



for a living planet

WWF-Cambodia

21, Street 322,
Boeung Keng Kang I,
Phnom Penh, Cambodia
P.O. Box: 2467

Tel: +855 23 218 034
Fax: +855 23 211 909

www.wwf.org.kh
www.panda.org/greatermekong
wwfcambodia@wwf.org.kh

Press release

For immediate release

Rigorous law enforcement is needed now more than ever to save Cambodia's endangered fish from extinction

The result of a rapid assessment showed that Giant Barb, Isok Barb, Giant Goonch, Mekong Tiger Perch, Elephant-ear Gourami and Mekong Freshwater Stingray are among other 35 fish species that were traded and sold at wet markets in Cambodia, as well as being trafficked into neighboring countries. Giant Barb and Isok Barb are classified as critically endangered both globally and in Cambodia, while Giant Goonch, Mekong Tiger Perch, Elephant-ear Gourami are classified as endangered in the Kingdom.

On the occasion of the Cambodia's National Fish Day on July 1st 2020, the Fisheries Administration and WWF plea to all relevant authorities to take urgent law enforcement actions on all illegal fishing and trade in endangered fish along the Mekong River. The trade in endangered fish species is posing a serious threat to Cambodia's fisheries resources, especially the mega fish species and the Mekong Irrawaddy Dolphins, which are considered as the Kingdom's living treasure the Fisheries Administration, provincial and local authorities, WWF and other relevant partners have been working to protect from disappearing. Following the completion of the rapid assessment, the Fisheries Administration and WWF put forward recommendations necessary to strengthen the implementation of the fisheries law against illegal fishing and fish trade.

"Fishermen, fish buyers and middlemen do not understand much about the fisheries law and relevant legislations on the protection and management of fisheries resources, especially endangered fish species that need our protection from extinction. I would like to urge all relevant authorities to increase the awareness raising about the fisheries law and associated legislations in force among the fishing communities and local people living along the Mekong River, as well as engaging their participation in the protection of fisheries resources and encouraging them to diversify their livelihoods activities," said H.E. Eng Cheasan, Director General of the Fisheries Administration.

A report on law enforcement by Kratie and Stung Treng Fisheries Administration cantonments, river guards and WWF showed an increase of fishing activities using cast nets, gillnets, floating/fixed nets, long-line hooks, electrofishing and fishing with poison in and around conservation zones prohibited by the law. For instance, the report showed an increase of 38% of gillnet use with 39,162 meters confiscated between December 2019 and May 2020, while only 28,435 meters confiscated between December 2018 and May 2019. In parallel, the use of long-line hooks also saw an increase of 46% with 37,040 meters of long-line hooks confiscated



for a living planet

WWF-Cambodia

21, Street 322,
Boeung Keng Kang I,
Phnom Penh, Cambodia
P.O. Box: 2467

Tel: +855 23 218 034
Fax: +855 23 211 909

www.wwf.org.kh
www.panda.org/greatermekong
wwfcambodia@wwf.org.kh

Press release

For immediate release

between December 2019 and May 2020, while only 25,437 meters confiscated between December 2018 and May 2019.

“I would like to appeal to authorities at all levels to tighten up their law enforcement efforts and enhance regular monitoring mechanism of activities at the fish markets and trading points, while imposing severe penalties on those who illegally fish in the river sections prohibited by the law as well as those involved in trading endangered and mega fish species in Cambodia,” said Mr Seng Teak, WWF Country Director.

The key recommendations from the rapid assessment included: 1/ conduct outreach and awareness activities aimed at educating fish sellers and traders about the Law on Fisheries and relevant legislations that include the IUCN Red List and the endangered fish species list of Cambodia, as well as campaigns encouraging the protection of endangered fish species; 2/ further investigate electrofishing activities and clearly identify the illegal fish trade supply chain; 3/ with participation of local authorities enforce the fisheries law to stop both fish harvest and trade routes from illegal fishing activities (e.g. electrofishing) along the river and selling endangered fish at the market; 4/ mobile patrolling teams led by chiefs and deputy chiefs of river guards shall take action on illegal fish trade which include endangered fish species.

“WWF stands ready to support and cooperate with the Fisheries Administration, Kratie and Stung Treng Fisheries Administration Cantonments, Provincial Departments of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and all other relevant provincial authorities to implement the recommendations and other urgent measures with the aim to promote effective law enforcement,” Mr Teak added.

Media contact:

Mr Tep Asarith,
Head of Communications, Advocacy, Knowledge Management
WWF-Cambodia
Email: asarith.tep@wwf.org.kh
Mobile: 012 957 919

Link to photos here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1y6FHRwKBnpEjdbIOD1waxuigmniQtT2O?usp=sharing>



for a living planet®

WWF-Cambodia

21, Street 322,
Boeung Keng Kang I,
Phnom Penh, Cambodia
P.O. Box: 2467

Tel: +855 23 218 034
Fax: +855 23 211 909

www.wwf.org.kh
www.panda.org/greatermekong
wwfcambodia@wwf.org.kh

Press release

For immediate release

About WWF-Cambodia

WWF was established in Cambodia in 1998 as a part of the WWF-Greater Mekong Programme. WWF's mission in Cambodia is to ensure that there will be strong participation and support from all people to conserve the country's rich biological diversity. Through the encouragement of sustainable use of natural resources, WWF-Cambodia promotes new opportunities for the benefit of all people, enhancing local livelihoods and contributing to poverty reduction in the Kingdom of Cambodia. For more information, go to www.wwf.org.kh