



LAW ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS IN WWF-CAMBODIA'S SUPPORTED PROTECTED AREAS

January to June 2025: Summary Report

TO SECURE A SHARED FUTURE FOR PEOPLE AND NATURE, WE MUST END WILDLIFE CRIME.

In Cambodia, overexploitation of natural resources has taken a toll on our ecosystems and treasured species. Illegal activities like poaching, logging, mining and illegal fishing pose a critical threat. To protect a future where communities and nature can thrive together, we must act.

To safeguard protected areas and prevent wildlife crimes, WWF-Cambodia works closely with government ministries and their ranger teams to bolster law enforcement efforts. We recruit community members to join patrol teams supporting rangers, providing the equipment and training that they need to protect their environment. We also support the establishment of community protected areas, where people can lead the management of their own natural resources.



Our protected area law enforcement efforts take place in two priority landscapes: the Eastern Plains Landscape and the Mekong Flooded Forest. In the Eastern Plains Landscape, we focus interventions in Srepok and Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuaries, two protected areas in Mondulkiri province. In the Mekong Flooded Forest, we support river guard patrols along the Mekong Dolphin Protection and Management Zone, a 120-kilometre stretch of Irrawaddy dolphin habitat between Stung Treng to Kratie provinces. We also operate in two protected areas in Kratie province: Prek Prasob and Sambo Wildlife Sanctuaries.



635,349



Hectares of protected area in the Eastern Plains Landscape, including Srepok and Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuaries

120

Kilometres of Irrawaddy river dolphin habitat within the Mekong Dolphin Protection and Management Zone

96,727

Hectares of protected area in the Mekong Flooded Forest, including Sambo and Prek Prasob Wildlife Sanctuaries



EASTERN PLAINS LANDSCAPE

Srepok and Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuaries

From January to mid-June 2025, Provincial Department of Environment rangers and local community members patrolled protected areas for 2,058 days and 1,437 nights. Covering over 54,936 kilometres of distance, our team averaged roughly 27 kilometres per patrol day – an increase from our previous six-month period due to dry season conditions.

Patrolling teams noticed a decrease in logging cases from the previous six-month period, with rangers and community patrol members confiscating 13 chainsaws from protected areas to prevent further habitat degradation. Law enforcement teams also removed 1,485 snares during patrols. This number is less than half the amount found during the previous period.

While these are encouraging signs for reduced illegal activity, several cases of land clearing and hunting were still detected, including five cases of illegal mining. Intensified enforcement, jointly spearheaded by the PDoE and WWF-Cambodia, resulted in 50 suspected perpetrators undergoing provincial court procedures, with 39 of whom were related to illegal mining.

During patrols, rangers rescued 11 wild animals from captivity, including a fishing cat, a crested serpent eagle, a yellow-cheeked gibbon, six macaques and two Indochinese silvered langurs. Two animals were released back into the forest, while the rest were sent to Phnom Thmao Wildlife Rescue Centre for rehabilitation.

2,058 patrol days
1,437 patrol nights
54,936 km of distance covered



50 rangers
42 community patrol members
3 mobile law enforcement unit members



Defining Next Steps

Wildlife sanctuaries continue to face growing pressure from unsustainable resource use like illegal mining, hunting, fishing, logging and land clearing. With limited numbers of rangers, as well as limited financial resources to invest in capacity-building, we must balance our resources to conduct effective protected areas management.

Following our law enforcement strategic plan, we plan to focus efforts on hotspots of illegal activity, using camera traps and drones to monitor for land clearing and hunting. In addition, we strive to ensure our patrol teams work safely and effectively with further training on patrol tactics, SMART data collection tools and the building of court cases. Through deepened collaborations with provincial governors, local authorities and community members, we aim to maximize our impact for the best conservation outcomes.

MEKONG FLOODED FOREST

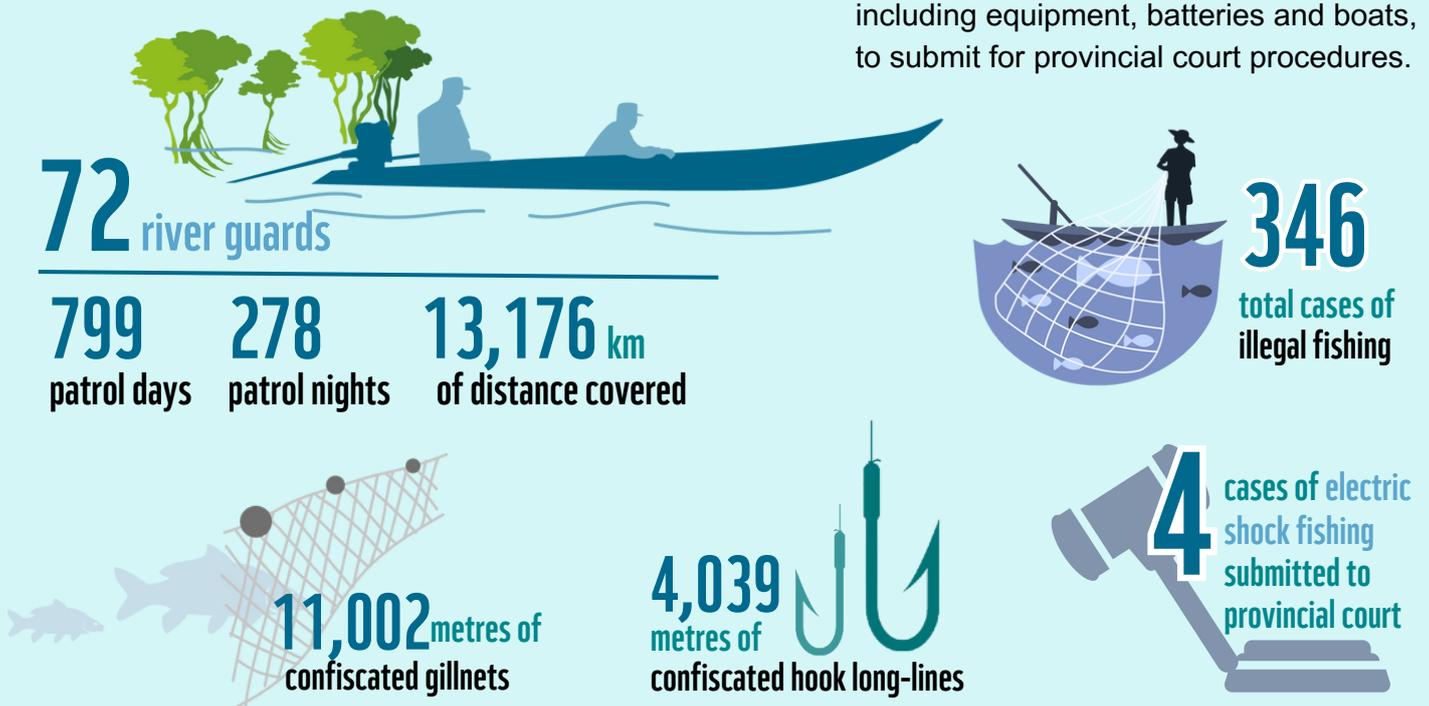
Mekong Dolphin Management and Protection Zone

With the Fisheries Administration and WWF-Cambodia's support, river guards and communities maintained 15 Mekong River outposts to safeguard wildlife. Between January and mid-June 2025, river guard teams conducted patrols over 799 days and 278 nights, covering roughly 17 kilometres per day and over 13,176 kilometres of total distance.

Dry season conditions enable more fishing activity to be concentrated in river deep pools, contributing to higher rates of illegal fishing. Patrol teams encountered a total of 346 illegal fishing cases, including 317 cases with gillnets, 32 cases with hook long-lines and 7 cases of electric shock fishing.

These fishing methods are life-threatening to the Mekong River's critically endangered population of Irrawaddy dolphins and place intense pressure on already struggling fish populations.

While addressing these cases, river guard teams confiscated 146 sets of gillnets (11,002 metres) and 34 hook long-lines (4,039 metres). In other cases, illegal activity was only observed or abandoned equipment was removed. Teams also confiscated evidence from four electric shock fishing cases, including equipment, batteries and boats, to submit for provincial court procedures.



Defining Next Steps

Since the year's beginning, seven dolphin births and no reported dolphin deaths are visible indicators of our positive impact. However, illegal fishing continues to pose a threat, and funding gaps make it challenging to hold violators accountable. During this period, WWF-Cambodia could only support river guard stations for ten days a month instead of fifteen days.

Our teams are continually adapting by strengthening river guards' capacity and increasing patrols during high-risk times, especially at night. By providing technical field support and training in mobile SMART tools, we aim to make the most of our resources with effective patrols. In addition, WWF-Cambodia continues to closely engage communities, government partners and donors to enlist their support.

Prek Prasob and Sambo Wildlife Sanctuaries

Government-supported rangers and community patrol members (CPM) – including one female ranger and one female CPM – completed a total of 577 patrol days and 92 nights between January and mid-June 2025. These patrols covered 7,736 kilometres, an average distance of 16 kilometres per patrol day.

The prevailing dry season provided easier conditions for accessing protected areas, clearing land and burning forest. Patrol teams encountered 32 instances of logging, resulting in 192 felled trees, and confiscated six chainsaws.

Over 55 hectares of land were also degraded or disturbed in 40 instances of land encroachment. Rangers worked with provincial officials to submit documentation of three cases of land clearing to court.

In addition, ranger teams recorded 35 instances of illegal hunting. A total of 167 snares, 100 metres of electric wire snares and 100 metres of net traps were removed during patrols, a reminder of the constant dangers that wildlife species face while roaming the forest.

577 patrol days
92 patrol nights
7,736 km of distance covered



Defining Next Steps

Addressing ongoing threats like land clearing will require stronger community engagement, patrol strategy and technical field support. Moving forward, increasing night patrols as well as technical meetings along with trainings will be a key focus. Working with local authorities, we also hope to identify potential poachers and provide sustainable livelihood options, such as joining community patrols, to prevent financial dependence on illegal resource extraction.



BUILDING A FUTURE IN WHICH HUMANS LIVE IN HARMONY WITH NATURE.



Working to sustain the natural world for the benefit of people and wildlife.

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