

December 20, 2016

Vietnam Bear Day calling for public support to end bear farming

Hanoi December 20, 2016: Today Education for Nature – Vietnam (ENV) and volunteers from ENV's Wildlife Protection Network carried out a series of awareness activities in 15 major cities across the country on Vietnam Bear Day to encourage the public to take action to bring an end to the cruel and illegal bear bile business.

During events hosted at universities, in markets, parks, and at shopping malls, thousands of people pledged on behalf of their family not to use bear bile or products made from bears.



"Bear bile farming has been going on for too long," said Nguyen Sy Bao Quoc, leader of the Nghe An Club. "We must urgently bring an end to this practice before all the bears disappear from the wild."

Over the last 10 years, the battle against the bear farming industry in Vietnam has achieved significant milestones, thanks to the collective efforts and hard work of the authorities, NGOs and members of the public. Captive bear numbers have decreased dramatically from 4,300 in 2005 to a little over 1,200 today while bear bile consumption has slumped 61% since 2009, according to ENV research [\[Link\]](#).

In response to what many are calling a "dying industry", many bear farm owners have given up their bear bile business and dozens of bears have been transferred to the government in this year. Earlier this month, six bears were voluntarily turned over to the authorities in Dak Lak after the owner expressed the desire to give up the bears he had been keeping for more than a decade.

"The increase in the number of voluntary bear transfers is a good indicator that bear owners understand that the business of keeping bears for bile is coming to an end," said ENV Vice Director, Ms Nguyen Phuong Dung. "When no-one consumes bear bile, there will be no more bear farms, and bears in the wild will no longer face the risk of capture to supply the bear bile industry."

On the occasion of Vietnam Bear Day, ENV joined famous MC, Mrs. Hoai Anh to call upon the public to actively help expedite an end to bear bile farming in Vietnam. In an ENV vlog Mrs. Hoai urged the public to be "Bear Heroes" by choosing not to use bear bile and advising others to do the same [\[Link\]](#). Other actions that the public can take include alerting local authorities or ENV's Wildlife Crime Hotline when they see bear bile or its products being advertised, sold, or traded.



In November, Forest Protection Departments from each of the bear farming hotspot provinces gathered in Hanoi for a workshop hosted by the Department of Nature Conservation and the Coalition of NGOs, comprising of World Animal Protection, Four Paws International, Four Paws Viet and ENV. The workshop exchanged ideas to improve the effectiveness of law enforcement and will lead to a roadmap to expedite the end of bear farming in Vietnam.

Expressing pride in the progress achieved to date, Ms. Dung cautioned that there is still a lot of work to do to finish the job. However, Ms. Dung remains confident that with the active engagement of the public and strengthened efforts of the government, this cruel and illegal business will perish, securing a brighter future for Vietnam's wild bears.

If you see bears being exploited for bile or bear bile and products advertised, sold, or traded, contact the ENV Wildlife Crime Hotline at 1800-1522. Everyone can be a 'bear hero' and make a difference with just a phone call.

ENDS

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About ENV

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.

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:

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