

Illegal Exploitation of Bears in Ha Long Undermines World Heritage Image

A picturesque bay with karst outcrops towering over gentle green waters. Tourists coming from all over the world to see the spectacular Ha Long Bay, staying at our hotels, dining in our restaurants, buying from our shops, enjoying and learning about our culture. Thousands of our visitors each year sail across the calm waters of our Ha Long Bay admiring the beauty and fresh ocean air, and return home to tell others about what they have experienced, tasted, and seen.

However, less than a mile away, lurks a darker side of the tourism industry at Ha Long Bay. Hundreds of bears are kept in cages, all of them illegally hunted from the wild, transported, and sold to bear farmers that have set up businesses extracting and selling bear bile in direct violation of the law, to satisfy the demand of tourists from South Korea and other Asian countries.

Over the past few months, these bile farms have attracted a lot of publicity. The farms are owned by Vietnamese businessmen, but the bear bile tourism operations are reportedly run by Koreans. Hundreds of Korean and other Asian tour groups visit the farms each year, where they witness the extraction of bile from captive bears, taste bear bile wine, and buy bear bile and other bear products, which they then are believed to smuggle out of the country in violation of the law.



A bear awaits a group of foreign tourists at a Ha Long bear farm. The bear will be put to sleep while bile is extracted from its gall bladder and sold to tourists in violation of the law

"I think it is appalling that people are doing these sorts of things to bears to entertain tourists," said one visiting western tourist. "I had no idea when I came to Ha Long Bay that these sorts of things were happening just down the road. I think that it is extremely important that the authorities put a stop to this practice."

The extraction and sale of bear bile is illegal. There are dozens of alternatives to bear bile available for people who seek treatment for illnesses or other health issues. The National Forest Protection Department (FPD) reports that there are about 4,000 captive bears currently registered in Vietnam. The law, however, does not permit owners to extract or sell bile from registered bears. While some registered bear farm owners are keeping their bears as pets, many more continue to exploit bear bile in direct violation of the law.

Of particular concern are major bear farm operations with tens of bears in captivity that often entertain large groups of visitors directly under the eyes of local authorities.

ENV is committed to working with authorities to eliminate illegal trade of bears and phase out bear farming while promoting alternatives to bear bile, and ensuring that farmers and owners of bears that violate the law, such as the bear bile tourism operations in Quang Ninh, are punished appropriately. ENV also seeks to ensure that the reputation of Vietnam's premier tourist site at Ha Long Bay is not overshadowed by the illegal activities of a few greedy businessmen in Quang Ninh.

ENV recommends that the Forest Protection Departments throughout provinces where bears are being kept and exploited for bear bile take bold steps forward and let bear farm business owners know that they must cease their illegal activities or face the full brunt of punishment under the law.

Quang Ninh Environmental Police Say “ENOUGH!” to Bear Tourism Operations

On October 2, Quang Ninh Environmental Police raided one of six bear farms just outside Ha Long City where a group of Korean tourists had gathered in a room to witness a bear bile extraction before allegedly being offered to buy bear bile from the Korean manager and staff. Police confiscated an ultrasound machine and other equipment used to extract bear bile and more than 200 bottles of wet and dry bear bile that the owners allegedly intended to sell to the tourists. The group of tourists, who may have been unaware that buying and transporting bear bile is illegal in Vietnam, were detained only long enough to document their identity.

The raid followed weeks of media attention and growing government interest on these six bear bile tourism operations. Some members of government are asking why Quang Ninh authorities had not moved sooner to shut down the illegal operations after the issue was brought to their attention earlier in the year.

The Korean managers of these farms, who claim to be accountants but are shown in undercover films directing operations and leading tours of Korean tourists, may be subject to punishment or expulsion if it is determined that the work that they have been engaged in violates the laws of Vietnam and the terms of their business visas.



Police question visitors at a bear farm in Quang Ninh where the staff were discovered on October 2nd extracting bear bile from an unconscious bear and selling illegal bear products to a group of Korean tourists

Tiger Conservation or Trade?

A recent newspaper article highlighted the concerns of a businessman in the south about the cost of managing his tigers in captivity. The businessman argued that his efforts to breed tigers was strictly for conservation purposes, and the public supported this idea, but nearly two years have passed and it remains unclear how captive tigers in the south will contribute to the conservation of the species.

What subspecies are in the farms? Are they being interbred between subspecies? How are tigers being paired to produce the best possible genetic offspring? Are tigers inbreeding on the farms diluting the genetic value of the offspring?

Recently, one of the businessmen noted that CITES banned commercial trade of tigers, but suggested that he should be allowed to give his tigers to others as gifts. Are we to think that this will not involve selling tigers beneath the table? In fact, the trader questions what will happen when there are more tigers produced on farms. The underlying suggestion is that tiger traders with captive tigers will eventually push for permission to sell their animals when numbers begin to reach capacity on the farms. How then will farms with hundreds of tigers that are inbred, mixed subspecies, and unfit to release in the wild contribute to conservation?

While the success in breeding tigers at some zoos and businesses in Vietnam can be commended, producing more captive tigers is unlikely to benefit conservation in any way. More likely, if tiger businesses are allowed to continue breeding their tigers without specific guidance and restrictions on how their tigers will specifically contribute to conservation of the species, we are likely to soon have the same impossible situation facing us with tigers that we do with bears, now nearly 4000 in captivity.

There is window of opportunity for the relevant authorities to deal with this issue while it is still small. We can act proactively, seeing the potential problems of the future, and eliminate the problem while we can. Or let the cancer grow until it is near fatal and react with a much more complex and costly solution.

This year, it is understood that permits expire for many of the businessmen keeping captive tigers. If some businessmen are permitted to keep their tigers when their permits expire at the end of this year, we must halt

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further breeding of tigers until a widely endorsed conservation breeding plan can be completed for each of the permitted owners, with clear objectives and demonstrating meaningful results for conservation. If tiger businessmen are whining now about how to pay for their captive tigers, we can expect the burden only to increase as more tigers are born, and more pressure from tiger businessmen to be allowed to sell their stock out the back door, as it is suspected some tiger businessmen are already doing.

It is therefore essential, now, to act decisively in dealing with this problem, or face the costly prospects of dealing with the issue at a later time when the problem has reached immense proportions, as it has in China with tigers, and here in Vietnam with bears.

- Tiger businessmen should stop all breeding on their farms until a management plan is approved for their breeding activities and their operations are open to regular and unannounced inspections by authorities.
- A statement and a plan should be prepared by each tiger owner specifying the exact purpose for keeping and breeding tigers, and a clear plan for how the tigers will be managed for conservation or education purposes.
- If tiger farmers are operating legitimate educational and conservation breeding facilities, these facilities should be accessible to experts from both inside and outside the government that can assess conditions, monitor animals, and assist with recommendations for improving the operations.
- Provincial governments must implement effective and regular monitoring programs to keep track of developments at the farms, while ensuring that all tigers, including deceased tigers and their parts are accounted for and that owners are not engaged in any commercial trade of any kind.
- Farmers should sign legally binding contracts agreeing that their permits will be revoked, their tigers will be confiscated, and they will pay substantial fines or face criminal prosecution if tigers under their care are, sold, traded, transported, or disposed of in any way without the expressed written permission of the National FPD CITES office.

Let's assume that some tiger businessmen have good intentions, as they say. Some of them may indeed have such good intentions. But let's also recognize the potential for this problem to grow if unchecked. We must act now to strengthen controls, tighten management, and assist the good people while shutting the door tightly on others that may harbor a secret agenda aimed at generating personal wealth at the expense of our tigers, and our national interest in protecting them.



Two tigers confiscated from a taxi in Hanoi on October 16 originated from the very same village of Thanh Hoa where a tiger farmer resides. The tiger keeper petitioned the authorities in 2008 to keep his tigers on the grounds that he intended to breed them for conservation purposes

CITES Calls on Vietnam to Report on Progress in Ending Tiger Trade

Decision 14.69 adopted by CITES member states during the 14th Conference of Parties in 2007 calls on all member states to restrict captive breeding to support conservation purposes only, and states that tigers should not be bred for trade in their parts or derivatives. Resolution 12.5 calls on member states to eliminate tiger product trade in domestic medicine markets.

In July 2009, CITES notified Vietnam and other tiger breeding states to produce a report on the progress of meeting obligations under the two resolutions.

CITES is the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species, an international treaty that Vietnam became a signatory of in 1994. The treaty regulates trade of endangered wildlife across international borders.

Yen Bai Authorities Demonstrate How Monitoring Can Work

While the situation at Ha Long Bay may continue to be a major concern in efforts to end illegal bear farming, there is better news from Yen Bai province.

National FPD and their World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) counterparts conducted the first comprehensive monitoring program focused on establishing a model that will be expanded to include all provinces where there are registered bears in captivity.

Working with provincial FPD and local authorities, the monitoring team inspected five farms, anesthetized 15 bears and used a micro-chip reader to read the unique registration number for each bear containing a chip that was inserted under the bear's skin more than two years ago. The inspection confirmed that 14 of the bears were where they belonged, but found one bear that was not registered and was therefore illegal.

Unlike some other provinces that have engaged in lengthy processes to determine whether the law, which is quite clear, should be followed, Yen Bai authorities and their National FPD counterparts acted quickly, ordering the bear to be confiscated and transferred to the Tam Dao Bear Rescue Center operated by Animals Asia Foundation (AAF).

There are two important outcomes from this example to share with other provinces:

Firstly, with support from National FPD and WSPA, Yen Bai is carrying out a monitoring program to ensure that bear farmers comply with the law. Authorities there have proven that effective monitoring yields results.

In addition to checking to ensure that no new bears had been illegally transferred to the farms, inspectors also looked at facilities and the general health and welfare of the animals to ensure that owners were in compliance with safety, health, and welfare requirements.

Like authorities in Dien Bien, Hanoi, Can Tho, and Lam Dong provinces, Yen Bai authorities have joined a small and growing group of provinces that are taking the lead in demonstrating their resolve to end illegal wildlife activities. Their message to violators is clear: if you are found with an unregistered bear or other illegal wildlife, it will be confiscated and you will be punished. You will NOT be allowed to keep your bear!

Confiscated Bears: Space Available, Send Your Unregistered Bears



An empty cage awaits occupants at the Animals Asia Bear Sanctuary at Tam Dao National Park. The facility has room for at least 100 confiscated bears

Despite rumors to the contrary, there is plenty of space for confiscated bears at the Animals Asia Foundation's Tam Dao Bear Rescue Center. The facility currently has the capacity to receive about 70-100 additional bears, and is continuing with plans to expand holding facilities to receive additional bears when they are discovered and confiscated by authorities.

AAF will work directly with authorities to receive confiscated bears, and help cover the costs of transport and care following the confiscation.

In the south of Vietnam, efforts are underway to expand the bear holding facilities at Ca Tien National Park, and a new bear rescue facility in Kien Giang run by the Kien Giang FPD and Free the Bears (FTB) currently has space for about 20 bears, and will be able to accommodate additional bears as they are confiscated. Provincial FPD's are urged to follow the example of Yen Bai, Lam Dong, Can Tho, Dien Bien, and other provinces that are demonstrating a determined effort to address the illegal bear situation by confiscating illegal bears immediately when they are found.

**If you need assistance with placement of confiscated bears,
Contact the ENV Wildlife Crime Hotline 1-800-1522**

Black-shanked Douc Langur Trade

URGENT NOTICE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

ENV is concerned by the recent number of incidents involving black-shanked douc langurs (*Pygathrix nigripes*) being hunted and traded in Vietnam. Since late 2007, ENV has documented 11 incidents and a total of 121 dead black-shanked douc langurs recovered from hunters. Five of these incidents have occurred in Khanh Hoa province, two in Dak Nong province, and two more in Binh Phuoc province. However, a case in Dak Lak province involved a local traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) processing operation and resulted in the recovery of 40 dead langurs. A more recent case in July resulted in the seizure of 52 dried remains of black-shanked douc langurs in the northern province of Bac Kan that were being transported to Cao Bang.

ENV has been working with the Khanh Hoa provincial government to encourage the province to heighten enforcement efforts around key sites where langur populations are known to exist, and several recent prosecutions of hunters responsible for nine of the deaths have been encouraging. Three hunters charged in a March 2009 case involving five langurs received an accumulated sentence of more than nine years in prison. In July, two hunters involved in a January 2009 case involving four langurs received sentences of 24 months and 30 months respectively.

Unfortunately, seizures and arrests most likely reflect only a small percentage of the hunting and trade in black-shanked douc langurs. It is therefore critical that enforcement efforts are strengthened within langur habitats to protect remaining populations.

The black-shanked douc langur is native to eastern Cambodia and the southern provinces of Vietnam. The species is listed as *endangered* on the IUCN Red List of endangered species. Primary threats include hunting for consumption as food or to make traditional medicine, and loss or fragmentation of habitats. Ninety-two of the langurs recovered in incidents documented by ENV consisted of dried remains, indicating that the langurs were to be used in traditional medicine.



The black-shanked douc langur can be distinguished from other langurs by its black legs and gray body

Photo by Tilo Nadler



Several black-shanked douc langurs confiscated from hunters in February in Khanh Hoa province

Recommendations

1. Alert Forest Rangers and staff at National Parks and Nature Reserves to increase efforts to prevent hunting such as increasing patrols in areas where langurs are known to reside, alert information networks to ensure timely notification of reports on hunting or trade, and maintain heightened vigilance.
2. Prosecute and punish hunters or traders that are caught with this species, following the excellent example of the courts in Khanh Hoa which have handed down prison sentences for several hunters recently caught with dead langurs.
3. Publicize widely arrests, prosecutions, and sentencing in order to ensure that hunters and traders are aware that the province will deal harshly with those caught breaking the law.

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Additional information

Protection Status

The black-shanked douc langur is protected under Group 1B of Government Decree 32/2006/ND-CP on Management of Endangered, Precious, and Rare Species of Wild Plants and Animals. The hunting, exploitation, trade, possession, advertising, and consumption of species and products made from these species is strictly prohibited.

The black-shanked douc langur is also listed under Appendix 1 of CITES prohibiting trade across international borders without a permit from the CITES office in both the country of origin and destination.

Conservation Status

The black-shanked douc langur is listed on the IUCN Red List as Endangered.

This advisory has been sent to provincial People's Committees, FPDs, Environmental Police, DARD, and National Park and Nature Reserve Managers in the affected provinces of Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Phu Yen, Khanh Hoa, Dak Lak, Tay Ninh, Dong Nai, Lam Dong, Ninh Thuan, Binh Thuan, and Binh Phuoc.

Announcement

New Criminal Law: Tougher on Wildlife Crime

A new version of the criminal code has been approved, which greatly increases fines and punishment for violations of wildlife protection law and closes a loophole in the previous version that did not specifically make possession of endangered wildlife illegal.

The new criminal code sets maximum fines of up to 500 Million VND (about \$27,000) for violations of the law, and imprisonment of up to seven years. The law also makes 'keeping' fully protected species without a legal permit illegal and subject to criminal punishment.

The new criminal code is scheduled to go into effect on January 1, 2010.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) is currently working on a tougher series of fines for administrative violations of wildlife protection law.

New Species Identification Resources

There have been a number of new resources out this year to help police, customs, and forest rangers with identifying species and animal products in trade.

TRAFFIC has produced a book with excellent photos and descriptions of common species in trade. Contact Ms. Van at 04-3719-0207.

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has produced an identification resource for wildlife parts including antlers, ivory and rhino horn, carnivore teeth and claws, hides, and other parts. Contact Ms. Nhung at 04-3773-7858 or email vietnam@wcs.org



Crime Log - Spotlight on Success

Law Enforcement Yields Positive Outcomes

In 2009, ENV has documented many successes by police and provincial Forest Protection Departments in efforts to combat wildlife crime. Notably, there have been a number of major cases that deserve attention not just because of the importance of the species involved, but also because these cases highlight critical aspects of effective law enforcement such as ensuring a timely response, outstanding performance by frontline law enforcement officers, well-planned investigations that lead to arrests and prosecutions, appropriate settlement of evidence, and sufficiently strong punishment aimed at deterring others from committing similar crimes.

Quang Ninh Environmental Police Take Bold Steps Addressing Bear Bile Tourism in Province

On October 2, Quang Ninh EP raided the Viet Thai Commercial and Tour Company in Ha Long city and caught red-handed staff of the company extracting bear bile and serving a group of Korean tourists.

According to a correspondence from Quang Ninh EP, the company is keeping 82 bears, 24 of which were not chipped and were reportedly owned by various other businessmen.

Nine people were issued violation papers including two Korean nationals working at the farm and seven Vietnamese employees. Several Korean tourists were also questioned after purchasing bear bile products. Quang Ninh EP also confiscated important evidence including a quantity of bear bile and equipment used for the extraction of bear bile. Environmental Police are seeking the maximum penalty for the company owner, an important step forward in efforts to eliminate illegal bear bile tourism operations in the province (*WCU Ref. Case 1122*).

Hai Phong Custom Agents Confiscate Tons of Elephant Ivory and other Wildlife at Port

Since March 2009, Hai Phong Customs have discovered three illegal shipments of elephant ivory in containers at the port, confiscating a total of about 8,600 kilos of ivory. The ivory in all three seizures originated from Tanzania and Mozambique.

A shipment confiscated in March included over six tons of ivory packed into two containers labeled as containing recycled plastic waste. Information provided by Customs agents in Vietnam in relation to the six ton shipment was instrumental in assisting Tanzanian investigators, and led to the arrest of a number of suspects in Tanzania thought to be involved in the smuggling operation, with more arrests expected.

A second smaller shipment of 611 kg of ivory was discovered by Customs Agents in July in a container that originated in Mozambique. In August, Customs seized a third shipment of ivory totaling approximately two tons arriving in a container originating in Tanzania (*WCU Ref. Case 1614, 1927, 1970*).



A box of elephant tusks seized by Hai Phong Customs In March 2009

On August 24, just three days after the two ton shipment of ivory was discovered, Hai Phong Custom's agents inspected two more containers arriving on a different ship from Indonesia and discovered nearly two tons of pangolin scales and freshwater turtle shells. The shipment documents listed the cargo as dried seaweed and fish parts (*WCU Ref. Case 1971*).

Hanoi Environmental Police Increase the Heat on Hanoi Area Tiger Traders

In 2009, Hanoi Environmental Police have made three major busts involving smuggling and trade of tigers along with other critically endangered wildlife.

In January, Hanoi EP caught a man illegally transporting on a motorbike a tiger skeleton and 10 kg of serow bones on Cat Linh Street of Hanoi.

"Every animal counts! Your decision may save a species from extinction."

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The head of a frozen tiger chopped up and stuffed into the trunk of a vehicle discovered in February by Hanoi Environmental Police and Dong Da district FPD

Police then raided the home of a suspect linked to the case in Dong Da district and discovered a variety of wildlife products, including six tiger hides, bear gall bladders, seven bear paws, and other wildlife parts. A subsequent raid of another home linked to the case resulted in the discovery of another tiger skeleton and a large bag full of various animal bones (WCU Ref. Case 1550).

In February, EP working in cooperation with Hanoi FPD, stopped a seven-seat van in Dong Da District and confiscated a tiger that had been cut up into pieces and was reportedly headed to a district in Ninh Binh noted for its tiger bone glue processing operations (WCU Ref. Case 1583).

In July, Hanoi EP made another tiger bust, this time discovering a frozen tiger and 11 kg of tiger bones hidden in a taxi. The taxi driver declared that the tiger products originated from Thanh Hoa province and were destined for Hanoi. (WCU Ref. Case 1905)

Tuyen Quang, Can Tho, and Yen Bai Provincial Forest Protection Departments Confiscate, Not Register, Protected Wildlife

In April, Tuyen Quang FPD, working in cooperation with provincial Environmental Police and the Chiem Hoa FPD mobile unit inspected a resident's house in Minh Quang district of Tuyen Quang province and discovered two bear cubs. The cubs were subsequently transferred to the AAF's bear sanctuary at Tam Dao National Park (WCU Ref. Case 1741).

In May, the Can Tho Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) conducted monitoring at the Thuy Tien tourism area and found one Asiatic black bear, two macaques, three Burmese pythons and two adjutants. The subject could not produce any legal certificates that proved the origin or the legality of the wildlife. Can Tho PC then instructed the DARD in cooperation with FPD, EP and other

related authorities to confiscate the unregistered bear, which was then transferred to the Cu Chi Rescue Center administered by Wildlife at Risk on August 21. The other animals are pending settlement (WCU Ref. Case 1828).

While a bear farm was being monitored in early July, Yen Bai FPD inspectors discovered an unregistered bear amongst many registered bears being kept by a local resident at one of the provinces' bear farms. Yen Bai authorities acted swiftly, confiscating the bear and fining the subject 10 million VND for illegal possession of a fully protected species. The bear was then transferred to AAF's bear sanctuary at Tam Dao National Park (WCU Ref. Case 1891).

Khanh Hoa Authority Get Tough on Hunters and Traders Poaching Endangered Langurs

In 2009, Khanh Hoa authorities have made three separate seizures of black-shanked douc langurs (*Pygathrix nigripes*) from hunters and traders with a total of 12 dead langurs recovered to date this year.

On February 4, police seized the remains of two douc langurs which had been killed in Hon Heo forest. In March, Hon Ba FPD and Cao Lam district police arrested three other suspects transporting five dead langurs on a motorbike at the entrance of a Hon Ba forest. Two months later, five more dead



The bodies of five black-shanked douc langurs confiscated in March from a motorbike driver outside Hon Ba Nature Reserve in Khanh Hoa province

langurs were confiscated from a man on a motorbike in Ninh Hoa district.

Three suspects arrested in the March case were prosecuted and issued sentences of between 24 and 48 months in prison (WCU Ref. Case 1563, 1625, 1798).

“Buying and selling wild animals and their parts is a CRIME.”

Crime Log: Cases of Interest

The ENV Wildlife Crime Unit documented 488 wildlife crimes between January 1 and September 30, 2009. Highlights of some of the many successful cases are noted below:

Quang Ninh province

On July 16 and 21, Quang Ninh traffic police confiscated a total of 24 bear paws in two separate incidents. In both cases, the buses transporting the bear paws were heading for the border town of Mong Cai from Ha Long City (WCU Ref. Case 1903, 1913).

Bac Can province

On July 24, the Bach Thong market control team stopped a motorbike in Bach Thong district and confiscated 52 dried black-shanked douc langurs (*Pygathrix nigripes*). The motorbike driver claimed that he was transporting the langurs to Cao Bang town (WCU Ref. Case 1926).

Hanoi

Hanoi EP have seized four illegal shipments of king cobras (*Ophiophagus hannah*), confiscating a total of 11 snakes since May of 2009. Most of the shipments were being transported to consumer markets in and around Hanoi. The king cobra is protected under Group 1B of Decree 32. The confiscated cobras were all transferred to the Soc Son Rescue Center (WCU Ref. Case 1811, 1885, 1958, 1959).



Bear paws recovered by Environmental Police from the home of a trader in Hanoi

Thanh Hoa province

On August 20, Thanh Hoa Traffic police discovered 17 elephant tusks hidden in a car heading north in Thuong Xuan district (WCU Ref. Case 1964).

Thua Thien Hue province

In May, Nam Dong district FPD confiscated two stump-tailed macaques that were being illegally transported in

Huong Phu commune of Nam Dong district. The two macaques were then released into Bach Ma NP several days after the confiscation (WCU Ref. Case 1812).

Binh Dinh province

On June 11, Binh Dinh EP, working in cooperation with the FPD and police from Hoai Nhon district, confiscated 200 kg of wildlife from a local resident's home. The confiscated animals reportedly included four frozen grey-shanked douc langurs (*Pygathrix nemaeus cinerea*), four frozen leopard cats (*Prionailurus bengalensis*), four dead pig-tailed macaques (*Malaca leonina*), 17 kg of Muntjac meat, and some live animals including a porcupine, muntjac, 14 civets, a Burmese python, 26 clouded monitors, 2 kg of Indochinese rat snakes, a cobra, a pangolin and 11 unidentified turtles (WCU Ref. Case 1838).

Nha Trang province

On September 11 in Nha Trang, an inter-agency force comprised of Environmental Police, Fisheries Department officers, provincial DARD, and border police inspected ten houseboats on Hon Tre island of Nha Trang Bay and discovered 849 hawksbill marine turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) being kept illegally by the houseboat owners. Police and Fisheries officers released the marine turtles back to the ocean on the same day. Two subjects were issued fines totaling 10 million VND (WCU Ref. Case 2001).

Dak Nong province

On August 30, Dak R'lap Environmental Police and the FPD raided the home of a trader in Dak R'lap district and discovered five dead black-shanked douc langurs (*Pygathrix nigripes*), six dead macaques, snakes, monitor lizards, the hide of a leopard cat and over 100 kg of wildlife products. The dead animals were reportedly found in the suspect's freezer (WCU Ref. Case 1979).

Ho Chi Minh city

On May 18, HCM Environmental Police FPD rangers inspected a pet shop in Ho Chi Minh City and discovered a pig-tailed macaque and a crested argus. The animals were confiscated and transferred to the Cu Chi Rescue Center on the same day. The shop owner was fined 853,000 VND (WCU Ref. Case 1780).

"The best way to protect wildlife is in its habitat where it belongs, before it falls into the hands of hunters and traders."

Crime Log: Important Case Reported By the Public

Bear Cub in Dien Bien

On April 23 following a tip from a local resident, Dien Bien FPD raided a local resident's house and confiscated an Asiatic black bear cub (*Selenarctos thibetanus*), which was then transferred to Animals Asia Foundation Bear Sanctuary at Tam Dao National Park (WCU Ref. Case 1764).

Macaque bones in Cao Bang

Following a tip from a local resident, Cao Bang EP in July caught a man illegally transporting 30 macaque skeletons at a bus station in Cao Bang town (WCU Ref. Case 1929).

Lorises in Lao Cai



One of many lorises turned over to ENV and placed at the Endangered Primate Rescue Center at Cuc Phuong National Park

In two separate incidents in June, Bac Ha district FPD of Lao Cao province confiscated a loris being sold at Bac Ha market and two lorises that were being kept in a cage at an aluminum-glass shop in Bac Ha town. Both cases were initially received by the ENV Hotline and passed onto the FPD (WCU Ref. Case 1849, 1855).

Macaques and pythons in Thanh Hoa

Three macaques and a python being kept at a hotel in Thanh Hoa province were confiscated by FPD after the case was reported by an ENV Wildlife Protection Volunteer living in the area. The macaques were later transferred to the Ben En National Park (WCU Ref. Case 1933).

Macaques and peafowl in Da Nang

In Da Nang, five macaques and two peacocks were confiscated by the FPD following a report to the ENV Wildlife Crime Hotline by a foreigner that had observed the wildlife at a café (WCU Ref. Case 1595).

More macaques in Hanoi

In February, Hanoi residents reported two cases involving macaques being kept illegally. One case involved three macaques being kept at a petrol station. The second case involved a single macaque being kept at an iron shop. In both cases, the macaques were confiscated by Hanoi FPD and transferred to the Soc Son Rescue Center. The subjects were fined 7,560,000 VND and 1,620,000 VND respectively (WCU Ref. Case 1564, 1600).

Leopard cats in Hanoi

In Hanoi, tips to the ENV Wildlife Crime Hotline from two Hanoi residents resulted in the confiscation of a total of four leopard cats in two separate incidents. Hanoi EP and FPD rangers confiscated one leopard cat in Mo Market where the animal had been observed for sale in the dog and cat section of the market. Three more leopard cats were confiscated from a pet shop in Dong Da district. All of the animals were turned over to the Soc Son Rescue Center (WCU Ref. Case 1544, 1673).

Voluntary transfers of animals

During the first nine months of the year, ENV recorded 14 voluntary transfers of wildlife from residents to rescue centers. These include the transfer of three registered bears to Ho Chi Minh FPD by a company in September. Earlier in May, 26 turtles, including six native species, were turned over to the Wildlife at Risk Cu Chi Rescue Center in HCM by the caretakers of a pagoda at the urging of some students that had conducted turtle surveys at several pagodas (WCU Ref. Case 2025, 1762).



An unusual case: A leopard kept by a private owner was turned over by Vinh Long authorities to the Cu Chi Wildlife Rescue Center

Photo by Matt Wills

"Punish criminals today to prevent crime tomorrow."

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Foreign reported crimes

Over the past ten months, timely reports on wildlife violations from foreign visitors have made a noticeable contribution to successful enforcement actions by authorities.

In Da Nang, FPD confiscated one pig-tailed macaque and three stump-tailed macaques from the Ba Na and Tien Sa resorts, where the animals were being kept on display for tourists in violation of the law.

In Quang Nam a macaque was confiscated from the Phu Ninh Lake Resort by the FPD, while in Tien Giang province, provincial government agencies (there is no FPD in Tien Giang) ordered the confiscation of two yellow-cheeked gibbons (*Hylobates gabriellae*), a python, and two macaques from a resort on the Mekong Delta. The gibbons were transferred to the Cu Chi Rescue Center. Two of the macaques were transferred and released at Dong Thap Moi Nature Reserve while the third macaque escaped during the transfer

process. The macaques confiscated in Da Nang and Quang Nam were subsequently released (WCU Ref. Case 1911, 1802, 1803, 1568)

Internet Crimes

Over the past few months, ENV received many reports through the hotline involving advertising of wildlife on websites and in forums. Advertisements have ranged from offering live snakes to pangolin and bear paw wine, tortoises, tiger claws, ivory, and other bear products.

Efforts to get website administrators to remove advertisements and curtail posting of future advertisements on websites have been successful, with six major websites and forums pulling ads and agreeing to prohibit future postings. One popular advertisement forum, the site of many previous advertisements, implemented a new policy in writing prohibiting the advertisement of wildlife products. ENV is pursuing a number of other important cases (WCU Ref. Case 1854, 1860, 1861, 1865, 1866, 1867).

Crime Statistics

The ENV Wildlife Crimes Unit has logged a total of 488 cases between January 1st to September 30, 2009.

Period	Trade seizures	Smuggling	Selling	Advertising	Possession display	Other	Total *
January 2009	4	6	10	0	2	1	23
February 2009	2	6	27	4	24	4	66
March 2009	3	9	36	4	15	1	69
April 2009	1	3	21	4	19	3	52
May 2009	4	17	22	5	18	2	68
June 2009	2	9	21	13	9	6	62
July 2009	4	10	20	12	10	1	57
August 2009	1	15	14	5	10	2	48
September 2009	1	7	8	13	15	3	47
TOTAL 2009	22	82	179	60	122	23	488

* These statistics represent only a small fraction of the active trade in wildlife in Vietnam, and only account for those cases that are reported to ENV.

The ENV Wildlife Crime Unit

The ENV Wildlife Crime Unit (WCU) was established in January of 2005 to facilitate public reporting of wildlife crimes through a national toll-free hotline. Information on crimes received through the hotline is quickly passed on to the appropriate authorities by ENV, after which the WCU tracks each case through to its conclusion. Public sources are kept informed of the progress and outcome of each case, and all cases are documented on ENV's Wildlife Crime Database.

The main aims of the program are to:

- * Encourage public participation in efforts to stop the illegal trade of wildlife;
- * Provide support to law enforcement agencies tasked with combating wildlife crime;
- * Document crimes and work with authorities to identify and address factors that contribute to wildlife crime.

The ENV Wildlife Crime Unit is jointly funded by the Humane Society International, The Whitley Fund for Nature, the MacArthur Foundation, and SeaWorld and Busch Gardens Fund.

The Wildlife Crime Bulletin is produced several times each year and is distributed to senior members in government and the National Assembly, Provincial People Committees, functional agencies tasked with wildlife protection, and protected area managers in all 64 provinces.

The English language version of the bulletin is produced and distributed to members within the conservation community.

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Contact us

ENV Wildlife Crime Unit

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Facebook English: www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=47162312016

Stop Wildlife Crime



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

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