas will be an advocacy product that will be used with regional governments and key decision makers to discuss ideas not only for their national conservation and development options within country, but also to highlight the costs and benefits that their choices will have on their neighbours and, in the case of rivers, the downstream countries.

As part of the USAID Learning Component, and to feed into the overall Atlas, WWF has produced a series of maps, database, and report on forest cover change in the region (See Annex 3). This is to educate policy-makers about the severity of forest cover change over the past 40 years, and identify areas for management intervention.

Outputs:

1. Coarse scale maps of forest cover change for the entire region from 1970-2005 using existing datasets (Michigan State TRFIC, Globcover Landcover and Veg. Continuous Conversion);
2. Map of forest cover change from 1990-2000-2009 for priority areas using higher resolution imagery. This work has been done by MDA Federal, using a change detection approach called CCA, and landsat imagery;
3. ArcREADER document, maps and a report for policymakers.

These outputs will help to not only guide conservation efforts in areas of particularly high change, but it will also establish a baseline for future monitoring in habitat for tigers, elephants, and many other species, and allow us to evaluate past impacts of infrastructure and potential future impacts on habitat and local communities.

Progress Table

Objectives, activities, anticipated outputs/results	Indicators (what you are measuring)	Baseline (Value of measurement)	Current status (Value) with discussion of any variance	Success rating (green, amber or red)
Objective 1.1: Protect, restore, and sustainably manage biodiversity elements of high scientific and economic value in the Greater Annamites ecoregion				
Activity 1.1.1 & 1.1.2: Protect key species and sites in the Annamites				
Anticipated Outputs/Results for Activity I.1.1 & I.1.2				
Saola population stabilized through immediate law enforcement interventions in the newly established protected areas	interventions	First interventions	more than 1500 snares were removed from the four highest priority areas	Green
Methods developed for monitoring saola	Method available	No Method	Additional funding secured and preparatory work ongoing, but method design delayed	Amber
Map of saola distribution at 4km2 resolution prepared based on best available knowledge	Map available	Map	Draft available, but final map only developed by Dec 09	Amber
Priority activities from management plans for Bach Ma National Park implemented	Equipment available; Enforcement/ awareness raising measures	No equipment; Measures not implemented	Equipment has been supplied; Measures implemented	Green
Long term financial model developed for Bach Ma National Park	Financial model available	Financial model	Model has been developed	Green
Key recommendation from feasibility studies for new saola reserves in Quang Nam and Thua Thien Hue provinces implemented	Key recommendations Implemented	Key recommendations not implemented	Management plans and boards not developed yet, due to temporary stop in ADB funding; community consensus events implemented	Amber
New funding leveraged for sustaining saola protection	Leveraged funding	No funding leveraged	£300,000 leveraged	Green
Wildlife Trade Action Plan approved	Approved plan	Not yet approved	Approval delayed, but project leveraged to work on this	Amber
Objective 1.2: Mitigate the most urgent, broad scale pressures on biodiversity in the Greater Annamites ecoregion				
Activity 1.2.1 Address immediate and apparent threats to biodiversity at the national and regional levels in the Greater Annamites				

Anticipated Outputs/results activity I.2.1				
Partnership established with one international mining company	Partnership established	No partnership	Initial discussions took place with US-based Alcoa company, but were put on hold due to economic crunch	Amber
Replication of cocoa agro forestry model in the Southern Annamites landscape started	# ha of new cocoa agro forestry	No new ha	It is expected that until end 2009, WWF will collaborate with ACDI/VOCA to establish another cocoa agro-forestry site of 30 ha in Da Huoai district	Amber
First draft of BMPs for cashew cultivation completed	Draft available	No draft	Delayed, but it is expected that draft BMPs for cocoa, cashew, and agro-forestry systems will be ready in 2010	Red
Objective 1.3 Harness local, national, and international support for long-term conservation of the Greater Annamites ecoregion				
Activity 1.3.1 Extend capacity to mobilize and manage large-scale conservation				
Anticipated Outputs/results activity I.3.1				
Biodiversity monitoring surveys of cocoa agro-forestry pilot	surveys	Bi-annual surveys in years before	Surveys conducted in Dec 08 and April 09	Green
Baseline and monitoring system for tigers and gibbons in the Southern Annamites landscape established	Baseline and monitoring system	No system	Activity has not been achieved because the funding did not come through.	Red
Key components of sustainable tourism strategy under implementation	First activities conducted	No activities	First activities have been conducted	Green
Sustainable financing mechanisms for protected areas around forest carbon market opportunities and Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) under development	Sustainable financing mechanisms	No mechanisms	The programme framework has been developed and financing opportunities are being sought.	Amber
Activity 1.3.2: Engage broader stakeholder support through advocacy-based communications in the Greater Annamites				

Anticipated outputs/results for activity I.3.2				
Exhibition on communities, landscapes and forests shown	Exhibition	No exhibition in FY09	Exhibition shown at several occasions	Green
National saola event held	event	No event	Event held 22 August	Green
Global media coverage on the first saola camera trap photograph	Media coverage	No coverage	No coverage as pre-condition that camera trapping is successful not fulfilled	Red
Increased funding and technical support to the Greater Annamites program	Funding and technical support	None for FY09	More than USD 4million of new funds. secured	Green
Objective II.1: Conserve species, habitats, and their interactions in the Lower Mekong Dry Forests Ecoregion				
Activity II.1.1: Landscape-scale species conservation in the Eastern Plains Dry Forests Landscape				
Anticipated outputs/results for activity II.1.1				
Scientifically rigorous tiger and tiger prey monitoring system designed and under implementation;	System design and implementation	Initial designs	Designed and being implemented	Green
A landscape (provincial) anti-poaching law enforcement unit deployed to directly address poaching and other illegal activities	Deployment of anti-poaching team	No team deployed	Team formed, trained, and deployed	Green
Activity II.1.2: Landscape-scale habitat conservation in the Eastern Plains Dry Forests Landscape				
Anticipated outputs/results for activity II.1.2				
Improved management of the Monduliri Protected Forest, Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary, and adjacent forest corridors	Increased management capacity in MPF and PPWS	60 staff in place and trained, though still under-resourced	Ongoing training though no further funds secured in FY09 to hire more rangers	Amber
Detailed assessment of forest carbon baselines as part of design of pilot carbon market payment mechanisms in the Eastern Plains	Forest carbon baseline assessed	Baseline	Assessment not done due to lack of funds	Red
Official recognition of community protected forests within existing protected area system	Official designation of community protected areas	Several established but not officially designated	Two community protected areas approved in March 2009 and nine more pending	Green
Objective II.2: Capacity building of local, national, and international stakeholders to plan long-term biodiversity conservation in the Dry Forest Ecoregion				

Activity II.2.1: Extend capacity to mobilize and manage large-scale conservation across the Dry Forests				
Anticipated outputs/results for activity II.2.1				
Dry Forests conservation and sustainable management concepts are reflected in government policies, including NBSAP	# Gov't policies incl. DF concepts	No national policies reflect specific DF concepts	NBSAP review delayed	Amber
Improved capacity of provincial government agencies to involve communities in decision making, planning, and to coordinate with other govt agencies on development planning	Coordination and information sharing among and between government agencies	Poor coordination and information sharing	Provincial Conservation Planning Working Group still functioning though needs streamlining	Amber
Increased transboundary communication and cooperation between Cambodian and Vietnamese provincial government authorities	Comms and physical meetings	Written comms but no meetings	Still no meeting	Red
NGOs and CSOs trained to engage mining companies for responsible mining	# trained	0 trained	Local NGOs, communities, and government agencies engaged on mining impacts and sustainable options	Amber
Commune-level land suitability assessments	Land suitability maps	0 maps	Maps for 4 communes	Green
Activity II.2.2: Build awareness and effective communication on Lower Mekong Dry Forests Ecoregion conservation				
Anticipated outputs/results for activity II.2.2				
Newsletter on Eastern Plains Landscape and Dry Forests	Newsletter produced and disseminated	WWF Cambodia newsletter produced quarterly	Newsletter still being produced quarterly	Green
Publicity and general communications coverage of USAID support for DF conservation and increased awareness of local communities in Mondulkiri	Signboards, publications, news articles	Ongoing development of materials	USAID logo on signs and report; several news articles	Green
Teachers from local communities trained in conducting EE in key communities in Eastern Plains;	# community members trained	25 Bunong community members trained in EE	50 Bunong community members (literacy teachers) trained	Green
Objective II.3: Lower Mekong Dry Forests Ecoregion - Protect priority landscapes and corridors through sustainable use of forest resources, sustainable agriculture, and forest restoration				
Activity II.3.1: Increase community benefits from community-based natural resource management, contributing to the learning exchange on payment for ecological services within WWF				
Anticipated outputs/results for activity II.3.1				

A detailed assessment of forest carbon stocks conducted to establish a baseline for a transparent payment mechanism	Forest carbon stock baseline establishment	No baseline established	No assessment conducted because funding is still being sought	Red
Community Protected Area/Forest Committees trained	# of CPA & CPF Committee members trained	No members trained in EE	6 officers of different CPAs and CPFs trained in facilitating community environmental awareness	Green
At least one more tourism homestay established	Homestay establishment	One community guesthouse established in FY08	Focus on ensuring success of one guesthouse before expansion	Amber
At least two more honey and resin associations established, business plans developed for pilot honey and resin associations, and study completed on potential for sustainable collection of sleng seeds;	Associations established, business plans, studies	Honey associations established in FY08	Additional community members trained, and part of new marketing plan	Amber
Objective III. Learning Component: Developing an understanding of impacts of conservation planning on landscapes, communities, and threat mitigation in the Greater Mekong				
Activity III.1 Assess Vulnerability of priority areas to combined effects of climate and non-climate pressures and identify options to enhance resilience and adaptation				
Anticipated outputs/results for activity III.1.				
Expert recommendations compiled and shared with WWF staff	Expert workshop held and recommendations disseminated	No workshop; no recommendations	Expert workshop held; recommendations compiled in published proceedings (Oct)	Green
Activity III.2. Capacity-building for large-scale threat mitigation				
Anticipated outputs/results for activity III.2.				
Regional WWF training on Climate Change, and REDD (originally was Regional workshops to share lessons learned on landscape and community-based conservation approaches)	Training events	Low capacity for Climate Change and REDD project planning	Three training workshops, and set of CC adaptation recommendations for policy makers	green
Series of forest landcover maps representing the historical changes to forest cover across the Mekong region and highlighting possible future scenarios	Historical forest land cover maps and scenarios	Outdated maps, not in format for decision makers	Set of maps produced	green

Next Steps

Greater Annamites Ecoregion

Activity 1.1.1 Protect Key Species

- Maintain and strengthen law enforcement for saola protection in the newly established protected area through direct grants to the Forest Protection Department and National Park staff in Thua Thien Hue and Quang Nam provinces. This follows WWF's previous efforts to increase the patrolling and enforcement capacity of forest rangers and intensive snare removal campaigns in priority areas.. Ranger patrols will be implemented to stop violators from hunting and to remove snares from the area. The increased presence of law enforcement officials will have visible effects on reducing hunting pressure.
- Develop spatially explicit interview methods to uncover and assess local people's knowledge of saola small-scale distribution and status and will implement these interviews in villages across the Saola Landscape. The rarity and elusiveness of saola have meant that the development of effective methods of monitoring has been difficult to develop, with camera trapping showing promise but being dependent on additional funds. WWF will continue to investigate the potential of camera trapping as a long term monitoring method. However, in the short term, saola conservation must find ways of working with the information available; hence we will also continue to develop spatially explicit interview methods to uncover and assess local people's knowledge of saola small-scale distribution and status and will implement these in villages across the saola landscape. We will develop field methods to assess hunting pressure, densities of other ungulates and other environmental variables likely to be associated with saola presence and use this information to model the likely state of saola populations such that, even if we are not able to develop a reliable field survey method, we still have a basis for managing saola populations in the new reserves.
- Building on the large grant secured from the Darwin Initiative for saola protection, fundraising to acquire additional grants will continue to widen the funding basis.
- From October 2009 to March 2010 WWF and partners will run a thorough survey to identify the exact number of remaining Javan rhino (Annamite subspecies) in Cat Tien National Park (Southern Annamites), their sex distribution and age structure. Based on this assessment, emergency interventions will be designed to work towards protecting the remaining rhinos.

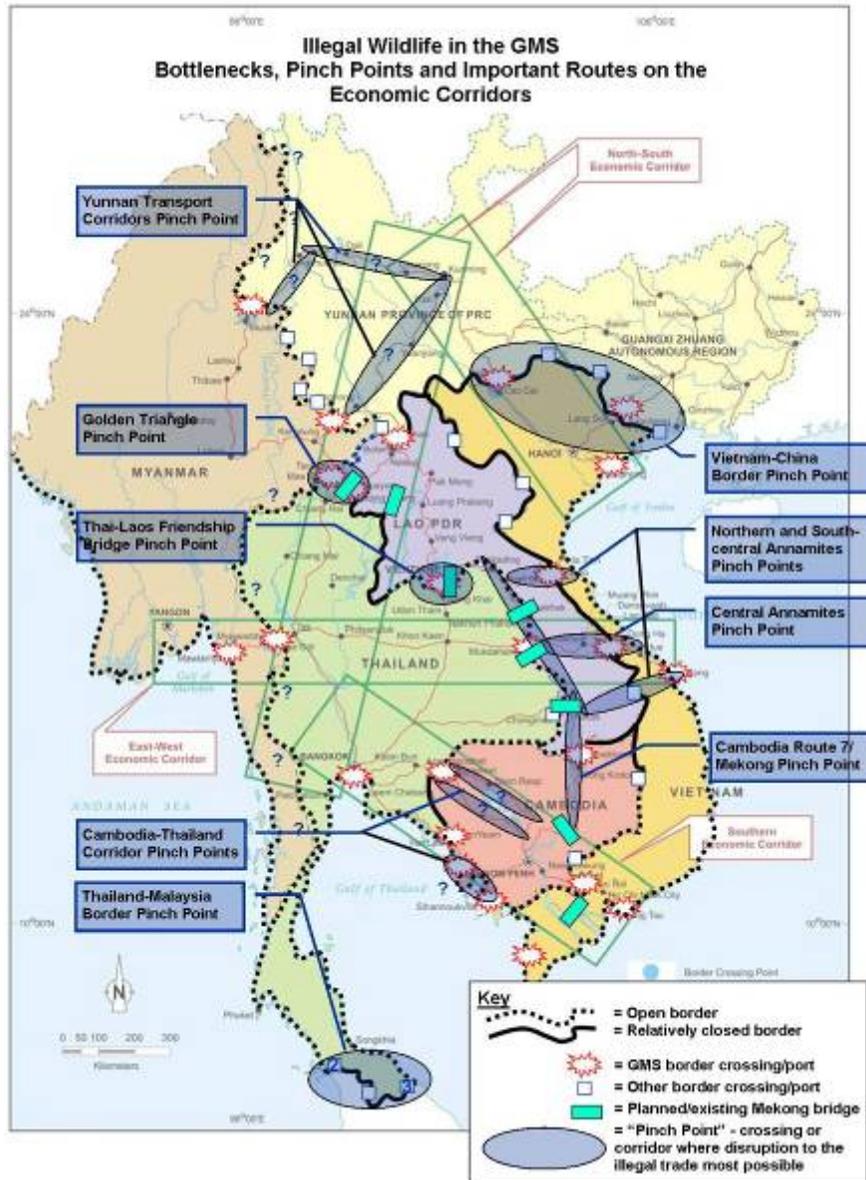
Activity 1.1.2 Protect Key Sites

- Support the provincial Governments in Quang Nam, Hue and Quang Tri to mainstream natural forest restoration into their provincial Forest Strategies and to revise provincial forest restoration plans accordingly. This effort will build on the restoration models that WWF and FPD have tested in the landscape and will feed the results into the provincial policy processes. However, since the ADB-funded BCI project was terminated for this project site, funding has not yet been secured for this plan.
- Support Bach Ma National Park in applying the financial model which has been developed. It is envisaged that this will improve the long term funding situation of the Park and ultimately long term sustainability of the conservation approach and achievements. Once this model is established and has proved to be useful, it is the aim to replicate it for other key Protected Areas in the Greater Annamites ecoregion.

- Assist Quang Nam Forest Protection Department (FPD) and Thua Thien Hue FPD with the development and implementation of management plans and management boards, based on the recent feasibility studies, for the two new protected areas. It is expected that the Provincial Governments will increase their financial commitments, based on the feasibility studies and management plans, which will ensure improved financial sustainability for the new Protected Areas. This activity is ongoing.
- Support provincial agencies in the effective implementation of the ‘Saola Sanctuary’ in Thue Thien Hue province through awareness raising, enforcement and development of staff capacity. This activity is ongoing.

Activity 1.2.1 Address immediate and apparent threats to biodiversity at the national and regional levels in the Greater Annamites

- Continue engagement with the Quang Nam Department of Planning and Investment on mainstreaming biodiversity into the provincial socio-economic development plan 2011 to 2015. If the Quang Nam PPC buys in to this initiative, the main process will be launched in October 2009. As part of this activity it is envisaged that WWF will conduct a mid-term review of the Central Truong Son Biodiversity Conservation Initiative 2004 – 2020 and the Quang Nam Biodiversity and Natural Resource Conservation Strategy 2005 to 2020 and to develop follow on milestones for 2015. WWF is currently looking for funding to implement this initiative.
- Coordinate the effort among WWF, TRAFFIC, FPD and Environmental Police to improve enforcement and to combat illegal wildlife trade by targeting key supply and distribution routes within the Province of Thua Thien Hue that have been identified as a priority trade bottleneck in the Central Annamites/Vietnam (see below).



- For large scale mining, a partnership with one international mining company is envisioned and will be negotiated to ensure that their operations meet the highest environmental and social standards. Discussions with companies are under way, but take longer than expected. The engagement will build on the WWF mining strategy and activity plan which has been developed for the Greater Mekong region.
- Work to improve agricultural practices by: continuing field activities on better management practices (BMPs) for cashew around Cat Tien National Park. By 2010, WWF and partners aim to have the draft BMPs for cocoa, cashew, and agro-forestry systems ready and disseminate them amongst farmers and key stakeholders for further consultation.

Activity 1.3.1 Extend capacity to mobilize and manage large-scale conservation

- Sustainable tourism strategy: In cooperation with FPD and the Institute of Tourism Research and Development, draft definitions and guidelines for planning and approval of

ecotourism projects in Protected Areas. It is currently expected that by June 2011, the definitions and guidelines will have been finally approved.

- Develop and submit at least one forest carbon proposal in FY10, based on the framework for a forest carbon program.

Activity 1.3.2 Engage broader stakeholder support through advocacy-based communications in the Greater Annamites

- Issue a global press release on a first camera trap photograph of a saola (assuming that the camera trapping is successful).
- Issue a global press release on a video footage of a Javan rhino in Cat Tien National Park (assuming that the video trapping is successful).
- Relaunch the Greater Annamites website, and include new features to attract broader target audiences.
- Develop and publish tailor-made communications on the subject that ecologically intact landscapes provide a cornerstone in any strategy to address climate change, both in terms of mitigation and adaptation.
- Distribute communications outputs to target audiences, including local communities and government officials at provincial and local levels.

Lower Mekong Dry Forests Ecoregion

- Implement the second phase of the tiger monitoring system in two protected areas (Mondulhiri Protected Forest and Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary) and adjoining corridors, in close collaboration with local government agencies (Forestry Administration, and Ministry of Environment), and the Wildlife Conservation Society – first minimum population estimates expected end of FY10.
- Continue support to multi-agency anti-poaching team across the landscape (Mondulhiri province) through additional training and equipment; ensure political will maintained for its operation.
- Secure funding to develop a pilot project to undertake a detailed assessment of forest carbon stocks in the key protected areas in the landscape as the first step towards developing a mechanism for directing forest carbon market payments to local communities and government agencies as support to the national carbon accounting system development in Cambodia.
- Review the Mondulhiri Province ExCom/PRDC Permanent Working Group on Conservation Planning and Development (PCPWG), and continue support to assist government to facilitate information sharing (between the relevant agencies and provincial line departments) and integrated planning activities.
- Seek a means to support the Mondulhiri provincial government to mainstream conservation and biodiversity considerations into the new provincial strategic development plan process in FY10.
- Continue to push for transboundary conservation cooperation dialogue between Mondulhiri and Vietnamese provincial agencies and protected area authorities, especially through direct exchange meetings between the two provinces.
- Follow up on recommendations for engagement by NGOs and CSOs with mining companies in responsible and equitable mining, and best management practices.

- Work with the Mondulkiri ExCom/PRDC and line departments to roll out land suitability assessments to other communes.
- Ensure the community guesthouse is up and running, that benefits are flowing to concerned stakeholders and that there is a sustainable business plan in place.
- Secure the investment to develop the pilot higher-end tourism infrastructure in the MPF for an ecolodge;
- Continue to expand the honey and resin associations in target communities in the Eastern Plains, developing appropriate business and marketing plans, and making the connections to markets.

Success Stories

Greater Annamites

- Saola conservation gained additional momentum in FY2009:
 - 1) At the national saola event in Hanoi in September 2009 signatures of more than 26,000 individuals from more than 150 countries in support of saola protection were handed over to key representatives of the provincial and national governments. At the ceremony the Government representatives reiterated the Government's strong support for saola protection.
 - 2) More than 1,500 snares from the four highest priority areas for saola conservation action within Bach Ma National Park extension and the new Saola Reserves were removed. This has reduced overexploitation - the greatest threat to the core population of saola in the Hue-Quang Nam landscape. WWF and Government partners work towards regularly implementing the targeted snare removal also in the future.
 - 3) Advancing and experimenting with saola monitoring methods made good progress. Camera trap techniques were piloted, interview methods tested with local people and hunters and using sniffer dogs is under discussion. With more than USD 420,000 secured over the coming years, particularly dedicated to saola research, WWF and partners expect to make big progress on actually deciding on and designing an appropriate monitoring method.
 - 4) The above grant, entitled 'Can hunting and conservation of endemic Annamite ungulates be reconciled?', is expected to advance population research on the saola and to implement effective enforcement measures. Thus this partnership with the Durrell Institution of Conservation and Ecology (UK) will help continue the saola and ungulate conservation work that GCP helped initiate.
- Implemented a range of conservation and awareness raising actions for the Bach Ma National Park extension, resulting in increased awareness of and support for the Park by local people.
- Secured more than USD 4 million to initiate: a) a sustainable natural resources management programme (Quang Nam, Hue); b) a Hue-based project to effectively combat illegal wildlife trade; c) a research project to further develop the monitoring method for the saola and to establish more accurate population data; d) several species monitoring and enforcement projects (on gibbons, grey-shanked doucs, saola, Javan rhino).

Lower Mekong Dry Forests

- Cambodia's first landscape-level mobile anti-poaching and law enforcement patrol team – made up of Forestry Administration, Ministry of Environment, and local Military Police - was established in the Eastern Plains Landscape. The joint patrol team has a difficult task ahead to crack down on illegal activities, many involving government officials and members of Cambodia's high society.
- A total of nine separate community areas in the EPL are either established, pending approval or in the process of being put forward for local management of natural resources representing a major step forward in empowering local communities;
- The first community-based tourism venture is underway in Mondulkiri province paving the way for more initiatives to follow should this pilot prove to be successful. Part of a planned mosaic of ecotourism products in the landscape the community guesthouse in Dei Ey village will serve the increasing number of international tourists visiting the EPL.
- Video footage and camera trap photographs offer the first real evidence that Asian elephant populations in the landscape appear to be increasing at a healthy rate. Elephant groups are being seen regularly to include several young individuals indicating more effective protection of key elephant areas.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Greater Annamites

From this year's Monitoring & Evaluation discussion the following lessons learned emerged:

1. USAID's Global Conservation Programme was a key contribution to set up an Ecoregional program, with a particular focus on the Central Annamites. It has been particularly valuable to have continuity of funding over a long period of time which allowed for longer term planning.
2. WWF is regularly facing the challenge that project activities or the start of projects are delayed, mainly due to slow approval processes by governments. Good relationships with the respective government focal points as well as integrating government representatives into the planning of activities are important to ensure smoother approval processes. WWF has always been following these tactics, but will make an effort to in particular involve government partners even more closely in planning.
3. The recent example of the termination of the Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative (BCI) for the Eastern Plains Biodiversity Corridor illustrates the need to secure a diverse funding portfolio to avoid devastating impacts as a result of the loss of a donor. The ADB-funded BCI project was terminated for this project site due to the withdrawal from the BCI of ADB's largest donor (the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Hanoi). This happened following an administrative dispute between ADB and the Royal Netherlands Embassy.
4. Sustainable financing remains a challenge. Progress has been made through different venues, for example, by tapping into forest carbon sources and working towards eco-tourism revenues. However, WWF and partners plan to invest more in these approaches to yield sufficient income for long-term conservation work.
5. Conducting research on the saola, including establishing population baselines, is a completely new type of research as methods cannot be copied from research on other species. This is very exciting work, but takes time, requires perseverance, and – very importantly – a

significant amount of resources and funding which is challenging to secure. Reasonable amounts of new funding have been secured to continue the work now after the GCP phases out. The new funding sources are a result of perseverance of WWF and partners over a long period of time and commitment by key donors, in particular USAID.

Lower Mekong Dry Forests

As one of the key activities to get right in FY09, the tiger monitoring system had a few teething problems. In landscapes in which tiger occur at low densities, like in the EPL, monitoring is difficult. In such situations methodologies developed in high density Indian landscapes are often unsuitable. In some circumstances tiger density may be too low to produce anything more scientifically valid than a minimum population estimate. This may be the current situation within the Eastern Plains Landscape (EPL). The previous commitment to undertake landscape-wide tiger occupancy surveys, in collaboration with the Wildlife Conservation Society, was particularly inappropriate within the landscape. The low occurrence rate of tiger sign (<0.03 signs per km walked during >500km of trial surveys) suggested that collecting data capable of generating statistically meaningful results was unlikely. Therefore these surveys were sensibly discontinued. The project is committed to future surveys using scat detection dogs, a methodology previously employed in the Russian Far East; a landscape where tiger occur in low densities comparable with Indochina.

The landscape mobile anti-poaching and law enforcement team has also experienced initial difficulties. Multi-agency initiatives are a challenge in most contexts and no less so in Monduliri province where the Forestry Administration is the more powerful agency with a mandate for natural resource management. From this pilot initiative we have become aware of the early risks and associated challenges, in particular, with dealing with illegal activities that may be related to high ranking officials or well connected members of the public.

The overall challenge for WWF is to ensure we deliver on the ambitious conservation programme that we have designed with our partners, while at the same time retaining the ability to react to important issues that arise. Next year the province will be developing a new strategic development plan. This poses an excellent opportunity for WWF to input to the process to try and ensure biodiversity is appropriately mainstreamed into the development planning. This kind of work calls for an altogether different set of skills than those needed to implement field-level conservation projects, but this is just the kind of challenge and call to action that WWF is able to answer.

Subgrantees

None

Annexes

(Please see attachments)

- Annex 1: Saola event press release
- Annex 2: Khmer report for decision makers on “The importance of forest and wildlife conservation in Mondulkiri
- Annex 3: Forest Cover Change in the Mekong Region: 1970 to present