



Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team: Combating Cambodia's illegal wildlife trade

TIME: 6.00pm

DATE: 30 September 2011

VENUE: LR424, SDE3, School of Design and Environment, NUS

Abstract

Wildlife Alliance partnered with the Cambodian government in 2001 to create a special wildlife crime investigation and counter-trafficking unit known as the Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team (WRRT) dedicated to fighting the illegal wildlife trade in Cambodia. WRRT travels around the country rescuing illegally trafficked wildlife. The team solicits tips from informants, conducts undercover operations, investigates trafficking networks, intercepts shipments of wildlife along borders, sets up vehicle inspections along major highways, and conducts regular inspections and raids of markets, restaurants, and houses of suspected and known wildlife traders. WRRT provides humane care to confiscated wildlife and, if deemed suitable, immediately releases them back to their natural habitat in an appropriate and safe location. Wildlife which are injured, sick, or habituated to humans are transported to the Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre.

The WRRT has rescued more than 46,000 live animals and confiscated 30 tons of wildlife products in Cambodia since 2001. Some 90% of restaurants in Phnom Penh have stopped serving wildlife dishes and the wildlife trade in Cambodia has been disrupted by up to 75%. Traders are either arrested and sent to prison or handed down hefty fines. In 2010, the WRRT was named Cambodia's national task force for ASEAN-WEN, the Wildlife Enforcement Network aimed at promoting regional cooperation to suppress cross-border wildlife trade throughout Southeast Asia.

About the Speakers

Mr Nick Marx has an M.Sc. in Conservation Biology from the University of Kent, UK. He is Head Animal Husbandry Specialist of the Care for Rescued Wildlife Programme (CRW), Projects Manager for CRW, WRRT and Wildlife Rehabilitation and Release Programme in Cambodia. He was formerly an animal warden at Windsor Safari Park, UK; and Head of Carnivores at Howletts Wild Animal Park, UK; and a ranger at Mala Mala Game Reserve, South Africa. He has written many articles in magazines and delivered lectures on animal husbandry, care for and breeding of wild cats in captivity, and on conservation.

Ms Amy Van Nice holds an M.A. in International Relations from the University of Kent at Brussels, Belgium, and B.A.(Hons) in Asian Studies from the University of Arizona. She is the International Development Manager and Environmental Education Project Manager of Wildlife Alliance in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. She has previously been an Assistant Program Manager/Grant Coordinator of the Alliance. Her previous employment was mainly in human resource development and deployment.

About Wildlife Alliance

Wildlife Alliance is an international non-profit organization headquartered in Washington, D.C., with country programs in Cambodia, Thailand, and Russia. Its mission is to provide direct protection to forests and wildlife for future generations. It has been working in Cambodia's Southern Cardamom Mountains, a biodiversity hotspot that is home to the second-largest intact forest in mainland Southeast Asia and a refuge for 14 globally endangered and threatened species, since 2000.

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