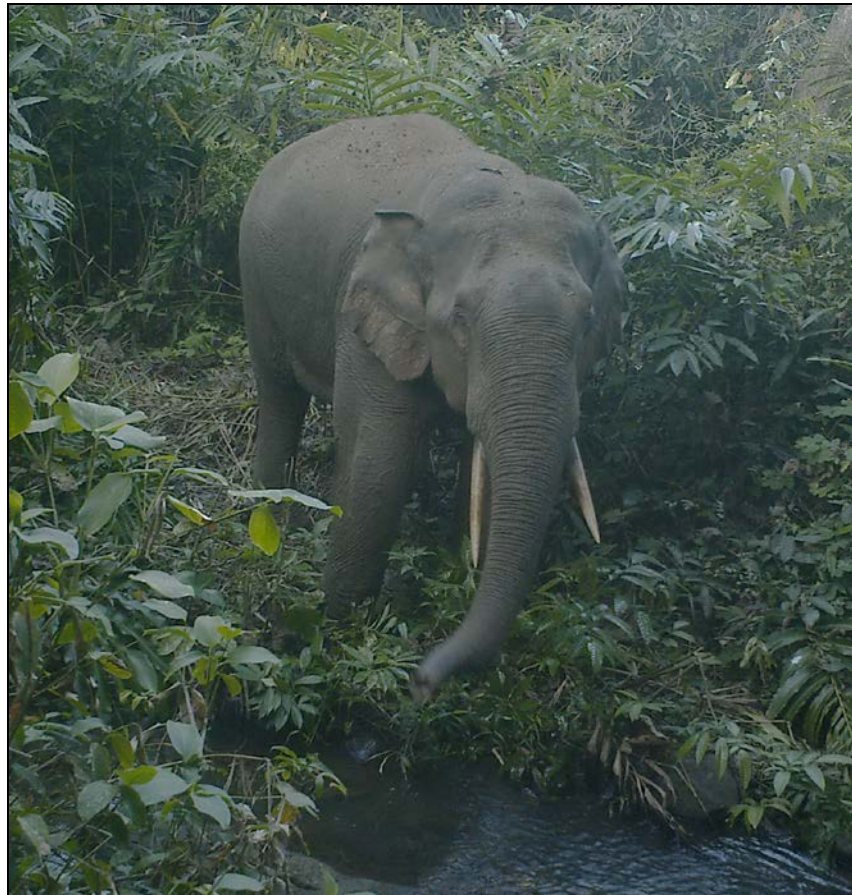


Direct Protection to Asia's Last Intact Elephant Corridor

Southwest Elephant Corridor, Cardamom Rainforest, Cambodia



Presented to:

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By



Project Summary

The Cardamom Rainforest *Southwest elephant corridor* is one of Asia's last remaining elephant corridors. Starting at the tip of Botum Sakor Peninsula along the Gulf of Thailand (**please see map on page 3**), then moving through Tatai Wildlife Sanctuary into the Southern Cardamom National Park to the north and veering eastward to Kirirom and Bokor National Parks, the corridor provides continuous, un-fragmented forest cover to the Asian elephants of the Cardamoms.

Wildlife Alliance has partnered with the Ministry of Environment to conduct direct protection of the elephant population through ranger patrolling and law enforcement to prevent illegal killing of elephants. Our direct protection efforts also include facilitation of solutions to human-elephant conflict in the communities located in the tip of Botum Sakor Peninsula to the south and those located along the border of Kirirom to the east. **We have achieved zero elephant poaching since 2006, until today.**

Wildlife Alliance, in addition to protecting the elephants, also protects the habitat by systematically fighting illegal logging and stopping forestland encroachment. It is a combination of law enforcement, zoning and demarcation, and on-going interventions by Wildlife Alliance with local authorities, that has succeeded until now in keeping the corridor intact.

We implement our comprehensive protected area management model, based on the following objectives: (a) enforce the Protected Area Law to stop poaching, illegal logging and land encroachment, (b) train and equip rangers and strengthen good governance through legal support; (c) facilitate participatory land use planning, zoning and demarcation of community land versus strictly protected forest zones; (d) systematically strengthen community outreach.

Our policy is to preserve *continuous forest cover* for elephant populations in order to *avoid fragmentation into forest islands*, which is, unfortunately the state of many elephant habitats throughout Asia. In those locations where forest becomes fragmented, elephants struggle to find enough food and water in the habitat that is left. As a result, more and more elephants are seeking food in villages surrounding these islands, thus causing human-elephant conflict. In addition, fragmentation of elephant populations represents a considerable threat to reproduction and genetic sustainability of Asian elephant populations over the long term.

The Asian elephant population in the Cardamom Rainforest was under considerable pressure from 20 years of civil war in the 1970s -1990s, which has left the population decimated. When Wildlife Alliance started its crisis intervention in April 2002, 37 elephants had been killed in just a few months prior to our arrival. Because of the direct ranger protection inside the forest, we have witnessed a fantastic increase in elephant sightings over the last 18 years, both through direct encounters and camera traps.

In the beginning, because elephants were previously so heavily hunted, they would only come out at night and in very small groups of two or three. For the first time in 2015, a full herd of 16 elephants was captured on camera trap (December 2015). The following years 2016 and 2017, several herds of elephants were photographed by rangers and many herds were photographed by night by our camera traps. In 2018, several other herds of elephants were witnessed at the below locations.



A 2019 camera trap of a large adult captured at night at 4 am.



A herd of 3 elephants photographed by rangers on August 20, 2018 at UTM: 0299893-1205044



A camera trap photo from 2018 of two elephant calves, evidence of the recovering population

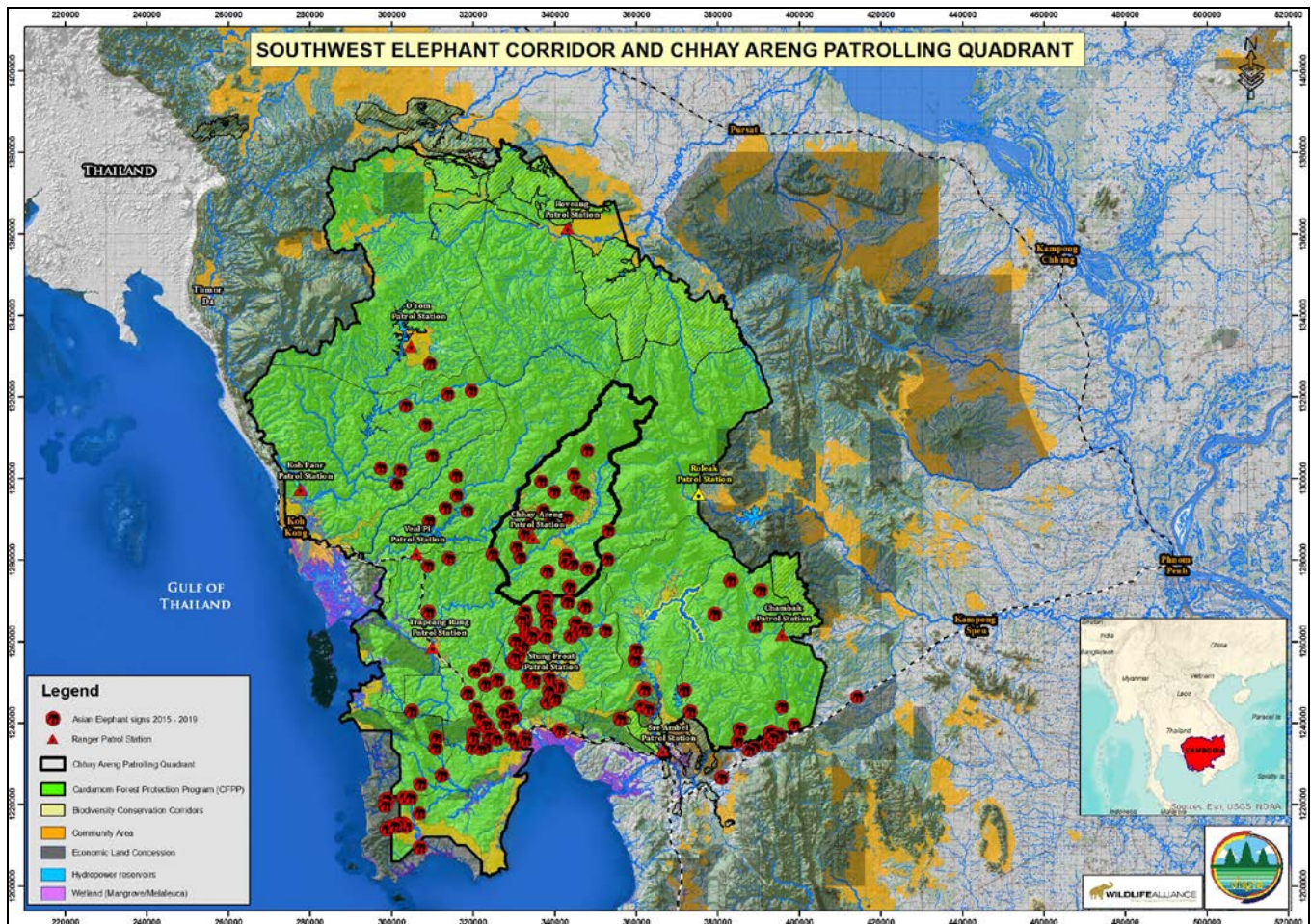


A herd of elephants taken by camera trap, including several calves

Project Purpose

The project goal is (1) to continue to have ZERO elephant poaching and (2) to prevent forest loss and fragmentation so that there is continuous forest cover for the movement of the elephant population.

The major problem we are encountering every year is the lack of financial resources from major aid donors to effectively protect the elephant corridor, despite the fact that the Cardamom Rainforest is classified as one of the Earth's 200 Global Eco-regions. In the presence of insufficient funds, the rangers cannot carry out their crucial daily operations. But we are adamant that this magnificent landscape must be protected and we continue our efforts despite all obstacles.



Action Plan

We are seeking funding from the International Elephant Foundation for \$15,000 to support ranger operations of one patrol unit of 7 rangers in the Chhay Areng Valley ranger station, Coordinates of the Chhay Areng Station are N. 11°37'35.1" E. 103°28'50.7". Coordinate system: WGS 84. . **See Location Map above.**

The Chhay Areng ranger station is mandated to patrol 103,920 hectares of rainforest. The funds are much needed for food rations and fuel for patrolling in the forest, bringing offenders to court and impounding illegal equipment (wildlife, chainsaws, guns, vehicles). Fuel is needed due to the size of the rangers patrol quadrant, as they need to be able to rapidly respond to threats.

Objectives	Results	Activities
Objective 1 By December 2020, maintain zero elephant poaching within the Chhay Areng patrol quadrant of 103,920 hectares.	1.1 By December 2020, rangers have conducted 230 patrols and 12 night ambushes	1.1.1 7572 km of forest covered 1.1.2 > 5,000 hunting snares removed 1.1.3 15 illegal camps removed 1.1.4 >10 illegal guns seized
Objective 2 By December 2020, less than 20 hectares of forest loss within the Chhay Areng patrol quadrant of 103,920 hectares.	2.1 By December 2020, Chhay Areng rangers have detected and stopped at least 12 cases of forestland encroachment 2.2 By December 2020, 100% of forestland encroachment cases result in legal action being filed.	2.1.1 12 cases of forestland encroachment stopped 2.1.2 > 50 chainsaws seized 2.2.1 10 legal cases against illegal offenders filed by rangers and submitted to provincial courts, with follow-up from Wildlife Alliance. 2.2.2 All equipment and timber confiscated is effectively managed (preventing leakage back into trade) and properly stored to serve as evidence for the court cases.

Wildlife Alliance

Wildlife Alliance is an international 501(c)(3) NGO with programs and partnerships in Cambodia and Thailand and completed projects in 6 countries. Our mission is to combat deforestation, wildlife extinction, climate change, and poverty by partnering with communities and governments. Wildlife Alliance has 25 years of experience in protected area management across four continents that has resulted in significant milestones for species and park protection. We have been working in Cambodia since 2000.

Impacted Biodiversity

More than 55 IUCN red-listed wildlife live inside the Cardamoms:

- Asian elephant *Elephas maximus*
- Asiatic black bear *Ursus thibetanus*
- Malayan sun bear *Helarctos malayanus*
- pileated gibbon *Hylobates pileatus*
- mainland clouded leopard *Neofelis nebulosa*
- fishing cat *Prionailurus viverrinus*
- marbled cat *Pardofelis marmorata*

- Bengal slow loris *Nycticebus bengalensis*
- dhole *Cuon alpinus*

and five critically endangered species:

- Sunda pangolin *Manis javonica*
- Siamese crocodile *Crocodylus siamensis*
- southern river terrapin *Batagur affinis*
- giant ibis *Thaumatibis gigantea* (Gray et al. 2017)
- white-eared night heron (*Gorsachius magnificus*)

For seven of these species, the Cardamom Rainforest is one of the top 10 landscapes globally for their conservation. The landscape's giant ibis population, which was recently confirmed to be present and breeding in the Southern Cardamom National Park, is particularly significant as the species is the number two ranked EDGE (Evolutionarily Distinct Globally Endangered) bird species globally (<http://www.edgeofexistence.org/species/giant-ibis/>).

The elephant corridor is a mosaic of habitats from ridge to reef. The project area largely comprises three broad habitat types i) Tropical Moist Broadleaf Forest ii) Deciduous Dipterocarp Forest and iii) Riparian *Melaleuca* Forest. The latter two habitats are highly threatened in South East Asia and have Globally Threatened status under the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems. The Cardamoms' mosaic of habitat types provides two crucial ecosystem functions in the mitigation of global climate change, by being the largest carbon sink and rainfall regulator in the region.

Without external support, the landscape's protected areas are reduced to 'paper parks'. Wildlife Alliance has been committed to the protection of the Cardamom Rainforest Landscape and has been providing this external support since 2002.

Budget

We are requesting \$15,000 funds for ranger operations that are planned to be spent as follows:

- | | |
|---|---------|
| ▪ Food rations | \$8,550 |
| ▪ Fuel for patrol 4 wheel drive (bringing offenders to court, bringing rescued wildlife to station, and impounding illegal equipment of chainsaws, guns, vehicles): | \$2,750 |
| ▪ Fuel for dirt motorbikes: | \$1,325 |
| ▪ Oil, repairs and maintenance for vehicles: | \$2,375 |

Total: \$15,000

