

10 tonnes of dead marine turtles nets trafficker 4 years and 6 months in prison

Nha Trang, Vietnam - (June 4, 2018) Today Nha Trang court sentenced Hoang Tuan Hai to 4 years and 6 months in prison for his involvement in trafficking approximately 10 metric tonnes of marine turtles, a seizure widely believed to be the world's largest confiscation of marine turtles to date. Today's trial was the culmination of nearly four years of intensive efforts by ENV to bring Hai to justice.



Mr. Hai was at the center of an industrial-scale trafficking operation that was discovered by ENV in 2014, resulting in police raids at six warehouses used by Hai and his brother to process and store marine turtles. The raids netted an estimated 7,000 individual turtles, a majority of which were identified as hawksbill turtles, a critically endangered marine turtle, fully protected under the law and valued for its decorative purposes, in addition to being manufactured into accessory products like combs, jewelry, and eye-glasses frames.

Brothers, Hoang Minh Cuong and Hoang Tuan Hai, were suspected of being the ringleaders of a marine turtle trafficking network that purchased large quantities of marine turtles from fishermen, before processing the animals as trophies and smuggling them to China. However, following the raids on the warehouses, the authorities failed to gather enough evidence to connect Hoang Minh Cuong to the case, leaving Hai to face the charges alone.

Ms. Bui Thi Ha, Deputy Director of ENV expressed, "We are delighted with the outcome of the trial this morning. After [the disappointing sentence for Nguyen Mau Chien](#), the prosecution of Hoang Tuan Hai enhanced our confidence in the strict application of law. ENV would like to express our gratitude to the efforts dedicated to Hai's prosecution by the law enforcement agencies of Nha Trang city and Khanh Hoa province."

With the outcome of the recent trial, Ha called upon the criminal justice system to think differently about its approach to wildlife crime. "We need to utilize law enforcement investigations to bring the ringleaders behind wildlife trade networks to light, backed by effective prosecutions and punishment by the courts, to address wildlife trafficking at its roots" emphasized Ha. "Seizing illegal products is not enough in itself. Our objective should be to strike at the heart of criminal enterprises that traffic wildlife, with the goal of destroying their network and businesses permanently."



It is time for Vietnam's wildlife trafficking ringleaders to be held accountable for their crimes against nature, from which they have profited in exploiting and trading endangered wildlife, at the expense of nature, our international image, and mankind overall.

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.