

# CASE STUDIES

## 2021 HIGHLIGHTS



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# CAMBODIA

2021

*Support to small-scale aquaculture provides an alternative to illegal fishing activities, contributing to conservation of fisheries*

## Abstract:

In Cambodia, the project works with model farmers living along the Sre Ambel and Mekong rivers. They receive both technical training and financial support to establish a home-based, small-scale, integrated agriculture and aquaculture system. Through this support, these farmers harvest vegetable and farmed fish for family consumption, with surplus sold at local markets, generating an additional income and reducing fishing burden.



Checking on the family fish pond in the Mekong river project site

## Context:

Asian freshwater turtles and tortoises are going through dramatic population declines. Cambodia supports globally significant populations of a number of highly threatened turtle species, including the Royal Turtle *Batagur affinis* and the Asian Giant Softshell Turtle *Pelochelys cantorii* - both species largely restricted to intact wetlands in the Mekong and Sre Ambel river systems. Unfortunately, Cambodia has become both a source for the illegal trade of turtles and also a transit country for turtles trafficked from Thailand and Malaysia onto Vietnam and China. The continued sand dredging, illegal fishing, overexploitation and loss of habitat from land grabbing and the clearance of riparian flooded forests, are major threats to the survival of these species, at great risk of extinction. A core focus of the project is to address threats to populations of these two critically endangered species, which include accidental capture by fisherfolk and hunting or poaching for local consumption or commercial trade, in both river systems. To address these issues, project partners engage with local communities in freshwater turtle protection and conservation, in collaboration with the Fisheries Administration and selected Community Fisheries. It also supports the development of home-based, family-owned aquaculture systems that generate incomes and improve livelihoods.

*Pelochelys cantorii*



## Objectives:

- 1 To enhance protection in key source sites for endangered species of Asian freshwater turtles
- 2 To increase effectiveness of law enforcement and justice sectors to combat wildlife and turtle trafficking
- 3 To increase transboundary coordination to combat wildlife trafficking especially with China
- 4 To reduce preference for illegally sourced products of turtle and tortoise species

## Highlights:

76 TURTLE NESTS protected by community members from nearby villages as part of negotiated conservation agreements, and resulting in 1,300 successful hatchlings of endangered turtles

775 DAYS OF JOINT PATROLLING carried out at source sites, covering over 18,000 km largely on boat along the Sre Ambel and Mekong river systems

1,140 HOUSEHOLDS participating in and benefitting from livelihood development activities: incentive for nest protection, patrolling, aquaculture, vegetable gardening, etc.

1,860 INFORMATION REPORTS recorded or received through the wildlife crime hotline and other sources, of which at least 591 were specific to freshwater turtle and tortoise species

105 RAID AND RESCUE OPERATIONS conducted against illegal turtle and tortoise traders, of which 15 resulted in legal action against the perpetrators

## Testimonial:



Ms. Nuth Vanna, model farmer in Sre Ambel river site



Mr. Prum Chantha, model farmer in Mekong river site

Ms. Nuth Vanna joined the project-supported Community Livelihood Improvement Programme in 2019. Before that, she was raising poultry at home, while her husband went fishing in the Sre Ambel river or worked in local farms to make a living. Ms. Vanna said,

*"I am interested to join the project because, beyond my contribution to protecting and conserving the Royal turtles, I learn new skills on how to raise fish, which I can use to increase our family income."*

Ms. Vanna's living conditions have improved since being part of the programme. She said that now, her family has not only enough food to eat, but can sell fish at the market and to her neighbours, making an income that covers basic daily expenses of her family and supports the education of her two godsons. Ms. Vanna shared her successful experience with other residents in the village; three other families have since joined the programme and started to raise fish at home too.

Also a model farmer, Mr. Prum Chantha has completed two cycles of catfish cultures; he could sell 137 kg of fish, earning approximately US\$287. He also harvested up to 25 kg of farmed fish for his family consumption, thus reducing the burden to go fishing in the river. Mr. Chantha said,

*"I am very happy to be part of this programme because I can earn additional incomes that reduce my family burden. And now I have a lot of time with my family looking after my children because I don't have to go out fishing. I am also happy that I could transfer my knowledge to others in my village."*



# MYANMAR

2021

*Community-led conservation approaches are vital for long-term conservation of Asian elephants in the Rakhine Yoma Elephant Range (RYER)*

## Abstract:

The project aims to disrupt illicit supply chains of wildlife from source to market by leveraging civil society partnership to increase the effectiveness of conservation actions. To achieve this objective, the work in Myanmar focusses on enhancing elephant protection at a regionally important site, the Rakhine Yoma Elephant Range (RYER).

The project partners are working together to enhance local awareness and participation in conservation, increasing strategic protection through community rangers and community guardians, and coordinating closely with local conservation partners. Partners aim to combat wildlife crime and reduce human-elephant conflict (HEC), whilst supporting livelihood security for communities around RYER.



Community guardians standing by an elephant watch-tower used for HEC mitigation



Discussions among community rangers for patrol planning

## Context:

In recent years, there has been a dramatic increase in commercial poaching of Asian elephants in Myanmar due to market demand for elephant skin and other parts in neighbouring countries, particularly China. At least 59 elephants were killed in 2017. Elephant poaching is organized by groups of hunters supported by international smugglers. Another threat is habitat degradation, which also leads to increased human-elephant conflict. The Rakhine Yoma Elephant Range (RYER), in the western coastal area of Myanmar, is a regionally important source site for elephants, and a strategic area for combating elephant trafficking. It has been proposed as a flagship site for 'Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE)' - the CITES-led site-based system designed to monitor trends in the illegal killing of elephants, build management capacity and provide information to help range states make appropriate management and enforcement decisions.

## Objectives:

- 1** To enhance protection activities in and around Rakhine Yoma Elephant Range Wildlife Sanctuary (RYER), a key site for Asian elephants in the region
- 2** To reduce Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) in the vicinity of RYER through the participation of local communities
- 3** To increase transboundary coordination to combat wildlife trafficking especially with China

## Highlights:

0 ELEPHANT CARCASS detected or reported inside RYER, as in 2019 and 2020

181 DAYS OF PATROLLING by community-only Elephant Protection Units (EPU) covering over 1,500 km inside RYER then in the Community Forest Areas adjacent to the protected area.

The community EPU are made up of community rangers and community guardians who live in villages around RYER

26 VILLAGES affected by elephant incursions nearby RYER received support and developed contingency plans on how best to reduce and mitigate human-elephant conflict (HEC)

1,040 MEMBERS OF COMMUNITIES living around RYER attended community meetings on reducing human-elephant conflict and countering wildlife trafficking

26 VILLAGES participated in a local community network to combat illegal wildlife trade and forest crime through sharing of information

ANOTHER 9 VILLAGES formed or reorganized conservation/HEC committees in charge of elephant conservation measures

## Testimonial:

In November 2021, community-only monitoring resumed in Rakhine's Community Forest Area, a human-elephant conflict (HEC) hotspot along the southwestern boundary of RYER, with the collaboration of interested communities from affected villages. The community-led patrol teams are comprised of former community rangers of RYER and newly recruited and trained community members. They conduct patrol in pre-identified areas to monitor the movements of wild elephants, as a measure to mitigate HEC and combat elephant poaching.

U Myint Soe, 37-yr old, is a local community leader with more than four years of experience in elephant conservation and HEC mitigation. While leading his community patrol team, he said,

*"Our effort on elephant conservation means not only protecting wild elephants, but also their habitats that are being threatened by human interference. Human-elephant conflict increases when they don't have enough safe habitat. We, our villagers, are being affected by this conflict since my childhood days. I am very proud to work on elephant conservation in our region together with my colleagues to reduce human-elephant conflict, as well as to protect valuable wildlife species and their habitats. I feel happy that we can reduce serious damage from elephant intrusion and also we see less poaching of elephants since the EU project activities are being implemented in our areas.*

*I, as a local community member, commit all my efforts to protect our forests and our wildlife."*





# MALAYSIA

2021

*Nationwide step-up in patrolling efforts through hiring of indigenous communities under the BP3 Programme supported by law enforcement agencies*

## Abstract:

The work in Malaysia focuses on the Endau-Rompin Landscape (ERL), one of three priority areas for tigers and elephants in the country. The recent government initiative 'BP3' has enabled dozens of new patrol teams to be deployed nationwide, made up of indigenous people supported by veteran armed forces personnel. This program is one of the most significant initiatives for on-the-ground protection of wildlife in the country, sorely needed to curb the threat of poaching, especially by Indochinese syndicates.



Group photo with newly recruited BP3 patrollers in Johor State



Two Cambodian agarwood poachers arrested following BP3 patrol report

## Context:

Within Peninsular Malaysia, historically there has always been limited resource allocated towards hiring rangers, even in protected areas. Outside protected areas, which form more than 80% of wildlife habitat, there is minimal patrolling presence. Recognizing this gap and the subsequent nationwide decline of tigers, the Department of Wildlife and National Parks established in 2020 a major initiative called the Biodiversity Patrolling and Protection Programme (BP3). This programme aims to mobilize indigenous villagers and army veterans to patrol wildlife habitats. In June 2020, an initial 100 military veterans and 50 indigenous people were appointed after completing a 10-day basic training course. In 2021, the initiative underwent a rapid expansion, to 600 patrollers. This initiative also associates conservation NGOs working on tiger conservation. NGOs play a role in managing a number of BP3 personnel which remain under the payroll of the Federal Government. The NGOs were selected on the basis that they have existing patrolling programmes, hence they already have expertise and coordination capabilities within the landscapes that they work in. In April 2021, project partners officially took on eighteen BP3 patrollers to patrol the Endau-Rompin landscape. They are responsible to carry out the protection work in this landscape, including removing snares, deploying camera traps for surveillance purposes, conducting deep forest counter-poaching patrols and tracking of offenders when required..

## Objectives:

- 1** To increase patrol efforts and the impacts of the patrolling in the Endau-Rompin Landscape, a key source site for endangered tigers in the region
- 2** To improve information and intelligence sharing among relevant agencies, partners, and targeted community members
- 3** To promote public use of the wildlife crime outline to counter wildlife trafficking

## Highlights:

A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN PATROL EFFORT from previous years, at 12,180 km patrolled, more than twice the level of 2020

A SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION OF # THREAT encountered per km, about half of 2020 rate

210 DAYS OF PATROLLING carried out at source site by 322 patrols, comprising the indigenous community BP3 patrolling, the multi-agency *Ops Bersepadu Khazanah* (OBK) patrolling, and the monitoring work by project partner

360 INTELLIGENCE/INFORMATION from foot patrolling, online monitoring and local networks recorded in SMART module and database for further wildlife crime analysis

87 INFORMATION REPORTS received through the wildlife crime hotline

## Testimonial:

Following the recruitment of indigenous *Orang Asli* community members from the villages surrounding Endau-Rompin National Park, all new recruits were introduced to the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010 and trained on basic patrol skills and equipment including GPS-based navigation, identification and recording of wildlife signs and “snare signatures”. BP3 patrolling under the project started operating mid-2021 and conducted 77 patrols covering 3,960 km in the landscape. The project's BP3 teams received credit for noted success within weeks of operations, as patrollers discovered and removed 24 illegal Indochinese campsites. One of these camps was still in active use by two Cambodians poaching agarwood, the world's rarest and most expensive variety of wood to be sold. The information was channeled to the relevant authorities for enforcement; the two offenders were arrested, prosecuted and sentenced to a combined 18-month jail term under the National Forestry Act 1984. Mr. Loo Main Leang, an indigenous villager recruited as Endau-Rompin patroller under the BP3 initiative, was part of the team that discovered the camp.

*“I am so grateful to the Department of Wildlife and National Parks and WC&S Malaysia for giving me the opportunity to participate in the BP3 initiative that is beneficial for both myself and my entire indigenous community. Through this programme, I became aware of the effects of snares on wildlife that can lead to the extinction of entire species, especially the Malayan tiger which is featured prominently on our national coat of arms. Once I saw for myself the threats posed by Indochinese poachers, I began to understand why the enforcement authorities are taking serious measures towards these people. By participating in this programme, I can see the collaborative efforts of various parties to conserve wildlife in our country. My hope is that the EU project will continue because apart from generating income, this programme is also able to change the way I think and convey a message to the community and my generation about the importance of caring for wildlife and their habitats.”*



Mr. Loo Main Leang, member of BP3 patrol team in Endau-Rompin landscape



# THAILAND

*Increasing people's awareness and love for forest and wildlife through the Nature and Wildlife Education Programme*

## Abstract:

The Nature and Wildlife Education Programme implemented in the western forest complex (WEFCOM) supports the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP) in carrying out various activities for children and teachers from schools in the area and for community youth outside of the education system. The programme's curriculum includes teaching on the importance of the forest complex and its wildlife for regional biodiversity, and on how communities can work with protected area authorities to conserve wildlife and habitats in mutually beneficial ways.

## Context:

WCS-Thailand's Nature Education team, in coordination with officers from Huai Kha Khaeng and Thung Yai Naresuan protected areas in WEFCOM, has been organizing various nature education activities for students, teachers, and local CSOs since 2008. These activities support the increase in awareness of local communities on forest and wildlife crime issues, and encourage these communities to engage and contribute to increase the effectiveness of Government action. The programme offers a variety of training courses and workshops to educate youth and other volunteers on the importance to conserve ecosystems and wildlife resources; this includes a chapter on the negative impacts wildlife crime has at community, national and international levels.



Youth creating campaign posters against poaching and trade of tiger and gibbon in violation of the Wildlife Conservation Act. #1362 is DNP's Hotline number to report wildlife crime



## Objectives:

- 1** To enhance protection in three wildlife sanctuaries of the Western Forest Complex, a key source site for endangered tigers in the region
- 2** To form and support the deployment of smart, joint patrol teams to detect and prevent threats to wildlife and habitats
- 3** To develop and use intelligent approaches to deter poaching and trafficking of Siamese rosewood
- 4** To rally Karen ethnic communities around tiger conservation by supporting local, sustainable production of traditional handicraft products and the expansion of market opportunities

## Highlights:

INCREASE IN TIGER DENSITY in all three protected area sites, with renewed evidence of dispersal of individual tigers outside of the project area

OVER 64,000 KM covered by SMART patrolling in all four project sites combined, including by teams combining forest rangers and members of Karen communities in WEFCON

ANOTHER REDUCTION OF # THREAT encountered per km patrolled, standing at only 10% of what it was in 2017

31 NEW STUMPS of rosewood detected; a total of 40 poachers and loggers arrested, 66 poaching/logging sites destroyed, and over 600 sets of poaching gear removed

AN ESTIMATED 3,756,200 THB INCOME generated for 136 Karen households through support to the production of handicraft and marketing of products

## Testimonial:

In 2015, WCS helped the DNP to set up and pilot a wildlife conservation volunteer system around Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary. As the system was being established, WCS used the strong network of nature education groups that it has been working with as part of its nature education programme since 2008, to recruit volunteers who were keen to participate in conservation. Ms. Angkana "Tao" Makvilai, Nature Education & Community-based Conservation Manager, is leading this initiative. She said,

*"We started with training to educate and provide volunteers with knowledge and understanding of the value and importance of natural resources and wildlife; we had them to participate in conservation research and education activities implemented with protected area staff; for example, volunteers were involved in the design and development of nature trails in a designated zone, and they were trained to become trainers on wildlife and habitat conservation for youth camps."*



Ms. Angkana "Tao" Makvilai, Nature Education & Community-based Conservation Manager, WCS Thailand

As the project came in, it sought to expand the concept of volunteer work by adding a wildlife trafficking element to it. It is expected that, once trained, "wildlife watchdog" volunteers will be able to leverage actions of law enforcement agencies with the public and the media. Recently, the project organized an art workshop for 61 volunteers from a local environmental conservation youth club near Thung Yai West. In the workshop, students learned how to design and produce conservation advocacy materials in the form of campaign posters. While doing so, they demonstrated increased awareness of wildlife trafficking issues threatening charismatic species surrounding them, and their willingness to be part of the solution.

*"Following the workshop, it was so rewarding to see more participants joining the private LINE application group of the independent conservation watchdog 'สายข่าวทุ่งใหญ่'!"*



# LAO PDR

2021

*Intelligence information supports multi-agency enforcement, leading to a successful prosecution against prohibited elephant ivory possession and trade*

## Abstract:

In April 2021, enforcement agencies in Savannakhet province arrested one suspect and confiscated elephant ivory, based on intelligence information from open-source social media research. The case resulted in a successful prosecution and court decision.



Consultation meeting with Lao's CWT enforcement agencies DCNEC and DOFI

## Context:

In recent years, and despite increased efforts by the Government of Lao PDR to implement its CITES obligations and commitments to address illegal wildlife trade, its responses to combat wildlife trafficking have been continuously hindered by insufficient capacity, lack of information and weak coordination among law enforcement agencies, and with those of neighboring countries. Lao PDR, bordering Thailand, Vietnam and China, has been identified as an important source, transit and destination country for wildlife parts. There is a growing number of ivory and wildlife markets catering for Chinese workers, transients and travelers popping up across the country, with reports of tiger parts also being trafficked to Vietnam through Lao PDR. Asian freshwater turtles and tortoises are also increasingly traded, principally for food, pet, and traditional medicine; as a result, they are going through dramatic population declines.



## Objectives:

- 1 To increase effectiveness of law enforcement responses to illegal wildlife trade through capacity building and intelligence analysis support
- 2 To promote transboundary cooperation in tackling wildlife trafficking between Lao PDR and neighboring countries, in particular Vietnam

## Highlights:

THE FIRST WILDLIFE CRIME HOTLINE RESPONSE AND RESCUE TRAINING for wildlife law enforcement officers from DOFI, POFI, National Police, Interpol, Customs, Environmental Police, and prosecutors

262 INTELLIGENCE/INFORMATION coming from the wildlife crime hotline, key informants and investigation trips to wildlife trade 'hotspots' - 121 of them were about the project's target species

37 INTELLIGENCE PRODUCTS on trafficking networks of target species shared with law enforcement agencies at national and provincial levels

6 CRIMINAL CASES involving target species launched as a result of project partners interventions, with 4 cases leading to arrests and two legal prosecution by judicial authorities completed successfully

## Testimonial:

In December 2020, the Police Department of Combating Natural Resources and Environmental Crime (DCNEC) organized an online research and information analysis training with technical support from the project. Through exercises on open-source research and social media monitoring, participants were able to collect and analyze information on suspected elephant ivory advertisements in Savannakhet province through Facebook. Further research and information support exchanged between project partner WCS and DCNEC led to organizing an intelligence briefing with the Savannakhet Provincial Environment Police Division and the Savannakhet Forest Inspection Office in March 2021. In April 2021, a joint effort of the Savannakhet Forest Inspection Office and the Police resulted in the arrest of one Lao national and the confiscation of elephant ivory items weighing 2.14 kilograms. In May 2021, the Office of the Prosecutor received the case summary from the Forestry Inspection Office, leading to a successful prosecution with the Court decision sentencing the suspect to two years imprisonment and a 3,000,000 Lao Kip fine.

Mr. Mouknivong Chanthavong, Deputy Director of Savannakhet's Provincial Environmental Police (EP), said,

*"The technical support and information assistance provided by the European Union project and our partner WCS have assisted us in better monitoring and investigating wildlife-related prohibited activities in social media.*

*We can continue supporting the Forest Inspection Office in investigating wildlife crime in Lao PDR."*



Mr. Keoudone Nousyhalath, Deputy Director of Savannakhet's Provincial Forest Inspection (POFI), said,

*"Successful investigations and prosecutions to combat illegal wildlife trade can be achieved through strong cooperation and coordination on information, capacity and resources with our P-WEN partner agencies such as the Forest Authority, Customs, and Police. We are grateful for information and support received from local authorities and local people, and especially from our partner organizations."*





# VIETNAM

2021

*How would you know if your CWT (counter wildlife trafficking) training was a success?*

## Abstract:

The work in Vietnam includes providing training and on-the-job technical support to national and provincial law enforcement and judiciary officers as they process suspected cases of wildlife poaching and trafficking.

During 2020, the project supported and facilitated a series of training courses to strengthen the investigation and prosecution capacity of police, prosecutors and judges.

In 2021, the project proceeded with a post-training evaluation, seeking to assess behaviour change and measure direct results, if any. The evaluation gathered, for a majority of participants, expressions of positive and significant change in Confidence, Attitude, Knowledge, Skills and Practice. Most respondents were applying what they had learned during the course.



The representative of EUDEL Vietnam delivering the opening speech



Group exercise during the first training course

## Context:

In recent decades, Vietnam has been considered as an important transit point, hotspot and destination in the illegal wildlife trade chain. To tackle this increasing and alarming trend, the central government has made efforts to address the legal framework directed at illicit wildlife trade, and to improve the national law system. Police and prosecutors are key actors in investigating and prosecuting crimes. To catalyze effective and timely enforcement actions, it is crucial to have regular briefing with these agencies, to receive updates on changes to the legal framework, and to share information on individual illegal wildlife trade cases in key hotspots where wildlife criminals are operating.

During June to October 2020, four training courses were organized under the project, targeting 65 police officers and 63 prosecutors and judges from 17 provinces and cities across Vietnam. The objectives of the training were to raise trainees' awareness and interest in CWT, and to provide knowledge and improve skills in investigating and prosecuting wildlife cases. The training also served as a vetting process to identify trustworthy and active individuals in these agencies.

## Objectives:

- 1 To increase the quality and quantity of intelligence generated by local journalists and NGOs on poaching and trafficking of wildlife including tiger, Asian elephant and freshwater turtles
- 2 To increase the number of enforcement actions on illegal trade of the project's target species in and/or related to Vietnam through civil society, academia and media leverage
- 3 To collect field evidence for policy advocacy on wildlife protection and against illegal wildlife farming and trade

## Highlights:

731 JOURNALISTS members of a local network facilitated and supported to present appropriate information on illegal wildlife trade to local authorities and the general public

2 MEDIA CAMPAIGNS, 220 ORIGINAL ARTICLES published by project partners, reaching x00,000s people

5 INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS on project's target species shared with government agencies

13 CRIMINAL CASES involving target species opened with project partner involvement

## Testimonial:

During 2021, WCS-Vietnam collaborated with the Foreign Relations Department (VO2) and Hanoi Procuratorate University (HPU) to evaluate the effectiveness of four training courses delivered jointly in 2020, for 128 frontline environmental and economic police officers, and prosecutors and judges; 113 of them responded to the post-training questionnaire, accounting for 88%. This survey was conducted to identify how participants applied the new knowledge/skills they gained in their enforcement actions against wildlife trafficking, and the challenges that they were still facing in handling wildlife cases.

- o 66 trainees (~58% of respondents) indicated that they had applied the learned knowledge and practice in their work with a frequency of "weekly" (18 trainees) and "monthly" (48 trainees) [Fig.1];
- o 98 trainees (~87% of respondents) certified that they had shared the learned knowledge with colleagues. Transfer of new knowledge occurred through sharing of copies of training materials, and direct talks on key contents of the relevant legal framework while handling a specific case;
- o 7 trainees (~6% of respondents) revealed their involvement in handling nine IWT-related violations. One case was under prosecution; another case successfully ended with a conviction and 5-yr imprisonment. The remaining violations were still under investigation or resulted in administrative penalties.

Figure 1. Frequency applying acquired knowledge in daily work

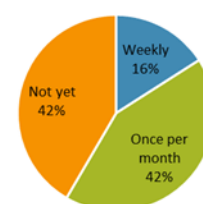
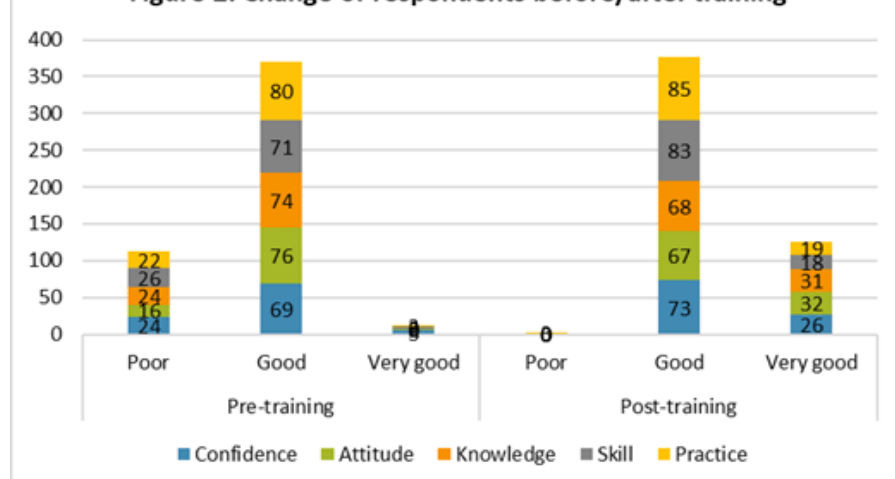


Figure 2. Change of respondents before/after training



Most respondents reported a positive and significant change in Confidence, Attitude, Knowledge, Skills and Practice following participation in the training. Only three respondents indicated no change nor results [Fig.2].

When responding to the questionnaire, some participants provided concrete examples of how they applied the new knowledge learned at the training in their work handling specific wildlife violation cases.

For example, a trainee of Ninh Binh's provincial economic police division used new knowledge in wildlife identification when engaged in the seizure of a serow individual transported by two offenders. Other trainees from Tay Ninh's provincial environmental police division used the new network and contacts they created during the training to conduct a forensic examination and prepare a prosecution case for illegal storage of 39 dried bodies of Hawksbill sea turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata*, an endangered species with prioritized protection.



# PR CHINA

2021

*Researchers from academia trained on the use of behavioural science to undermine demand for wildlife parts*

## Abstract:

The project's work in China focuses on the end market; it aims to reduce both demand and offer of wildlife products using different strategies, including working on reducing intentions to purchase products made from tiger, elephant and freshwater turtles through a behavioral science-based approach. A series of online "Behavioural Insights Practitioner Masterclasses" was delivered to Behavioural Insights Unit (BIU) members who have since applied their new knowledge to conduct targeted surveys and trial experiments.

## Context:

The Chinese government is paying increased attention to illegal trade and consumption of wildlife products. More effective enforcement and growing public awareness on wildlife trafficking issues appear to drive positive change in nationwide attitudes towards less consumption of wildlife. However, wildlife populations remain threatened as illegal and poorly regulated legal trade persists. This demonstrates a pressing need for practitioners to identify pivotal drivers amongst persisting consumers, uncovering missing links that may close the intention-action gap and hopefully lead towards achieving observable, attainable and sustained changes in wildlife consumption.

As the conservation expertise in China is predominantly centered around biological sciences, there is growing interest amongst practitioners to explore interdisciplinary practices and apply mixed methods in human-subject research, and revisit intervention strategies to optimize impacts on pro-environmental behaviours. In this context, the project facilitated the establishment of an interdisciplinary Behavioural Insights Unit hosted by Sun-Yat-Sen University (SYSU) in Guangzhou. The BIU counts 40 members from academic institutions, research institutes and NGOs. To improve members' knowledge and capacity to apply behavioural science in interventions to reduce illegal consumption of wildlife, project partners collaborate with a frontrunning expert team that provides training and mentorship to BIU members on the use of behavioural insights in IWT-relevant research.

## Objectives:

- 1 To support partnerships with private sectors to prevent and disrupt wildlife criminals using e-commerce and transport/courier services
- 2 To facilitate international cooperation on wildlife and forest crimes between China and countries of the Mekong region
- 3 To reduce intentions to purchase products made from tiger (bones), elephants (skin) and turtles (as pets) through a behavioural science-based approach



## Highlights:

1,314 IWT INFRINGING LISTINGS detected online and reported to the responsible e-commerce platforms, of which 763 were subsequently taken down, in addition to the removal of 1,019 posts from previous years

1 BEHAVIORAL INSIGHTS UNIT (BIU) functioning in Sun-Yat-Sen University (SYSU), project partner, with 40 standing members, from different academic schools within SYSU, other Chinese academic institutions, conservation NGOs, and undergraduate and graduate students and research associates

33 BIU members (19 females) extensively trained in applying behavioural insights in interventions to reduce illegal consumption of target wildlife products; of which 17 have already applied new knowledge and skills for the national baseline survey, the target baseline study, and in trial experiment design

## Testimonial:

Co-hosted by project partners, the Behavioural Insights Practitioner Masterclass was held for BIU members during 2020-2021. Across three semesters, participants were introduced to theories in behavioural science; best practices in research to measure explicit/implicit preferences and sensitive behaviours in the context of IWT; and demonstration on how behavioural insights can be used to develop evidence-based intervention designs and evaluation to elicit behavioural change effectively. The masterclass placed an emphasis on communicating technical jargon in accessible terms; conceptualizing theory in practice via interactive exercises and sharing lessons learned from relevant case studies from other disciplines; and presenting achievable solutions with replicable and adaptable frameworks in the context of reducing consumption of illegal wildlife products.

I'm now going to show you one comic. After you have looked at this information, We will ask you some questions about it. And also your opinions. Your answers are anonymous.

下面我们会给您看一幅漫画，看完以后，我们会问一些有关漫画的问题和您的看法。您的回答都是匿名的。



Design of one of the series of trial intervention posters to be used to evaluate influence of messaging in elephant skin consumption

*"I really liked this masterclass seminar series as it systematically introduced behavioural sciences customized to the context of wildlife products consumption. Like many other BIU members in our group, I learned about mechanisms behind decision-making and behaviors, and the context that behaviors may change or not,"* said Ms Beilu Duan, project researcher with SYSU. *"This knowledge has helped us in designing interventions for reducing wildlife demand in our project. Moreover, we have learned many scientific methods to measure sensitive behaviors and evaluate behavior change which we usually find challenging in applied research. I find them very helpful and useful in inspiring the design of interventions on reducing illegal consumption of wildlife products in China."*



Ms. Beilu Duan in her group practicing theories via interactive exercises and reflective sessions





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