

CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	Wildlife Conservation Society
Project Title:	Cambodia Vulture Conservation Project
Date of Report:	6 April 2010
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CEPF Region: Indochina

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

Grant Amount: \$19,730

Project Dates: 2008-2009

Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner): Wildlife Conservation Society implemented the project in partnership with the Cambodian government agencies of the Forestry Administration and the Ministry of Environment. The government is the legal authority managing the areas in which the project is based and WCS provides technical support to improve management.

Conservation Impacts

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

The Cambodia Vulture Conservation Project worked directly towards the implementation of CEPF Strategic Direction 1. We focused on conserving two priority bird species by species-focused action (CEPF Investment Priority 1.1): White-rumped *Gyps bengalensis* and Slender-billed Vultures *G. tenuirostris* by providing additional food sources at 'vulture restaurants' – food scarcity was identified as a threat to vulture conservation by the CVCP in a 2005 strategic review. The vulture restaurants also attract important numbers of Critically Endangered Red-headed Vultures as well as occasional Greater Adjutants *Leptoptilos dubius*, another priority species. We have carried out monitoring of the availability of the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory veterinary drug diclofenac, and worked with the national government to implement a ban on veterinary use of diclofenac. This will improve the long-term viability and conservation outlook for vultures in Cambodia. Additionally, we have monitored availability of other poisons and educated local communities about the effects of their use. We have used our innovative nest protection scheme to protect nests of vultures, and this has also enabled us to locate nests of other priority species including White-shouldered Ibis *Pseudibis davisoni*, a Critically Endangered species which breeds in the same season. This is carried out with the communities at each site and provides substantial local income and enables capacity building. This project has therefore also worked towards CEPF Investment Priority 2.1. Locally in Preah Vihear Protected Forest and Kulen Promtep Wildlife Sanctuary, we have improved local management capacity by engaging in participatory land use planning and linking this development to conservation agreements. This includes protection of vulture nests and has increased the sustainability of conservation efforts.

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project against the expected results detailed in the approved proposal.

The four targets listed below are those detailed in the original proposal. We comment on the success WCS has had in achieving these goals.

1. Increasing numbers of vultures in Cambodia.
This project monitored vultures regularly at vulture restaurants throughout the year and at the annual census in June 2009. We counted 266 individuals, the second highest total for all species and for the two target species individually: White-rumped and Slender-billed Vultures. The previous highest number was in 2008. Additionally, in the breeding season over the last few months (Nov 2009 – Apr 2010), it is likely that the numbers of vultures fledged as a result of project activities will be the highest recorded. Red-headed Vulture numbers remained stable; they are not obligate feeders around large carcasses and thus a smaller proportion of the total population is likely to be found at a census.
2. A ban on veterinary use of diclofenac in Cambodia.
We worked with the Department of Animal Health in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to develop a ban on the veterinary use of the drug diclofenac: this is the drug which has caused the catastrophic declines of Asian vultures across much of their former range. We helped print letters informing all veterinary workers and other people involved in animal health across the range of vultures in Cambodia. Additionally, we have been educating local people about the effect of inappropriate use of agricultural poisons on wildlife and livestock as this has now been identified as the greatest known cause of mortality of vultures in Cambodia.
3. Development of ecotourism and community support for vulture restaurants.
Ecotourism numbers suffered somewhat as a result of the economic crisis, but they have recovered towards March and April 2010. Visitors will have paid for a total of seven restaurants in Preah Vihear Protected Forest which is a substantial amount of food for these threatened species. We anticipate as public awareness grows about the site and as roads have improved recently making a one night visit to the vulture site more attractive, the numbers will increase in the future. Bookings for 2010-11 season are likely to increase according to our responsible ecotourism partner, the Sam Veasna Center.
4. Paper on Cambodia vulture project and vulture conservation in Cambodia submitted to peer-reviewed journal.
A manuscript on the vultures in Cambodia has been prepared and we are awaiting revision of ranging data from satellite tags and preparation of maps from these data. This will be submitted to BCI in due course.

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected: n/a

Species Conserved: White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis*, Slender-billed Vulture *Gyps tenuirostris*

Corridors Created: n/a

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

1. Prevent the extinction of Cambodia's vulture populations.
We have been successful in maintaining vulture population numbers by providing food at vulture restaurants as a short-term measure. The long-term corollary of this is the increased investment in conservation management we are supporting in the Northern Plains sites which will increase large mammal numbers over time. We have developed a national ban on the veterinary use of diclofenac as well as providing education about this

and other poisons across the vulture range here in Cambodia. This will aid the long-term survival of vultures in Cambodia by reducing the chance of any catastrophic loss through poisoning.

2. Restore their population size to levels consistent with their long-term survival.
We have carried out measures as described in 1 above and also to ensure that numbers increase, we have widened the impact of the nest protection scheme. Specifically, we have searched across larger areas of Cambodia to locate nests and this has been successful and found three new colonies, including one of eight nests. In total 34 nests are being protected and if they are all successful (due in April 2010), this will be highest fledging success we have monitored since the Cambodia Vulture Conservation Project was established. This is directly attributable to the support of CEPF.
3. Mitigate threats throughout their range.
As stated above, the major direct threat now, aside from limited food availability, is poisoning from inappropriate use of agricultural poisons. This has been addressed by educating people about the effects of poisons on wildlife and livestock.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

Although we had hoped we would find more vulture nests in Cambodia, the discovery of such a large colony in southern Preah Vihear province is very exciting and we are very pleased at how the local community has supported our work. The individuals involved in nest protection at this site are influential in the community and the long-term impact of involving them in vulture conservation may be very valuable.

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.

Any project intending to develop long-term sustainability needs to consider overall costs and the effectiveness and motivation of managers. Working with local communities can help to keep costs low as overheads are small. Additionally, if management is devolved to the most local level possible, then this ensures that benefits to local people are maximised and management structures are simplest and thus more effective and cheaper. We have ensured that local communities are involved in day-to-day activities including nest protection, vulture restaurants and provision of cows for restaurants. Overall, 60% of the budget of this project went to local community members (67% if indirect costs are excluded). Indirectly, this also helps develop local capacity as people learn skills associated with vulture conservation. Importantly, the development of community management received the full backing of the Royal Cambodian Government which is the competent authority at the main vulture conservation sites. This partnership is essential as it ensures that support is provided to the community by a powerful body if other powerful commercial or political interests target an area.

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

This project was designed based on a strategic review of Cambodian vulture conservation requirements developed in 2005. This helped focus the project design on the most pressing needs for short- and long-term conservation of vultures.

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

Simplicity in implementation of vulture nest protection has ensured its success and cost-effectiveness. By paying money directly to local community members we keep costs low, the poorest members of communities benefit and the main threat to vulture nests (predation by humans) is removed.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

We work in partnership with many different agencies across Cambodia. This includes three government agencies from two different ministries and four different NGOs. Additionally, two other NGOs have become interested in the work of this project as a result of its success and at least one will become involved in day-to-day vulture conservation activities as a result of the project's success. This partnership ensures that many different competencies are involved in vulture conservation here and makes it very flexible. It also helps raise awareness across the country of the plight of vultures.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
Disney	A	\$18,199	This is reduced from planned amount as donor did not renew funding.
GEF/UNDP	A	\$22,594	This donor took up the difference in project costs as a result of the above situation.
WCS	A	\$3,000	

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

- A** Project co-financing (Other donors contribute to the direct costs of this CEPF project)
- B** Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF project.)
- C** Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)

Sustainability/Replicability

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

Food availability is one of the major limitations on vultures in Cambodia. Although we hope that ecotourism can play a role in supporting provision of food, it is unlikely to become a major long-term source of food for more than a few sites. However, by combining this project with other landscape-scale site-based projects,

we are helping increase population sizes of species such as gaur, banteng, Asian elephant and other species which will provide food in the long-term. Additionally, we hope improved engagement of visitors in learning about conservation of vultures here will increase the overall investment by tourists after they have visited.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

It is likely as a result of finding new nests over the course of the project that we may have discovered new information about the nest site preferences of vultures. If a researcher were to use this for a habitat suitability analysis, it might be possible to identify additional nest sites in the country.

Safeguard Policy Assessment

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

Not required

Performance Tracking Report Addendum

CEPF Global Targets

(2008-2009)

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.

Project Results	Is this question relevant?	If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.	Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.	Describe the principal results achieved from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010. (Attach annexes if necessary)
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.	No			
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?	No			
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.	No			
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.	Yes	5 communities	5 communities	Communities living in and around main vulture sites benefited from payments for environmental services, including nest protection and vulture restaurant provision. Ecotourism as a result of development of vulture conservation activities also supported on community. All communities consist of poor local people who rely on rice and vegetable farming and NTFP collection for subsistence.

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

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.cepf.net, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

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