

CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	Wildlife Conservation Society
Project Title:	Northern Plains of Cambodia Bird Nest Protection 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: \$19,673

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 Northern Plains Bird Nest Protection Project links directly to CEPF Strategic Direction 1. It helped to conserve 8 priority bird species by species-focused action (CEPF Investment Priority 1.1): Giant *Pseudibis gigantea* and White-shouldered Ibis *P. davisoni*, White-rumped Gyps *bengalensis* and Slender-billed Vultures *G. tenuirostris*, Greater *Leptoptilos dubius* and Lesser Adjutants *L. javanicus*, White-winged Duck *Cairinia scutata* and Sarus Crane *Grus antigone*. Additionally, community conservation support have helped us protect populations of at least a further 8 priority species including Asian Golden Cat *Catopuma temminckii*, Eld's Deer *Cervus eldii*, Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus*, Clouded Leopard *Neofelis nebulosa*, Marbled Cat *Pardofelis marmorata*, Asian Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus*, Green Peafowl *Pavo muticus* and Siamese Crocodile *Crocodylus siamensis*.

Additionally, Preah Vihear Protected Forest adjoins the Mekong River where it flows from Lao PDR. The bird nest protection scheme has been active with the communities in this area ensuring that local livelihoods have been improved and capacity increased. This project has therefore also work towards CEPF Investment Priority 2.1. We have increased local management capacity by linking land use planning here to conservation agreements. This has increased local capacity of enforcement staff to effect conservation and improves the sustainability of conservation efforts.

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

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

1. Increased participation of local communities in nest protection activities

The number of communities participating in nest protection activities in 2008/9 was 21, with local payments of \$22,259 (from all sources), increasing to 23 villages in 2009/10 with local payments of \$32,204. Average payment per village went up by 40% partly as a result of increased numbers of nests and also the increased participation by communities as a result of this project. This funding was from both CEPF and other sources as well. A very large proportion of CEPF funding 59% (66% if indirect costs are excluded) went to local community members. The amounts paid, sometimes >\$300/individual, are significant relative to other sources of income in these remote rural villages, where families receive \$300-400 cash per year from other activities.

2. Increased populations of water birds across the project area.
Record numbers of nests (423) in total have been found in the past year with record productivity of chicks (739). This is in part as a result of initiatives supported by this project, including improved monitoring of Giant Ibis and also because of recovering populations of Greater and Lesser Adjutant, White-shouldered Ibis and Sarus Cranes.
3. Paper published in peer reviewed journal.
A paper describing the bird nest protection scheme including a review of its success and effects on community livelihoods as been published:

Clements, T., John, A., Nielsen, K., An, D., Tan, S. & Milner-Gulland, E.J. 2009.
Payments for biodiversity conservation in the context of weak institutions: Comparison of three programs from Cambodia. *Ecological Economics*.

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected: n/a

Species Conserved: Giant Ibis *Pseudibis gigantea*, White-shouldered Ibis *P. davisoni*, White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis*, Slender-billed Vulture *G. tenuirostris*, Greater Adjutant *Leptoptilos dubius*, Lesser Adjutant *L. javanicus*, White-winged Duck *Cairinia scutata*, Sarus Crane *Grus antigone*

Corridors Created: n/a

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

1. Encourage local people to locate, report and monitor nest sites
Numbers of communities engaged in locating, reporting and monitoring nests have increased. This has been demonstrated by monitoring number of communities and individuals involved in such payments, total payments and total numbers of nests reported and monitored.
2. Reduce the exploitation of eggs and chicks by local people
Exploitation by local people was at very low levels during the project. This has been maintained by engaging local communities as part of a long-term programme to conserve these threatened bird species. The project has been extremely effective at targeting the main identified threat to species conservation: collection of nests for eggs and chicks.
3. Increase the breeding success of threatened water birds.
Total breeding numbers and individually Giant Ibis and Lesser Adjutants are at record highs. Other species, including Greater Adjutants, Sarus Cranes, White-shouldered Ibis and White-rumped Vultures are recovering. Project activities have been successful in reversing the downward trend of Greater Adjutant nesting success and maintaining the increases of other species.

4. To produce a scientific paper on the 'Bird Nest Protection Project'

Clements, T., John, A., Nielsen, K., An, D., Tan, S. & Milner-Gulland, E.J. 2009. Payments for biodiversity conservation in the context of weak institutions: Comparison of three programs from Cambodia. *Ecological Economics*.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

An issue that has arisen is that the project has had such success in increasing breeding numbers of many species and correspondingly monitoring costs are now increasing. This is in part because of improved Giant Ibis nest detection and monitoring (as this is the most important species protected by the project), as well as increasing numbers of birds overall. We anticipate that although bird numbers will continue to increase, threats to the nests will decline over time as management continues to become entrenched into local culture and people become further educated about conservation in the landscape. Thus it may be possible to reduce this investment slightly over time. Refinements to the basic methodology will no doubt be made which will reduce costs.

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.

The bird nest protection project is extremely efficient from the point of view of its impact (number of species and total benefits for poor community members). Sustainability of this project is an important issue and we have been working to address this. Ecotourism has changed local people's understanding of the value of the threatened species in the landscape and they are now contributing to nest protection in Tmatboey, the award-winning ibis tourism site, by protecting and monitoring White-shouldered Ibis nests directly. This is direct investment by the village of revenue generated from ecotourism into nest protection. However, this covers a relatively small, albeit important, number of nests in a small area. Long-term financing from ecotourism and other sources is required for the remainder of the landscape.

We have reviewed how tourists visiting the area can be better engaged in the work we carry out and in long-term support of conservation here. People who visit the site are already interested and motivated by the birds, so by improved communications and direct contact, we should be able to improve the funding from visitors who have become more engaged in supporting conservation. This will also apply to other members of the public who visit www.wcscambodia.org and learn more about our work.

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

The project has been very successful and works smoothly. We are confident that this is a system which could be applied in other areas using local community members to locate, report and monitor nests of large birds with oversight from competent technical staff. The essential elements include the easy identification of each species, the value of the payments and the necessity of the system.

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

The very large areas and distances to be covered, the many communities and the severe flooding that took place in 2009 made this project harder to implement than planned, particularly as it had greater success in terms of numbers of nests found. Increased numbers of military personnel as a result of the border conflict have also made this harder than normal because of increased threats. However, because of the long term management investment in the Northern Plains, we have been able to engage with military commanders and control this problem. Indeed, military personnel have been confiscating cranes and other wildlife that they find being trafficked illegally and returning them to the government conservation agencies.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

A valuable lesson learnt from Clements et al. (2009) is that community bird nest protectors are able to deal with direct predation from nests, but have difficulty coping with some other threats to bird nests and colonies. The bird nest program does not directly target habitat protection, and interviews suggest that bird nest protectors are not able to protect breeding sites or feeding areas from other villagers or outsiders. For example, in 2008 some nesting trees used by Greater Adjutant were cleared by immigrants near the village of Antil. Management investment in participatory land use planning and governance in this remote area have subsequently resolved this problem, but it is clear that bird nest protection is not a stand-alone tool. It must be combined with both stronger institutional building measures such as improved land management and livelihoods development (where these can be linked to conservation agreements) as well as improved governance.

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
GEF/UNDP	A	\$39,878	
WCS in kind	A	\$4,000	

***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.

Issues related to sustainability are described above. Progress here has been good in reviewing methods of improving sustainability. This has included increased investment from tourism directly to support conservation as well as local communities investing in nest protection and monitoring.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

Bird nest protection has been effective in dealing rapidly with threats to birds. The rapid advances in combining participatory land use planning with ecotourism and ibis rice livelihood development provide a long-term secure framework for benefits sharing and thus increasing motivation of local people to protect wildlife for the long-term. This has been effectively demonstrated in a number of villages where hunting was a major livelihood activity until recently.

Safeguard Policy Assessment

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

n/a

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.

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.	n/a			Please also include name of the protected area(s). If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?	n/a			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.	n/a			
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	n/a			
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.	23			

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

If you marked "Other", please provide detail on the nature of the Community Characteristic and Socioeconomic Benefit:

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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