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KEO SEIMA REDD+

Quarterly Newsletter

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Welcome to Keo Seima REDD+!



Signing agreement ceremony of Keo Seima’s REDD+ Carbon project between Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Ministry of Environment.

Hello and a warm welcome from the Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary (formerly Seima Protection Forest) team. The Royal Government of Cambodia, through a long-running partnership with Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), has sold to Disney the first carbon credits from a climate change mitigation project in Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary. The protected area encompasses a total area of 292,690 hectares, of which 166,983 hectares is part of the REDD+ project area. The sale represents one of the largest transactions of carbon credits generated from an avoided deforestation project.

Signing Ceremony of Keo Seima’s REDD+ Carbon Project Agreement

The Royal Government of Cambodia and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) signed an official Project Agreement for the Keo Seima REDD+ Project (Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) witnessed by H.E. Say Samal, Minister of Environment and U.S. Ambassador William A. Heidt, at the offices of the Ministry of Environment.

“This is the first large carbon sale for Cambodia that will provide sustainable financing of Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary. This is a great achievement for forest and wildlife protection and community development in Cambodia, and for sustainable financing of these efforts,” said H.E. Say Samal, Environment Minister.

“Protecting Cambodia’s forests and helping the country combat climate change are priorities for the U.S. government,” said U.S. Ambassador William A. Heidt. “These are global issues that are significant beyond Cambodia’s borders. A partnership between an iconic American company and Cambodia is a symbol to the world that there are innovative ways to protect the earth and a wide variety of partners who can help. We are proud to have supported this partnership and will continue to help develop strategies that make forests more valuable standing than they would be cut down.”

The ceremony represents a significant achievement for sustainable financing of forest conservation in Cambodia,” said Ross Sinclair, WCS’s Director Cambodia Program. “It is also about the strong partnership between WCS, the Royal Government of Cambodia, local communities, and development partners like USAID.

The Keo Seima REDD+ project started in 2010 and is being implemented by the Ministry of Environment (formerly by the Forestry Administration) and WCS in Mondulkiri and Kratie provinces, with financial support from USAID’s Supporting Forests and Biodiversity Project implemented by Winrock International, as well as other donors.

Local Community Representatives Met and Discussed about Keo Seima REDD+

More than 40 local people from 20 forestry communities located in the Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary held a meeting with officials from the Ministry of Environment and Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) to discuss action plans and use of budget gained from recently Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary’s carbon credit sales for forest and wildlife protection, villages’ development and local livelihood improvement.

In August, 11 2016, the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Wildlife Conservation Society signed an official Project Agreement for the Keo Seima REDD+ Project (Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) at the offices of the Ministry of Environment. The signing ceremony was part of the first large carbon sale for Cambodia and will initiate sustainable financing to protect KSWs, formerly known as the Seima Protection Forest.



Group photo in front of Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary head quarter after discussion between stakeholders about Keo Seima REDD+.

Wild Elephant Calf Killed by Snare inside Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary

A young Asian elephant, a species listed on IUCN Red List as Endangered, died inside Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary (KSWs) in the early hours of Sunday night, after being caught in a snare a few days earlier.

The young male elephant was first seen by a local villager who went to gather non-timber forest products inside the KSWs, but he only informed the MoE Rangers one week later. The MoE and WCS worked quickly to coordinate a rescue effort. A veterinary team of skilled Wildlife Alliance and Forestry Administration vets was sent from Phnom Tamao Wildlife Sanctuary, and Jack Highwood, the Deputy Director of the Elephant Livelihoods Initiative Environment (E.L.I.E), traveled from Sen Monorom to provide care and technical support during the attempt to move the injured and weakened animal from the forest. People from the local area also worked hard late into the night with the team to move the elephant.



Body of young elephant calf found inside Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary after it had been snared for week.

"Snares are a silent curse killing Cambodian wildlife. They maim and kill indiscriminately, often species that the poacher was not directly targeting, like with this young bull elephant. They cause slow, painful, and unnecessary death to many animals," said Olly Griffin, WCS Conservation Operations Technical Advisor in KSWs.

WCS has a dedicated anti-snare team operating throughout the wet season, which, together with Forestry Administration law enforcement teams and community patrol teams, collected more than 1,000 snares in 2015. WCS is actively expanding the anti-

snare program in Seima; however, the support and cooperation of the government and local people is needed to prevent more unnecessary deaths from snares.

Wildlife Research and Monitoring team joined Giant Ibis Survey Training

WCS’s Research and Monitoring Team from Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary participated in a technical training on Giant Ibis survey methods in the Northern Plains of Cambodia. Focusing on theory and field practices, the 3 day training aimed to increase participant understanding of giant ibis breeding and foraging ecology.

The Giant Ibis (*Thaumatibis gigantea*), Cambodia’s national bird, is under threat from human disturbance and habitat loss. Listed as Critically Endangered (IUCN Red List), its population has drastically declined over the last 50 years. Already extinct in Thailand, the last breeding populations are restricted to northern and eastern Cambodia. The Northern Plains of Cambodia consists of a forest-mosaic of broadleaf semi-evergreen, deciduous dipterocarpus forest and seasonal watering holes (Trapeangs). The protection of this habitat is essential to the world’s largest remaining populations of Giant Ibis.



Research team examined the Sarus crane nest in the Northern Plains of Cambodia after the eggs hatched and the chicks left the nest.

Wildlife Research and Monitoring team Actively Removed Snares from Sanctuary



The Biodiversity and Research team is removing the snare from Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary to help reduce threats to Seima’s incredible wildlife.

WCS's Biodiversity Research and Monitoring Team in Seima is one of the best in the region if not in the world. In addition to providing critical information about key species’ status, population, threats, and movements, they are also wildlife protectors. They help inform law enforcement team understand about on-going wildlife poaching and forest cutting, and directly remove snares from wildlife habitat. During the wet season, when the biodiversity monitoring cannot be undertaken, the monitoring team returns to the forest to remove

snares. Snares are set often in long lines in the forest, sometimes stretching for several kilometers or more, to catch any animal that happens to be passing through the area. Snares don't kill the animal outright but trap them, usually by the leg, keeping them there until the hunter returns. Many animals die of starvation, dehydration and stress in the process. Snares are indiscriminant, they capture and kill whatever come long, be that a common species or are already Critically Endangered. The monitoring team has removed thousands of snares from Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary over the years helping to reduce threats to Seima's incredible wildlife.

WCS is actively expanding the anti-snare program in Seima; the support and cooperation of government and local people is needed to combat this incredibly damaging hunting practice. Much of the wildlife caught in snares from protected areas is not for subsistence hunting, but supplies the illegal trade in wildlife, largely in urban areas. If we did not stop the large-scale snaring in forest soon, the species in them that make Cambodia famous will be lost forever.

Chicken Raising Helps Improve Livelihood of Local Villager

Mr. Meas Sameuon, age 61, is a poor farmer living in O'rana village of Mondulkiri province situated in the Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary. He has relied on rice farming and natural resources to support his family of six. He was not interested in any livelihood activities introduced by NGO until Chief of O'rana village told him about its advantage. He contacted and asked the Cambodia Rural Development Team (CRDT) to be member of Chicken Raising Group which is funded by the One Action and Wildlife Society Conservation (WCS).



Meas Sameuon is feeding his chicken with foods he gathers from the field.

He then becomes a member of Chicken Raising Group and has been invited to join many livelihood trainings, such as skill training, group's saving activity, business promotion and integrated vegetable growing. With obtained skills he learnt from trainings, Sameuon started chicken raising activity and expands his business. He is quickly success with his livelihood activity, where he can make over 300\$ from chicken selling to support his family.

Sameuon is delighted with his livelihood activity, and aims to expand the business. He said that chicken raising, vegetable growing and food processing are very importance for his family because after participating he has received technical skills and financial benefits to support his family.

Andong Kralong Ecotourism Is Receiving National Recognition

Andong Kralong Community Based Ecotourism is progressing very well after it was established in 2000 to help communities make incomes from forests and wildlife protection. The community members have presented themselves in national and provincial levels. Meantime, they were invited to join the eco-tourism and community based ecotourism workshop at Phnom Penh, joint organized by the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Tourism. This workshop allowed them to interact with people working in tourism and ecotourism sector across the country.



A community member from Andong Kralong Ecotourism received honor award from H.E. Say Samal, Minister of Environment.

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