

## CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

<b>Organization Legal Name:</b>	Wildlife Conservation Society
<b>Project Title:</b>	Conservation of Tiger and Prey Populations by Improved Monitoring of Tiger and Prey Population to Assess the Success of Management Interventions in the Nam Et-Phou Louey National Protected Area, Lao PDR
<b>Date of Report:</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> January 2013
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**CEPF Region:** Indochina Hotspot

**Strategic Direction:** 1: Safeguard priority globally threatened species in Indochina by mitigating major threats

**Grant Amount:** \$49,810

**Project Dates:** 1 June, 2011 to 31 October, 2012

**Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):**

This work will be conducted together with the Research and Monitoring Section of the NEPL NPA Management Unit under the Houapanh Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO) and the national Department of Forestry (DoF). Therefore, people involved in this project are NEPL government staff, local villagers who live inside/nearby the park including guides and field assistants in addition to those already working for NEPL and WCS.

The Conservation Department (Vietnam Forestry Directorate, MARD) and the Biodiversity Conservation Agency (Vietnam Environment Agency, MONRE) were key partners at a central level in our work in Son La Province as the two main government agencies responsible for wildlife conservation and protected areas and be involved at all steps in the implementation of work in Vietnam and disseminated results from NEPL activities. Son La Provincial authorities, primarily the Forest Protection Department, Border Army, and Police alongside Customs, Market Control and the Dept. Animal Health will be the key agencies tasked with strengthening protection of wildlife and habitat in Son La province and all participated in the multi-agency stakeholder meetings to assess the level of commitment and interest the provincial agencies have towards wildlife conservation in these areas, and identify steps required for improving protection.

### Conservation Impacts

***Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.***

The Nam Et Phou Louey National Protected Area is ~5,000 km<sup>2</sup> of critical habitat representing the CEPF ecosystem profile. The area supports key species characterizing the transitional zone of the Northern Annamites. This project has helped move the conservation initiatives in NEPL NPA further along the conservation continuum. The major threats and root causes of biodiversity loss, socioeconomic context, and current/future conservation investments are better understood

from the information obtained under this grant. Strategic decisions can now be made to adapt previous interventions to allow for conservation success in NEPL NPA in the future.

***Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project.***

**Planned Long-term Impacts - 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal):**

- Long-term tiger monitoring protocols for tigers and prey in the Nam Et-Phou Louey National Protected Area (NEPL NPA) (5,950 km<sup>2</sup>) that will provide the basis for an adaptive management component for tiger management in the NEPL NPA
- Strengthened protection of the NEPL tiger population through interventions in adjacent areas in Vietnam

**Actual Progress Toward Long-term Impacts at Completion:**

- The conservation work completed under this grant significantly increases the NEPL NPAs knowledge of the tigers and prey base. This knowledge is now informing the adaptive management of NEPL NPA to increase the protection of the core zone of NEPL NPA.
- Our assessment in Vietnam has produced critical data and analysis to guide future discussions and plans for restoring tigers to Son La and Vietnam more generally

**Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal):**

1. First estimate of tiger numbers on NEPL since 2004, and hence will provide a critical assessment of the current population status and the effectiveness of interventions implemented in 2006.
2. Development of a long-term tiger monitoring program for NEPL
3. Assessment of the effectiveness of management interventions at increasing tiger numbers in NEPL
4. Improved management interventions to effectively reduce emerging threats to tigers
5. Strengthened capacity of government and national WCS staff in tiger and prey survey and monitoring techniques
6. Consensus reached on the feasibility and strategic approach for improving conservation of tigers in NEPL by strengthening protection in adjacent areas in Vietnam.

**Actual Progress Toward Short-term Impacts at Completion:**

Camera trapping was completed over an area of about 1200 km<sup>2</sup> in the Nam Et – Phou Louey Core Area. Three tiger photographs were obtained, representing one or two tigers. Sample sizes were too small for a capture-recapture population estimate. Tiger numbers have clearly declined since 2004, when 7 tigers were photographed in a 400 km<sup>2</sup> area. Relative prey abundance (number of independent photos/100 trap nights) increased nearly three-fold. Interventions were not sufficient to maintain tiger numbers, despite an apparent increase in prey.

We generated the most accurate and current data on land cover and tenure in the Vietnamese district adjacent to Nam Et Phou Louey National Protected Area in the northern highlands landscape in Lao PDR. Our analysis is sufficient for Sốp Cộp to be under consideration as a focal area for tiger restoration in Vietnam, yet this depends upon the survival of a breeding tiger population in NEPL. There is suitable land cover, with approximately 82,000 ha adjacent to NEPL, tenure and relatively limited current and planned infrastructure. We initiated dialogue with provincial and district government agencies in Son La and found good indications of local government support. Our findings are being assimilated into national tiger restoration plans and the province is following up with its own assessments.

**Please provide the following information where relevant:**

**Hectares Protected:**  
**Species Conserved:**  
**Corridors Created:**

***Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.***

Maintaining capacity in the face of high levels of government staff turnover was one of the greatest challenges for this project. The project was successful despite this, largely due to a reconnaissance survey during the previous year during which nearly all camera trap locations were chosen by experienced personnel.

Camera theft was also a significant issue, but we adapted to this by ensuring adequate numbers of extra cameras to replace stolen cameras, and by leaving cameras out longer to achieve a level of effort of 400-500 trap nights/100 km<sup>2</sup>.

The ongoing conflict between government and ethnic groups in Son La caused delays to our work in this province but close collaborations with central government helped us to deliver. Furthermore, the division of responsibilities on tiger conservation between MARD and MoNRE often caused unnecessary delays and complications in activities.

***Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?***  
No.

## Project Components

### **Project Components:**

#### **Component 1 Planned:**

Tiger population estimated in NEPL NPA

#### **Component 1 Actual at Completion:**

Tiger population estimated in NEPL NPA as a minimum of two individuals.

#### **Component 2 Planned:**

Long-term tiger monitoring plan developed for NEPL

#### **Component 2 Actual at Completion:**

Long-term tiger monitoring plan developed for NEPL. We recommend opportunistic monitoring using camera traps set to monitor known individual tigers. Large-scale camera trapping will provide little additional information given current tiger density.

#### **Component 3 Planned:**

Feasibility and strategic approach for improving protection of adjacent areas in Vietnam assessed and developed

#### **Component 3 Actual at Completion:**

Our assessment in Vietnam has produced critical data and analysis to guide future discussions and plans for restoring tigers to Son La and Vietnam more generally, we have provided guidance on a strategic approach and are in continuing discussions at central and provincial levels to take this forward

#### **Component 4 Planned:**

*To provide full consultation with, and informed participation of, ethnic minorities.* Prior to beginning camera trapping, Nam Et – Phou Louey management personnel met with headmen in villages adjacent to the camera trapping grids to inform them of our intended camera-trapping

activities and the purpose of these activities, and invite them to participate by providing paid porters to assist field teams.

*To avoid, minimize or mitigate potentially adverse effects of new restrictions to, and increased enforcement of, access to natural resources.* None of the project activities directly result in adverse effects such as new restrictions to, or increased enforcement of, access to natural resources. Nonetheless, one of the purposes of monitoring the NEPL tiger population is to evaluate effectiveness of conservation interventions, especially enforcement patrols, so we have taken steps to minimize and mitigate the impacts on ethnic minorities around NEPL (see next section). The project does result in benefits in the form of fees paid to porters working for monitoring teams. Currently, 18 porters have been hired to assist monitoring teams

**Component 4 Actual at Completion:**

The Nam Et – Phou Louey management personnel met with headmen in villages adjacent to the camera trapping grids to inform them of our intended camera-trapping activities. The communities were invited to participate by providing paid porters to assist field teams. Villagers were paid fair wages based on the Ministry of Labor guidelines for labor compensation.

None of the camera trapping efforts resulted in adverse effects on community's access to the natural resources. The wealth of information obtained from this camera trapping effort suggests that the populations of ungulates have increased over the last 7 years. This increase potentially will contribute to increased access to wild pigs and muntjac in the controlled use areas near the villagers.

***Were any components unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?***

No. All components were realized.

***Please describe and submit (electronically if possible) any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.***

- 1) Tiger monitoring guidelines
- 2) Sốp Cộp District, Sơn La Province: A potential tiger restoration landscape in Northern Viet Nam?

## **Lessons Learned**

***Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.***

***Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)***

Having conducted a reconnaissance survey in the previous year was critical to successful implementation because of high turnover in management staff shortly prior to project implementation. Having camera sites already chosen meant that field teams did not need extensive experience in choosing camera trap sites, which is experience that is not quickly or easily gained. Rather, teams needed only to know how to operate camera traps and GPS.

***Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)***

That village heads were not informed about camera trapping activities probably resulted in increased theft of cameras. It was initially planned that the NPA director would inform village heads, but he neglected to do so.

*Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:*

### **Additional Funding**

*Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of the CEPF investment in this project.*

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Type of Funding*</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Notes</b>
WCS	A	\$52,505	
Panthera/WCS	A	\$14,400	
Govt of Lao	A	\$1,150	

*\*Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:*

### **Sustainability/Replicability**

*Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.*

- The camera-trapping portion of this project can be easily replicated given that all camera locations and dates cameras were set and removed were recorded.
- The results from the feasibility study (including GIS analysis and stakeholder consultations) provide the baseline and framework for future interventions in this area and the approaches used can be replicated to other species and provinces as appropriate. This study has been finalized in English and is currently being translated to submit to all relevant Government Agencies

*Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.*

### **Safeguard Policy Assessment**

*Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.*

### **Additional Comments/Recommendations**

## Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, [www.cepfn.org](http://www.cepfn.org), and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

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**\*\*\*If your grant has an end date other than JUNE 30, please complete the tables on the following pages\*\*\***

**Performance Tracking Report Addendum**

**CEPF Global Targets**

**(Enter Grant Term)**

Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant.  
Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.

<b>Project Results</b>	<b>Is this question relevant?</b>	<b>If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.</b>	<b>Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.</b>	<b>Describe the principal results achieved from</b>  1 July, 2012 to 31 October, 2012  <b>(Attach annexes if necessary)</b>
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.		595,000	595,000	Changes in tiger numbers in Nam Et – Pho Louey National Protected area from 2004-2012 estimated, providing an evaluation of management interventions during that period.  NPA staff trained in tiger monitoring techniques.
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?	No			Please also include name of the protected area. If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares.		595,000	595,000	Please see #1, above.
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	No			
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.	No			

**If you answered yes to question 5, please complete the following table**



