



**ANNUAL REPORT
2023**

PROTECTING THE **CARDAMOM** RAINFOREST LANDSCAPE

The Cardamom Rainforest is one of the largest remaining intact rainforests in Southeast Asia, and it is under constant threat. Spanning nearly 1.6 million hectares of rainforest, this ecosystem is protected through the Cardamom Forest Protection Program (CFPP).

Working in partnership, Wildlife Alliance and the Ministry of Environment strengthen law enforcement, reclaim forestland, combat illegal logging, and promote sustainable resource management. Ranger teams patrol the landscape to prevent wildlife poaching, trafficking, and other illegal activities that endanger the forest.

Protecting the Cardamom Rainforest: How It Works

Wildlife Alliance does not hold police or military authority. Law enforcement inside the protected areas is led by the Royal Government of Cambodia, through Ministry of Environment Judicial Police Officers (Rangers), who enforce environmental law, conduct legal searches, issue notices, and manage prosecution procedures.

The Royal Gendarmerie Khmer (Military Police) supports ranger teams during operations when additional security is required.

Protecting Cambodia's forest requires more than patrols alone. Wildlife Alliance serves as a civilian and technical partner, strengthening this system through training, critical equipment, logistical support, legal process monitoring, and work closely with local communities.

This collaborative system ensures conservation is effective, lawful, and accountable, while respecting the rights of those who depend on the forest.

From 16 ranger stations scattered across the landscape, teams patrol between 26,000 to 180,000 hectares each, confronting threats when they occur.

This year was relentless on the ground for the rangers. Across the Cardamom Rainforest Landscape, rangers conducted 7,193 patrols and covered an astonishing 298,562km by foot, motorbike, boat, and car.

Rangers made significant progress in stopping illegal deforestation, seizing 1,078 cubic meters of illegal timber, confiscating 1,532 chainsaws, and dismantling 663 illegal logging camps. They documented 167 land encroachment cases, with 79 sent to court, resulting in 154 fines. More than 534 wild animals were rescued, many of them victims of poaching or trafficking.

These efforts highlight a sustained commitment to preserving the biodiversity of the Cardamom Rainforest for future generations.

Ministry of Environment rangers on a river patrol, protecting Cambodia's **wildlife** and forests.

RAINFOREST PROTECTION

1,591,976

Hectares of pristine
rainforest under
Protection

7,193

Patrols conducted by
specialized ranger
Units

44,675

Snares removed

1,532

Chainsaws confiscated
from illegal loggers

534

Live wildlife rescued



A ranger team travels upriver through the Cardamom Rainforest to save and relocate rescued **wildlife**.



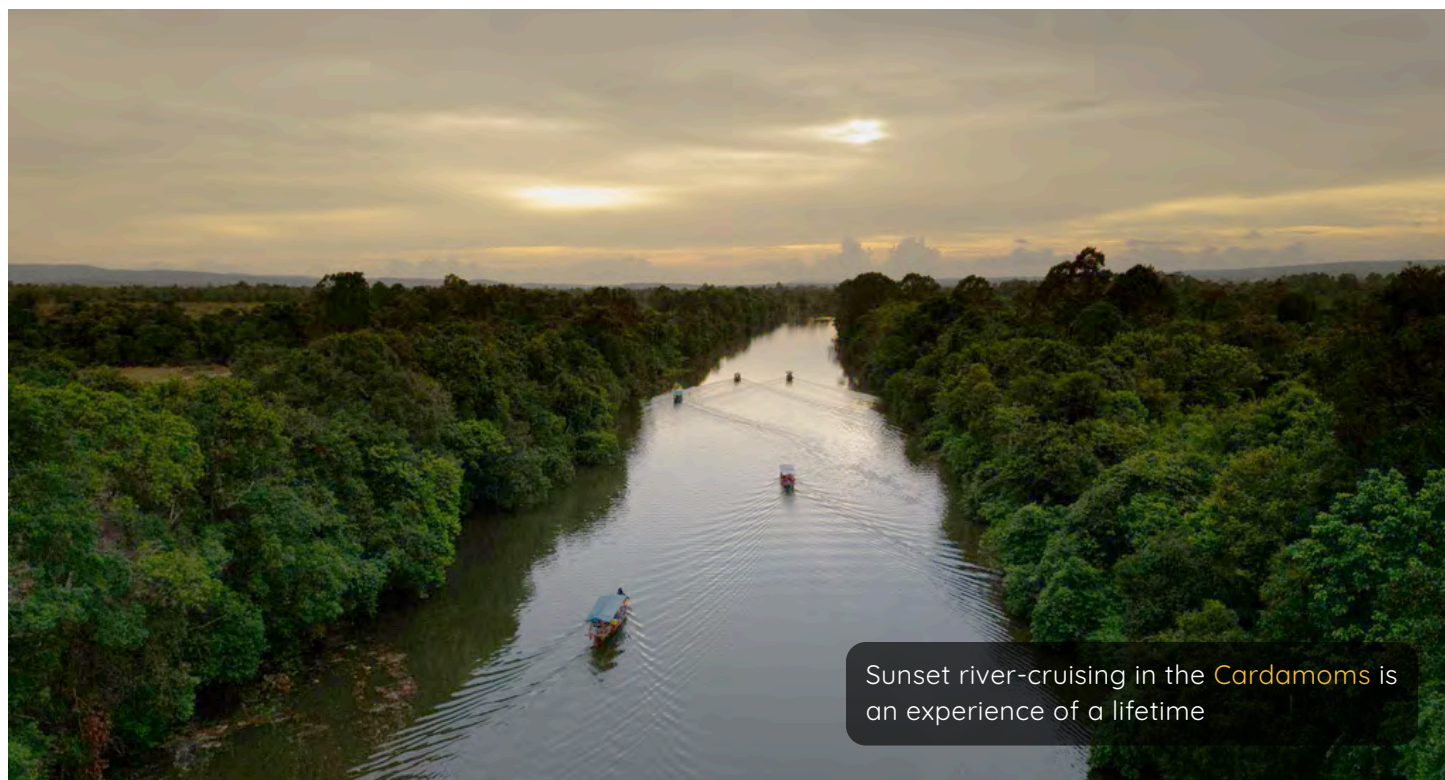
A staggering **1,532** chainsaws were confiscated from illegal logging operations in 2023, reflecting the scale of ongoing forest protection efforts.

TRANSFORMING LIVELIHOODS THROUGH ECOTOURISM

Protecting the Cardamoms also means supporting the people who live there. Long-term conservation cannot succeed without strong resilient communities who can thrive without harming their environment. That is why Wildlife Alliance invests in sustainable livelihoods that reduce pressure on forests while creating opportunities.

Community-Based Eco-Tourism (CBET) projects in Chi Phat and Stung Areng provide local communities with income while helping to protect surrounding forests and protected areas.

The Stung Areng ecotourism project offers sustainable livelihoods through homestays and guided nature tours and in 2023 was recognized with the Eagle Homestay Award. The project has improved local infrastructure, empowered women through savings groups, while also enhancing community services and organizing clean-ups. Training in photography and trail maintenance has also further strengthened conservation efforts and the community's online presence.



Chi Phat CBET focuses on environmental conservation, cultural pride, and local job creation, helping to reduce reliance on hunting and illegal logging. By offering viable alternatives to hunting and illegal logging, the project helps ensure that conservation delivers direct benefits to people who live alongside the forest.

Despite ongoing challenges such as waste management and littering, future plans aim to enhance visitor services, developing unique tour packages, and expand visitor attractions that support long-term sustainability





LOCAL LIVELIHOOD IMPACTS

5,027

Tourist visitors to
ecotourism Projects

1,213

Families benefitting
from Ecotourism
Projects

217,542

Total Revenue
generated

TRANSFORMING LIVELIHOODS THROUGH **AGRICULTURE**

Direct protection of forests and wildlife has always been our mission – and community engagement is essential to making that protection last.

Sovanna Baitong: Sustainable Farming for the Future

In 2004, the Community Agriculture Development Project was launched in Sovanna Baitong village with a clear goal to support a transition away from destructive slash-and-burn farming and wildlife poaching toward modern, sustainable agriculture.

Over more than a decade, the project grew into a community-led success. By early 2017, the project was fully handed over to the local association, while Wildlife Alliance continues to provide financial support for the maintenance of 20 hectares of fruit trees.

Today, the community orchard employs 14 local workers who are guided by a team leader. To promote healthy fruit tree growth, activities include irrigation, fertilization, pest control, grass clearing, and pruning. Sprinklers are used in the dry season, and various fertilizers are applied as needed. Pest and disease control is scheduled or done as necessary.

Grass is regularly cleared to reduce competition and foster soil health, while pruning improves air circulation and minimizes fungal diseases in the rainy season.

In 2023, the community orchard produced a total of 21,212 durians and 550 kg of rambutans, which were all sold to contracted wholesalers.

But the benefits extend well beyond agriculture. A portion of the orchard's 2023 income was reinvested through the construction of a new concrete bridge in Sovanna Baitong village, replacing a damaged wooden bridge. This upgrade provided local employment and resulted in a 3.4 meter by 0.6-meter bridge that improves access and safety for residents.



A farmer harvesting durian at the Community Orchard in **Sovanna Baitong**.



Community **farmers** harvesting fresh produce from their Sovanna Baitong farm for the local market.

SOUTHERN CARDAMOM REDD+ **COMMUNITY** EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Southern Cardamom REDD+ Community Education Scholarship Program provides university scholarships and English language training for underprivileged students from rural communities within the project area, helping them to pursue higher education and long-term career opportunities.

These scholarships cover expenses including tuition, and provide essential support that aims to break the cycle of poverty while promoting sustainability. Currently, 17 students are studying in various fields such as international business management, tourism and hospitality, information technology, environmental science, accounting and taxation, community development and medicine.

In addition to financial assistance, students receive ongoing academic support and personal development through regular meetings and mentoring. By investing in education, the program promotes social, economic, and environmental development, preparing students for meaningful careers and fostering community growth throughout the Cardamoms and Cambodia.



SOUTHERN CARDAMOM REDD+ PROJECT **INFRASTRUCTURE** DEVELOPMENT

Providing Access to Clean Water

The Southern Cardamom REDD+ Project (SCRP) protects 497,835 hectares of rainforest in Cambodia, preventing more than three million tons of carbon emissions annually. Accredited under the Verified Carbon Standards (VCS) and Climate, Community & Biodiversity (CCB) Standards, the project works with 29 communities in Koh Kong, Pursat, and Kampong Speu provinces.

Beyond forest protection, SCRP supports alternative livelihoods through ecotourism, agriculture, livestock, infrastructure, and scholarships, all helping to strengthen community resilience.

In 2023, the Project installed 51 solar-powered water wells across 17 villages, providing reliable access to clean water for 492 families. For many households, this marked the first time safe water was available close to home, dramatically improving daily life.



WATER WELL BENEFICIARIES

29

Villages

51

Numbers of small-scale
Solar Water Wells

492

Total number of families
benefitted

2,268

Total number of people
benefitting
through these water
wells

1,292

Total number of
Females benefitting
through these water
wells

Clean water is now reaching **local** communities, improving daily life.

Primary Schools, Public Restrooms, and Bridge Construction

To improve access to education, the project constructed two new primary schools for local communities: one in Pur Beoung village, Dang Peng commune, Sre Ambel district, and the other in Priek Svay village, Thmor Dounpov commune, both in Koh Kong province. Each school measures 32 meters long and 9 meters wide and includes four classrooms.



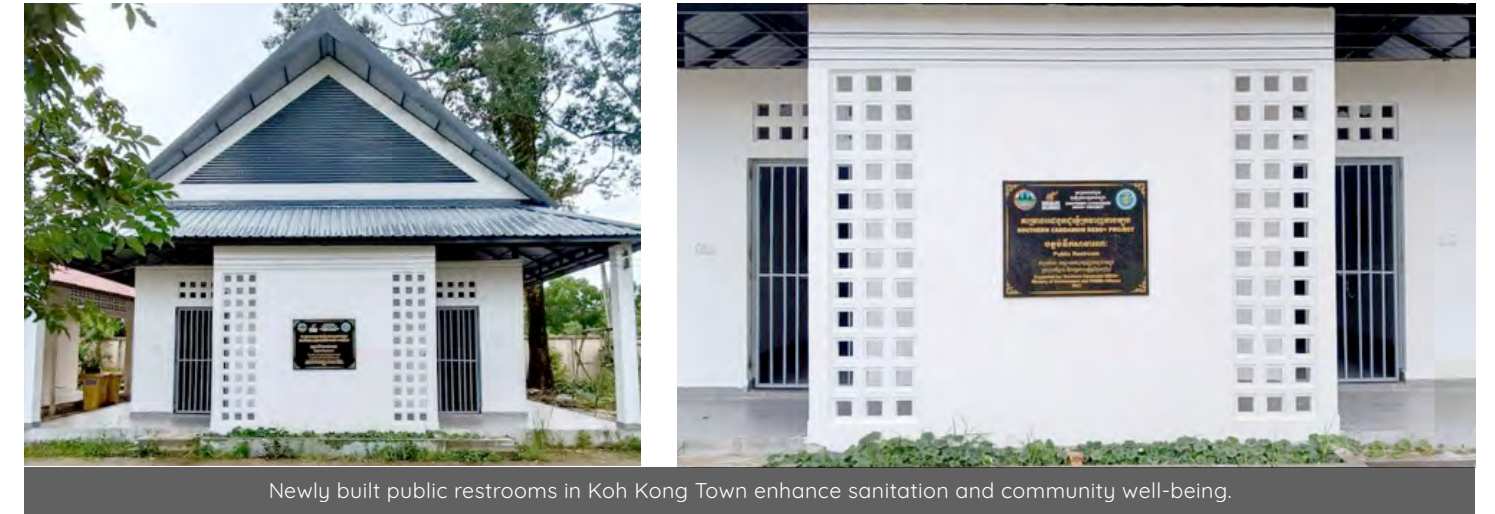
Four-classroom primary schools in Pur Beoung and Priek Svay villages now provide rural children in Koh Kong with access to learning.

SCRIP has also supported secondary and high school infrastructure in Koh Kong and surrounding villages. Koh Kong High School includes 16 classrooms while Tatai Khrom Secondary School in Anlong Vak village and Trapeang Rung High School in Trapeang Rung village each have ten classrooms.



The new cement bridge over the Chhay Reab River connects 567 families to markets, schools, and medical services.

In addition to education facilities, a 72-meter-long cement bridge has been built over the Chhay Reab River. This bridge benefits 567 families in Dang Peng commune. Previously isolated for up to six months each year during the monsoon season, the new bridge connects these families to markets, schools, and medical facilities.



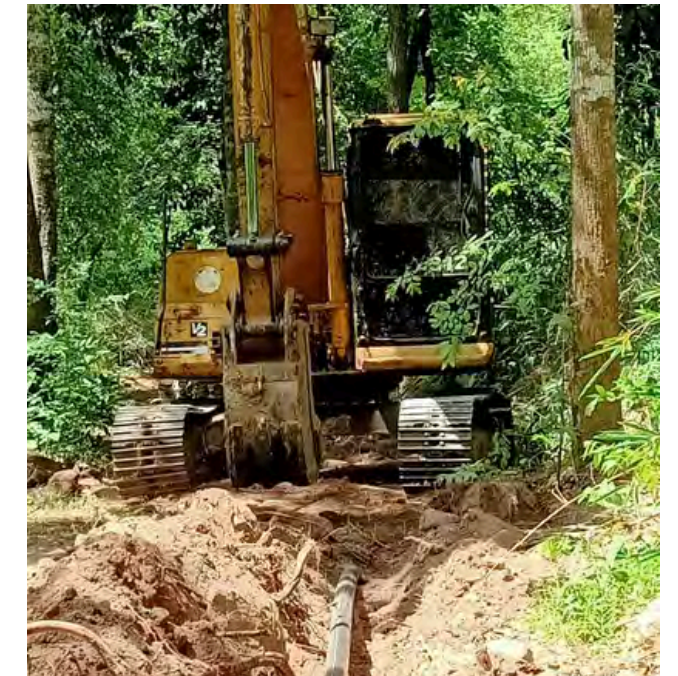
Newly built public restrooms in Koh Kong Town enhance sanitation and community well-being.

Water piping system in Chambak village and Trapeang Rung Village

Another key infrastructure development in 2023 was the installation of a water piping system in Chambak village of Phnom Srouch district in Kampong Speu province. Following a request from the Chambak Commune Council and local residents, the project supports 223 families, representing a total of 849 individuals.

This system transports water from the top of the mountain located southwest of the village, covering a total distance of 4,600 meters to improve reliable access to clean water.

In Trapeang Rung village, Koh Kong province, a separate project installed a 1,200-meter piping system to distribute water from modern wells to households along the Trapeang Rung River. This project was also requested by the Commune Council and villagers through the Southern Cardamom REDD+ project in 2023.



Pipelines have been laid through a dense forest, connecting the mountain source to the village and ensuring reliable clean water access for residents.



TIGER REINTRODUCTION PROGRAM

In 2023, **Wildlife** Alliance and Cambodia's Ministry of Environment took steps toward returning tigers to the landscapes of Cambodia.

The journey began in February, when a Cambodian delegation led by His Excellency Chea Sam Ang visited New Delhi, India to explore the Tiger Reintroduction Program. They met with Shri Bhupender Yadav, Union Cabinet Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change and engaged with the National Tiger Conservation Authority, Global Tiger Forum, and Wildlife Institute of India. Together they presented a draft Tiger Action Plan, discussed technical strategies for reintroduction and visited Sariska Tiger Reserve to learn firsthand from its 2008 tiger reintroduction experience.



The Cambodian delegation met with NTCA to advance the seven action steps for bringing tigers from India to Cambodia's Cardamom Landscape.

From February to June, Wildlife Alliance carried out our third camera trap survey to assess the tiger prey density in the Cardamom Landscape. The cameras revealed thriving populations of red muntjac and other prey species, crucial for sustaining and supporting future tigers.



Camera traps captured red muntjac and other key prey species, reflecting the thriving biodiversity needed to support tiger reintroduction.

Building on this momentum, Wildlife Alliance transferred four sambar deer to the Tiger Reintroduction Station in July, joined by ten wild boars in November, strengthening the prey base for future tigers.



Abundant populations of wild pig and sambar deer captured on camera traps demonstrate the healthy prey base needed for tiger reintroduction.

In October, Wildlife Alliance and the Ministry of Environment hosted Tiger Reintroduction training for officials from Panna Tiger Reserve, with the support of the National Tiger Conservation Authority and the Indian Embassy in Cambodia. This knowledge exchange strengthened technical capacity and reinforced cross-border collaboration.



In November, Wildlife Alliance and the Ministry of Environment finalized the Action Plan for the Tiger Reintroduction Program in Cambodia. This plan will remain a working document for ongoing inputs.

The year concluded in December, when the Tiger Technical Team assessed the Cardamom Landscape, evaluating enclosures and potential release sites. Preparation now focuses on camera trap surveys, strengthening the prey base, engaging local communities, and identifying source populations in India, along with post-release monitoring efforts.

DISRUPTING THE ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

Since 2001, Wildlife Alliance has partnered with the Cambodian government to confront wildlife crime head-on. Together, we created a special wildlife crime investigation and counter-trafficking unit known as the Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team (WRRT).

The WRRT brings together Wildlife Alliance staff, Forestry and Fisheries Administration officials, and Military Police. Through an informant network and the Wildlife Crime Hotline, the public can report illegal wildlife possession, turning tips into real enforcement action.

In 2023, the WRRT delivered decisive results. The team carried out more than 613 operations, rescuing over 1,345 live animals and seizing approximately 601 kg of illegal wildlife meat. Major busts targeted bushmeat traders and intercepted large shipments of turtles prized as delicacy items. Many of the animals rescued were threatened species, including Sunda pangolins, different species of turtles, birds, long-tailed macaques, civets, slow loris, yellow-cheeked gibbons, and douc langurs.

Every confiscated animal received immediate humane care and, if deemed suitable, was directly released back into an appropriate habitat, with the assistance of administration officials. Those that were injured, sick, or habituated to humans were brought to Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre for care, rehabilitation and later release where feasible.

Public engagement remains a powerful vehicle in stopping wildlife crime. In 2023, WRRT received 2,944 calls through our 24-hour Wildlife Crime Hotline, including reports from informants, government officials, and concerned citizens regarding wild animal situations. The team also intensified efforts to combat illegal wildlife sales online, processing 233 reports through our Wildlife Crime Hotline Facebook page, identifying and reporting 585 instances of illegal wildlife sales. As a direct result, Facebook responded by removing 138 illegal posts.



Confiscated **wild meat** from illegal hunting being incinerated to prevent trafficking and consumption.



A **civet** caught in a deadly snare was found in time and rescued by rangers.

WILDLIFE RAPID RESCUE TEAM (WRRT)

1,345

Live animals rescued

710

Animals released back
into the wild

601 kg

Wild meat confiscated

613

Operations conducted,
including donations

70

Traders apprehended



Wildlife officers examine seized animal parts linked to illegal trade, highlighting the urgency of stronger protection measures.

CARING FOR VICTIMS OF THE WILDLIFE TRADE

Wildlife Alliance's wildlife programs are dedicated to rehabilitating animals rescued from the illegal wildlife trade and wherever possible, preparing them for release back into the wild.

At the heart of this work is Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Centre (PTWRC), a protected forest area owned and operated by the Cambodian Forestry Administration (FA). Wildlife Alliance provides animal care expertise to ensure rescued animals receive lifelong care when needed, and the opportunity to return to the wild when recovery allows.

In 2023, PTWRC received 1,302 animals through confiscation and donation. One of the year's most challenging incidents occurred when Military Police intercepted a minivan carrying 352 non-native animals, many of whom sadly died but survivors were transferred to PTWRC. Overall, 435 animals died due to prior mistreatment or severe stress before arrival. At the same time, 103 animals were born, showcasing effective care and captive breeding efforts, while 753 animals, including pythons and macaques, were successfully released back into the wild.



Among the year's notable rescues were two female clouded leopard cubs, listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List. The cubs were moved to a natural enclosure designed to prevent escapes while encouraging natural behaviors. Efforts are underway to find a mate to support future conservation breeding.

Meanwhile Chhouk, the well-known male elephant, is recovering using his prosthetic leg. His stump is treated daily to prevent sores and in December, a custom-built hydrotherapy pool was completed to support his long-term mobility and health. All the other resident elephants are also doing well following continuous improvements in care.

Fewer orphaned infants arrived at the nursery this year, but keepers continue to provide round-the-clock care when needed. Infrastructure upgrades were a major focus in 2023, including new enclosures and a water system to address the pollution issues that had contributed to intestinal disorders in primates.

Repairs to the waterbird aviary are underway and a new boundary fence has been constructed to protect the Rescue Centre, which is fully funded by Wildlife Alliance, along with three patrol stations to enhance security.



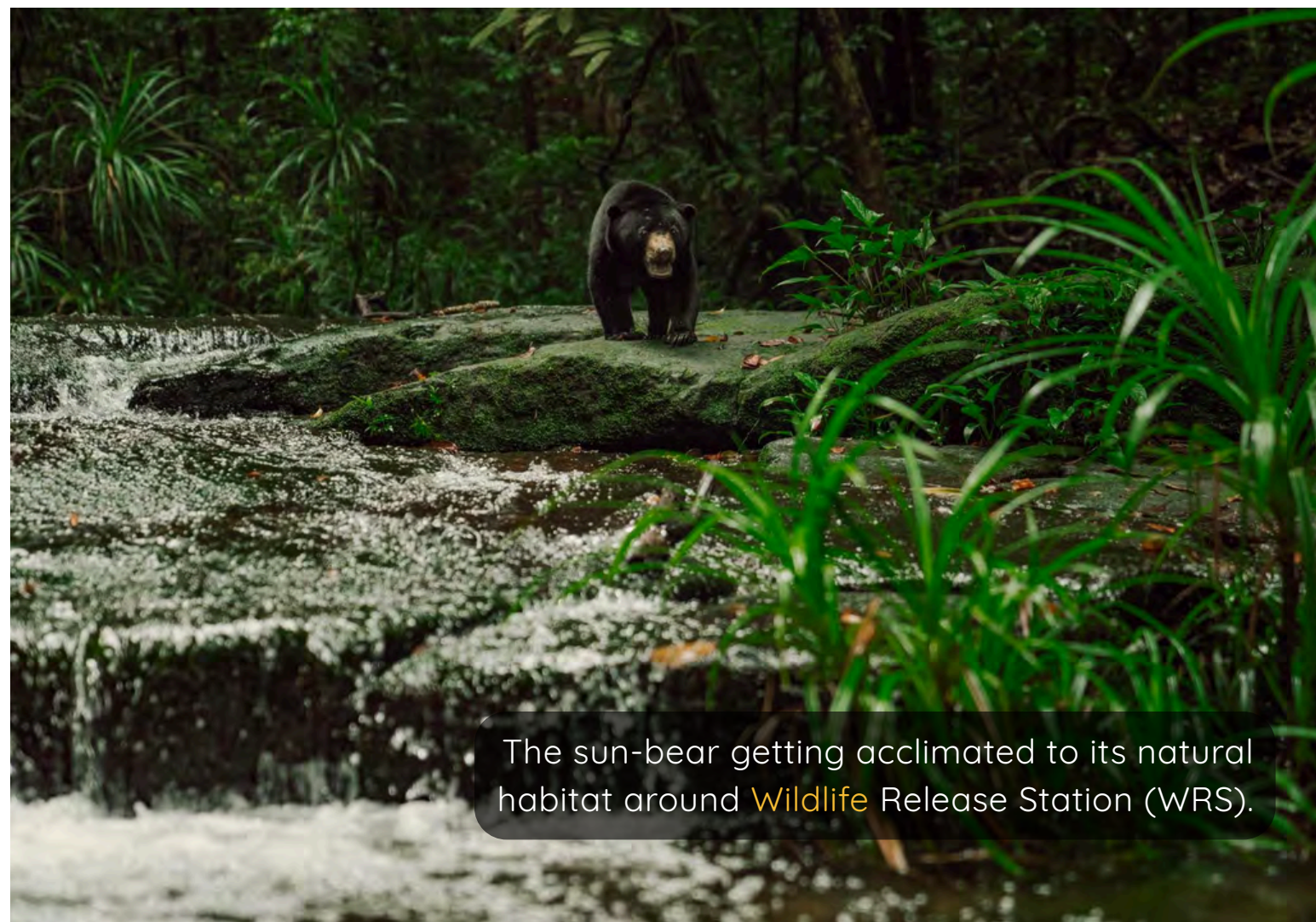
Improved management by Mr. Prierp Piseth and Wildlife Alliance keepers strengthened security in Phnom Tamao forest. In 2023, rangers removed 62 snares and traps and arrested two hunters, including one responsible for shooting a sambar. Regular night patrols continue to deter safari-style hunters. However, the most persistent threat to wildlife remains feral dogs, with 15 sambar and other wildlife killed by dog attacks during the year.

Rehabilitation and Reintroduction in Action

Wildlife Alliance's Wildlife Release Station (WRS) in Koh Kong supports carefully managed 'soft releases' of animals to help them adapt gradually to life in the wild. In 2023, 123 guests came to WRS, helping build awareness of wildlife recovery efforts. 43 animals arrived, including pangolins and macaques, with three pangolins born (of whom two survived). 17 animals died, mostly due to weakness or dehydration, while 30 animals were successfully released.

Two sun bears, Micah and Kolab, continue to thrive in their 1-hectare enclosure, despite minor health issues. Pangolins Gerti and Chanti both produced healthy offspring, and post-release tracking studies on released pangolins show promising results for survival and adaptation.

In September, eight rescued pangolins were assessed for release. Two males were hard-released but quickly lost their signals. Seventeen young long-tailed macaques were integrated into existing troops.



The sun-bear getting acclimated to its natural habitat around Wildlife Release Station (WRS).

Sophea and Kiri, two released wreathed hornbills, now live alongside resident great hornbill Jo-er while the four rescued green peafowl released in March are already nesting. Meta, a hand-raised sambar fawn, was released in December 2023, while another fawn, Sambath, remains in care. Seven sambar deer survived a chase by a dhole pack, demonstrating their resilience in the forest.

In 2023, WRS expanded its release capacity with the construction of a large enclosure for sambar and muntjac deer and a double pangolin enclosure. Visitor chalet roofs were also replaced, causing only a temporary disturbance to resident wildlife.



Sambar deer released at Wildlife Release Station (WRS)



A Leopard cat cared for and released at Wildlife Release Station (WRS)

The Community Anti-Poaching Units (CAPU) split into two teams that patrolled the forest surrounding WRS, removing 1,011 snares for larger animals, civets, and three birds and macaques nets. These efforts helped maintain healthy populations of wild species of pigs, porcupines, and leopard cats, and other species. Rangers now operate from a new timber station built in 2023, powered by solar panels.

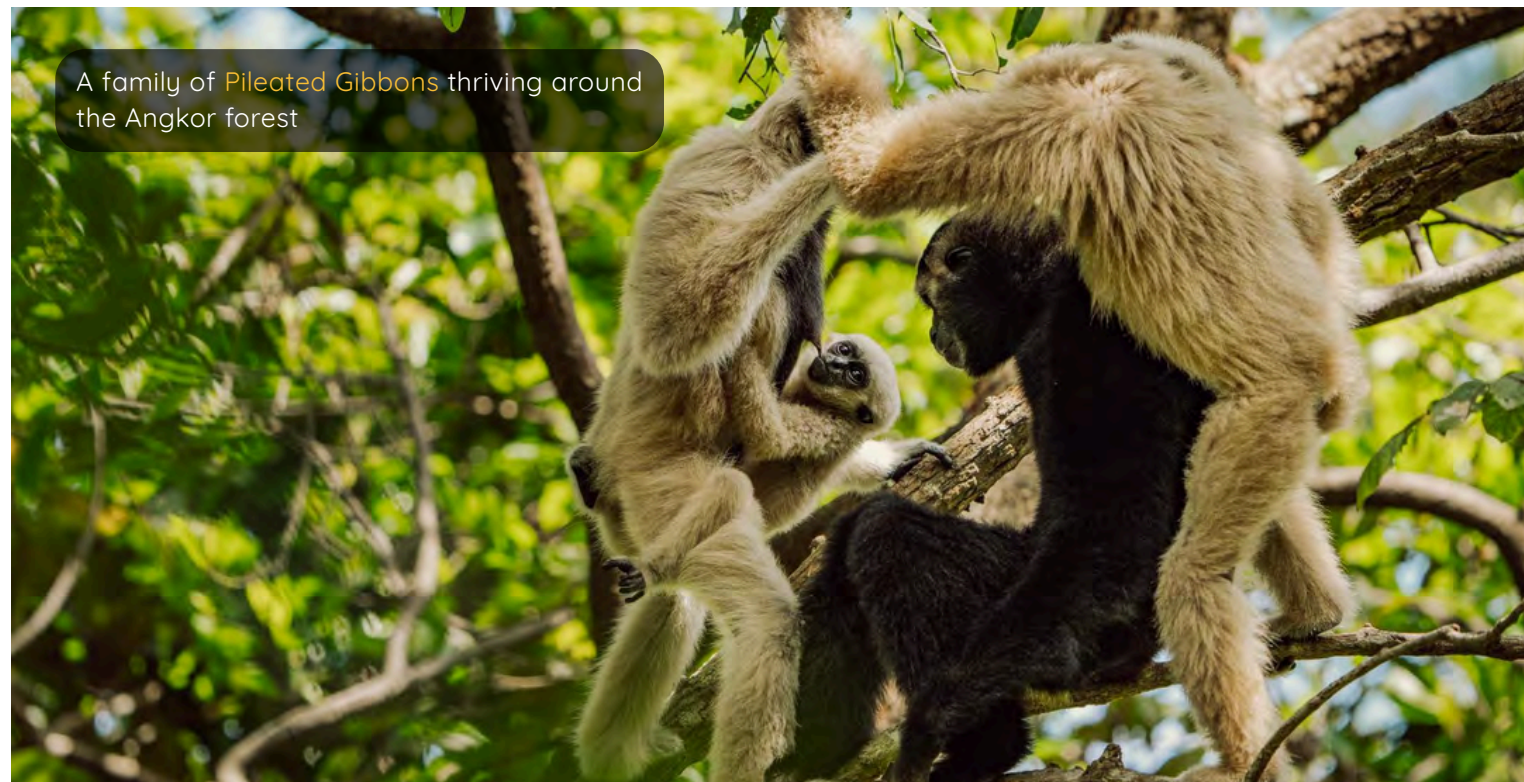
Sunda pangolins are critically endangered. Like their fellow *pangolin* species elsewhere in Asia and Africa, they are being poached to extinction for their meat and their scales, which are used in traditional Chinese medicine. A proud moment at WRS to witness this critically endangered animal being born.



REWILDING ANGKOR

For over 15 years, the Angkor Wildlife Release project has been quietly restoring wildlife to the forests of the Angkor Archaeological Park. To date, four pairs of pileated gibbons have been released, producing nine offspring. Other species returned to the landscape include muntjac, otters, leopard cats, civets, langurs, tortoises, and a wide range of bird species.

From January 1, 2023, to January 31, 2024, the project recorded 12 wildlife births, including ten otter pups and two gibbon babies. Sadly, two of the other released otters died due to snares, perhaps set by a disgruntled fisherman. We released seven animals this year, including a wreathed hornbill, a pair of hand-raised wreathed hornbills, a rescued water monitor lizard, a bottle-raised leopard cat, and two common palm civets.



A family of Pileated Gibbons thriving around the Angkor forest

A major milestone came at Tanei Temple when Baray and Saranik, the first gibbon pair released, welcomed their fourth child, K'dam-touk, on September 11, 2023, and became grandparents in January 2024 with the birth of K'mum.

The smooth-coated otter family are also doing well, with five new pups observed in January 2024. The otters are nomadic, frequently seen in Angkor. Other released wildlife, including silvered langurs and hornbills, are also regularly spotted - signaling a healthier, more balanced ecosystem.

CHANGING HEARTS AND MINDS THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Kouprey Express (KE), Wildlife Alliance's mobile environmental education unit, works in partnership with the Ministry of Education to engage Cambodian youth on environmental stewardship and wildlife protection.

In 2023, KE reached 56,742 students across 61 schools and three NGOs. The program also organized four field trips for 783 participants, and engaged 762 young people at eight public events, including book fairs.

Outreach activities engaged 621 community members, while social media reached 348,028 people. To reinforce conservation messages long after each visit, KE distributed 73,669 educational notebooks, 46,109 wildlife crime hotline stickers, and 422 wildlife t-shirts and backpacks.



Students participating in Kouprey Express activities, learning about wildlife and the environment through creative and engaging lessons.



ORGANIZATION AND INDIVIDUAL DONORS

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

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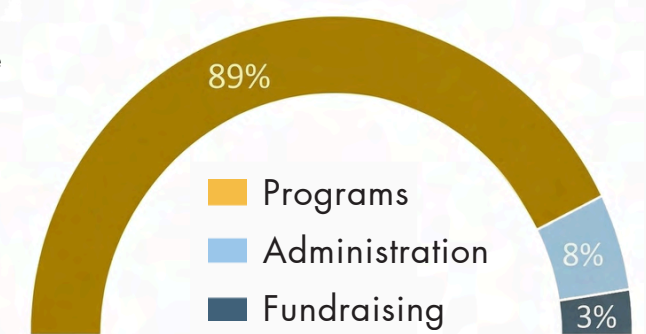
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EXPENSE BREAKDOWN



A touching moment between **Suwanna Gauntlett** and Lucky, Phnom Tamao's ambassador elephant, reflecting the compassion and dedication at the heart of wildlife conservation.





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