



Twenty-five Critically Endangered Royal Turtles Return to the Wild

The Royal Government of Cambodia's Fisheries Administration (FIA), WCS (Wildlife Conservation Society), Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS), and the Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA) announced today the release of 25 Royal Turtles into their natural habitat in the Sre Ambel river system—the only place in Cambodia where this species is found.

Listed on IUCN Red List as Critically Endangered, the Southern River Terrapin, locally known as the Royal Turtle, (*Batagur affinis*) is one of the world's 25 most endangered tortoises and freshwater turtles. The species lives only in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, and its global wild population numbers less than 500 mature individuals. It was designated Cambodia's National Reptile by Royal Decree in 2005.

After undergoing health examinations by veterinarians from the WCS Bronx Zoo Zoological Health Program, all 25 sub-adult turtles were fitted with acoustic transmitters that will allow researchers to monitor their survival and seasonal movements, and to better understand their habitat use within the wider river system." [Read full story](#)

Key Coverage:

1. [PNN TV](#) 2. [Bayern TV](#) 3. [Phnom Penh Post](#) 4. [Sabay news](#) 5. [Khmer Times](#)

Inauguration of Koh Kong Reptile Conservation Center

Fisheries Administration (FiA) and WCS inaugurated the Koh Kong Reptile Conservation Center (KKRCC) on 14 November 2017. The opening ceremony was chaired by H.E. Srun Limsong, Deputy General Director of FiA, H.E. Sok Sothy, Koh Kong Provincial Deputy Governor, Mr. Joe Walston, WCS's Vice President for Field Conservation Program, and Mrs. Pat Koval, TSA's Chairman of the Board, along with other donors, NGOs partners, international turtle experts, local authorities, community members, teachers and students.



Royal Turtles were released into the pond inside the Koh Kong Reptile Conservation Center. © Eng Mengey / WCS

The KKRCC is a joint effort between FiA and WCS to conserve the Critically Endangered Royal Turtle, Cambodia's National Reptile, as well as Critically Endangered Siamese Crocodile. It is situated in Toul Koki Commune, Mondul Seima District, Koh Kong Province. This world-class facility will be used for raising and breeding the Critically Endangered Royal Turtle, Siamese Crocodile and other threatened reptile species.

Over 120 Nests of Globally Vulnerable Lesser Adjutant Located in Northern Plains

During the 2017 breeding season so far conservationists from Ministry of Environment (MoE), WCS (Wildlife Conservation Society), and local communities have discovered 121 Lesser Adjutant stork nests in Kulen Promtep and Chhep Wildlife Sanctuaries in the Northern Plains of Cambodia. WCS has hired 10 local community teams, under the Bird Nest Protection Program, to locate, monitor and protect nests until fledging. These conditional payments ensure that these globally threatened nests are protected from poachers, egg collection and disturbance.



Lesser Adjutants on the nest in Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary. © Rours Vann / WCS

"Thanks to support from Sam Veasna Centre (SVC), Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, and the EU, from the beginning of October until now, our research teams have found 121 Lesser Adjutant nests in the Northern Plains. Of those, 65 are located in Chhep Wildlife Sanctuary, and 56 are in Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary," said Rours Vann, Wildlife Research Team Leader for WCS and MoE in Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary. "We continue searching for new nests and are now working closely with local community teams and rangers to protect the nests and breeding areas."

Key coverage:

1. [Bayern TV](#) 2. [Phnom Penh Post](#) 3. [Thmey Thmey](#) 4. [Vayo FM](#) 5. [Khmer Times](#)

New Project Strengthens Capacity Building for Ecosystem-based Adaptation

WCS in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment (MoE) and the Forestry Administration (FA) launched a new project “Capacity Building for the Ecosystem-based Adaptation in O Por Catchment Subproject of the Biodiversity Conservation Corridors (BCC)” in Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary, Mondulkiri Province. The project will establish a community NTFP enterprise under a community NRM scheme supporting Pu Kong, O Chrar and Pu Char villages.

Funded by Asian Development Bank (ADB), this two-year project will focus on the development of key skills and experience of both local communities and local, provincial, and national government to sustainably manage natural resources for increased resilience to climate change.



Participants from MoE, FA, WCS, authorities and communities joined the project launch. © Sun Ratha / WCS

Local Communities Obtain Approval for Community Protected Areas Establishment

Local communities in three villages have received approvals from the provincial authority and Ministry of Environment (MoE) to establish Community Protected Areas (CPAs) inside the Chhep Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS), aiming at improving local forest resources management and use.



Local villagers collected non-timber forest products inside Chhep Wildlife Sanctuary. © Eleanor Briggs / WCS

These new CPAs - Prey Pei Lveng, Trapeang Pong, and Baray Khamkert - are situated in Kampong Sralov Muy Commune, Chhep District of Preah Vihear Province. Consisting of over 260 families and covering nearly 3,000 hectares, these CPAs will give communities the right to directly manage and use forest resources in sustainable way.

“This is welcome news for local communities and critical step toward official establishment of the CPAs inside the CWS. WCS, in collaboration with Preah Vihear Provincial Department of Environment, will work closely with local communities in these three villages to organize community committees, CPA management plans and boundary demarcation to fulfill CPA regulation and guidance requirements,” said Keo Sovanna, WCS’s Community Outreach Team Leader in CWS.

Young Gibbon Rescued in Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary

Two villagers from Andoung Kralong handed the conservationists of WCS and Ministry of Environment in Keo Seima Wildlife Sanctuary (KSWS) a young Yellow-cheeked Crested Gibbon on 24 November 2017.



This young gibbon is now safe and staying at Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescued Center. © Simon Mahood / WCS

Yellow-cheeked Crested Gibbon (*Nomascus gabriellae*) is listed on the IUCN Red List as Endangered. Its global population has been rapidly declining over the past decades, with hunting and habitat loss being the big threats.

KSWS is a very important area for the species, where more than 2,500 Yellow-cheeked Crested Gibbons fill the forest with their haunting territorial song. This female gibbon is about six-week years old and was sent to Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescued Center for rehabilitation and care.



WCS conservationists are putting acoustic transmitter on Royal Turtle's carapace before releasing it to the wild. © Eng Mengey / WCS



H.E. Tea Vichet (second from left) and H.E. Srun Limsong (second from right), Deputy General Director of Fisheries Administration, joined the Royal Turtles release along the Sre Ambel river system, Koh Kong Province. © Eng Mengey / WCS



Mrs. Pat Koval, TSA's Chairman of the Board, is cutting red ribbon, along with H.E. Sok Sothy (second from left), Koh Kong Provincial Deputy Governor, and H.E. Srun Limsong (third), Deputy General Director of Fisheries Administration to inaugurate the Koh Kong Reptile Conservation Center. © Eng Mengey / WCS

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