



# WILDLIFE WATCH

JANUARY – MARCH 2023

*News from the front lines of ENV's efforts to protect wildlife*





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Inside ENV



# Fighting crime isn't easy.

If it were easy, we would have been done a long time ago.

The ENV Wildlife Crime Unit (WCU) was established in 2005 to facilitate public reporting of wildlife crimes, and to undertake crime reduction enforcement campaigns in cooperation with authorities. The WCU operates a toll-free national Wildlife Crime Hotline through which the public can report violations. Each case is logged onto ENV's Wildlife Crime Incident Tracking Database and tracked through to its conclusion.

Responses to each reported violation vary, depending on the seriousness, species involved, and likelihood of securing voluntary compliance from the perpetrator (for minor or common crimes).

Thus far, ENV has logged 26,583 cases comprised of 74,176 individual violations. ENV's overall success rate, including both successful law enforcement responses and voluntary or involuntary compliance by the subject, is 63%. ENV receives roughly 8 new publicly reported cases each day.

## ON THE FRONT LINES WITH ENV'S CRIME FIGHTERS



# CRIME STATS

610

advertising and selling  
cases (1,916 violations)

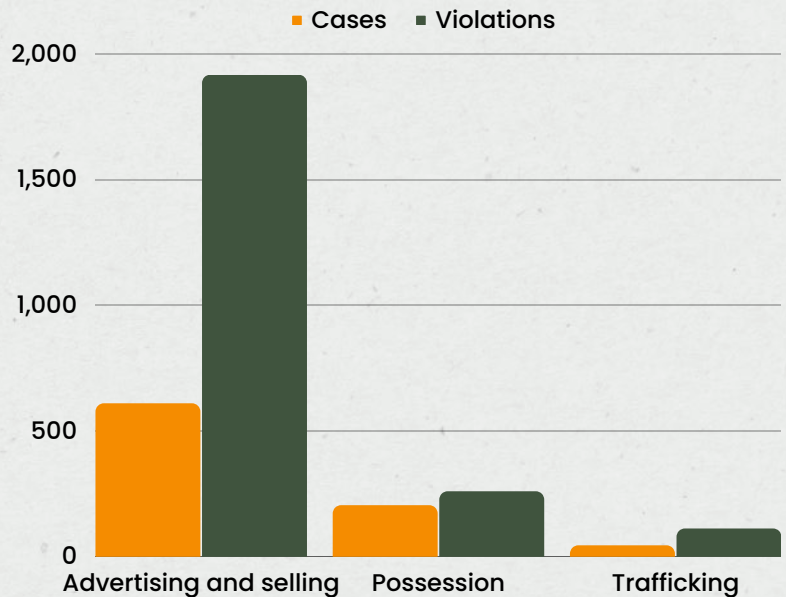
204

possession cases  
(259 violations)

45

trafficking cases  
(111 violations)

## Wildlife cases by classification



## HIGHLIGHTS

*January – March 31, 2023*

861

new cases logged by  
ENV, comprised of  
**2,423** violations

478

cases reported by the  
public to ENV through our  
Wildlife Crime Hotline,  
averaging **8** new cases  
each day

418

internet crime cases  
logged by ENV,  
comprised of **1,461**  
violations

994

live animals confiscated  
or transferred following  
reports to the ENV  
Wildlife Crime Hotline

126

successful law enforcement  
agency interventions  
resulting in seizures of live  
animals or products



## Crime reduction enforcement campaigns: **TACKLING RETAIL CRIME AT FIXED BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS**

For the last 11 years, ENV has been carrying out intensive crime reduction campaigns in major cities targeting business establishments such as restaurants, markets, traditional medicine (TM) shops, pet shops, and other businesses where wildlife is frequently sold. The campaigns are aimed at reducing wildlife crime through collaboration with the city or district government.

This year, ENV's retail-focused crime reduction campaigns are more robust than

ever, with the first of many already having kicked off in January.

Inspections are comprehensive in their coverage, with trained ENV field inspectors methodically checking businesses on every road, street, alley, and market within a defined geographic area (usually a district), looking for evidence of violations. These can include live animals, menus advertising wildlife dishes, wildlife wines, trophies and decorations, and traditional medicine made from wildlife.



Over the past few months, ENV has carried out 11 campaign inspections, including several in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, as well as in Dak Lak, Phu Quoc, Hue, and Hai Phong.



## ENV's crime reduction campaign history

Since ENV began conducting these intensive crime reduction campaigns in 2013, a total of **22,162** business establishments have been inspected, approximately **11%** of which were found to have violations. Thus far, **55** major crime reduction campaigns have been carried out targeting **12** cities and **35** districts. The overall success rate of authorities in dealing with violations reported by ENV is **66%**, ranging from **22%** in poorly performing Hoang Mai district of Hanoi, to **100%** in two districts of Ho Chi Minh City.

**22,162**

establishments inspected

**55**

individual crime reduction campaigns completed

**12**

cities completed

**11%**

of inspected establishments found with violations

**35**

districts completed

**66%**

average crime reduction success rate overall

## What have we learned?

Since 2013, the species composition of consumer wildlife crimes has changed considerably. Pangolins are all but gone from menus, as are most other forms of serious crimes involving endangered wildlife. Civets and bamboo rats, birds, and reptiles comprise the bulk of violations today. Prevalence of crime (percentage of establishments where violations were recorded) has also dropped from 14% in 2013 to 7.3% in 2023. All of this suggests a trend in the right direction, though stubborn districts in certain cities show no sign of improvement, and developments like the arrival of exotic species in pet markets pose new problems and concerns.



Above: Inspections of retail establishments on the island of Phu Quoc recorded violations at 31 of 66 establishments – a startling and unprecedented 46.9% prevalence of consumer wildlife crime (national average is 11%). About 50% of the cases involved advertising and selling seahorses and shark fins.

# ONLINE WARRIORS

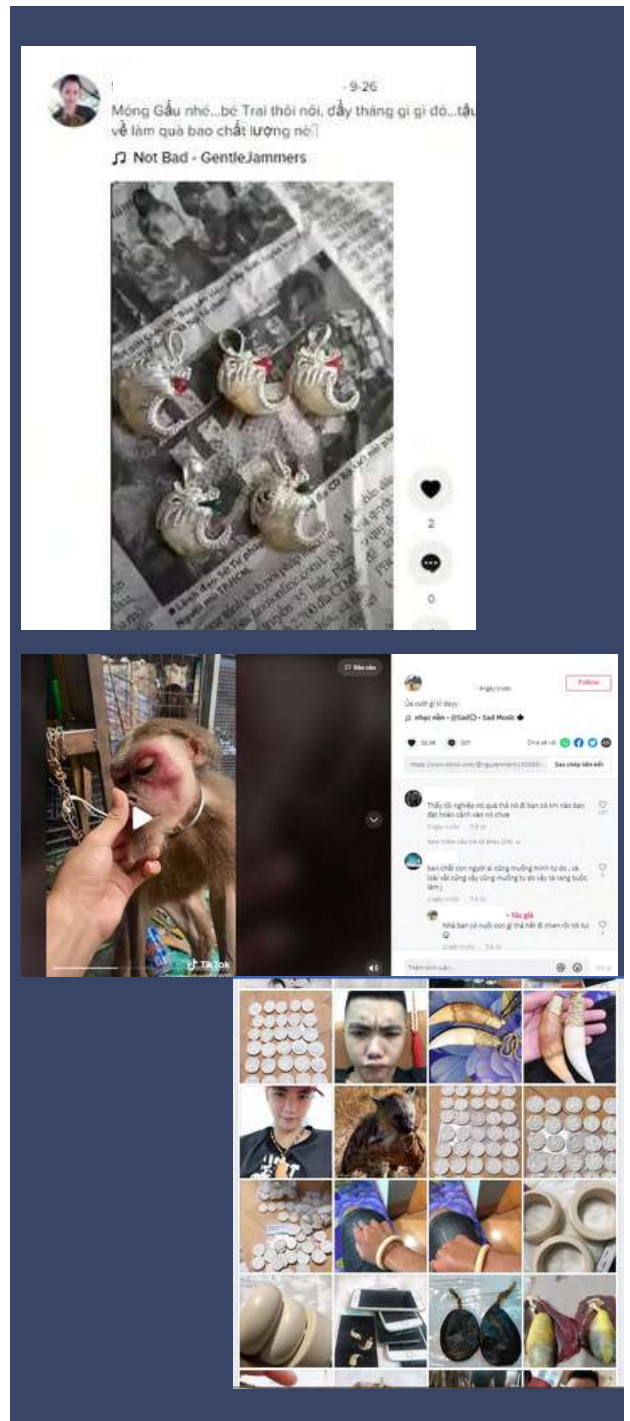
ENV's "Cyber Crime Team" deals with hundreds of new online cases each month. Many of these violations are committed by opportunistic sellers who simply have a social media account at hand, while some are committed by repeat offenders, and yet more are perpetrated by a smaller number of hard-core suppliers with links to organized crime and wildlife traffickers.

ENV's Cyber Crime Team must untangle the violations as they come in, with priority cases being passed to the Law Enforcement Response Team, and lower priority cases handled by utilizing responses tailored to the specific nature and content of the crime. In most cases, the aim is to achieve voluntary compliance through link removals or account deactivations done by the subjects themselves.

In cases where the subject does not comply with polite requests or warnings, ENV will fall back on our social media partners such as TikTok, Google, Zalo, or Facebook to summarily remove the links without involvement of the account holders.

"Every effort is made to encourage the subject to voluntarily comply with wildlife protection regulations, which ban the advertising and selling of wildlife online," says ENV's Cyber Crime Team Leader. "While this works for 80% of the lower priority cases, we depend on our social media partners to pick up the slack."

In 2022, ENV logged 1,686 cyber wildlife crime cases comprised of 5,712 violations. During the first quarter of 2023, an additional 418 cases were logged comprised of 1,461 violations. ENV's overall success rate in dealing with cyber crime is 71.3%.



ENV commends the excellent efforts by TikTok, Zalo, and Google to respond to violations in a timely manner. However Facebook, while having been particularly responsive in the past, has become less responsive to Vietnam's wildlife protection needs in recent months.



# Cyber crime reduction campaigns (CCRCs)

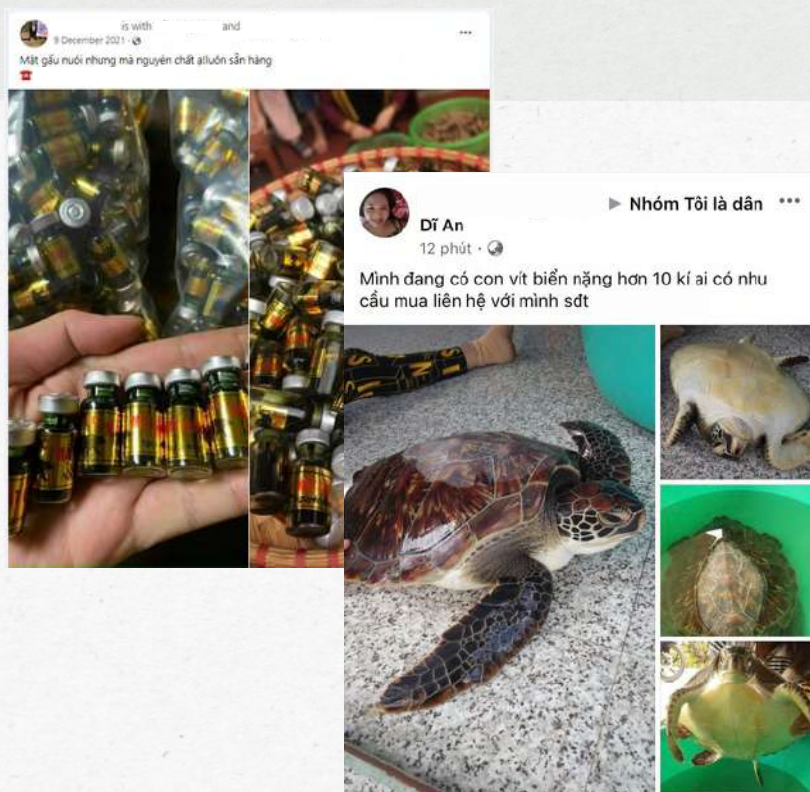
Every few months, ENV carries out a new cyber crime reduction campaign targeting a specific species group. Each campaign involves searching for online violations using keywords related to specific species. A standardized methodology is used to allow for the comparison of campaign results from year to year to evaluate changes in products sold, reductions or increases in violations, and social media platform performance.

Recent cyber crime reduction campaigns have focused on marine turtles (January), rhinos (February), and elephant ivory (March). This first round resulted in 25 cases involving the advertising and sale of marine turtle products such as fans, combs, and

glasses frames. This is a relatively small number of cases and an indicator that marine turtle products are not readily sold online in Vietnam when compared to other products like ivory. Likewise, a CCRC targeting rhino horn sales in February resulted in only 12 cases, most of these involving the sale of fake horns or pieces of horns online.

In contrast to rhino and marine turtle cases, in March, a total of 106 ivory cases were logged, comprised of 172 violations.

ENV utilizes our *varied response* approach to dealing with CCRC cases, and as of the end of April, we have already achieved success rates of 85%, 46%, and 54% for marine turtle, rhino horn, and ivory cases respectively.



## OUR VISION

Most citizens understand that advertising wildlife online is both illegal and morally wrong. Awareness, voluntary compliance, and the strong arm of the law collectively reduce cyber wildlife crime to a manageable number of persistent criminals, all of which run a very real and high risk of arrest and prosecution for their crimes.





## ***the ones we don't talk about***

ENV does not report publicly on the details of our cooperation with law enforcement on specific cases. However, about **12%** of the cyber crimes reported to ENV end up in the hands of our Law Enforcement Response Team, who work closely with police and other relevant authorities to target priority online cases. Nearly **20%** of these cases result in an arrest, administrative fine, or some form of police action, while the remainder are deferred back to the Cyber Crime Team for issuance of warnings and/or link and account deactivation by our social media partners.



# ENV's traditional medicine (TM) campaign is here, there, everywhere

In early 2022, ENV launched a major campaign focused on reducing consumer demand and use of medicines made from endangered wildlife. Like most ENV campaigns, this campaign is multifaceted and comprised of a wide range of activities focused on a single strategic objective: Reduce TM demand and use. While ENV does not publicize its strategies, nor what it has not yet achieved, some key campaign activities are listed below, all of which are underway.



## HÃY LÀ MỘT NGƯỜI TIÊU DÙNG THÔNG THÁI

Hiện chưa có bằng chứng khoa học về công dụng chữa các bệnh xương khớp, ung thư, hay những tác dụng “thần kỳ” khác của thuốc có nguồn gốc từ ĐVHD như nhiều lời đồn thổi. Trong khi đó, y học hiện đại phát triển trên cơ sở khoa học và thử nghiệm đã chứng minh hiệu quả trong việc điều trị hầu hết các loại bệnh.

Không những vậy, nhiều loại thảo dược được khai thác bòn vừng và săn có tại các cơ sở kinh doanh y dược có truyền cũng đang được các bác sĩ chỉ định để điều trị một số căn bệnh.

Khi ốm, tôi đến bệnh viện. Bác sĩ chẩn đoán bệnh và kê đơn cho tôi rất phù hợp. Giờ đây tôi đã hoàn toàn bình phục.

(Bà Hoàng Thị Đới, Cao Bằng)

“Hãy sống suốt. Khám bác sĩ và dùng thuốc theo chỉ định thay vì sử dụng ĐVHD.”

(Bác sĩ Trần Quốc Khánh - Bệnh viện Hữu nghị Việt Đức)

“Sản phẩm từ ĐVHD không còn cần thiết nữa. Thực chất, có hàng trăm loại thảo dược có thể thay thế thuốc từ ĐVHD”

(ThS. Bs Nguyễn Đình Thực - Văn phòng TW Hội Đông y Việt Nam)

“Xin đừng làm hại các bạn động vật hoang dã. Hãy bảo vệ tương lai của cháu và các bạn ấy.”

(Bé Vũ Diệp Anh, Hà Nội)



**DƯỞNG DÂY NÓNG BẢO VỆ ĐVHD**  
**1800-1522**  
HOTLINE@FPT.VN

- More than 48 “Don’t Use Wildlife Medicine” events hosted in markets, at universities, in parks, and at shopping malls by ENV and our Outposts throughout the country.
- Collaborating with the Ministry of Health to strengthen law and policy.
- TV and radio advertisements targeting the public.
- Targeted enforcement and reduction activities focused on TM providers: Over 246 new cases involving TM violations reported since January 1, 2022.
- Wildlife Friendly TM initiative involving signing on TM practitioners who commit to not using wildlife in medicine.
- TM communications campaign with awareness messaging to 2,500 practitioners and shops in major cities throughout the country.
- Viral advertising on major social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.
- Radio, news shows, and media statements to reinforce public messaging and keep the issue relevant.



# ENGAGING traditional medicine practitioners

While younger people are less inclined to use traditional medicines, older generations are harder to influence, and many remain adamant about the supposed healing value of traditional medicines made from wildlife. ENV's strategy therefore focuses on both ensuring that younger generations adopt modern medicine as an appropriate and effective treatment, while also promoting the use of herbal alternatives among all generations.

As part of ENV's broader TM campaign,

which ranges from strengthening policies and enforcement to raising consumer awareness, ENV has set out to engage TM practitioners directly, establishing a network of more than 2,300 traditional medicine shops and practitioners in 12 major cities. Through ENV's Wildlife Friendly TM Network, ENV communicates with TM practitioners via regular mailings, while also directly engaging shop owners through in-person visits, where they are urged to become "Wildlife Friendly" business establishments.

(Right) Recent messaging sent to TM practitioners nationally urged them to become "Wildlife Friendly" establishments and encourage customers to seek herbal alternatives.

**VÌ MỘT NỀN Y, DƯỢC CỔ TRUYỀN BỀN VỮNG**  
**KHÔNG BUÔN BÁN DƯỢC LIỆU**  
**CÓ NGUỒN GỐC TỪ ĐỘNG VẬT HOANG DÃ**

env Trong năm 2022, hàng nghìn người dân từ 8 tỉnh/thành trên cả nước đã ký cam kết nói **KHÔNG** với các sản phẩm thuốc từ động vật hoang dã

*Động vật hoang dã không phải là Thuốc*

Quý Cơ sở kinh doanh/Thầy thuốc có thể củng cố niềm tin của người dân bằng cách bán và kê đơn các loại dược liệu bền vững thay vì sản phẩm từ động vật hoang dã

Tham gia Mạng lưới Cơ sở kinh doanh/Thầy thuốc y được cổ truyền thân thiện với Động vật hoang dã

Xem phần "Động vật hoang dã không phải là thuốc"

- Chỉ kê đơn các loại thuốc, dược liệu hợp pháp và không có thành phần từ động vật hoang dã nguy cấp để giúp bảo tồn ngành Y được cổ truyền của nước nhà.
- Tránh các rủi ro pháp lý đáng tiếc do hành vi buôn bán, quảng cáo thuốc từ động vật hoang dã là vi phạm pháp luật và có thể bị truy cứu trách nhiệm hình sự, phạt tù hay tước giấy phép kinh doanh vĩnh viễn.
- Tăng niềm tin của người dân vào y được cổ truyền khi xã hội ngày càng có xu hướng lựa chọn các loại thuốc dược liệu để kiểm, rẻ và bền vững thay vì sử dụng các sản phẩm có nguồn gốc từ động vật hoang dã.
- Hạn chế bị cơ quan chức năng thường xuyên kiểm tra, giám sát do từng ghi nhận buôn bán, quảng cáo thuốc từ động vật hoang dã, tránh ảnh hưởng tới hoạt động kinh doanh.
- Trở thành một Thành viên của Mạng lưới Cơ sở kinh doanh/Thầy thuốc y được cổ truyền thân thiện với động vật hoang dã của ENV (Danh sách được công khai và trực tuyến)

QUÉT MÃ TẠI ĐÂY

QUÉT MÃ TẠI ĐÂY



## ENDANGERED WILDLIFE REMOVED FROM MINISTRY OF HEALTH LIST OF INGREDIENTS AUTHORIZED FOR EXPORT

ENV sought to remove wildlife from the list of species that are permissible for export under a revised circular that was due to be released in February 2023. The problem was that many endangered species were listed as authorized “ingredients” for export, including ingredients made from pangolins, tigers, and rhinos, amongst other species. While the circular

required that the animal parts be of legal origin, ENV remained concerned that the allowance would be confusing and potentially result in or promote trade of endangered wildlife. After working closely with MOH, and following multiple meetings and discussions, the new circular (effective February 2023) lists only flora species as permitted for export.

## VOICE OF VIETNAM: TRADITIONAL MEDICINE DOCTOR URGES PUBLIC TO USE HERBAL ALTERNATIVES



ENV’s monthly radio show in March features both a Westerner and a traditional medicine doctor speaking out about the need for the public to use herbal alternatives to wildlife medicines. The ENV show has aired monthly on Voice of Vietnam radio since 2005. The March show marked the 194th show to air, with each having covered a different topic relating to wildlife protection.

## GOING VIRAL WITH OUR TRADITIONAL MEDICINE MESSAGING

In March, ENV released a new vlog reinforcing ENV’s campaign messaging that urges the public to seek modern medical treatment for ailments or use herbal alternatives to medicine made from wildlife. The vlog features local residents, a TM doctor, and a Western doctor and was released virally, viewed by 95,400 users of YouTube and Facebook.







# SECURING COMPLIANCE OF BUSINESSES

## Urging non-commercial facilities to comply with the law



For more than four years now, ENV has been conducting a targeted campaign aimed at strengthening regulations at zoos and other licensed facilities keeping wildlife.

One aspect of this campaign consists of proposing a vision for a new decree that will (1) prohibit commercial trade of wildlife and wildlife parts at licensed facilities, (2) require that animals at these facilities be legally sourced, and (3) limit the breeding of tigers, bears, and other endangered wildlife (except in circumstances where clear conservation breeding plans are in place and approved by

both the CITES Management Authority and Scientific Authority).

Another part of ENV's campaign involves raising awareness of zoo owners through regular communications with members of the Vietnam Zoo Association (VZA). ENV's communications highlight compliance requirements under the law, provide advice on how zoos can meet these requirements, and highlight other news and events, aimed at ensuring that licensed zoos do not engage in illegal activities. In March, ENV issued its 11th communication to the VZA network.



Buses and other transport and logistics services are routinely used to illegally transport wildlife in Vietnam. As part of an effort to secure cooperation and support from bus- and other transport companies, ENV issued its first alert to 205 key companies with prior histories of involvement in trafficking cases, as recorded in the ENV Wildlife Crime Incident Tracking Database.

The alert urges transport company owners not to transport wildlife or wildlife products using their service vehicles, as well as urging drivers and shipment loaders to be wary of the contents of packages that could contain live animals.

## Transportation companies beware: Know what you are transporting









**KHÔNG PHÓNG SINH ĐỘNG VẬT HOANG DÃ VÀO ĐẾN, CHÙA để bảo vệ quần thể các loài động vật hoang dã trong tự nhiên và gìn giữ đa dạng sinh học của Việt Nam.**

**QUÝ CƠ SỞ CÓ THỂ HỖ TRỢ BẢO VỆ ĐỘNG VẬT HOANG DÃ BẰNG CÁCH:**

- 1 Khuyến cáo phật tử và du khách không mua rùa và các loài động vật hoang dã khác để phóng sinh.
- 2 Chuyển giao các cá thể động vật hoang dã hiện đang lưu giữ đến trung tâm cứu hộ.
- 3 Thông báo đến đường dây nóng miễn phí 1800-1322 hoặc cơ quan chức năng địa phương để kịp thời xử lý nếu phát hiện động vật hoang dã hoặc hành vi buôn bán động vật hoang dã trong/gần khuôn viên cơ sở.

**ĐỘNG VẬT HOANG DÃ THUỘC VỀ TỰ NHIÊN.  
HÃY BẢO VỆ ĐỘNG VẬT HOANG DÃ TRONG NGÔI NHÀ CỦA CHÚNG!**

# Pagoda communications

ENV's 7th communique to the religious leaders of more than 1,125 pagodas throughout the country, appealing for their assistance in addressing the release of turtles in pagoda ponds. Cooperation from numerous pagodas around the country have resulted in transfers of 990 turtles since 2018, as well as placement of signboards urging the public not to engage in turtle releases. Turtles are released in temple ponds to bring good luck and karma. A majority of turtles released in ponds are wild caught.



If you own a restaurant and you are in compliance with wildlife protection laws, you're all set. However, if a portion of your business profits from selling or advertising wildlife that is not of legal origin, we are coming for you.

In March, ENV issued its first "restaurant communique" targeting 691 owners of restaurants where wildlife violations have previously been reported. The message: Do not sell or advertise wildlife, and if you do, ensure you have papers showing the legal origin of the wildlife, or risk losing your license, facing fines, and having goods seized.

This "restaurant communique" marked the first of many, as ENV increases pressure on businesses to comply with wildlife protection laws.



**TẤT CẢ CÁC LOẠI ĐỘNG VẬT HOANG DÃ**  
đều được quản lý và bảo vệ ở những cấp độ khác nhau theo quy định của pháp luật.

**Một hình vẽ, một chiếc chụp ảnh, một tấm biển quảng cáo...**

• Dù chỉ là những gì tưởng chừng nhỏ bé, chúng vẫn có thể vi phạm pháp luật về bảo tồn động vật hoang dã.

• Nếu bạn không có giấy tờ chứng minh nguồn gốc hợp pháp của động vật hoang dã, bạn không được phép trưng bày, bán, hoặc quảng cáo chúng.

**Một món ăn, một món đồ uống...**

• Nếu bạn không có giấy tờ chứng minh nguồn gốc hợp pháp của động vật hoang dã, bạn không được phép bán, hoặc quảng cáo chúng.

**Một món quà, một món đồ lưu niệm...**

• Nếu bạn không có giấy tờ chứng minh nguồn gốc hợp pháp của động vật hoang dã, bạn không được phép bán, hoặc quảng cáo chúng.



**CƠ SỞ KINH DOANH NÊN LÀM GÌ?**

**LƯU Ý QUAN TRỌNG:** Nếu bạn là chủ sở hữu của một cơ sở kinh doanh, bạn cần phải tuân thủ các quy định của pháp luật về bảo tồn động vật hoang dã. Nếu bạn không có giấy tờ chứng minh nguồn gốc hợp pháp của động vật hoang dã, bạn không được phép trưng bày, bán, hoặc quảng cáo chúng.

**Hậu quả nếu vi phạm:** Nếu bạn vi phạm pháp luật về bảo tồn động vật hoang dã, bạn có thể bị phạt tiền, bị tước quyền kinh doanh, hoặc bị truy cứu trách nhiệm hình sự.

# Telling restaurant owners what they don't want to hear



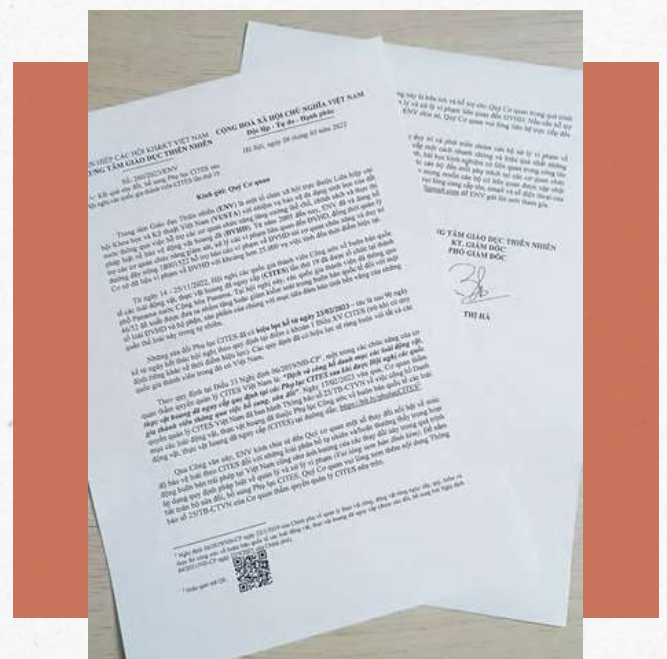
# STRENGTHENING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM



(Above) ENV's most recent Wildlife Crime Bulletin was released in January 2022 and distributed to government at the central and provincial level, including all National Assembly members, as well as police commanders, prosecutors, and judges in all 63 provinces. The crime bulletin highlights policy issues, provides law updates, and recognizes the work of front-line law enforcement agencies throughout the country.

# ALERT! MORE SPECIES LISTED UNDER CITES

The November 2022 CITES Conference of Parties (COP19) meeting in Panama resulted in a number of newly listed species and changes to species regulated under CITES. After a careful review of these changes to identify species either native to or trafficked in Vietnam, ENV issued an alert highlighting these changes to the 1,435 members of ENV's Criminal Justice System Network, comprised of law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and courts in all 63 provinces of Vietnam. With this alert, ENV aimed to ensure that law enforcement agencies are operating with the latest information, and that the courts are sufficiently prepared to respond to new cases that may be affected by the changes in CITES listings.





# ENV'S PROSECUTION TRAINING

During the first few months of 2023, ENV's Law and Policy Team continued with its regular training sessions for prosecutors, focused on application of wildlife protection laws. One session hosted by the Youth Union of the Supreme Procuracy involved 60 young prosecutors from the Supreme Procuracy, as well as prosecutors from Hoa Binh, Quang Ninh, Nghe An, and Hanoi.

Another session focused on almost 100 prosecutors and judges in Cao Bang province, where recent criminal cases and a perceived shift in trafficking routes have elevated levels of concern at ENV.

ENV's prosecution training differs from much of the traditional training courses in that ENV integrates real-world experience in dealing

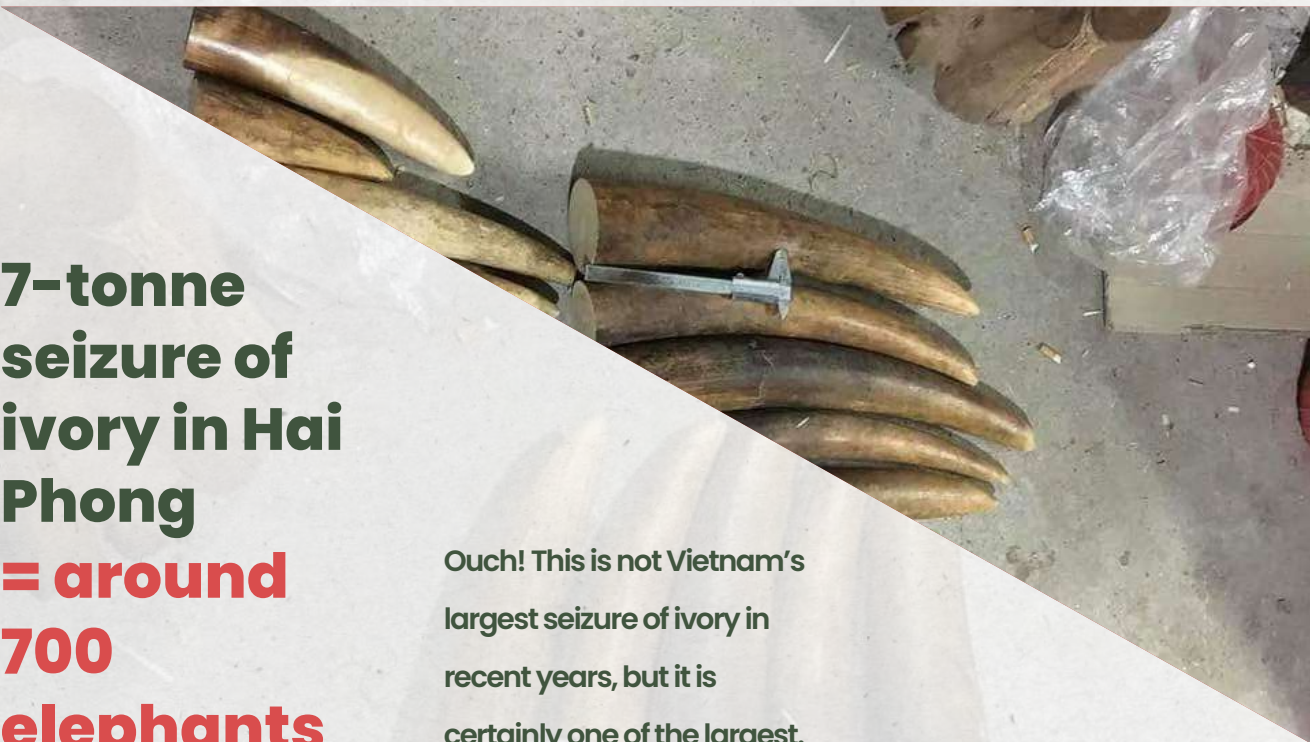
with hundreds of criminal cases, combined with a true understanding of the difficulties that prosecutors face in their day-to-day dealings with criminal cases. ENV will continue to carry out similar training courses for prosecutors for as long as there continues to be demand from provinces and a clear need for ENV's style of grounded guidance and support.

In addition to providing training, ENV operates a Criminal Justice System helpline through which law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges can seek guidance on wildlife law issues. ENV handles around 10 support cases each month. ENV's Criminal Justice System network is currently comprised of **4,200** members.



*Leaders of the Supreme Procuracy, members of the Supreme Procuracy Youth Union, representatives of procuracies in Northern provinces (Hanoi, Nghe An, Quang Ninh, Hoa Binh), and representatives of the Youth Union of the Ministry of Justice and the Supreme Court.*





## **7-tonne seizure of ivory in Hai Phong**

**= around  
700  
elephants  
slaughtered  
in Africa**

Ouch! This is not Vietnam's largest seizure of ivory in recent years, but it is certainly one of the largest.

The ivory belonged to an estimated 700 slaughtered elephants who met their fate at the hands of poachers, who shot the elephants before sawing off their tusks and leaving their carcasses to rot in the hot African sun. The killing of elephants for their ivory is largely fueled by demand for ivory jewelry,

carvings, and other products in China, Vietnam, and other Asian countries.

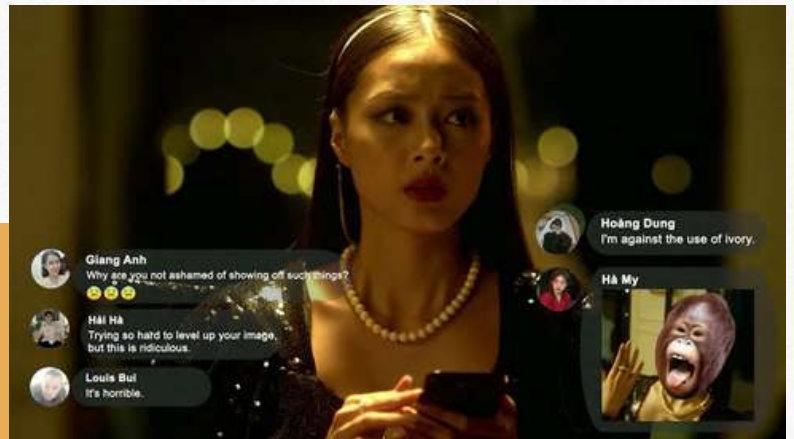
The ivory in this seizure originated from a port in Angola and was hidden in three containers amongst a shipment of cashews.

The true test will be whether the investigation of this case leads to the owners of the shipment, and whether the owners are brought to justice.



# MOBILIZING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN PROTECTING WILDLIFE

## NEW PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (PSA) URGES PUBLIC NOT TO BUY IVORY



ENV's latest PSA is out and airing on around 60 television stations across the country! The new PSA features a popular and stylish woman attending a luxury party, where she is gifted ivory jewelry by the host. She posts some selfies with the jewelry on social media, leading to some unexpected blowback... We'd hate to spoil the ending, though – watch the subtitled PSA [here](#).

If you are fishing in front of a sign saying “no fishing,” you probably deserve a fine. But if you are illegally fishing in a lake and hear the police coming, it is probably best not to run and hide in a wildlife restaurant.

Such is the case of “[Ditzy Man](#),” a new public service announcement by ENV featuring, yes, a fisherman who hides from approaching authorities by running into a wildlife restaurant, only to realize that he is surrounded by illegal activity. The PSA is part of ENV's “common violations initiative,” aimed at raising public awareness about the potential illegality of what might seem to be harmless common activities, like ordering a civet dish or shark fin soup.

## YOU CAN RUN, BUT YOU CAN'T HIDE





# ENV'S WILDLIFE WARRIORS: OUR EYES AND EARS

ENV "Outposts" are exactly what they sound like: Small collections of highly motivated volunteers – ENV's Wildlife Warriors – that have been recruited and formed a team to carry out compliance monitoring of businesses, public events, and other engagement activities in their respective cities. Presently, ENV has nine active Outposts operating in Vietnam. Each Outpost is assigned a monitoring list of up to 30 businesses that need to be checked each month. Outpost monitoring is a critical

part of the ENV Crime Unit's ability to address violations in major cities.

Outposts also carry out public awareness events and engage in special assignments like TM shop identification, surveys, and their own special activities.

In addition to thousands of independent volunteers spread out across the country, ENV's Wildlife Warriors are the eyes and ears of ENV, without whom much of ENV's efforts to address retail crime would be impossible.



## CAN THO – ENV'S 9TH VOLUNTEER OUTPOST

In March, ENV established its 9th Outpost in Can Tho, Vietnam's 6th largest city. Through seminars arranged at universities, ENV recruiters provided a situation report on wildlife trafficking in Vietnam for 124 participants, 52 of which promptly signed up to be volunteers. An Outpost training course that followed provided 27 eager volunteers with basic monitoring and event organization skills.

Additional volunteer recruitment sessions were carried out in Hai Phong, Vinh Long city, Nha Trang, and Da Lat, reaching 586 potential recruits of which 130 became Outpost members or independent volunteers.





# ENV's CLEAN LIST

“Stop the *laundering of vulnerable wildlife at commercial wildlife farms with the stroke of a pen*”

There are over 9,000 licensed commercial wildlife farms in Vietnam. Species reportedly raised and bred at these farms vary widely, from crocodiles, pythons, and freshwater turtles, to civets, bamboo rats, and wild pigs.

ENV's is opposed to any form of commercial trade in wildlife where the wildlife is not of legal origin, or where the commercial farming of the species has a detrimental impact on wild populations, such as by raising consumer demand beyond that which can be met by farms.

The single largest problem facing much of Vietnam's commercial wildlife farming sector is the fact that it remains cheaper and easier for farmers to source animals illegally from the wild and launder them through farms than it is to invest in what is often years of feeding, care, housing, and other expenses required for animals to reach a sellable size.

Excluding crocodile farms and a few other types of commercial farms that generally

operate as “closed systems,” ENV is yet to find more than a few farms that are not actively laundering wildlife or fraudulently producing permits showing legal origin for animals that in fact came from the wild.

In light of the fact that the laundering of wildlife through licensed commercial wildlife farms continues to undermine efforts to protect wild populations of many species, ENV has proposed to the government emergency measures aimed at addressing the issue through a phased approach that immediately limits and excludes species of conservation concern, while addressing laundering and regulatory deficiencies for all other farmed species.

Rather than listing which species cannot be farmed, ENV has proposed a “Clean List” of species that can be farmed. Based on our design, species that are listed on the Clean List and are permitted for commercial farming would meet certain criteria, including



(1) the farming of the species is not likely to have a detrimental impact on wild populations of the species (currently a requirement of the law), (2) the species breeds well and is ecologically able to persist and grow within a captive environment, and (3) the species is economically viable for commercial trade. Species that do not meet these criteria, based on sound scientific bases, would not be eligible for the Clean List.

One additional advantage of ENV's Clean List approach is that it greatly simplifies the permitting and management process for farmers and authorities, making permits easier

to issue and farms easier to regulate.

For those species that make it on the Clean List, we have bought ourselves time to deal with laundering, improvement of regulations governing licensed farms, and strengthening enforcement and oversight, while removing the species of greatest concern from the threats they face as a result of commercial farming.

ENV continues to promote inclusion of the Clean List in the revision of wildlife protection laws under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), and other conservation organizations like IUCN and WWF have shown their support for this approach.





# CIRCULAR 26 TIGHTENS COMMERCIAL WILDLIFE FARMING REGULATIONS

A new regulation came into effect in February 2023 which helps tighten the management of commercial wildlife farms. Circular 26 is meant to close loopholes that have made it easier for licensed farmers to launder wildlife. ENV played a critical role in the inclusion of key elements of the new circular, working closely with the circular's authors.

Some key provisions of the new circular include a requirement that detailed information be shown on transport permits regarding the source, buyer, seller, and end destination of wildlife shipments coming from farms.

This is of particular interest given that transport permits are commonly used by wildlife traffickers to claim that animals that were sourced from the wild originated from a legal farm. In fact, farmers sell papers to traffickers at a nominal fee, often per animal.

For example, when we approached a licensed

farmer in the south and told them that we had a shipment of civets that we needed papers for, we simply paid a fee and got papers showing the civets originated from that specific farm. Use of fraudulent papers such as those obtained by ENV is commonplace within the commercial wildlife farming industry, constituting yet another revenue stream for licensed farmers.

While the new circular does not eliminate the use of fraudulent permits to traffic wildlife, it makes it more difficult by enabling authorities to track shipments more easily.

Circular 26 is not a cure for the laundering epidemic, but it is a start. Combined with development of a "Clean List" of species that are permissible for commercial farming and stricter regulations that deter criminal behavior, abuse within the commercial wildlife farming sector will be substantially reduced, and eventually, all but eliminated.





# If your commercial wildlife farm is also a laundromat, you are soon to be out of business

As part of ENV's broader commercial wildlife farming strategy, ENV is communicating with more than 1,700 owners of top-tier commercial wildlife farms nationally. Our messaging is mainly aimed at ensuring that they are aware of relevant laws regulating their operations, as well as providing adequate warnings that all animals raised on their farms must be of legal origin. ENV also highlights changes in permitting processes under the law, encourages compliance with all relevant regulations, and profiles current cases where farmers have been subject to loss of their licenses, seizures, prosecution, and even jail time for laundering wildlife.

The idea behind this strategy is that farmers will sense a change through regular and sustained communications which, combined with tighter regulations, increased provincial oversight, and the understanding that authorities are getting serious about laundering, will lead to a portion of those violating the law becoming compliant or getting out of the business thanks to the hassle or slowly diminishing sources.

In March, ENV sent out its 9th communique to 1,753 licensed commercial wildlife farms, reinforcing the requirements under the new Circular 26 aimed at improving controls

over the origin and movement of wildlife from commercial farms. Notably, ENV inputs into the new circular released in December 2022 require inclusion of detailed information about the buyer and seller, sources, and destinations of wildlife on transport permits. These new changes, and the fact that they have been communicated with commercial wildlife farm owners, will make it more difficult for wildlife to be laundered through these facilities.

Right: Wildlife transportation permits now require more detailed information to help curb laundering.

Số TT	Tên ĐVHD	Tên Khoa học	Số Lượng	Trọng lượng	Ghi chú
01	Chồn lông đỏ	parus cristatus	08	30 kg	
02	Chồn thi đỏ	phasianes albinus	10	10 kg	
03	Vịt lùn nước	perdicinidae	04	2 kg	
04	Quạ đen	hyalaineurapha	02	4 kg	
05	Hồng hoàng	cygnus bicoloris	01	1 kg	



# CRIME FEATURE

## Turtle farm inspections lead to seizure

By now, we all know that there is a lot of shady business going on at commercial wildlife farms. An ENV investigation a few years ago indicated that virtually all of the 27 major multispecies commercial farms inspected by ENV investigators were involved in laundering wild animals into their farms and producing papers that fraudulently claimed that the animals were born and raised on farms.

A major trial underway in the South involves the notorious owner of a farm that is linked to a transnational wildlife trafficking ring, comprised of major licensed commercial wildlife farms allegedly colluding with local authorities to traffic tonnes of wildlife sourced from Cambodia and elsewhere through their licensed farms each year.

While a few licenses have successfully been withdrawn in a few provinces, authorities seem unwilling to address the issue decisively by inspecting farms, issuing strict fines for violations, seizing illegal animals, withdrawing licenses, and

prosecuting serious offenders. Once local authorities establish a consistent level of enforcement with serious risks to violators, most commercial farmers throughout the country will comply, and the excessive laundering of wildlife that occurs today will end.

It's not all bad news, though. Following an ENV inspection of an Asiatic softshell turtle farm in November 2022, where it was found that the owner did not have legal papers of origin for turtles that he was keeping at his farm, ENV sought closer scrutiny from authorities, resulting in the discovery and confiscation of almost 100 yellow pond turtles (*Mauremys mutica*) that were illegally obtained and being kept by the farmer. While no charges were filed, the case is a perfect example of what is going on at commercial wildlife farms throughout the country, as well as what authorities can achieve when they simply do their jobs well.



Following an ENV inspection of an Asiatic softshell turtle farm (far left), authorities confiscated nearly 100 yellow pond turtles (*Mauremys mutica*) (left) that were illegally obtained and being kept by the farmer.



# SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT

## Inside ENV's ivory crime reduction campaign

In early 2022, ENV embarked on a campaign to address ivory sales in Dak Lak province. Ivory products such as carvings, rings, bracelets, and other jewelry were openly sold in stores frequented by tourists visiting the province. Sales were concentrated in the capital city of Buon Ma Thuot and several popular tourist destinations, as Dak Lak is known as one of the few remaining places in Vietnam where wild elephants can be found.

After securing agreement from the provincial People's Committee and their subsequent issuance of instructions to relevant agencies to tackle the issue, ENV collaborated with enforcement agencies in a campaign that resulted in thousands of ivory and other wildlife products seized from retail establishments, a good portion of which were fake. ENV's Investigation Team also examined a smaller number of individuals who supplied retailers with ivory products, identifying key targets for law enforcement. Two of these important suppliers have been shut down, arrested, or fined, with additional targets pending police action.

In March, ENV hosted training for Dak Lak law enforcement authorities on ivory product identification to help refine skills when inspecting business establishments. ENV's Crime Reduction Mobile Team has also conducted three inspections of retail establishments throughout the Buon Ma Thuot City, as well as recently conducting joint inspections alongside city police of some of the persistently violating establishments.



Above: In March, new awareness panels were placed at 12 government offices and 12 tourist locations in Dak Lak, urging the public not to buy ivory products.



In March, ENV hosted an ivory identification training session for police in Dak Lak (above), prior to conducting the 3rd major enforcement campaign targeting ivory retailers and seizing 324 suspected ivory and other wildlife products from shops in two popular tourist areas (below).







Above: Businesses sign up for ENV's "Elephant Friendly Business" campaign in Buon Ma Thuot city of Dak Lak province.



As ENV's enforcement wing chases down ivory suppliers and retailers, ENV's Communications Team has initiated awareness activities by running viral adverts, working with local journalists, placing awareness panels in government offices and at tourist sites, establishing an ENV volunteer Outpost in Buon Ma Thuot to assist with compliance monitoring and host awareness events, conducting monthly viral advertising that targets Dak Lak residents, and initiating an "Elephant Friendly Business" campaign to engage and raise awareness within the tourism sector and amongst shop owners.

"While the sale of ivory in the province has not been completely eradicated, the province and all relevant agencies of the government have come together to tackle the issue," says Ms. Bui Thi Ha, ENV's Law and Policy Director. "It may seem strange, but given that the ivory being sold in Dak Lak is mainly from African elephants, the efforts of Dak Lak authorities directly serve to protect both Vietnam's and Africa's elephants in the wild, helping to fulfill Vietnam's international obligations to protect elephants globally."

Left: Viral advertisements warn of serious consequences for ivory trading.



THE  
FOOTBALL  
HUDDLE  
ALMOST  
CERTAINLY  
GAVE IT  
AWAY:

BEST LAID  
PLANS  
GONE  
WRONG



## INSIDE ENV

In April, ENV conducted an inspection of the infamous Thanh Hoa bird market in Long An province. The market consists of around 50 businesses in a tourism-style roadside rest area, 26 of which are selling birds. The market was put on the conservation radar by journalists a few years ago, after which ENV took up the case and was assured by district authorities that they intended to deal with the market. Thus, while passing through the neighborhood with a mixed team of bird experts, Crime Reduction Team members, and a few other ENV staff, we stopped to have a look.

When inspecting such a market, it is always important to have a good plan so that the team can conduct its inspection unhindered and avoid arousing shop owners' suspicion. Not so much in this case. Team A circled to the right. Team B circled to the left. When we met in the middle, it was decidedly awkward.

Even if the shop owners had for a second believed that we were tourists, our cover had certainly evaporated from the get-go thanks our football huddle in the center of the parking lot, during which we decided how to approach the problem (as we should have done before arriving).

Two signs put up by the province urging shop owners not to sell birds, displaying ENV's name and logo, stood visibly in front of two main sections of the bird market. Awareness was evidently not the issue. And yet hundreds – if not thousands – of birds were observed at the 26 violating establishments, comprising 30 or more species.

The shop owners tolerated our inspection and documentation of crimes, and ENV concluded after more than two hours on site that moving the market, as has been proposed by authorities, would not address the problem. Instead, a phased approach is needed to eliminate the trade of birds, starting with a focus on birds being sold that are specifically protected under the law.

The funny thing of course is that ENV – perhaps the most experienced organization in Vietnam in planning and carrying out retail-focused inspections – suffered such a lapse in planning, leading to the embarrassing football huddle in front of an audience of 26 bird shop owners. The only thing missing from our comedy routine was applause from the shop owners.



## Education for Nature – Vietnam

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.

### ENV STRATEGIC PROGRAMS

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:

- Working with policy-makers to strengthen legislation, close loopholes in the law, and promote effective application of laws and policy that protect wildlife;
- Strengthening enforcement through direct support and assistance to law enforcement agencies in combatting wildlife crime;
- Reducing consumer demand for wildlife products through investment in a long-term and sustained effort to influence public attitudes and behavior, including mobilizing public participation and action protecting wildlife by reporting wildlife crime

ENV's efforts to combat illegal hunting and trade of wildlife are made possible thanks to the generous support of the following partners:



### CONTACT US

**Address:** Block 17T5, 17th floor, Unit 1701, Hoang Dao Thuy Str., Thanh Xuan Dist., Hanoi, Vietnam

**Tel:** (84 24) 6281 5424

**Fax:** (84 24) 6281 5423

**Email:** [hotline.env@gmail.com](mailto:hotline.env@gmail.com)

**Website:** [www.env4wildlife.org](http://www.env4wildlife.org)



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