



News Release

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Slender-billed and White-rumped Vultures have returned to Srepok Wildlife Sanctuary after over five years of absence

Filled with joy, the Wildlife Research Team of the Ministry of Environment and WWF reported on July 22nd, 2021 the record of two Slender-billed and one White-rumped vultures at their roosting sites in the Srepok Wildlife Sanctuary of Mondulkiri Province.

The team suggested that the recent results of the conservation efforts in protected management in the Eastern Plains landscape are believed to have contributed to the return of these critically endangered vultures. In fact, the bird records in the area showed that the Slender-billed vulture was last seen in late 2015 with an estimated number of four individuals, while the research team lost their sight on the White-rumped vulture from 2017 until now.

According to Ms Milou Groenenberg, WWF's Biodiversity Research & Monitoring Manager for the Eastern Plains Landscape Programme, the reason of these vultures' disappearance during those years was most probably due to several poisoning incidents from the area that the conservation team was also able to observe. It is worth nothing that the forest area is also home to the Red-headed vulture.

In the Mekong landscape, the recent vulture counts by the Wildlife Research Team of the Ministry of Environment and WWF showed 4 Slender-billed, 11 White-rumped, and 5 Red-headed vultures at roosting sites near Sambo Wildlife Sanctuary, a protected area situated along the Mekong River in Kratie province.

His Excellency Neth Pheaktra, Secretary of State and spokesman for the Ministry of Environment, said: "This is good news for conservationists and for biodiversity. "On behalf of the Ministry of Environment, I would like to commend the research team of the Ministry of Environment and WWF, as well as the rangers of Srepok Wildlife Sanctuary, for their efforts to protect and conserve one of the largest dry forest complex in South East Asia," he said, adding that the effort will also enable a safe home for wildlife species with protected forest habitats, food and water. "We urge all stakeholders to participate in conserving these rare vulture species for the benefit of biodiversity and the preservation of Cambodia's natural resources heritage for future generations."

Mr. Seng Teak, WWF-Cambodia Country Director, said that this good news definitely encourages everyone involved, especially all staff with the Eastern Plains Landscape Conservation Program, boosting their efforts to protect these birds with hope for an increase in the future.



In Cambodia, the populations of all three vulture species have been declining over the past 15 years. The primary threats to these globally important vulture populations include deliberate poisoning of domestic and wild animals leading to secondary poisoning of vultures, limited food supply, habitat loss and disturbance.

As of June 2021, the latest vulture counts nationwide by the Cambodia Vulture Working Group (CVWG) showed a total 121 birds, including 20 Red-headed, 66 White-rumped, and 35 Slender-billed vultures. The CVWG is composed of members from the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fishery, BirdLife, WWF, ACCB, WCS, NatureLife, Rising Phoenix, CBGA, SVC, and CBC.

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