

WILDLIFE CRIME

BULLETIN

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The southern Vietnam box turtle (Cuora picturata), a critically endangered turtle species found in some southern provinces of Vietnam. Cuora picturata was recently added to the List of fully protected species under Decree 64. It is a CRIMINAL OFFENSE to smuggle, trade, sell, or transport this species.

LEGAL LOOPHOLES

THREATEN CONSERVATION OF SPECIES

The rapid and loosely regulated growth of private zoos and eco-tourism facilities in Vietnam is underscoring the pressing need to have a robust management regime in place to curb criminal activity, primarily the illegal sourcing of animals from the wild and the potential trading of endangered species for commercial purposes.

Loopholes and inconsistencies in the law create space for potential wildlife launderers to operate, while the burgeoning number of private facilities that appear to make little or no profit from their legitimate business raises questions concerning their true intentions. Unless firm action is taken to redress the exploitation of wild species, the substantial gains being made in wildlife conservation by legitimate conservation facilities will continue to be undermined.

The major challenge posed to authorities now is the potential for the problem to swiftly escalate, with 50 such facilities currently licensed and more on the way. The current lack of clear guidelines for the regulation of conservation facilities undoubtedly leaves the door open to criminal activity. It is strongly suspected that some conservation facilities are little more than legal “window-dressing” that allows operators to source stock from wild populations and, as a consequence, cast a negative shadow over legitimate zoos and facilities that are operating in compliance with the law.

One example is Pham Van Tuan, a twice-convicted tiger trafficker from Nghe An, whose wife obtained a conservation license to keep 24 tigers. Another example is illegally obtained marine turtles being kept at the aquariums of two Hanoi zoos, not to mention other endangered species of questionable or illegal origin being found routinely at any number of licensed facilities throughout the country.

The fact is that conservation facilities are poorly regulated and many offer no meaningful contribution to either wildlife conservation or education. Abuse is widespread, and it is only likely to worsen if the number of licensed facilities grows in the absence of a robust management regime.

ENV, therefore, recommends the formulation of a new decree that will address these concerns, allowing legitimate facilities to operate freely, while reducing and eliminating fraud, illegal acquisition, and criminal trafficking from Vietnam’s zoo and conservation facilities.

ENV proposes the following:

- Licensed conservation facilities must be prohibited from any form of commercial trade of wildlife, except for exchanges between other licensed conservation facilities such as zoos.
- Zoos and other licensed conservation facilities must obtain animals legally, as is currently the requirement under the law.
- Licensed facilities that violate either of the above two requirements risk immediate loss of their licenses as conservation facilities, closure of the facility, and /or criminal penalties and financial punishment, depending on the seriousness of the violation.

ENV further recommends that the onus of responsibility to meet all the requirements of a “conservation facility” fall squarely on the owner. Prior to issuance of a license,



owners must demonstrate to the government how their facility will contribute to the conservation of endangered species. In this light, ENV proposes that conservation facilities be licensed for specific purposes, including:

Rescue centers and sanctuaries:

Rescue centers and sanctuaries should be run by the government or in partnership with non-profit organizations, as is currently the case for most existing facilities. The objective of these facilities is to receive wildlife from authorities or other sources for the purpose of rescue or long-term care. The commercial sale of animals from these centers is strictly banned, apart from transfers to other licensed conservation facilities and zoos.

Education facilities:

These include public facilities and zoos established for the purpose of raising public awareness about nature and wildlife. Education facilities should be allowed to breed wildlife for education, research, and conservation purposes only. The exchange of animals between zoos and other non-commercial facilities would be permissible.

Conservation breeding and research facilities:

These facilities include places where qualified scientists are conducting research on the species maintained in captivity. Breeding of animals at these facilities must be conducted for the purpose of conservation of the species. This requires facility owners and managers to factor genetic composition into breeding plans, maintain stud books, and have a long-term plan for the recovery of the species.

Legacy facilities:

These include a small number of animal-keeping facilities that pre-date current law but do not qualify as educational, rescue, or research facilities. No additional legacy facilities will be licensed. Efforts will focus on phasing out these facilities and transferring captive wildlife to other licensed facilities.

Facilities can apply for licenses that include one or more purposes as defined above. However, these facilities must meet the criteria outlined in the legislation prior to issuance of a permit that sets the conditions under which they may operate and binds owners to comply with all relevant laws and regulations.

License applications must include a properly planned proposal containing details of activities, financial investment, and most importantly, expected conservation outcomes; how will the facility contribute to conservation? The proposal should be carefully examined by MONRE, MARD and Vietnam's CITES Scientific Authority prior to approval.



A bear at the five-star BEAR SANCTUARY Ninh Binh operated by Four Paws

TODAY'S CALL TO ACTION

While ENV has opened up dialog on the issue, it is plain that ENV will continue to urgently press the government to develop legislation to address the issue of conservation facilities in Vietnam. Meantime, ENV also urges the government and LEAs to take the following actions to better manage the issue before it's too late:

- Freeze the registration of any new conservation facilities until a new law on the regulation and management of non-commercial/conservation facilities is issued.
- Implement a comprehensive assessment of all current conservation facilities, especially privately-owned facilities, to evaluate their legitimacy and contribution to species conservation.
- Strive to properly manage all aspects relating to the registration and the operation of conservation facilities.
- Clarify the roles and the responsibilities of the relevant governmental bodies in registering and managing conservation facilities.



ILLEGAL WILDLIFE

traffickers' dreams go up in smoke as Vietnam burns their ivory

As two illegal wildlife traffickers adjusted to life behind bars after being sentenced to a total of 16 years, Vietnamese authorities were putting a match to their one-tonne haul of ivory.

The destruction, not far from the scene of their arrest in Nhi Khe village - a notorious hotspot for ivory and rhino horn trafficking, was an exemplary end to the court proceedings. The flames were testament to the Vietnamese criminal justice system's renewed determination to tackle illegal wildlife trafficking and create legal deterrence for potential offenders.

ENV, therefore, applauds the decision to both impose strict prison sentences – six and ten years – and incinerate the confiscated ivory. This new norm is important since Vietnam plays a pivotal role as a transit hub for large shipments of illegal ivory and rhino horn from Africa en route to China.

Since 2010 alone, more than 66 tonnes of ivory and over 750 kg of rhino horn have been seized in Vietnam (based on crime data recorded by ENV). However, only a tiny fraction of this growing stockpile has been destroyed. Most confiscated ivory and rhino horn seizures remain under lock and key at a variety of State-managed storage facilities.

Today this approach is untenable. ENV firmly believes that destruction of confiscated ivory and rhino horn should be the routine outcome, not the exception, following courts cases or investigations that are not concluded. Indeed, the only ivory

and rhino horn that should be retained are small samples that are required for DNA analysis and mapping, education and training, and scientific research.

It is a fallacy to argue that destruction of ivory and rhino horn stockpiles is a “waste”, or to suggest that selling the stockpiles will help meet consumer demand and thus protect wild elephants and rhinos. These arguments have been proven unfounded time and again.

Firstly, legalizing stockpiled ivory will, far from meeting demand, almost certainly stimulate fresh consumer demand that does not exist at present. As market demand grows, the direct consequence is further pressure on wild elephant populations. So long as ivory is a “commodity” with a value, the killing of wild elephants will continue.

Secondly, the presence of both legal and illegal ivory will present law enforcement with the near-impossible task of accurately determining the provenance and therefore present opportunities for criminals to circumvent the law.

This scenario described above is not without precedent in Vietnam. Consider what happened when Vietnam legalized the market for crocodile products and sparked the development of commercial crocodile farming. The consequence was that, instead of relieving pressure on wild crocodiles, the legalization heralded the decimation of native populations of Siamese crocodiles not only in Vietnam, but in neighboring countries as well.

It is beyond question that opening up legal trade of endangered species merely stimulates demand and compromises enforcement. Vietnam's ivory and rhino horn stockpiles are effectively worthless. They simply cannot be sold without compromising the future of wild elephants and rhinos globally.

ENV believes that destroying stockpiles of confiscated ivory and rhino horn sends an unequivocal message to the world that Vietnam is firm in its resolve to combat illegal wildlife trafficking and safeguard the world's remaining elephants and rhinos from poaching.



NOTATION: According to the provisions of Decree 29/2018/ND-CP and Circular 57/2018/TT-BTC, ONLY “parts (specimens) of rare and precious forest animals in Group IB” are to be transferred to the General Department of State Reserves (“GDSR”) of the Ministry of Finance for reservation. In this case, only the Prime Minister can decide how to deal with the confiscated parts/specimens.

Meanwhile, all exhibits of other endangered, precious, and rare species must be transferred to specialized management agencies or destroyed. As a result, only confiscated ivory from Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*) and horns from Javan rhinos (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*) – Group IB species according to Decree 06 – are to be transferred to the GDSR. All elephant ivory and rhino horn from elephants and rhinos listed in CITES Appendix I (that are more commonly seen in trade) must be either destroyed or transferred to specialized management agencies for handling in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Code 2015, Decree 29/2018/ND-CP, Circular 57/2018/TT-BTC, Resolution 05/2018/NQ-HDTP, and related legal documents.





FIVE NEW 2019 DECREES BOOST WILDLIFE PROTECTION

The Vietnamese Government has underlined its commitment to wildlife protection by issuing five new decrees to help boost implementation of wildlife protection legislation across the country.

The series of decrees relate to management and punishment, including Decree 06/2019/ND-CP which replaces Decree 32/2006/ND-CP and Decree 82/2006/ND-CP, and Decree 26/2019/ND-CP which regulates the management of endangered forest and aquatic animals.

In particular, Decree 06 also provides guidance on the implementation of CITES, which is applied to both forest and aquatic species.

Meanwhile, 15 new animals have been added to an expanded Decree 160/2013/ND-CP List of endangered species by the amendment of Decree 64/2019/ND-CP.

Decree 35/2019/ND-CP and Decree 42/2019/ND-CP provide guidance on punishments for wildlife-related violations in Forestry and Fisheries respectively. Collectively, this pair of decrees reinforce the Penal Code and ensure that all violations relating to wildlife are punished either by administrative fine or prosecution.



DID YOU KNOW?

- Only certain endangered species published by CITES Scientific Authorities can be farmed for commercial purposes. However, a list of these species has not been issued as of September 2019, and thus, the farming of endangered species is on hold until further guidance/consultation with the government and the Scientific Authorities (**Decree 06**).
- Species appearing in the lists of both Decree 06 and Decree 160 (as updated by Decree 64's amendment of the List of endangered species prioritized for protection) are now subject solely to the legal conditions of Decree 06. The exception is exploitation to create initial breeding stock for scientific research purposes. In this instance, the applicable law is Decree 160 as amended by **Decree 64**.
- Similar to forest species, endangered aquatic species are also categorized into two groups under Decree 26, namely Group I and Group II. Group I species can only be exploited for conservation, scientific research, and initial breeding research programs or international cooperation. The exploitation of Group I species for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited. Group II species, meanwhile, can be exploited for commercial purposes as long as the exploitation meets legal requirements (**Decree 26**).
- Administrative penalties for violations involving endangered, precious, and rare aquatic species, that aren't subject to criminal prosecution, are based on the volume of confiscated aquatic products (**Decree 42**).
- Big-headed turtle (*Platysternon megacephalum*); Bourret's box turtle (*Cuora bourreti*) and southern Vietnam box turtle (*Cuora picturata*) are among those that have been upgraded to the List of endangered species prioritized for protection. Violations involving these species are now deemed criminal offenses regardless of weight, value, or number of individuals in most cases, except for advertising and several procedural violations (**Decree 64**).



**“THE BEST PLACE TO PROTECT
WILDLIFE IS IN ITS HABITAT
WHERE IT BELONGS”**

Q&A

If a species is listed under both the Decree 06 IB group and the Decree 160 (as amended by Decree 64) List of endangered species prioritized for protection, how should violations be dealt with?



In this case, violations will be treated as violations relating to Decree 160 species. In other words, all violations involving the species (except for advertising and several procedural violations) will be prosecuted regardless of weight, value, or quantity.

In Vietnam, there are certain lists of endangered species that are currently applicable, including CITES Appendices, the new List of endangered species prioritized for protection (Decree 160 as amended by Decree 64), the List of endangered forest species (Decree 06), and the List of endangered aquatic species (Decree 26). A species may belong to different lists simultaneously. For example, the Sunda pangolin (*Manis javanica*) is listed under Decree 160 (as amended by Decree 64), Decree 06 Group IB, and CITES Appendix I. However, according to the Penal Code, the List of endangered species prioritized for protection (Decree 160 as amended by Decree 64) is the highest protection list in Vietnam, and thus takes priority, followed by Group IB of Decree 06 and Appendix I of CITES. Therefore, this means that if a species belongs to both lists (Group IB of Decree 06 and Decree 160 as amended by Decree 64), relevant violations will be considered as violations relating to Decree 160 (as amended by Decree 64) species.

This fact is further confirmed by Clause 4 of Article 6 of Decree 35 which states: "Violations relating to species of Group IB, IIB, or CITES Appendix I and II that are simultaneously listed as prioritized species for protection (under Decree 160, amended by 64) will be treated as violations relating to a Decree 160 (as amended by Decree 64) species."

JOIN THE ENV CRIMINAL JUSTICE NETWORK

Over 120 members have joined the criminal justice network to:

- Receive the latest updates on legislation and important wildlife trafficking cases
- Share success stories to help encourage and motivate others
- Speak directly with wildlife protection law specialists that can answer questions and to receive guidance on what aspect of the law to apply to different circumstances.

The criminal Justice Network was created to support YOU!

If you are part of the law enforcement, procuracy, or judicial community:

Contact our Policy and Legislative Team at

cgteam.env@gmail.com or call **+84 24 6281 5427** for help

Quick reference on wildlife protection laws:

<http://bit.ly/HuongdanENV>

WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU!

TWO TONNES OF WILDLIFE SOURCED FROM FARMS MOST LIKELY LAUNDERED FROM THE WILD

On January 23, 2019, Quang Binh Police stopped a bus heading north toward Hanoi and the Chinese border and confiscated over two tonnes of wildlife, including 1,930 kg of snakes - mostly radiated and common rat snakes, 300 kg of yellow-headed temple turtles, 280 kg of monitor lizards, and 50 kg of geckos. The shipment had reportedly been sourced from commercial farms in Tay Ninh and Soc Trang provinces and was detained for lack of quarantine paperwork. The shipment was later released back to the trader.

It is not hard to fathom why they had trouble obtaining copies of legal papers showing the names of the farms that allegedly bred and raised the animals that made up the two-tonne shipment. Knowing the name of the farms would have undoubtedly revealed what ENV, the police, provincial authorities, and the farmers already knew: The shipment more than likely included animals that were sourced from the wild illegally and then laundered through a commercial farming operation(s).

A basic understanding of the ecology of the species in the shipment reveals the truth, even if the legal papers claim differently. For example, yellow-headed temple turtles

will successfully breed in captivity, and assuming that the adult breeding animals were legally obtained, it would take roughly 10 years or more of growth for each turtle to reach a size that is typically sold. Most farmers are not looking for profits ten years down the line – it is far easier to buy adult-sized turtles illegally and make them appear to have been born and raised at the farm when in fact, large adult turtles are almost always from the wild.

Other indicators, such as scarring on the shells from predator attacks (which occur in the wild), show that the papers claiming that the turtles were legally sourced from a licensed farm are erroneous.

Armed with a basic understanding of the ecology of most species, it would take less than 10 minutes for an expert from the Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources (IEBR) to determine if a specific farm is actually breeding wildlife or rather supplementing their captive stock with illegally obtained, wild-sourced animals. However, a lack of transparency allows continued abuse of the regulations and undermines the efforts of responsible parties within the government, as well as the public, to protect wildlife.



**“IF YOU ARE NOT
PART OF THE SOLUTION,
YOU MAY BE
PART OF THE PROBLEM.”**

ENV challenges authorities in provinces where commercial wildlife farms are operating to bring transparency to the wildlife farming industry by permitting expert scientists from government and non-government institutions to inspect certain licensed farms without notice, and review breeding and captive management operations at these facilities.

Given the lack of effective oversight, limited expertise, and implications of corrupt practices in relation to the

management of commercial wildlife farms, ENV further calls on provincial authorities to make farming licenses and applications for permits public, so that farmers must bear the scrutiny of scientists and others when applying for permits and operating their farms. Public accountability will, without a doubt, substantially improve the oversight of licensed commercial wildlife farms, reduce illegal activities like laundering, and strengthen biodiversity protection throughout the industry.

In 2014 - 2015, ENV investigated a sample of multispecies commercial wildlife farming operations in Vietnam. It was found that laundering was widespread amongst the farms visited, and that the commercial farming permit issuance

process was “compromised” and failed to ensure that these commercial farms were dealing only in legally obtained and bred species.

THE **env** **CHALLENGE**

SCHOOL IS NO PLACE FOR WILD ANIMALS



Schools are no places to keep wildlife – rather, they are places to educate the next generation to become socially responsible citizens within their communities. For this reason, ENV took particular offense with a primary school in Ho Chi Minh City keeping a macaque and some other animals back in January 2019. ENV initiated a law enforcement response when the case was first reported through the Wildlife Crime Hotline, but soon learned that the school had legal papers for the animals.

While the case might normally have been dropped at this point due to the fact that there was no legal issue with the school keeping the animals, ENV pursued the matter with the Ho Chi Minh City Department of Education and Training, calling for a ban on keeping wild animals at all schools throughout the city – excepting only higher education facilities where research may warrant some legal activities.

ENV saw the message as critical to younger generations, whom we expect to grow up as law-abiding citizens that contribute to society positively. Furthermore, there was the issue of safety and possible exposure to disease that could adversely affect students.

In May, ENV was notified that the Department of Education and Training in Ho Chi Minh City had issued a city-wide ban on keeping wild animals at schools. ENV commends the positive actions of the Ho Chi Minh City authorities in recognizing the need to ensure the health and safety of students, as well as reinforce the message to coming generations that wildlife belongs in nature.

ENV urges FPDs nationally to carefully consider the issuance of permits for keeping wild animals as pets. These “legal” animals, particularly those kept in public view, adversely affect wildlife protection efforts by unintentionally advertising to others that it is okay to keep wild animals as pets. It’s impossible to tackle wildlife trafficking and protect the wild populations of our biodiversity with the interference of mixed messages and half-baked approaches. No permits. No keeping wild animals as pets. Period.



ENV WILDLIFE CRIME UNIT OPERATIONS: JANUARY-JUNE 2019

Tackling Wildlife Crime



The ENV Wildlife Crime Unit receives an average of more than four new cases reported to ENV's 1800-1522 Wildlife Crime Hotline each day. Upon receiving a report, experienced case officers contact the appropriate authorities to address the violation and track each case through to conclusion, documenting the outcome on ENV's Wildlife Crime Incident Tracking Database. In cases involving the advertising or sale of critically endangered species, ENV will work directly with law enforcement to set up and execute "sting" operations aimed at both apprehending the seller and seizing wildlife.

A total of 729 cases were logged during the first two quarters of 2019, including 50 trafficking cases, 371 retail selling and advertising cases, and 293 cases involving illegal possession of wildlife – usually live animals.

Publicly reported cases to the hotline accounted for 525 new cases during the reporting period, of which 50.4% resulted in successful outcomes, ranging from seizures of wildlife, arrests, and prosecutions, to administrative penalties or voluntary compliance following warnings issued by authorities or ENV.

A total of 80 live animals were confiscated by authorities in 27 provinces following public reports of violations through the Wildlife Crime Hotline.

ENV also worked closely with authorities to facilitate the voluntary transfer of animals during the first half of 2019, after the owners contacted ENV and expressed their desire to hand over animals that they had acquired illegally. These transfers included a Burmese python, a red-shanked douc langur, three Sunda pangolins, 10 macaques, six leopard cats, six marine turtles, and ten lorises, among other species.

ENV wishes to thank our collaborating partners in law enforcement, provincial Forest Protection Departments, and most importantly, the public, for working together to strengthen wildlife protection and helping Vietnam meet its national and international responsibility to protect global biodiversity.

Crime Statistics: January 1, 2019 through June 30, 2019

Crime classification	First half of 2019	Total (2005-2018)
Selling and advertising	371	7,641
Possession	293	3,830
Trafficking	50	1,862
Hunting/other	13	345
Total cases [1]	729	13,542
Total number of violations	1,765	34,849
Success rate (overall) [2]	60%	44% (2014-2018) [3]

[1] Some cases logged are not ultimately classified as violations, and thus the total number of cases may differ slightly from the total number in each classification (possession, trafficking, etc.).

[2] Overall success includes both publicly reported cases AND cases resulting from ENV enforcement campaigns. Successes include any successes that occurred during the month, including successes achieved on older cases.

[3] Flagging of successful cases did not begin at ENV until 2014.



CRIME LOG

The crime log includes highlights of cases during the period of January 1, 2019 through June 30, 2019. Due to the large number of cases being logged each month by the Crime Unit, ENV is unable to include all of the cases in the crime log. ENV has consequently chosen examples from around the country that we believe reflect the outstanding efforts of our law enforcement and Forest Protection Department (FPD) partners.



AN GIANG

On May 31, 2019, responding to a public report via the ENV Wildlife Crime Hotline, An Giang FPD confiscated two king cobras (*Ophiophagus hannah*) and released them to the wild. Initially, the two king cobras were captured by workers at a construction site and kept at a local tourism area. (Case ref. 14310/ENV).

BA RIA - VUNG TAU

On March 21, 2019, thanks to a report from the public via the ENV Wildlife Crime Hotline, Ba Ria City FPD ordered the immediate removal of some bird nets that were strung up in an open area behind a coffee shop (Case ref. 14019/ENV).

NOTE: *Trapping birds using mist nets and other devices is illegal. FPDs are strongly encouraged to respond swiftly in such cases. In addition to raising awareness, nets and tools used for trapping birds in violation of the law must be confiscated, and hunters should be appropriately fined to deter further trapping in the area.* On April 2, 2019, Ba Ria – Vung Tau Environment Police confiscated a loris during a sting operation undertaken with ENV. The loris was previously advertised for sale on Facebook for VND 700,000. ENV coordinated with Ba Ria – Vung Tau Environment Police and arranged for the subject to meet with a police officer posing as a buyer at a coffee shop, resulting in the successful confiscation (Case ref. 14095/ENV).

On April 17, 2019, a fisherman in Xuyen Moc district called the ENV Wildlife Crime Hotline to report that he had caught a hawksbill marine turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricate*) that had become caught in his nets and wished to transfer the turtle to authorities. Ba Ria – Vung Tau Fisheries officers were provided with the fisherman's address and arrived shortly thereafter to receive the animal. The hawksbill was subsequently released back into the ocean (Case ref. 14185/ENV).

NOTE: *ENV urges Fisheries authorities to advise fishermen within their jurisdictions to immediately release marine turtles following their accidental capture, unless the animal is injured or the area is unsafe for release.*

Major pangolin scale seizure in Vung Tau

On May 23, 2019, National Anti-smuggling Customs and Customs at Cai Mep Port in Ba Ria – Vung Tau province seized 5,264 kg of pangolin scales, which was discovered in a container listed as carrying cashews and originating in Nigeria (Case ref. 14342/ENV).



Tiger skull and parts seized in Vung Tau

On June 4, 2019, Ba Ria – Vung Tau provincial Environment Police raided the home of a Xuyen Moc district man and confiscated a tiger (*Panthera tigris*) skull along with other wildlife products, such as an ivory pendant; tiger, bear, and leopard claws; tiger skin wallet; and wild pig tusks. The subject was identified by ENV in February 2019 advertising hundreds of wildlife products on social media. An evidence package and profile were sent to police after which the subject's home was inspected, resulting in an arrest and seizure of goods (Case ref. 13958/ENV).

CON DAO FPD

goes after marine turtle egg trader

On April 16, 2019, Con Dao National Park FPD and Con Dao District Police seized 60 green sea turtle eggs (*Chelonia mydas*) as well as body parts which included flippers, organs, and meat from a resident's house in Con Dao district. The total weight of eggs and parts was 85.4 kg. One subject was sentenced to two years in prison and the other will face trial soon (Case ref. 14187/ENV).



“TIGERS, GIBBONS, LANGURS, ELEPHANTS, AND MANY MORE SPECIES ARE FOLLOWING RHINOS DOWN THE PATH OF EXTINCTION. IT'S UP TO YOU TO STOP THIS BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.”

BAC NINH

On June 4, 2019, National Environment Police and National FPD, in cooperation with Bac Ninh Environment Police, checked a handicraft shop in Tu Son district and seized 6 kg of suspected ivory products. However, according to the identification results, only 0.76 kg of the seized ivory was real. Police suspect that the ivory in this case originated in Thuong Tin district, a well-known ivory and rhino horn trading hotspot in Hanoi (*Case ref. 14409/ENV*).

Frozen tiger cubs seized in Bac Ninh sting operation

On April 23, 2019, Bac Ninh Environment Police undertook a sting operation in cooperation with ENV and confiscated two frozen tiger cubs in Tu Son town. The subject was targeted by ENV after he advertised the tigers for sale on Facebook for VND 18 million each. This case was not the first time that the subject had advertised wildlife for sale on Facebook. At the end of 2018, he advertised two bear paws in a wine jar for VND 13 million. However, he claimed to ENV undercover (UC) operatives at the time that he had sold out before ENV and police could set up a sting. In addition to wildlife, the subject also advertised opium and various weapons on social media (*Case ref. 13069/ENV*).

BAC KAN

On June 6, 2019, Cho Don District Economic Police, along with Quang Bach Station FPD and Cho Don District FPD, stopped a motorbike and seized 13.8 kg of Indochinese rat snakes (*Ptyas korros*), three Chinese cobras (*Naja atra*), and one Common butterfly lizard (*Leiolepis belliana*). The subject was administratively fined VND 12 million, and all of the wildlife was later released into a local forest (*Case ref. 14441/ENV*).

BINH DUONG

On February 28, 2019, An Phu Ward Police confiscated 400 grams of ivory products from a pawn shop after receiving evidence from ENV that the seller was offering ivory and tiger products for sale online. The subject was subsequently fined VND 170 million for possession of endangered wildlife products and VND 70 million for advertising wildlife (*Case ref. 11719/ENV*).

NOTE: *This is an excellent example of how law enforcement can effectively respond to internet crime, targeting online suppliers and punishing them for both possession and advertising of wildlife.*



Advertising of prohibited products such as ivory and rhino horn is subject to an administrative fine of VND 70-100 million

Online tiger product supplier arrested in possession of 54 tiger skin wallets

On May 30, 2019, Binh Duong Environment Police confiscated 54 tiger (*Panthera tigris*) skin wallets along with a tiger skin belt, claws, teeth, and a tail keychain. Also confiscated were three clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*) skins, three ivory pendants, and other wildlife products. The case originated in October 2018, when ENV identified an online wildlife supplier that was advertising hundreds of tiger, bear, and ivory products, as well as other wildlife on social media. An evidence package and profile were provided to police, resulting in an investigation that led to the subject's arrest and prosecution (*Case ref. 13477/ENV*).

Another online tiger product supplier arrested

On June 13, 2019, Thuan An Town Police in Binh Duong province confiscated two bear claws, one tiger claw, and one tiger canine after receiving an evidence package and profile from ENV on a subject that was advertising large quantities of protected wildlife on social media. According to the police, the subject is pending prosecution (*Case ref. 13688/ENV*).

CAO BANG

Border authorities in Cao Bang bag ivory smuggler

On January 13, 2019, Dam Thuy Border Security and Trung Khanh District FPD stopped a motorbike in Trung Khanh district that was operating without a registration number and discovered 51 kg of ivory. Following a confession by the driver, authorities then arrested a woman in the same commune who had reportedly hired the driver to transport the ivory to China. The woman subsequently confessed that the ivory had been sourced from Hanoi (*Case ref. 13830/ENV*).

Major seizure in Da Nang nets more than nine tonnes of ivory

On March 26, 2019, Da Nang Customs and National Environment Police discovered more than nine tonnes of ivory in a container at Tien Sa port in Da Nang. The container originated from the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the ivory was packed in sawdust and concealed in boxes constructed of many wooden planks glued together to appear like a stack of wood (Case ref. 14097/ENV).

On March 22, 2019, Cam Le District Environment Police and Da Nang City FPD responded to a public report via the ENV Wildlife Crime Hotline and confiscated one Chinese water dragon (*Physignathus cocincinus*) and two African spurred tortoises (*Centrochelys sulcata*). The subject was reportedly keeping the animals as pets at a restaurant. Reportedly, he received an administrative fine of VND 3 million (Case ref. 13950/ENV).

NOTE: There are an increasing number of exotic species being sold and kept as pets in Vietnam. Many of these animals are brought into Vietnam illegally, including some endangered species regulated under CITES. Authorities confiscating exotic species should contact an appropriate rescue center or State zoo to place the animals following confiscation. Under no circumstances should non-native species be released.

On June 19, 2019, the Mobile Team of Da Nang FPD and Cam Le District Environment Police responded to a public report via the ENV Wildlife Crime Hotline and confiscated 21 turtles from a local market, including Indochinese box turtles (*Cuora bourreti*), Malayan snail-eating turtles, impressed tortoises, and Asian stripe-necked leaf turtles. The turtles were later released back into the wild (Case ref. 14542/ENV).



DAK LAK

On January 14, 2019, Dak Lak Environment Police seized 17 kg of Indochinese rat snakes (*Ptyas korros*) from a local man who was transporting the snakes on a motorbike. The subject claimed that he was hired to transport the wildlife for an unidentified man in Buon Ma Thuot City. The subject was administratively fined VND 3 million, and all of the snakes were released back into nature (Case ref. 13847/ENV).

DONG NAI

Authorities confiscate 16 wildlife trophies from local restaurant

On March 4, 2019, thanks to a report from an ENV volunteer via the ENV Wildlife Crime Hotline, Tan Phu District FPD cooperated with Phu Son Commune Police to confiscate 16 wildlife trophies from a local restaurant, including two gibbon trophies, two langur trophies, three leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*) trophies, one clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*) trophy, four long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*) trophies, two flying squirrel trophies, and two squirrel trophies (Case ref. 13994/ENV).



GIA LAI

On January 7, 2019, Gia Lai Environment Police cooperated with Krong Pa District FPD to check a local resident's home and seized a common palm civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*), a porcupine, 10 elongated tortoises (*Indotestudo elongata*), two Asian stripe-necked leaf turtles (*Cyclemys pulchristriata*), and 40 kg of wild pig meat. The wild pig meat was destroyed, and the live animals were subsequently released. The subject was administratively fined VND 15 million (Case ref. 13839/ENV).

HANOI

Bear cub wine sting results in arrest

On March 5, 2019, Hai Ba Trung District Economic Police confiscated a wine jar containing a bear cub during a sting operation undertaken in cooperation with ENV. The wine jar was advertised for sale on Facebook for VND 11.5 million. The subject was an online seller who advertised tiger cubs and other wildlife. ENV initially sought to set up a sting involving several tiger cubs that she had advertised for sale, but when the cubs were not available, the sting team opted to buy bear cub wine instead, leading to the successful outcome (*Case ref. 13835/ENV*).



Ivory retailer busted in Thuong Tin

On March 20, 2019, Hanoi Environment Police checked a local pawn shop in Thuong Tin District and seized more than 50 kg of ivory. The district is a hotspot for ivory and rhino horn trade and has been the subject of much attention in recent years. Recent inspections of a number of villages within the district have indicated that much of the formerly open sale of ivory has moved behind closed doors (*Case ref. 14084/ENV*).

Five frozen tiger cubs seized in Hanoi

On January 8, 2019, Nam Tu Liem Economic Police and Hanoi Environment Police seized five frozen tiger cubs at a guest house near the bus station. The subject was from Thanh Hoa province and was found to have connections to Thailand. (*Case ref. 13815/ENV*).

Ivory mule nabbed at Noi Bai Airport

On April 7, 2019, the Anti-smuggling team of the Hanoi Economic Police discovered 15 kg of ivory products in the luggage of a woman arriving on a flight from Japan. The woman stated that she was asked to transport the bag by a Vietnamese woman whose husband was

Japanese. Police subsequently arrested two men, including the owner of the shipment and the trafficker who received the shipment from the woman (*Case ref. 14144/ENV*).

South African arrested in Hanoi with rhino horns

On April 12, 2019, Hanoi Anti-smuggling Police at Noi Bai International Airport discovered 14.6 kg of rhino horn in the checked baggage of a South African passenger. The subject reportedly smuggled the rhino horns from South Africa, transiting in Singapore before arriving in Vietnam. The man confessed that he was hired to transport rhino horn by a man in South Africa and intended to deliver the horns to a Vietnamese person. (*Case ref. 14175/ENV*).

ENV sting operation results in arrest of rhino horn trafficker

On June 6, 2019, Nam Tu Liem District Police confiscated 4.44 kg of ivory statues during a sting operation undertaken in cooperation with ENV. The carved statues were advertised for sale on Facebook for VND 178 million. ENV worked with police to set up a buy, during which the ivory was seized, and two subjects were arrested. The case first developed in December 2018 following the seizure of 32 kg of rhino horns at Ankara International Airport in Turkey. In that case, the horns were discovered in the unclaimed luggage of the subject. Thanks to assistance from an international law enforcement agency, ENV was able to work with Vietnamese law enforcement to positively identify the subject, after which the sting operation was planned and executed after the subject posted advertisements for ivory on his social media. The second subject arrested in the sting was reportedly the supplier (*Case ref. 14294/ENV and 13696/ENV*).



207 kg of ivory seized in Hanoi

On June 27, 2019, Hanoi Environment Police and Hai Ba Trung Police arrested a Ha Tinh man transporting 109.3 kg of ivory in Hai Ba Trung district. Following the initial seizure, police inspected a residence and recovered 98 more kilograms of ivory, making a total of two pieces weighing 207.3 kg (Case ref. 14581/ENV).

HA TINH

Lao Border pangolin bust in Ha Tinh

On January 16, 2019, National Economic Police in cooperation with Huong Son District Police raided a home in Huong Son district of Ha Tinh, arresting nine people and confiscating 215 Sunda pangolins (*Manis Javanica*) – 167 of which were live. The pangolins had been smuggled into Vietnam from Laos and were being force-fed to increase their body weight prior to sale. A subsequent search of an address linked to the case turned up a small quantity of ivory. The live pangolins were later transferred to the pangolin rescue center of Cuc Phuong National Park (Case ref. 13840/ENV).



On April 21, 2019, city, provincial, and district police, along with Customs officers at the Cau Treo border gate, inspected a bus arriving from Laos and discovered one Sunda pangolin (*Manis javanica*) 17 turtles – including seven Indochinese box turtles (*Cuora galbinifrons*), five keeled box turtles (*Cuora mouhotii*), four big-headed turtles (*Platysternon megacephalum*), and one Asiatic soft-shell turtle (*Amyda cartilaginea*). Two arrests were made, and the pangolin was transported to the rescue center of Pu Mat National Park while the turtles were transported to the Cuc Phuong Turtle Conservation Center (Case ref. 14215/ENV).

HAI PHONG

Bear sting operation in Hai Phong nets two cubs

On January 9, 2019, Hai Phong Environment Police in cooperation with ENV conducted a sting operation and confiscated two very small Asiatic black bear cubs (*Ursus thibetanus*). These bear cubs were advertised for sale on Facebook for VND 50 million/pair. ENV worked with police, posing as the buyers, and arranged a meet at a coffee shop, resulting in the successful confiscation. The cubs were later transferred to Four Paws' BEAR SANCTUARY Ninh Binh. The subject was given a suspended sentence of 15 months (Case ref. 13746/ENV).

Major pangolin scale and ivory seizures in Hai Phong

On January 22, 2019, Hai Phong Customs opened a wood container originating from Nigeria and seized 515 kg of ivory and 1,541 kg of pangolin scales hidden in wooden boxes. The shipment arrived in Hai Phong on January 19, 2019 and was most likely going to be transported overland to China.

Another container belonging to the same consignee was inspected on January 30 by Hai Phong Customs, resulting in the seizure of another 1,339 kg of pangolin scales and 109 kg of ivory, also from Nigeria (Case ref. 13882/ENV and 13897/ENV).

On March 25, 2019, National Anti-smuggling Customs cooperating with Hai Phong Customs seized a third major shipment of about eight tonnes of pangolin scales from a container originating in Nigeria. The shipment arrived at Hai Phong port two days prior to its discovery. It was one of a series of large pangolin scale seizures that have occurred in Vietnam, Hong Kong, and Singapore in recent months (Case ref. 14096/ENV).

On April 16, 2019, Hung Yen Economic Police posted at a toll station attempted to stop a suspicious vehicle which sped away. Hung Yen police pursued the vehicle into Hai Phong province, successfully stopping it at another toll station, where the driver and his accomplice abandoned the vehicle and fled on foot. Police found 39 pangolins in the vehicle, which were later transported to the Pangolin and Small Carnivore Rescue Center at Cuc Phuong National Park (Case ref. 14182/ENV).



Fourth major pangolin scale seizures in Hai Phong Port in 2019

On April 19, 2019, Hai Phong Customs seized 3,446 kg of ivory and 3,977 kg of pangolin scales from a container that was shipped to Vietnam from the Democratic Republic of Congo. The contraband was hidden in asphalt drums (Case ref. 14186/ENV).

Hai Phong woman arrested with rhino horns

On May 30, 2019, National Criminal Police (C02) in cooperation with Quang Ninh Provincial Police seized two white rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*) horns weighing 6.9 kg from a home in Mong Cai city. The subject is currently pending prosecution (Case ref. 14460/ENV).

On June 5, 2019, Hai Phong city Economic Police, Hai Phong FPD, and Vinh Niem Ward Police seized 14 oriental small-clawed otters (*Amblonyx cinerea*), one leopard cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*), nine wreathed hornbills (*Rhyticeros undulatus*), eight great hornbills (*Buceros bicornis*), four parrots (*Psittacula spp.*), and 10 glossy ibises (*Plegadis falcinellus*) during an enforcement action that started with stopping a vehicle, within which some hornbills were discovered, and then raiding an address of the alleged trafficker, resulting in the seizure of the otters and other wildlife. The driver of the vehicle claimed that he was hired to transport wildlife to Mong Cai on the Chinese border. Four arrests were made in connection with the case (Case ref. 14544/ENV).

HO CHI MINH CITY

On April 10, 2019, Police in District 5 responded to a public report via the ENV Wildlife Crime Hotline and confiscated one yellow-headed temple turtle (*Hieremys annandalii*) from a street vendor. The turtle was later transferred to Saigon Zoo (Case ref. 14164/ENV).

NOTE: Street vendor cases are traditionally difficult to deal with, as the vendors move about, selling at different locations, and an immediate response is required by local authorities in most cases to successfully catch the seller. In some cases, the seller is caught but only warned. If this “warning” successfully achieves the aim of deterring further illegal activities by the seller, then this is a suitable response. However, in many cases, the authorities fail to adequately address these crimes, resulting in continued illegal activities by the sellers. ENV strongly recommends that authorities confiscate animals and cages in all cases and issue fines that are sufficient to deter further criminal activity.

Customs seizes 10 kg of ivory hidden with lobsters

On April 23, 2019, Customs at Tan Son Nhat International Airport discovered 10 kg of African elephant ivory (*Loxodonta Africana*) in the luggage of a male

passenger that had arrived on a flight from Dubai. The contraband was painted black, wrapped in foil paper, and hidden in a box with lobsters and dried fish in an attempt to avoid inspection (Case ref. 14220/ENV).



HOA BINH

On April 17, 2019, Lac Thuy District Market Surveillance seized 29 keeled box turtles (*Cuora mouhotii*) as they were being transported on the street. The turtles were subsequently transferred to the Turtle Conservation Center at Cuc Phuong National Park. The subject was administratively fined VND 10 million (Case ref. 14193/ENV).

KIEN GIANG

Kien Giang Police arrest internet ivory supplier

On May 18, 2019, Kien Giang Environment Police confiscated about 400 grams of ivory products and 27 wild pig tusks from a man's home in Ha Tien town. The subject was identified by ENV in 2017 as an online supplier advertising a range of illegal wildlife, including ivory products, bear and tiger parts, skins, and trophies. ENV subsequently provided police with an evidence package and subject profile, resulting in the seizure of goods. The subject was administratively fined VND 15 million (Case ref. 11286/ENV).



LAI CHAU

Bear paws seized in Lai Chau sting

On January 30, 2019, Lai Chau Environment Police confiscated two bear paws during a sting operation undertaken in cooperation with ENV. The bear paws were advertised for sale on Facebook for VND 6 million. ENV coordinated with Lai Chau police and arranged for the subject to meet police, posing as buyers, which resulted in the successful confiscation (Case ref. 13883/ENV).

NOTE: *Selling, possessing, trading, or transporting bear paws (including bear paws in wine) are criminal offenses subject to penalties under the revised Penal Code of 2017. In the past, bear paw crimes were treated less seriously, particularly in the case of restaurants possessing bear paw wine. Today, these crimes are considered serious violations.*

LAM DONG

FPD intervention inspection finds nothing in Lam Dong but is still a success

On December 24, 2018, Da Huoai District FPD and local authorities checked the home of a subject that had posted advertisements on his Facebook page showing hundreds of squirrels, raptors, and a ferret badger for sale. Although authorities did not find any wildlife during their inspection, a strict warning was issued, and the subject subsequently removed all the offending links from his Facebook page. The case, reported to ENV by a member of the public, is a positive example of how authorities should respond to the growing challenge that internet wildlife crime presents (Case ref. 13740/ENV).

NOTE: *ENV routinely deals with wildlife violations on the internet, with more than 829 cases comprised of 2,950 individual violations reported in 2018 alone. 75% of these cases resulted in the successful removal of links by small-time sellers after warnings were issued directly by ENV, while more serious cases were passed to law enforcement. Furthermore, ENV's collaboration with Facebook resulted in the deactivation of 147 targeted pages.*

Restaurant wildlife seized

On June 26, 2019, Lam Dong Province FPD and Lam Dong Provincial EP inspected a restaurant in Da Lat city and found a Sunda pangolin (*Manis javanica*) being kept in a yard behind the restaurant. Authorities also found a water monitor (*Varanus salvator*), a small Indian civet (*Viverricula indica*), and a porcupine. All the wildlife was subsequently transferred to Cat Tien National Park's rescue center (Case ref. 14585/ENV).



LANG SON

Lang Son authorities confiscate tiger trophies from temple

On January 29, 2019, Huu Lung district authorities confiscated two tiger trophies from a temple in Lang Son and transferred them to the provincial museum. The trophies were reportedly kept at the temple for religious purposes. However, the law protecting tigers and other wildlife does not make exceptions for religious establishments, and Lang Son authorities recognized the need in this case to ensure that the law is enforced universally to all citizens and entities - not selectively based on opinion or other factors (Case ref. 13747/ENV).

NOTE: *The keeping of wildlife at religious establishments such as churches and pagodas continues to be an issue of concern for ENV. Most provinces, like Lang Son, have demonstrated their commitment to applying the law equally, yet some other provinces fail to do so, perhaps out of fear of upsetting religious establishments within their community.*

ENV holds that it is necessary, particularly in the case of religious establishments that are respected by the people as leaders within their community, to comply with all relevant wildlife protection laws, setting an example for their constituents and contributing to both the protection of biodiversity and the interests of the greater society.

NGHE AN

Primate traffickers busted in Nghe An after attempted escape from police

In January 19, 2019, Nghe An Economic Police seized many primates, including two Laotian langurs (*Trachypithecus laotum*), 12 pig-tailed macaques (*Macaca leonina*), and one rhesus macaque (*Macaca mulatta*) from the back of a pick-up truck in Vinh City. In an effort to escape, the driver, one of four subjects in the case, reportedly crashed his truck into a police vehicle, and once the vehicle was immobilized, refused to get out of the truck, forcing the police to break the windows to subdue the subject. In the back of the vehicle, police found many fake registration plates, and the rear compartment was equipped with ventilation, suggesting that the subjects in this case were experienced traffickers (Case ref. 13851/ENV).

Facebook tiger trader busted in sting operation

On March 21, 2019, Nghe An Environment Police confiscated two frozen tiger cubs during a sting operation undertaken in cooperation with ENV. The tigers were initially advertised on Facebook for VND 10 million each. ENV assisted the police by posing as a buyer and arranging for the subject to deliver the cubs to a location where police were waiting. According to the subject, the tiger cubs originated in Laos (Case ref. 13997/ENV).

Pu Mat hunter bagged with endangered langurs

On January 11, 2019, Pu Mat National Park's FPD cooperated with the park's Anti-Poaching team and seized from a band of hunters two dead grey langurs (*Trachypithecus crepusculus*), one live wild pig, four dry wild pig legs, five handmade guns, and five knives. One of the five subjects confessed that he was the person who purposely shot two langurs. The live wild pig was released back to Pu Mat National Park. On June 25, 2019, the five hunters were issued prison sentences ranging from two to four years (Case ref. 13853/ENV).

On March 27, 2019, Ky Son District Traffic Police stopped a motorbike and seized a dead Asian golden cat (*Catopuma temminckii*) and five deskinning civets from a Nghe An man (Case ref. 14103/ENV).

Bears confiscated at home of Nghe An bear trafficker

On May 30, 2019, Nghe An authorities confiscated three Asiatic black bears (*Selenarctos thibetanus*) at the home of a bear bile trafficker in Quynh Luu district. The seizure resulted from nearly nine months' efforts by ENV and Nghe An authorities to ensure that the law is applied to criminals operating from within the close-knit community known as a hotspot for criminal activity. The bear trafficker had six registered bears, but there were nine bears found to be present at his home at the time authorities inspected the site. Several other bears appeared to be lacking microchips and were suspected to be illegal as well, but the owner was allowed to retain these bears. The three confiscated bears were transferred to Four Paws' BEAR SANCTUARY Ninh Binh (Case ref. 13187/ENV).

NOTE: ENV is actively calling for the prosecution of this bear bile trafficker for criminal possession of a protected species. The law applies to all residents of Vietnam, regardless of religious beliefs, ethnicity, wealth, or influence. Wildlife crime can only be successfully and effectively addressed if people recognize the consequences of criminal behavior and are fully aware that the law will apply to them in the same way that it would to others.

On June 2, 2019, Nghe An Environment Police arrested two subjects from Kon Tum province on Highway 1A, in possession of seven dead pangolins (Case ref. 14387/ENV).

QUANG BINH

On May 21, 2019 during a routine patrol on Highway 1A, Quang Binh Traffic Police stopped a bus heading north and seized 3.5 kg of Indochinese rat snakes (*Ptyas korros*), 2.5 kg of radiated rat snakes (*Elaphe radiata*), and 142 kg of orchids. Two drivers were administratively fined VND 15.5 million in total for transporting wildlife without legal papers, as well as for other unrelated violations (Case ref. 14338/ENV).

On May 29, 2019, after receiving a report from the public, Dong Hoi city FPD and staff of the Dong My ward People's Committee checked a hotel and seized one red-shanked douc langur (*Pygathrix nemaeus*) trophy that was being displayed publicly at reception. According

to the owner, the trophy did not belong to the hotel and had been left behind by a patron (Case ref. 14374/ENV).

NOTE: Possessing protected wildlife – whether live or dead or only parts or products – is a crime. ENV commends the Dong Hoi FPD for taking action on a wildlife trophy case, as it is the only way to address broader wildlife trafficking as a whole: Zero tolerance resulting in increased awareness and deterrence of criminal activities.

QUANG NAM

Motorcyclist found with pangolins

On June 9, 2019, Nam Giang District Police and Song Thanh FPD stopped a motorbike ridden by a local woman and confiscated two Chinese pangolins (*Manis pentadactyla*) – one live and one dead. The subject is currently pending prosecution (Case ref. 14535/ENV).

QUANG NINH

On April 10, 2019, Hai Hoa Border Security stopped a man who was transporting a tiger skin and six Asiatic black bear bones on his motorbike from Mong Cai city, with the intention of crossing the border into China. The subject stated that he was hired to transport the contraband to China by an unknown man for about VND 1 million (Case ref. 14159/ENV).



On May 31, 2019, Quang Ninh FPD stopped a bus and discovered 13 Sunda pangolins (*Manis javanica*), 61 Indochinese box Turtles (*Cuora galbinifrons*), and 61 big-headed turtles (*Platysternon megacephalum*) in styrofoam boxes in the storage compartment. The driver was from Hai Duong and confessed that there was a man in Nghe An who had hired him to transport the wildlife from Nghe An to Quang Ninh. The confiscated animals were later transferred to Ha Noi Wildlife Rescue Center (Case ref. 14388/ENV).

QUANG TRI

Civets and lizards seized in transit

On April 11, 2019, Huong Hoa District Police and Huong Hoa District FPD stopped a motorbike pulling a trailer loaded with suspicious bags and seized 14 common palm civets (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*) and two water monitors (*Varanus salvator*). The subject was administratively fined VND 25 million. The surviving animals were released into Sa Mu Conservation Area, while several dead animals were destroyed (Case ref. 14173/ENV).

THAI NGUYEN

Frozen tiger, bear, and other parts seized in Thai Nguyen

On May 14, 2019, Thai Nguyen provincial Environment Police, city police, and FPD checked a registered bear farm in Thai Nguyen city and discovered a large quantity of illegal wildlife, including an adult frozen tiger, a frozen Asian golden cat painted to look like a tiger, two live unregistered and illegal bears, two tiger skins, five bear paws, three macaques, 10 turtles, and turtle shells and plastrons. The bears and other living wildlife were transferred to the Ha Noi Wildlife Rescue Center, while dead animals and parts were transferred to the local FPD. The owner was arrested and is pending prosecution (Case ref. 14306/ENV).



THANH HOA

Online tiger products supplier nabbed in Thanh Hoa

On January 14, 2019, police in Thanh Hoa seized several leopard claws and a canine tooth, along with other wildlife products from a man who had been advertising tiger parts, marine turtles, and clouded leopard skins among other wildlife parts for sale on social media. The seizure occurred after an evidence package was provided to police by ENV documenting the specific violations and profiling the subject. The case was subsequently prosecuted and convicted, with the subject receiving a 15-month suspended sentence (Case ref. 12865/ENV).

On June 5, 2019, Quan Son District Economic and Environment Police stopped a motorbike and discovered seven live big-headed turtles (*Platysternon megacephalum*), a live Indochinese box turtle (*Cuora galbinifrons*), one frozen masked palm civet (*Paguma larvata*), and 0.7 kg of pangolin scales. The turtles were transferred to Cuc Phuong's Turtle Conservation Centre, and the subject is pending prosecution (Case ref. 14429/ENV).

VINH LONG

On January 30, 2019, Vinh Long FPD confiscated a stump-tailed macaque (*Macaca arctoides*) that was being kept at a church in Long Ho district. The macaque was later transferred to Hon Me Rescue Center in Kien Giang (Case ref. 13362/ENV).

VINH PHUC

Online ivory trader arrested, gets 1.5 years in prison

On January 8, 2019, Vinh Phuc Police arrested an online trader as he was transporting ivory products, subsequently searching the subject's house and recovering a total of 10 kg of ivory. The case was initiated by ENV after the subject advertised large quantities of ivory products on social media. ENV provided police with an evidence package and subject profile, leading to police successfully arresting the subject and seizing the ivory.

The case was prosecuted, and on June 18, 2019, the subject was sentenced to one year and six months in prison by a Vinh Phuc court (Case ref. 13611/ENV).

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KEY PROSECUTION UPDATES

Nhi Khe trader gets six years in ivory products seizure

On January 14, 2019, a Hanoi man was sentenced to six years in prison after 92 kg of ivory products were discovered in his home in Nhi Khe village of Thuong Tin district in Hanoi (*Case ref. 13103/ENV*).

**“ACCEPT MONEY
FROM A CRIMINAL,
AND YOU BECOME
ONE YOURSELF”**

Ivory traffickers get prison sentences

On March 7, 2019, the Hanoi People's Court convicted two subjects under Point d, Clause 3, Article 244 of the Penal Code for trafficking in ivory, sentencing the two subjects to ten and six years in prison respectively. The ivory was subsequently destroyed by authorities in accordance with the law.

The case stemmed from a February 2018 raid of the subject's home in Thuong Tin district of Hanoi, during which National Environment Police and Hanoi Environment Police seized 971 kg of elephant ivory and ivory products, as well as equipment used to carve ivory (*Case ref. 12097/ENV*).

A rare moment: Airport case results in prison sentence

On January 16, 2019, a smuggler boarding a flight to Thailand with 3.1 kg of ivory in his luggage was sentenced by a Hanoi court to 10 months in prison on a charge of ivory smuggling. The case dated back to late 2017, when the subject was caught at Noi Bai airport as he prepared to leave Vietnam (*Case ref. 11891/ENV*).

Tay Ninh and Lang Son smugglers get prison time for smuggling just one pangolin

One is enough. The smuggling and trade of pangolins is a criminal offense, and courts around the country are letting wildlife traffickers know that trafficking wildlife is a serious crime, regardless of the number of animals involved.

In November 2018, a Tay Ninh man was sentenced to one year in prison stemming from a February 2018 case, during which he was caught transporting a pangolin and other wildlife to Ho Chi Minh City.

Furthermore, on February 26, 2019, a Hanoi man was sentenced to two years in prison after he was caught in October 2018 on a public bus smuggling a single pangolin.

These two recent convictions represent a growing trend in response to the revised Penal Code that is resulting in jail sentences for wildlife traffickers. Tay Ninh and Lang Son Provincial Courts, as well as many other courts throughout the country, are sending a clear message reinforcing a “zero tolerance” approach to wildlife trafficking (Case ref. 12119/ENV and 13343/ENV).

Otter trafficker jailed in Nam Dinh

On January 31, 2019, a Nam Dinh man was sentenced to 11 years and six months in prison by the Nam Dinh City Court after he was caught in November 2018 smuggling 10 oriental small-clawed otters (*Amblonyx cinerea*) (Case ref. 13589/ENV).



**“MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF
CRIMINALS TODAY TO PREVENT
CRIME TOMORROW”**

Kingpin Nguyen Mau Chien back in jail for a few more months after retrial

On March 7, 2019, infamous wildlife trafficker Nguyen Mau Chien received an additional three-month prison sentence and returned to jail for his role in smuggling rhino horns. The case dates back to April of 2017, when two operatives of Chien's trafficking network were caught smuggling rhino horns – leading to a search of Chien's home and the seizure of 35 kg of rhino horn, in addition to small quantities of ivory and other wildlife products. Chien was the first major wildlife trafficker to be arrested in Vietnam and the first to go to jail, initially serving a 13-month sentence (*Case ref. 10872/ENV*).



A prosecution appeal win put Nguyen Mau Chien back behind bars.

Five-year sentence for possession of marine turtles

On June 7, 2019 a Phu Quoc court convicted the owner of a floating house and a local fisherman to five years and five years and three months respectively for possession of 12 green sea turtles, weighing 165.5 kg, which were discovered in September 2018 at a floating house. The fisherman was reportedly the supplier (*Case ref. 13221/ENV*).



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10-year prison sentence for pangolin smuggling in Hanoi

On April 17, 2018, Hanoi Environment Police arrested a man transporting eight frozen Sunda pangolins (*Manis javanica*) and four frozen Malayan sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*) paws. The subject confessed that he had bought the contraband from a woman in central Vietnam and intended to send it by bus to another province for sale. According to the Environment Police, it was the third time that the subject was arrested for wildlife trafficking. The subject was subsequently convicted and sentenced to 10 years and nine months in prison. The bear paws and pangolins were transferred to the Vietnam National Museum of Nature (Case ref. 12487/ENV).

Thanh Hoa pangolin and turtle smuggler gets eight years

On May 23, 2019, a pangolin and turtle smuggler was convicted and sentenced to eight years in prison by the Quang Xuong Court. The case dates back to October 2018, when the FPD stopped a truck carrying cows and discovered a secret compartment containing 24 pangolins and 46 big-headed turtles. Both species are fully protected under the law, with the turtles being listed under Appendix I of CITES. The subject was from Nghe An province, a hotspot for wildlife criminal trafficking operations (Case ref. 13342/ENV).

Pangolin scale suppliers sentenced to a year plus

On June 7, 2019, a Quang Ninh provincial court sentenced two men to prison terms of 12 months and 15 months respectively for smuggling protected wildlife. The case stemmed from a November 2018 seizure involving 31.8 kg of pangolin scales as they were being transported to the Chinese border at Mong Cai (Case ref. 14552/ENV).

Pangolin smugglers get six years

On June 24, 2019, two men were each sentenced by the Yen Mo Court to six years in prison for smuggling pangolins. The conviction dates back to a December 2018 seizure of 41 pangolins by Ninh Binh Economic Police and Traffic Police. The two men claimed that they were hired to transport the pangolins on their bus by a man in Nghe An. The alleged Nghe An owner was never identified (Case ref. 13720/ENV).





ENV's efforts to combat illegal hunting and trade of wildlife are made possible thanks to the generous support of the following partners:



Additional support provided by:



EDUCATION FOR NATURE – VIETNAM

Education for Nature – Vietnam (ENV) was established in 2000 as Vietnam's first non-governmental organization focused on the conservation of nature and the protection of the environment. ENV combats the illegal wildlife trade and aims to foster greater understanding amongst the Vietnamese public about the need to protect nature and wildlife. ENV employs creative and innovative strategies to influence public attitudes and reduce demand for wildlife trade products. ENV works closely with government partners to strengthen policy and legislation, and directly supports enforcement efforts in the protection of endangered species of regional, national, and global significance.

ENV STRATEGIC PROGRAMS

Since 2007, ENV has focused its activities on three major program areas that comprise ENV's integrated strategic approach for addressing illegal wildlife trade in Vietnam. These include:

- Reducing consumer demand for wildlife products through investment in a long-term and sustained effort to influence public attitudes and behavior.
- Strengthening enforcement through direct support and assistance to law enforcement agencies, and mobilizing active public participation in helping combat wildlife crime.
- Working with policy-makers to strengthen legislation, close loopholes in the law, and promote sound policy and decision-making relevant to wildlife protection.

ENV would also like to thank our individual supporters from all over the world, who have contributed to our efforts by providing financial support, giving critical technical assistance, or volunteering their time.

Finally, ENV would like to thank the authorities for providing information and images used in this Wildlife Crime Bulletin.

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