

Care for Rescued Wildlife

Principal Achievements December 2008 – December 2009

After resolving concerns with the Cambodian Forestry Administration on wildlife care, enclosures, and financial management, Wildlife Alliance resumed work at a comprehensive level at Phnom Tamao Wildlife Rescue Center (PTWRC) at the beginning of December 2008. We provided immediate assistance with animal food, staff supplements and cage maintenance, and increased our staffing levels and program commitments throughout the year as more funds were accessed.

We are pleased by the current strong relationship with the Forestry Administration (FA) and the Cambodian government representatives, who hold ultimate authority over wildlife in the country. The director of PTWRC, Mr. Nhek Ratanapich, requested that Wildlife Alliance submit to him the management structure of a Western zoo to help with restructuring Phnom Tamao's systems of oversight and management.

In cooperation with the FA, we implemented a wide variety of management innovations including the creation of a senior Head Keeper position; the funding and startup of a forest demarcation and protection program; a zoo maintenance team; and the hiring of a full-time resident Cambodian veterinarian. Wildlife Alliance assisted all of these initiatives and provided the funding or technical support needed to achieve them.

The positive changes during 2009 indicate that the Forestry Administration is taking its wildlife and rescue center very seriously, heralding good things for the future. While operating on a shoestring budget compared to a Western zoo, Phnom Tamao is regarded as an excellent center, a leading facility in Southeast Asia that is perhaps unparalleled in any developing country. All rescued animals are well-fed and housed, with quality veterinary care and appropriate diet and enclosures. No wild animals are turned away, and we have achieved success in rehabilitation and release of formerly captive wildlife.

In terms of physical infrastructure, Phnom Tamao's main enclosures and rehabilitation site are strong. While the quarantine will benefit from an overhaul, the overall site is well-maintained, suitable for all the animals, and clean and free of rubbish. More than 200,000 Cambodian visitors to the facility show their appreciation for the facility and affection for the rescued animals, and the environmental education outreach to the Cambodian community will continue to grow in 2010.



PTWRC is currently in great shape and this progress looks set to continue. Below are bullet points of some of the achievements over the past 13 months. Thank you very much for your generous support.

RESCUES AND BIRTHS

- The Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team (WRRT) rescued a female gaur calf from a village in Ratanakiri province.** She was taken to PTWRC and hand raised by keepers. She was initially fed every 2 – 3 hours, night and day. She seemed to be slow growing and was checked by a large abscess that developed on her shoulder, which proved very difficult to cure. She is now in good health and is gaining weight rapidly. When bigger she will probably partner the male gaur that was sent from France and arrived at PTWRC in March 2009.
- WRRT rescued a snared serow female was in Pursat province and transported her to PTWRC in June.** She was taken to the clinic. She had a snare wound to a foreleg and as with all snare wounds this has taken a long time healing. However the leg is now nearly better and she has been transferred from the clinic to a large forested enclosure with a shelter and pool that was specifically constructed for her. When her leg is completely better a male born to our breeding pair of serow at PTWRC will be moved into her enclosure.
- In April, our Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team rescued two black bear cubs in Battambang.** Both had serious snare injuries and had lost limbs before they were rescued. They were inhumanely kept in a tiny trailer awaiting sale to dealers. They have now recovered and live in comfort and safety at Phnom Tamao.
- Births at PTWRC** in 2009 include Southern serow, sambar, muntjac, wild boar, Eld's deer, dhole, jackal, common palm civets, fishing cats, leopard cats, binturongs, pig-tailed and long-tailed macaques, Lyle's fruit bats, painted storks, lesser adjutant storks, a Siamese fireback pheasant, green pigeons, Siamese crocodiles, and lions (the only non-indigenous animals at PTWRC). Many of these animals are recognized as globally threatened,



Figure 1: Bottle feeding gaur calf

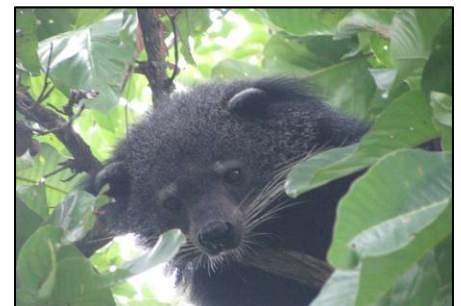


Figure 2: Young binturong born at Phnom Tamao, now in rehabilitation program

endangered, or even critically endangered.

VETERINARY CARE AND REHABILITATION

- Veterinarian Oung Chenda started work at PTWRC for Wildlife Alliance in March 2009.** He finishes his veterinary training in January 2010 at the Prek Leap School of Agriculture in Phnom Penh. He has been a revelation at PTWRC. Before he started work with Wildlife Alliance he spent two months with the French veterinary practice, Agrovét, in Phnom Penh, to improve his skills. He has moved to the village of Samrounjoun Market near PTWRC and is always on hand in case of emergencies. He works extremely hard and gets involved in other aspects of work at Phnom Tamao as well as care for sick animals – overseeing the raising of baby animals, moving animals from Quarantine to the Main Center, ensuring keepers are caring for their animals properly, and capturing escaped animals. He helped hand raise the baby Endangered white shouldered ibis and treated the sick gaur calf daily after she developed a very large abscess on her shoulder. His constant presence at the rescue center ensures better care for sick animals there.
- The leg of rescued elephant Chhouk, now completely healed, required prosthesis to prevent skeletal malformation and also to ease the elephant's discomfort.** We contacted the Cambodian School of Prosthetics and Orthotics (CSPO) which agreed to help. The first prosthesis was fitted in March 2009 and was an immediate success. Chhouk had no problems with it, walking into the forest as soon as it was fitted, as if he had been wearing it all his life. He is now on his second prosthesis, which has been made with a higher "sole". He appears to be more comfortable and moves more easily. He is extremely popular with visitors and now has a pool just for himself, as he cannot walk for extensive distances in the forest. Chhouk's rescue and rehabilitation have brought substantial media and public attention to the plight of Cambodia's wildlife, and Asian elephants specifically.
- Our Care for Rescued Wildlife program rehabilitated and released primates, small cats, wild birds, and other species rescued from**



Figure 3: Chhouk and Lucky in pool. Prosthetic foot is visible on left leg.



poachers and traders. Animals released into the Phnom Tamao Protected Forest at PTWRC over the year include parakeets, doves, Brahminy kites, lesser adjutant storks, pythons, Bengal monitor and water monitor lizards, wild boar, sambar and muntjac deer, common palm civets, Asiatic jackal, long-tailed macaques and leopard cats. Burmese and reticulated pythons and lesser whistling ducks were taken to Koh Kong and released. We carefully monitor their release and ensure their safety.

- **Pileated gibbon, Popoi, has fully recovered from the terrible arm fracture he suffered over two years ago.** The steel pin has been removed from his arm and a lesion that subsequently developed has now healed. He has finally been moved to a large enclosure in the Wildlife Rehabilitation area of PTWRC. He remains trusting, affectionate and playful despite suffering two years of intensive treatment and sedation twice per week.

ENCLOSURES AND MANAGEMENT

- **New enclosures constructed at PTWRC in 2009** funded and carried out by Wildlife Alliance include a 40m x 80m Southern serow enclosure containing a pool and roofed area; a roofed holding area for the gaur from France, which is being housed in a 1 hectare enclosure previously constructed by Wildlife Alliance; a slow loris enclosure and a flying squirrel enclosure. Routine repairs and improvements were conducted throughout the year whenever

necessary. Maintenance and repairs were regularly carried out on the elephant and tiger dens and enclosures.



Figure 4: New gaur enclosure

- In cooperation with the Cambodian FA, **we streamlined and improved the management structure amongst the animal keepers.** Each Section has one head keeper, each taking the job more seriously. The entire rescue center is overseen by Try Sitheng, whom Wildlife Alliance employs to care for rescued elephant Lucky. Sitheng is fond of animals, works extremely hard, and is happy and proud to have his new position. He is popular with the other keepers but unafraid to ensure they do their jobs properly. He is also quite prepared to tell his superiors about aspects he disapproves of if he feels the situation merits this. He leads from the front and never asks anyone to do anything he is not prepared to

do himself. This new staffing structure has provided immense benefits in terms of management. His new job means Sitheng now has less contact with Lucky; however he is always on hand if he is needed.

- Following continued requests from Wildlife Alliance, **the Director of PTWRC has formed a unit to deal with minor enclosure maintenance.** This is now up and running, though small problems are still being ironed out.
- At our suggestion, **the Cambodian Government implemented patrol stations in the Phnom Tamao Protected Forest** manned by community rangers. This heartening initiative demonstrates the Cambodian government's pride in preserving PTWRC and the surrounding forest. Wildlife Alliance funding makes the rangers' work to protect the forest and the released animals possible. This protection is essential if the forest is to be conserved and released animals are to survive.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

- American naturalist and TV host **Jeff Corwin made his third visit to film Wildlife Alliance projects, documenting efforts to save species on the brink of extinction.** He filmed our wildlife rehabilitation and release programs and a Wildlife Rapid Rescue Team bust on a restaurant selling wildlife for the series and book *100 Heartbeats*. The film aired in November and the book is on shelves now.
- **DNA testing of rescued Siamese Crocodiles made headlines in late 2009.** DNA testing by Fauna & Flora International and Wildlife Alliance revealed that more than half of the rescued crocodiles at Phnom Tamao are Critically Endangered Siamese Crocodiles, providing a potential lifeline for a species once thought "functionally extinct" in the early 1990s.
- **Other media attention about our Care for Rescued Wildlife program in 2009** included numerous articles in the English-language press in Southeast Asia, a Czech radio story, the *Telegraph* and smaller newspapers in Australia and Great Britain.



Figure 5: Jeff Corwin at restaurant bust

TOTAL EXPENDITURES

The total amount spent by Wildlife Alliance at PTWRC between December 2008 and December 2009 was \$250,700.50. This includes comprehensive care for elephants and tigers, food for all other animals, administrative and logistical costs, advertising, keepers' salary supplements, salaries and equipment for forest patrols and community rangers, security, forest demarcation, cage construction, maintenance and enrichment, animal medicines, and veterinary care. It does not include salaries for Wildlife Alliance staff other than veterinarians and animal keepers. It is hoped that as more funds are raised during 2010, Wildlife Alliance contributions will increase and improved benefits for the rescued wildlife will be realized.

Some of the major donors and institutional supporters for our Care for Rescued Wildlife during 2009 were the following individuals and organizations:

Ahimsa Foundation, Badreyyah Alireza, Anderson-Rogers Foundation, Asian Elephant Art and Conservation Project, Aspinall Foundation, Paul Berg, Barb Braniff, David Bohnett Foundation, Barbara Delano Foundation, Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation, Frank Kling, Landry's Downtown Aquarium, Nick Marx, Prince of Peace Enterprises/Tiger Balm, Sarlo Foundation, SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund, Starlight Foundation (Florida), Super Natural Distributors and Wallace Research Foundation.

We greatly appreciate the support of all of these donors, and the thousands of individual donors around the world who contribute to Care for Rescued Wildlife.