STRIKE WHILE THE IRON IS HOT:
DECREE 06 REVISION PRESENTS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR INCLUDING A “CLEAN LIST”

THE INVASION OF RED-EARED SLIDERS HAS BEGUN

The red-eared slider, commonly sold in the trade as pets and for mercy release, is an invasive species, according to Circular 35/2018/TB-BTNMT of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

WILDLIFE CRIME ONLINE:
USE CONFISCATION AND FINANCIAL PUNISHMENT AS MEANS TO STOP CYBERCRIME

ENV WILDLIFE CRIME UNIT OPERATIONS 2023
STRIKE WHILE THE IRON IS HOT: DECREE 06 REVISION PRESENTS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR INCLUDING A “CLEAN LIST”

Decree 06/2019/ND-CP (dated January 22, 2019) was the first legislation which introduced the idea of a “clean list” – a list of wildlife species viable for farming. ENV believes that the current review of this decree presents the perfect time to re-incorporate the clean list, given that it was disposed of in Decree 84/2021/ND-CP – a previous revision of Decree 06. Ultimately, the reintroduction of a clean list for wildlife farming will help better manage the over 7,500 existing wildlife farms in Vietnam, streamlining the inspection procedures while ruling out situations where endangered and threatened species are hunted and laundered through farms.

Requiring farm owners to only farm certain wildlife species authorized by CITES Scientific Authorities is not a new concept. According to relevant regulations under Decree 82/2006/ND-CP (revised by Decree 98/2011/ND-CP), commercial farming of a species may only be allowed if there is written certification by the CITES Scientific Authorities that the species is able to produce numerous successive generations in a controlled environment (in the case of breeding at farms), or that the farming of the species does not have any negative impacts on its conservation in nature.

Decree 06 later inherited and strengthened these regulations, further stipulating that the Vietnam CITES Scientific Authorities must publish a list of species that can be bred for commercial purposes, i.e. a “clean list,” before this stipulation was later done away with under Decree 84.

ENV believes that the current Decree 06 revisions should return the clean list, but also that the requirement of obtaining written certification from CITES Scientific Authorities, indicating that a species is suitable for a captive environment, poses an unnecessary burden in the presence of the clean list and should not be included in the decree again.

ENV firmly believes that a clean list can close the regulatory loopholes in the current commercial farming industry in Vietnam, promoting wildlife conservation while enabling farms to earn profits without harming biodiversity.
CLEAN LIST

AN EASY FIX TO HELP BETTER MANAGE WILDLIFE FARMING IN VIETNAM

How does a clean list benefit FPDs and the CITES Scientific Authority in the licensing process?

Instead of having to request written approval from the CITES Scientific Authority each time a new facility registers to farm a CITES-listed wildlife species, FPDs would only need to confirm that the species registered for farming are included in the clean list. In addition, the CITES Scientific Authority would only be required to release the list once and update it as necessary, rather than responding to each licensing request.

How does a clean list benefit FPDs in the management process?

Licensed farms are currently permitted to conduct captive breeding and production operations for at least 39 species considered to be threatened globally. However, many of these species are being sourced from the wild and laundered through commercial farms, posing a substantial threat to biodiversity, both in Vietnam and in neighboring countries where the animals are also illegally sourced. The issue here is that Vietnam currently does not have an effective monitoring mechanism, making it almost impossible for FPDs to identify whether an animal is legally bred in captivity or was illegally sourced from the wild. However, a clean list could be a quick fix eliminating the laundering of globally threatened species by simply excluding them from the list of legally farmed wildlife. With a clean list, only species that breed well in captivity, are economically viable, and are not threatened in the wild may be farmed, reducing the risk of wild-caught threatened species being illegally put onto farms. More importantly, during farm inspections, FPDs simply need to ensure that any species found are included on the clean list.

How does a clean list help farm owners?

Currently, farm owners do not know which species they are permitted to farm. Farm owners therefore run the risk of investing in the farming of a species which may later be declared by the CITES Scientific Authority as requiring protection due to adverse effects on wild populations, thus resulting in a loss of investment or a lack of appropriate solutions for these facilities. With a clean list, this uncertainty is completely removed, allowing farm owners to focus on those species that are both ecologically and economically viable for farming. In addition, the clean list can be accompanied by a simpler and more reasonable registration process for farm owners, as well as guidance on how to farm the listed species.

Consider this: A clean list will also clean the ranks of registered and licensed farmers, weeding out wildlife traffickers and launderers and leaving only farmers that are operating within the law. Isn’t it time that commercial wildlife farming becomes a clean and legitimate business that contributes to economic growth, without compromising Vietnam’s biodiversity? The solution to make this possible is within our reach.

“THE BEST PLACE TO PROTECT WILDLIFE IS IN THEIR HABITAT WHERE THEY BELONG, BEFORE THEY FALL INTO THE HANDS OF HUNTERS AND TRADERS.”
As evidenced by data recorded by ENV over the course of 10 years, Vietnam’s criminal justice system has made considerable progress towards increasing the risks associated with trafficking wildlife through the imposition of strict and consistent punishment that strengthens deterrence. While the sustained level of effort to address wildlife trafficking is laudable, some challenges remain ahead. Notably, the need has become increasingly urgent to focus attention on targeting the leadership of trafficking networks, not just their underlings, as well as to conduct more comprehensive and in-depth investigations of major seizures at airports and shipping ports to identify ownership. ENV believes the key to dismantling these networks lies in the ability and willingness of law enforcement agencies to secure the arrests of network leaders, and in the courts’ capacity to impose appropriate sanctions.

Note: Criminal cases include transportation, storage, and trade of wildlife, but exclude criminal cases involving retail sales.

ARRESTS AND PROSECUTIONS IN 2023

Note: These cases are recorded based on the seizure date – the date on which the authorities detected and confiscated the wildlife – forming the basis for arresting and handling criminals at a later date.

Table 1. Percentage of trafficking seizures resulting in arrests (2017-2023)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criminal trafficking cases</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases with arrests</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of criminal cases with arrests</td>
<td>85.1</td>
<td>87.7</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>95.9</td>
<td>95.5</td>
<td>92.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of subjects arrested</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cases prosecuted</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of criminal cases prosecuted</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONVICTIONS AND PRISON SENTENCES BY VERDICT DATE

Note: The number of prosecutions shown by verdict date in Table 2 will differ from the numbers shown in Table 1, as Table 2 reflects ONLY cases that were trialed during each given year, including cases where seizures and arrests occurred during previous years.
Table 2. Court performance by verdict date (2017-2023)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Prosecutions</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of cases resulting in prison term(s)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>205</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of cases resulting in prison term(s)</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of subjects imprisoned</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>117</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average prison term (years)</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE FALL OF KINGPINS

Having a real impact on global trafficking of wildlife requires hard work and a good plan. It is not as simple as just seizing quantities of wildlife at a port or airport. The leaders of these global wildlife trafficking networks need to be strategically targeted. Law enforcement must invest the time and investigative resources into building a case that will lead to an arrest, prosecution, and imprisonment of network leaders. When the leadership of a criminal network falls, the network they control will more than often crumble and collapse, as it did for former trafficking kingpins Nguyen Mau Chien and Hoang Tuan Hai.


Such efforts are underway elsewhere in the world, with investigations that have spanned years of investment leading to arrests and prosecutions.

For example, Liberian national Moazu Kromah and two Guinea-Bissau nationals were arrested in 2017. Kromah was a major ivory kingpin with links to Vietnamese traffickers. Following an extended investigation, he and his accomplices were arrested and subsequently extradited to the United States, where they were prosecuted. In 2022, Kromah received a five-year prison sentence. Other trials are pending.

The next to fall was Teo Boon Ching, “The Godfather” – a Malaysian national who played a key role in trafficking containers of ivory and other contraband through Malaysia and into Southeast Asia. Like Kromah, Teo was strategically targeted by international law enforcement, ultimately resulting in his arrest in Thailand and extradition to the United States, where he was convicted and is currently serving a prison term.

The arrests in both these cases, and many other lesser-known examples, resulted from strategic investigations by law enforcement and cooperation by many countries and have substantially contributed to the undermining and disabling of networks run by these criminal leaders.

If we are going to have any real impact on wildlife trafficking, we have to target the leaders of these networks and be willing to invest the time, resources, and energy into planning and executing successful operations that result in the kingpins’ arrests. We have the tools, the capacity, and the determination to do what needs to be done to really make a difference and help eliminate Vietnam’s role in international wildlife trafficking permanently.
THE INVASION OF RED-EARED SLIDERS HAS BEGUN

Red-eared sliders are in Vietnam, and they may be here to stay. The red-eared slider, native to the central United States, is one of the world’s most traded reptiles, sold by the millions as pets when they are still hatchlings. While some might find the little green turtles cute, they grow quickly and are often released into the wild when they get larger, often to the detriment of native species. Thanks to releases of these pet turtles, breeding populations of red-eared sliders can be found in nature throughout the world, from the UK and European countries to the Middle East, South Africa, Japan, and much of Southeast Asia, totaling as many as 50-60 countries.

In Vietnam, it is illegal to sell, trade, or possess red-eared sliders – an early measure taken by the government aimed at preventing the species from becoming established in the wild. However, enforcement of laws prohibiting the trade of this species is weak in some provinces. Red-eared sliders can be found in many pagoda ponds throughout the south, where Buddhist worshippers buy them as juveniles for release. They are also released into rivers and other waterways by worshippers, resulting in their introduction directly into the wild in Vietnam.

Like Vietnam, many countries have banned the import of red-eared sliders out of concern that wild populations of the species could outcompete native turtle species and even alter the ecosystem by feeding on plants and animals normally consumed by other species.

It may not be too late for Vietnam if we act now and aggressively enforce restrictions on selling the species, actively seizing these turtles wherever they are found and educating Border Police and Customs to strictly control the import of thousands of hatchling turtles that are likely entering Vietnam from Thailand, and possibly other countries, where they are farmed.

Stop the invasion! Act decisively and strictly on cases involving the advertising and selling of red-eared sliders. Confiscate animals when found. DO NOT let more of them end up in the wild here in Vietnam.

“PEOPLE WHO BUY, SELL, OR TRADE WILDLIFE IN VIOLATION OF THE LAW ARE CRIMINALS.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individuals/agencies</th>
<th>Authorized enforcement actions</th>
<th>Legal basis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police officials/FPD officials</td>
<td>• Issuance of warnings</td>
<td>• Clause 1, Article 57; and Clause 1, Article 63 of Decree no. 45/2022/ND-CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Imposition of fines up to VND 500,000</td>
<td>• Clause 1, Article 39; and Clause 1, Article 43 of the Law on handling administrative violations¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Confiscation and destruction of turtles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heads of District Police Divisions</td>
<td>• Issuance of warnings</td>
<td>• Clause 2, Article 57 of Decree no. 45/2022/ND-CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Imposition of fines up to VND 1.5 million</td>
<td>• Clause 2, Article 39 of the Law on handling administrative violations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Confiscation and destruction of turtles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commune-level Police Chiefs</td>
<td>• Issuance of warnings</td>
<td>• Clause 3, Article 57 of Decree no. 45/2022/ND-CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Imposition of fines up to VND 2.5 million</td>
<td>• Clause 3, Article 39 of the Law on handling administrative violations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Confiscation and destruction of turtles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairpersons of commune-level People’s Committees</td>
<td>• Issuance of warnings</td>
<td>• Clause 1, Article 56 of Decree no. 45/2022/ND-CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Imposition of fines up to VND 5 million</td>
<td>• Clause 1, Article 38 of the Law on handling administrative violations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Confiscation and destruction of turtles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District-level Police Chiefs/ FPD Chiefs</td>
<td>• Issuance of warnings</td>
<td>• Clause 4, Article 57; and Clause 6, Article 63 of Decree no. 45/2022/ND-CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Imposition of fines up to VND 25 million</td>
<td>• Clause 4, Article 39; and Clause 3, Article 43 of the Law on handling administrative violations¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Confiscation and destruction of turtles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairpersons of district-level People’s Committees/ Directors of the provincial-level Police Departments</td>
<td>• Issuance of warnings</td>
<td>• Clause 2, Article 56 and Clause 5, Article 57 of Decree no. 45/2022/ND-CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Imposition of fines up to VND 100 million</td>
<td>• Clause 2, Article 38 and Clause 5, Article 39 of the Law on handling administrative violations¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Confiscation and destruction of turtles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairpersons of provincial People’s Committees</td>
<td>• Issuance of warnings</td>
<td>• Clause 3, Article 56 of Decree no. 45/2022/ND-CP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Imposition of fines up to VND 1 billion</td>
<td>• Clause 3, Article 38 of the Law on handling administrative violations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Confiscation and destruction of turtles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Law No. 15/2012/QH13 dated June 20, 2012, on handling administrative violations (amended by Law No. 67/2020/QH14 dated November 13, 2020).

**DO NOT RELEASE NON-NATIVE SPECIES**

There have been a number of incidents throughout the country involving confiscated non-native turtle species that were subsequently released to the wild by well-meaning authorities. It is critically important not to allow non-native species to be introduced into the wild in Vietnam. Some of these species are well known to establish wild populations, outcompeting native species, and adversely impacting the ecological balance of the local ecosystem.

When confiscating non-native species, your best options are as follows:

1. Transfer to a rescue center
2. Transfer to a licensed non-commercial facility such as a zoo
3. Destroy the animals
4. If no other option, contact ENV, and we will try to assist
A lot can be learned from Dien Bien FPD with respect to their efforts to address online advertising and selling of wildlife. In an April 2023 case involving an online supplier advertising red-whiskered bulbuls, FPD carried out a successful inspection of the subject’s pet shop, confiscating 13 birds and issuing a fine of VND 3 million. The owner was also required to remove all of the links advertising wildlife on his social media accounts.

Although this case involves just a small number of birds, it is reflective of the change that is needed throughout Vietnam with regards to how authorities address online wildlife crime efficiently, fairly, and quickly.

Dien Bien FPD is not alone. Many other provinces have responsive FPDs doing their jobs effectively as part of efforts to address wildlife crime on social media platforms. A recent case in Quang Nam province also started with an online advertisement for birds, finally leading to a successful inspection of the subject’s home and confiscation of birds. FPD then issued a VND 4.2 million fine to the seller and required him to remove all of his violations from Facebook.

The common thread that ENV is seeing with successful cybercrime cases handled by authorities is:

1. Inspection
2. Confiscation
3. Requirement to remove advertising links
4. Fine

The process starts with identification of the crime. In most cases, ENV can assist in identifying the subject and provide authorities with an address. Authorities can then inspect the address and determine if animals or products are present. If so, a seizure is immediately possible, and the case can be handled based on the evidence seized and the appropriate laws governing the species and quantity of the animals or products.

However, if nothing is found during an inspection of the subject’s home/business, then authorities must deal with...
the advertising violation, which can range from a warning and requirement to remove violating links if the crime is minor, to a substantial fine in cases where the violations involve high-value, fully protected species or parts and products such as ivory or tiger claws.

In cases where the online violations are numerous or involve large numbers of animals, parts, or products, a

warning is unlikely to deter the supplier from violating again, as ENV can confirm from the previous handling of hundreds of serious cases where warnings were issued. The best response in handling serious online violations where a seizure of goods and arrest are not possible, is to issue a strict fine in accordance with what is allowed under the law for advertising prohibited products, and to require the subject to immediately deactivate the offending social media or website page.

Some examples of serious fines issued for online wildlife advertising include:

**Son La province:** VND 85 million for advertising tiger claws and canines, bear claws and canines, and ivory products

**Binh Phuoc province:** VND 70 million for advertising wildlife claws, canines, and ivory products

**Dien Bien province:** VND 70 million for advertising bear bile

**Ha Giang province:** VND 77.5 million for advertising wildlife products such as bear claws, ivory products, macaque bone traditional medicine (TM), and python bone TM

**Kon Tum province:** VND 86.25 million for advertising wildlife and wildlife products such as pangolin wine, cobra wine, civets, macaques, clouded monitors, tiger claws, bear bile, tiger bone TM, a trophy of a marble cat, leopard cats, Owston's civets, and a serow head

Deterrence is the best course of action in serious cases where arrest is not possible. If you are unsure of the appropriate response and whether it will work, consider the subject's violation history. If you were an online wildlife seller, what would make YOU stop advertising wildlife online? A VND 1 million fine? If not, what would work for you?


Many thanks to the numerous FPD teams across the country, like those in Dien Bien, Quang Nam, Son La, Ha Giang, and Kon Tum, who are working to protect wildlife and are making a conscientious effort to tackle wildlife crime online.

**CYBERCRIME TRAINING OFFERED TO INTERESTED LAW ENFORCEMENT UNITS**

ENV has developed a practical, hands-on cybercrime training course for law enforcement officers, aimed at improving skills in dealing with cyber wildlife crime. The training uses real-world cases to identify subjects, lock down addresses, and enable law enforcement interventions. If your agency is interested in ENV’s practical cybercrime course, contact our Law and Policy team at 0865.242.882.
**RETIREMENT RECOMMENDED FOR VIETNAM’S REMAINING BILE BEARS**

In 2023, a total of 19 more bears were transferred from bile farms to rescue centers and sanctuaries. Vietnam’s remaining bears on bile farms have stayed there for more than 20 years since they were illegally purchased as cubs. Vietnam’s remaining bile bears are old and have undergone a life of hardship, confined to small cages and regularly exploited for bile by their owners.

ENV believes that after 20 years of cruel and illegal treatment, it is time that Vietnam’s remaining 208 bile bears be transferred to sanctuaries, where they can live the remainder of their lives, eating well, being taken care of, and having the freedom and space to run and interact with other bears, for whatever time they have left in their lives. These 208 bears deserve retirement; they have earned it.

As of 2023, the largest number of captive bile bears remain in Hanoi, with 106 bears (50% of the country’s total) kept at 19 private households, most in the district of Phuc Tho. Dong Nai, Nghe An, and Hai Phong earn the unfortunate rankings of 2nd, 3rd, and 4th place amongst provinces that are slow to respond to national efforts to end bear bile farming, with 17, 16, and 14 bears remaining on bile farms in each province respectively.

As the countdown to eradicating bear bile farming continues, it is time to act and take specific and immediate measures to transfer all remaining bears without compensation to bear sanctuaries.

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**COMPENSATION FOR BEARS IS NOT AN OPTION**

All captive bile bears were illegally obtained by their owners, purchased as cubs in direct violation of criminal law aimed at protecting them. In 2005-2006, around 4,300 captive bears were registered and microchipped in an effort by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) to gain control of and eliminate bear bile farming in Vietnam. Registration of all captive bears did not legitimize ownership, as there were no legal papers of origin, as is required under the law. Technically, bear bile farmers could be arrested and prosecuted for illegal possession of bears without legal origin.

Some bear bile farmers, in a poorly conceived attempt to further profit from their illegal bears, have sought compensation from the government in order to transfer their bears to a sanctuary. However, compensation is not an option. The government does not buy bears that were illegally obtained any more than one could expect a policeman to buy a stolen motorbike back from a thief. It’s not going to happen.

ENV notes that MARD deserves much credit for working to address the bear bile farming crisis in Vietnam over the past 18 years. Supported by World Animal Protection, which was instrumental in chipping all captive bears in 2005-2006, the total number of captive bears on bile farms has decreased from around 4,300 to just over 200 today – a substantial drop over 18 years.

However, it is time for functional agencies to finish the job and end bear bile farming. The onus of responsibility lies with provincial agencies to either seize captive bears or convince owners to transfer them voluntarily without compensation, with the aim of expediting an end to this cruel and illegal business.
GETTING TURTLE SELLERS OFF THE STREETS IN HO CHI MINH CITY AND NEIGHBORING PROVINCES

The cycle of selling turtles on the street seems endless, with reports coming in from Ho Chi Minh City and southern provinces daily. Street vendors tend to move around a lot, which makes them difficult to catch. However, law enforcement agencies do succeed in catching street vendors selling turtles on a somewhat regular basis. The question is…why does it persist?

ENV believes that the problem can be addressed with some determined action to put a stop to the practice of selling turtles on the street. When ENV cooperated with a district government agency in Hanoi to end the sales of turtles outside of a particular pagoda, it persisted until the district initiated a determined effort to end the practice, after which the practice stopped immediately.

Street vendors are no different. Responding agencies must identify sellers and document issuance of warnings, whether verbal or written. Once a warning has been issued, that street vendor, if caught again, faces not just confiscation of their turtles, but an administrative fine as well. Once an administrative fine is issued and documented, incrementally more serious action should be taken to address violations.

If this process is followed, a majority of street vendors will stop their business on Ho Chi Minh City’s and other streets due to the risks involved. However, if law enforcement fails to establish risks associated with the sale of turtles on the street, the problem will continue indefinitely.

1. Always identify the subject when confronted
2. Always confiscate turtles to ensure there is a cost incurred by the street vendor
3. Always advise the street vendor that if they are caught again, punishment will be increasingly more severe

Once risks are established, the practice will end at least temporarily, as street vendors will expect the enforcement campaign to be limited in its durations. Monitoring is therefore required following the successful elimination of street vendor crime to ensure that street vendors are aware that enforcement is consistent and indefinite.

For assistance in dealing with street vendors, please feel free to contact ENV.
Nghe An Environment Police
For the successful arrest of a major wildlife trafficker, as well as the confiscation of 75 big-headed turtles.

Division No. 3 of Hanoi Environment Police
For the successful arrest of a persistent wildlife seller, as well as the confiscation of more than 4 kg of ivory and other endangered wildlife products.

Cao Bang Environment Police
For their effective and thorough investigation of a case that resulted in the confiscation of 132 exotic wild animals, including several endangered species, and the arrest of three subjects.

Hai Phong FPD
For their exceptional and tenacious efforts in persuading a stubborn bear owner to give up her bear in April 2023.

Da Lat Court and Procuracy
For handing down a 15-month prison sentence to an online supplier who was found guilty of selling 20 sun bear claws, as well as many other fake wildlife products. This marked the first prison sentence for an online supplier in Da Lat city.

Thai Nguyen FPD
For their efforts in persuading a tiger farm owner and implementing the necessary procedures to secure the successful and rapid voluntary transfer of six Indochinese tigers.

Quang Nam FPD
For their outstanding performance in handling publicly reported wildlife crime during 2022, not only greatly contributing to the national effort to combat illegal wildlife trade, but also strengthening the inevitable relationship between the public and law enforcement agencies in addressing wildlife crimes.

Tong Cot Border Guard
For their successful handling of two cases which resulted in the confiscation of 93 wildlife individuals and the arrest of eight relevant subjects.

Quy Hop Court and Procuracy
For proposing and imposing a 13-month prison sentence on an online supplier for selling 11 sun bear claws.

Thang Binh District Court
For imposing a 10-year prison sentence on a professional turtle trader found guilty of trafficking 74 turtles.

Muong La Police
For their swift action in dealing with a major online wildlife trader and subsequent proposal to Sơn La Provincial People’s Committee to impose an administrative fine of VND 85 million on the trader for illegally advertising prohibited wildlife products.

Nghe An Economic Police
For their outstanding investigation efforts leading to two seizures totaling 5.3 tonnes of pangolin scales and the arrest of four subjects in August and October of 2023.
IN NEED OF PROTECTION: THE IMPRESSED TORTOISE

The impressed tortoise (Manouria impressa) needs your special attention. They are not yet listed as fully protected under the law, but they are in trouble in the wild, and the law still affords the species protection on the basis that all animals must be of legal origin. As is often the case, the law lags behind the actual situation on the ground. Unfortunately, authorities in some provinces have issued permits to commercial farmers to “breed and sell” this species.

The impressed tortoise is a terrestrial tortoise that lives in cool and humid mountain environments. It does not survive well in captivity.

Here is why this species cannot be commercially farmed: Impressed tortoises do not survive well in captivity. Although some commercial farms might have falsely submitted papers claiming that they are breeding and raising this species in captivity, functional agencies should be aware that Manouria impressa is a highly stressed, environmentally delicate species with a specialized diet. Almost all captive individuals eventually die in captivity, even at rescue centers, and this species also does not breed in captivity, with most dying within months of capture. ALL impressed tortoises in the trade come from the wild, even if farm papers falsely claim that they came from a commercial farm.

Actions:
1. Always confiscate this species when found
2. Consult experts at the Cuc Phuong Turtle Conservation Center, Hanoi Wildlife Rescue Center, or IEBR for handling and disposition of confiscated animals
3. This species should be added to Decree 160 as a fully protected species prohibited from trade in Vietnam
4. No farm permits for this species should be issued under any circumstances
The “Wanted for Illegal Wildlife Trafficking in Vietnam” dossier is a regular series of alerts that is produced by ENV and shared with provincial leaders on a quarterly basis. Each dossier lists the names and details of serious and persistent violators, ranging from online sellers and restaurant owners, to bear farm owners and other criminals who consistently violate the law, despite the efforts of law enforcement agencies.

In each quarterly dossier, persistent violators are listed by their province of residence, together with general information on the subjects and their past violations. This document serves to provide a general overview of the listed subjects. It should be noted that prior to the distribution of the dossiers, ENV would by this time already have provided relevant law enforcement agencies with detailed information on the subjects, along with evidence of their violations. Moreover, the dossiers also provide information on relevant laws, in order to assist provincial leaders in appropriately addressing violations. Subjects will remain listed in each quarterly distribution of the “Wanted for Illegal Wildlife Trafficking in Vietnam” dossier until they are no longer in contravention of wildlife protection laws.

Through these dossiers, ENV aims to raise the alarm to provincial leaders on wildlife criminals in their provinces who continuously flout the law. ENV urges provincial leaders to take a stand and requests that relevant authorities take urgent, decisive action in dealing with these persistent violators, thereby setting crucial examples of strict enforcement to help deter similar criminal behavior.

ENV intends to recognize provincial law enforcement agencies that successfully arrest and prosecute “wanted” persistent violators in an annual report that will highlight how effectively different provinces have dealt with wildlife crime.
The ENV Wildlife Crime Unit receives an average of nine new cases reported to the ENV 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 its conclusion, documenting the outcome on ENV’s Wildlife Crime Incident Tracking Database. In many cases, ENV cooperates directly with law enforcement to undertake operations aimed at both apprehending traffickers and seizing wildlife.

A total of 3,595 cases were logged in 2023, comprised of 11,790 individual violations. These cases included 226 trafficking cases, 2,494 retail selling and advertising cases, and 740 cases involving illegal possession of wildlife, commonly possession of live animals.

Hotline reports from the public accounted for 2,199 new cases in 2023, of which 55.3% resulted in successful outcomes. Successful outcomes include seizure of wildlife, arrest, and prosecution, as well as administrative penalties or voluntary compliance as a result of warnings issued by authorities or ENV.

In 2023, a total of 2,517 live animals were confiscated or transferred to authorities with ENV assistance. These included 139 macaques, 6 tigers, 8 Asiatic black bears, 980 tortoises and freshwater turtles, 11 otters, 4 gibbons, 1,156 birds, as well as many other species. Additionally, 1,832 online advertisements were addressed either through law enforcement action, voluntary compliance following issuance of warnings, or deactivation and removal by websites and social media platforms.

Since 2005, when the ENV Wildlife Crime Unit was established, ENV has logged 29,041 cases comprised of 84,376 individual violations.

ENV wishes to thank our collaborating partners in law enforcement, as well as 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.

**ENV case loads and violations over the past three years**

![Graph showing case loads and violations over the past three years](image-url)
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:

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

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