



**WILDLIFE ALLIANCE**

*Direct Protection to Forests & Wildlife*

# ANNUAL REPORT

2019



Wildlife Alliance directly protects more than 1.4 million hectares of the Cardamom Mountains, Southeast Asia's last great rainforest.

## CELEBRATING 20 YEARS



This year, 2020, marks the 20th Anniversary of Wildlife Alliance in Cambodia: time flies when you are fighting for conservation.

During this period, we have achieved a phenomenal amount. The landscape continuity of the Cardamom Mountains rainforest has been secured with the creation of new protected areas covering more than 4,000 km<sup>2</sup>, our law enforcement has achieved zero poaching of elephants, and our highly successful award-winning community tourism and agricultural project continue to lift communities out of poverty. We have transformed Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre from one-of-the worst to one-of-the-best animal care facilities in Asia whilst rescuing more than 80,000 animals from the Illegal Wildlife Trade. We could not have achieved this all without your support. Our commitment to Cambodia, and its fantastic wildlife and people, remains as strong as ever. We will keep fighting for the next 20 years!

The past 12-months have been critical for securing the financial sustainability of Wildlife Alliance largely due to carbon sales from the Southern Cardamom REDD+ Project. Nature-based Solutions are the cheapest and most effective solution to the climate emergency and tropical forests, such as the Cardamoms, are essential for climate stability. The growing recognition of this, from government and

corporations is key to the planet's future. REDD+ revenues are also helping us to demonstrate to the Government of Cambodia the economic value of preserving forest and are directly influencing government decision making. The sustainable funding from REDD+ allowed us in 2019 to expand our successful and unique model of forest protection and to open two new ranger stations in Central Cardamom National Park – previously an area of lawlessness and extensive deforestation. In this annual report we describe the rationale of our expansion and highlight some of the impressive results of our enforcement work in this area.

Our conservation success is largely based on the commitment and dedication of our staff working 24/7 on-the-ground in Cambodia to safeguard the forests, wildlife, and communities. In 2020 we will continue our unstinting focus on protecting Forests and Wildlife in Cambodia and beyond. I am particularly excited with our major progress towards tiger reintroduction, one of the most exciting and ambitious species conservation projects being planned globally. I look forward to our continued partnerships with you all.



**Suwanna Gauntlett**  
Wildlife Alliance Founder & CEO

# RAINFOREST PROTECTION

**1,465,665**

hectares of rainforest under protection

**22,207**

deadly snares removed from the forest floor

**4,129**

patrols conducted by specialized ranger units

**963**

chainsaws confiscated from illegal loggers

**462**

vehicles seized from illegal loggers and poachers



Long patrols for up to 7 days and 48 hours without sleep; being a ranger isn't easy but it's their hard work and dedication that keeps the forest standing.

# PROTECTING THE CARDAMOM MOUNTAINS

Since 2001, Wildlife Alliance has been protecting Southeast Asia's iconic Cardamom Mountains rainforest. Since then we have led more than 39,000 patrols across the landscape and established one of the most effective and professional law enforcement forces in Asia. We directly supervise and manage all law enforcement. We ensure our rangers are well paid, receive full health and life insurance, have the equipment and capacity to work safely and effectively, and are motivated and led by inspirational supervisors. We create a culture of excellence in conservation, high performance, and zero tolerance for corruption.

Over the past 20-years the threats to the Cardamom's forests and wildlife have evolved. Initially we were fighting the targeted poaching of iconic species such as tiger and Asian elephant and then the illegal logging of hugely valuable rosewood. Our efforts have been critical to mitigating these threats and we are proud to have achieved zero poaching of Asian elephant in the Cardamoms since 2006. The current threats to the Cardamoms are more insidious: land speculation leading to deforestation.

This is largely driven by the massive recent Chinese investment in Cambodia which is part of China's national Belt and Road Initiative. This investment has been associated with land-grabbing and speculation. Chinese investment increases the value of land, thus promoting land speculation and illegal defor-

estation, whilst also stimulating demand for illegal wildlife products. As a result of these pressures, we have observed a significant increase in forest and wildlife crime in the landscape's protected areas. The number of illegal chainsaws confiscated by our teams has increased 650% since 2015, the number of hunting snares removed has increased by 300% since 2014, and illegal land encroachment into the protected area has increased by 750%, from 24 hectares annually in 2010, to 180 hectares in 2018. In 2019, our proactive enforcement patrolling prevented 126 cases of land speculation driven deforestation.

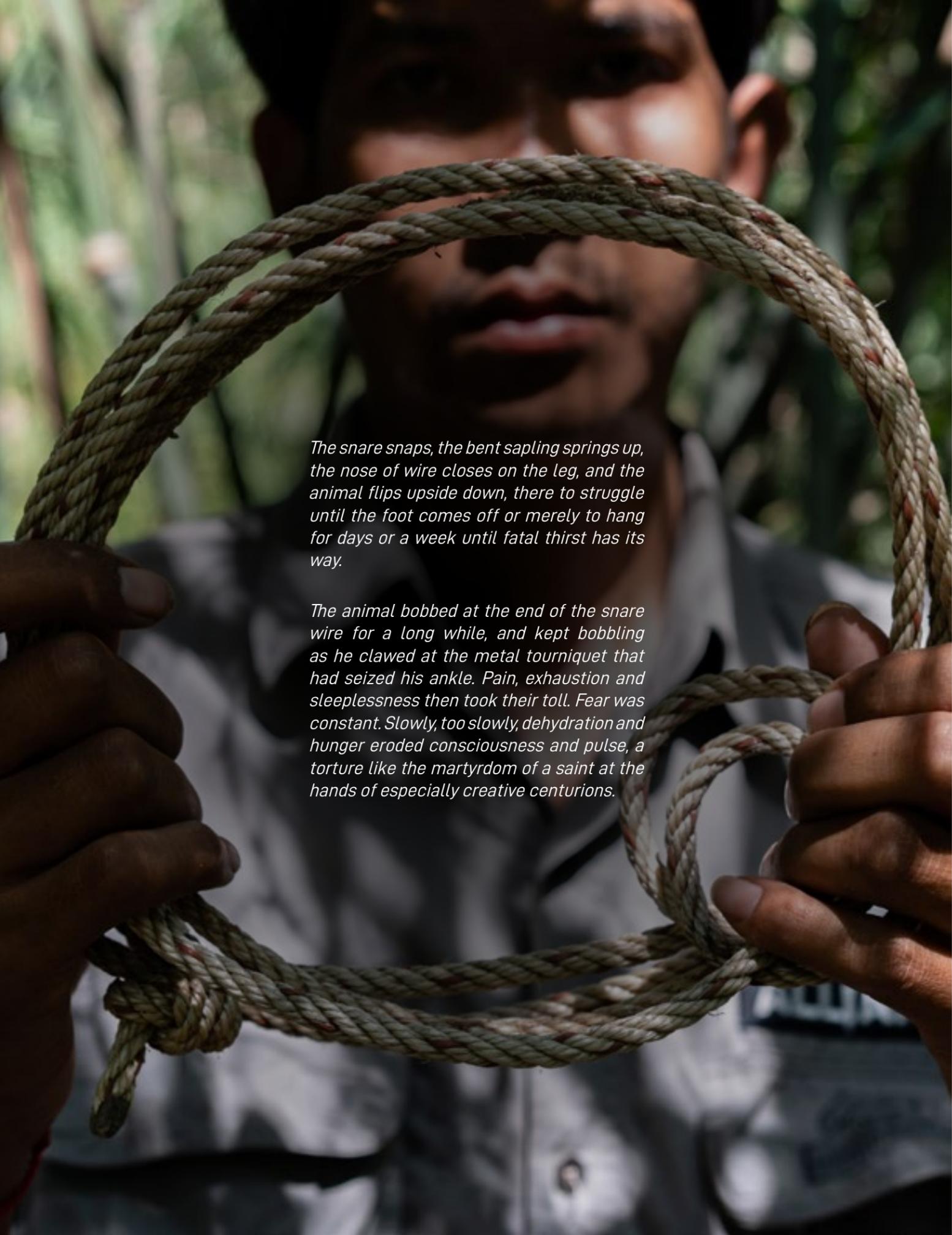
Given these threats, and the lack of additional effective enforcement elsewhere in the Cardamoms, there was an urgent and critical need to enhance our law enforcement efforts. Consequently, in 2019 we expanded our operations to cover additional areas of the Cardamom Mountains rainforest. We opened two new ranger stations to protect the northern flank of Southern Cardamom National Park. This area borders Central Cardamom National Park where enforcement has historically been minimal. The result has been a huge increase in enforcement effectiveness. In the first five months of operations (August-December) rangers from these new stations conducted 373 patrols, confiscated 307 illegal chainsaws, removed 2,562 lethal hunting snares, and took 23 serious wildlife and forest offenders to court.

An aerial photograph showing a small boat on a narrow river or stream. The boat is moving away from the viewer, leaving a white wake in the dark water. The river is flanked by dense, lush green tropical forest. The perspective is from directly above, looking down at the boat and the surrounding trees.

Stung Proat station rangers patrol deep into the wilderness in their patrol quadrant. Rangers are on constant alert 24/7, patrolling by land, sea and air.



Every chainsaw poses a deadly threat to the forest. Since the establishment of CFPP, our rangers have confiscated more than 4000 chainsaws from the hands of illegal loggers.



*The snare snaps, the bent sapling springs up, the nose of wire closes on the leg, and the animal flips upside down, there to struggle until the foot comes off or merely to hang for days or a week until fatal thirst has its way.*

*The animal bobbed at the end of the snare wire for a long while, and kept bobbling as he clawed at the metal tourniquet that had seized his ankle. Pain, exhaustion and sleeplessness then took their toll. Fear was constant. Slowly, too slowly, dehydration and hunger eroded consciousness and pulse, a torture like the martyrdom of a saint at the hands of especially creative centurions.*



A civet rescued by rangers in the Cardamom Mountains.

## THE ASIAN SNARING CRISIS

Southeast Asia is at the center of the global extinction crisis. Hunting, largely to supply the commercial wildlife trade, is one of the most significant causes of wildlife decline in the region with industrial snaring the most pervasive form of hunting.

Snares are an indiscriminate hunting method. Snares do not pick and choose. Anything and everything on the forest floor is a potential victim. Animals killed and maimed by snares in the Cardamom Mountains rainforest include everything from small birds and reptiles to bears and Asian elephants. And many, possibly the majority, of the individuals caught in snares are wasted. The opportunity cost of setting snares is so low many snares are set and never again checked. Most of what is caught simply rots away: a tragic and heart-breaking waste.

Since 2001 Wildlife Alliance rangers have removed 227,601 snares from the Cardamom Mountains rainforest. Despite the heroic efforts of our forest rangers the problem continues. Urgent action is required to Stop the Snaring Crisis.

Wildlife Alliance is focused on:

- Halting all consumption of wildlife meat – the ultimate driver of snaring.
- Sensitizing the judiciary to the seriousness of snaring and applying appropriate punishments including combining multiple crimes when sentencing.
- Strengthening legislation to allow the prosecution of hunters carrying materials to make snares in protected areas.



Kong Vang, one of our keepers at our Wildlife Release Station, walks Micah, a rescued Malayan sun bear.

## WILDLIFE RESCUE AND CARE

**2,774**

animals rescued from the  
illegal wildlife trade

**1,251**

animals rehabilitated and  
released following IUCN  
protocols

**100**

wildlife traffickers  
apprehended

**1,300**

number of animals  
provided daily care for

**4,167**

animals released into  
protected areas

# 20 YEARS COMBATING WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

In 2001, Wildlife Alliance established the Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team (WRRT), Asia's foremost wildlife police unit, when wildlife trade was rampant and insidious throughout Cambodia. Monkeys were sold on pavements, sun bears in restaurants, and the skins of recently poached tigers and other big cats openly traded. The trained and motivated members of the WRRT have worked tirelessly to crack-down on this cruel trade.

By combining governmental authority with civil society oversight, the WRRT represents a unique model for tackling the illegal wildlife trade in Asia. In addition to enforcing Cambodian law and working with authorities to arrest and prosecute wildlife traders, we also ensure the humane treatment and subsequent management of all live animals confiscated from trade. Our team are trained on animal welfare and handling and all confiscated animals are either rapidly released into appropriate habitat or provided guaranteed life-time care at Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre. The work of the WRRT has gained recognition as one of Asia's foremost wildlife law enforcement operation units; in 2015 our efforts were rewarded as we received the "Best Wildlife Law Enforcement Unit in Asia Award" from the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP).

In 2019, we worked with researchers from the University of Adelaide to publish a paper in the prestigious journal *Biological Conservation* examining the horrific breadth of the Illegal Wildlife Trade in Cambodia. This revealed the trade is far more than iconic and widely



Sunda pangolins seized by our WRRT who caught wildlife traffickers smuggling them onto China and Vietnam.

known species such as pangolin, tigers, and elephant. Between 2001 and 2018 the WRRT conducted 10,829 seizures of 125,445 animals from 268 species in 97 different families of birds, mammals, and reptiles. The majority of confiscated species were not listed by CITES or given strong protection under Cambodian Law. This reveals that current legislation is not sufficient to secure these species from over-harvesting. Analysis also showed a major and opportunistic trade in birds, of almost any species, for a wide variety of uses together with worrying and consistent trade in a number of threatened reptile species, including turtles and pythons.

On a positive note, the numbers of animals seized has declined recently demonstrating an impact of our considerable financial and emotional investment. Despite clear signs of progress in the fight against unsustainable wildlife trade in Cambodia we will continue to focus on this critical issue over the months and years to come.

It was too late for these Malayan porcupines — victims to Cambodia's brutal bush meat trade — that were seized during a raid on a restaurant in Koh Kong province. WRRT's presence in Cambodia has proven to be a significant deterrent for illegal wildlife traffickers.





Sitheng spends a moment with one 'Lucky' elephant. Lucky is one of the world's few elephants to have survived Endotheliotropic Elephant Herpes Virus thanks to the expert care of our vets at Phnom Tamao.



A Critically Endangered black-shanked douc langur (*Pygathrix nigripes*) rescued from the illegal wildlife trade being bottle-fed at our Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre.

## REHABILITATING CAMBODIA'S RESCUED WILDLIFE

Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre was created in 1995 by the Cambodian Government to care for rescued wildlife in need of a home. In 2001, the site was in a sorry state and Wildlife Alliance began partnering with the government for the management of Phnom Tamao which also serves as Cambodia's national zoo. Initially, the government experienced a lack of funding and knowledge and animals could not be properly cared for. Due to the excellent relationship that now exists with Wildlife Alliance, Phnom Tamao has blossomed into perhaps one of the best wildlife care centers in the region. Our proud boast is that no wild animal is ever turned away and all would be dead without our interventions.

Phnom Tamao holds upwards of 1,300 well-cared for animals from more than 100 species. In many ways Phnom Tamao is an inspired choice of locations for such a venture. Set in 2,300 hectares of forest, rescued animals feel at home in such a setting and thrive. These are also the opportunity to release appropriate wildlife back into the surrounding forest. The center has become a source for Endangered species, such as pileated gibbon, Eld's deer, and smooth-coated otter, which are being returned to natural habitat throughout the Kingdom of Cambodia. There are few places in Asia that release such a diversity of species, with as much success as we have achieved, from small carnivores, ungulates and primates to a wide diversity of birds and reptiles.



Wildlife Alliance rangers deploy camera traps to assess the tiger prey population density in the Cardamom Mountains rainforest.

## BRINGING TIGERS BACK HOME

Tigers are Asia's iconic species – the most recognizable and charismatic predator on the planet. They are indicators of the state of the environment and thus human-health and well-being. Tigers are catalysts for the conservation of Asia's great forests and wildlands. Tiger landscapes directly support the livelihoods and well-being of more than 200 Million people and provide billions of dollars of ecosystem services and benefits annually.

the planet's most threatened and quintessential species.

In 2019, His Excellency Say Samal, the Cambodian Minister of Environment, endorsed Wildlife Alliance's vision of tiger reintroduction into the Cardamom Mountains and instructed us to begin the process of developing the required infrastructure for in-situ tiger conservation breeding. A remote site, suitable for conservation breeding, surrounded by high quality forest and recovering prey populations, has been identified. In 2020, we will construct facilities, for breeding both tiger and tiger-prey, and finalize tiger sourcing. Cubs born at the breeding center, likely in 2021, will grow as wild tigers and be ready to kick-start Cambodian tiger reintroduction. One of the most ambitious and transformative species conservation projects of the 21st century is underway.

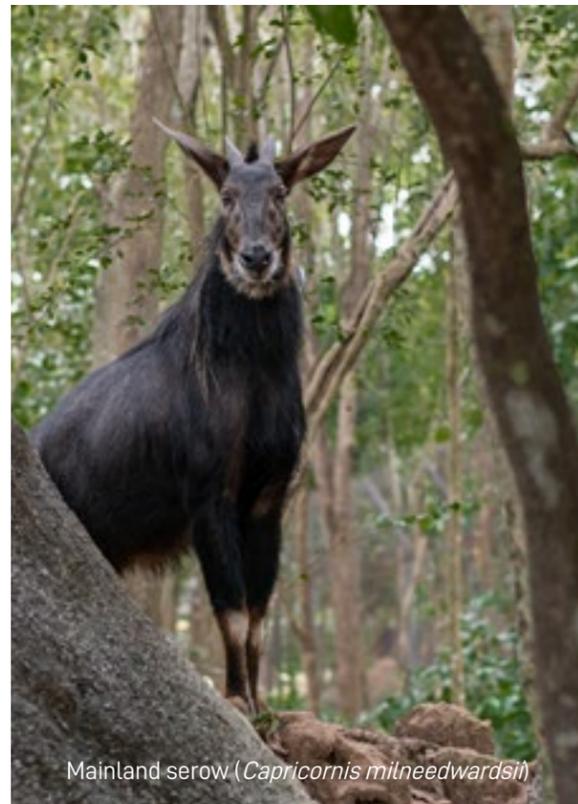
Cambodia's last tiger was recorded in 2007 with poaching, of both tigers and prey, the direct driver of extirpation. Asian forests lacking tigers lack their identity, their soul, and are missing key ecological functions. Returning tigers to a landscape returns much of what is needed to be a functional forest and ecosystem, whilst also having the potential to galvanize societal support for conservation. Tiger reintroduction into Cambodia is a generational legacy project which can help to preserve



Wild boar (*Sus scrofa*)



Indian muntjak (*Muntiacus muntjak*)



Mainland serow (*Capricornis milneedwardsii*)

# COMMUNITIES

**7,674**

students received environmental lessons

**1,808**

rural Cambodians reached

**55**

schools and NGOs visited

**5,961**

visitors to CBET communities

**484**

families benefiting from CBET

**\$235,309**

income to CBET villagers



It's not all serious. Ratana, a member of our Kouprey Express team, inspires the next generation of Cambodian environmentalists through fun and engaging lessons.



Tourists spend the night on the roof of the Cardamoms. The Areng valley is one of two CBET project sites developed by Wildlife Alliance.



Wildlife Alliance collaborated with local cultural groups to restore a unique indigenous musical instrument (the "Ploy") to the Areng Valley.

## SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS IN THE HEART OF THE CARDAMOM MOUNTAINS

Protecting forests and wildlife requires the support of local communities. The Cardamom Mountains rainforest has traditionally been a remote area with high levels of poverty and limited support from government. The communities heavily rely on the exploitation of natural resources to survive. Addressing this, and providing genuine sustainable livelihoods to communities surrounding the forests in which we work, is the focus of our community engagement work. It is essential that conservation focused livelihood interventions provide economic value to existing natural resources; otherwise an unwanted consequence may be further environmental destruction – after all rich people cause far

more environmental problems globally than poor ones!

In 2019, our principal Community Livelihood activity in the Cardamoms was our award-winning Community Based Ecotourism. These projects now operate across 12 villages in the Cardamom Mountains, with 484 families working as community service providers and receiving regular income which, critically, is dependent on maintaining the natural resources of the Cardamoms. In 2019, a total of 5,961 visitors to Community Based Ecotourism in Chi Phat and Areng generated \$235,000 USD for the communities.



Kouprey Express bring community members from all over Cambodia to Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre to inspire them to become environmental stewards in their communities.

## A CATALYST FOR CHANGE

Wildlife Alliance began addressing the widespread lack of environmental awareness in Cambodia in 2005 by creating the Kouprey Express. The team are the only mobile environmental education unit operating in Cambodia, traveling across the country building capacities of students, teachers and whole communities to address the many factors which threaten Southeast Asia's wildlife: habitat loss, forest degradation and fragmentation, poaching, and the illegal wildlife trade. Engaging youth is critical to protecting the future of Cambodia's natural heritage as 60% of the population is under 30 years of age. At present, Cambodia's core curriculum completely lacks an environmental education component. The Kouprey Express has been working with the Ministry of Environment to rectify this. In 2018, the team worked closely with the Ministry of Environment to show how we work in rural schools and provide a needs assessment as the first step in developing an

environmental education component for the national curriculum.

As a result of the Kouprey Express' efforts, we have been recognized by other conservation NGOs, as well as the Cambodian government, as the nation's leader in environmental education, and we are regularly called upon to conduct education and outreach in their respective project areas. We continued to work alongside our long-time friend and partner, Freeland, to bring wildlife education to Cambodian speaking communities in eastern Thailand in Khao Yai and Ta Phraya National Parks. This has been an amazing opportunity for the Kouprey Express to extend beyond Cambodia as wildlife know no borders. The Kouprey Express has been instrumental in ensuring the long-term success of our conservation efforts, equipping tomorrow's leaders with the tools to safeguard our natural heritage.



Students learn about why Cambodia's natural environment is so unique and what they can do to be a part of the movement to protect it.



The crocodile back from extinction. The Siamese crocodile (*Crocodylus siamensis*) was thought to be extinct in the wild. In 2000, it was rediscovered in the Cardamom Mountains and is now under the direct protection of our rangers.

# ORGANIZATION AND INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Our considerable advances in conservation are a direct result of the organizations and individuals who share our values.

## \$100,000+

Barbara Delano Foundation  
 Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)  
 Fondation Segré  
 Full Circle Foundation  
 Morgan Family Foundation  
 United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)  
 Wilderness Freedom Fund  
 Wildlife Works Carbon

## \$50,000-\$99,999

Wallace Research Foundation  
 British Embassy Phnom Penh  
 Golden Triangle Elephant Foundation  
 Margaret Ellwanger

## \$25,000-\$49,999

John Swift  
 Ministry of Land Management  
 Suwanna Gauntlett  
 Thomas Plant  
 WWF-Cambodia

## \$10,000-\$24,999

4 Rivers Floating Lodge  
 Ahimsa Foundation  
 Anderson-Rogers Foundation  
 Conservation International  
 Cyrus and Joanne Spurlino  
 Freidman-French Foundation  
 Indochina Trade & Logistic Ltd.  
 Jeff Morgan  
 National Geographic Society  
 Noah and Anette Osnos  
 SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund  
 Tamaki Foundation

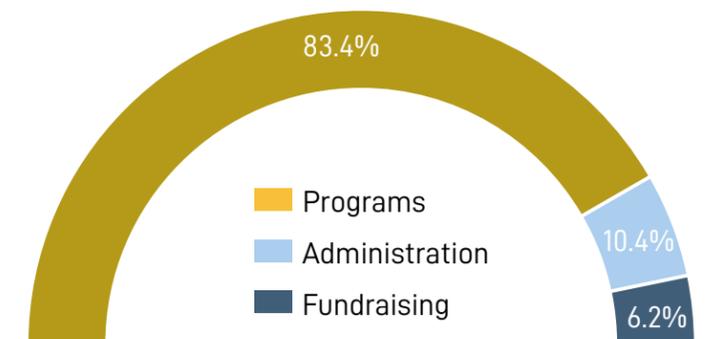
U.S. Embassy Phnom Penh  
 Waterloo Foundation

## \$1,000-\$9,999

Boylston Family Foundation  
 Alexander Busse  
 Alison Behie  
 Badreyyah Alireza  
 Barbara Smicklas  
 Belinda Guadarrama  
 Bonnie Miller  
 Bradley Miller  
 Brant Rotnem  
 Bryan Eastin  
 Charles Goodfellow III  
 Charles Marshik  
 Compact Global Holdings  
 Doug and Carol Anderson  
 Ellen Gutierrez  
 Fauna & Flora International  
 For Peace Inc  
 GC Micro  
 Hew Amatruda  
 Ivan Samuels

Jill A Mountjoy  
 Julia Hart  
 Landry's Downtown Aquarium Denver  
 Lin Heng Lye  
 Local Independant Charities of America  
 Lorraine Parmer  
 Maggie Clare  
 Maio and Levon Nishkian  
 Margaret Cole  
 Maureen Kane McGee Charitable Gift Fund  
 Rising Phoenix Co. Ltd  
 Rita Vallet  
 Rotary Club of Phnom Penh  
 Ryan Kelton  
 Sandra E Gale  
 Stanley Enterprises  
 The Eric and Joan Norgaard Charitable Trust  
 The Rockwood Trust  
 Theodore E. Jacobson, D.D.S.  
 Vivien MacDonald  
 Wildlife Heritage

## EXPENSE BREAKDOWN





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