

The Loggerhead



A regional Southeast Asia newsletter
covering issues on environment, science, technology and health

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This edition's In the Spotlight section features *Rare*, a conservation organization inspiring local communities to take action to protect their natural resources. As the world's attention will be on the UN Climate Change Conference, this picture reminds us to think globally, act locally. Above: *Rare* Pride campaign in the Palawan islands, Philippines shows school children excited about their environmental education posters. © Rosemary Godfrey/*Rare*

U.S. Participation at UN Climate Change Conference

The 13th Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will be held in Bali, December 3-14, concurrent with the third formal conference of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (the first commitment period of which will end in 2012). The U.S. delegation at Bali will work to launch a roadmap for developing a post-2012 framework that will contribute to global agreement under the UNFCCC by being global in scope, environmentally effective, and economically sound and sustainable.

The United States recognizes the November report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that concludes both that warming of the climate system is unequivocal and that most of the observed warming during the past 50 years is very likely caused by human activity. The U.S. is part of the international consensus that the UNFCCC is the appropriate venue for negotiating future international climate efforts. In May, President Bush called for the development of a new international climate and energy security framework. Addressing Global Climate Change will require sub-

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The Southeast Asia Regional Environmental Affairs home page:

bangkok.usembassy.gov/embassy/reo.htm

stantial global reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, and the United States is committed to doing its part.

The international community has recognized the fundamental links among energy security, climate change, and sustainable development. The promotion of secure, affordable, and clean sources of energy is key—including clean coal, nuclear, biofuels, and other advanced technologies. The United States is leading the development of new technology options that have the potential to reduce, avoid, or sequester greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, the United States has spent 37 billion dollars since 2001 for climate-related science research, the development of new technologies, and international assistance programs for adaptation to climate change.

Sumatran Rhino Population Increases in 2 Parks

A 2007 survey conducted by the Rhino Protection Unit (RPU) and an organization called Yayasan Badak Indonesia found that despite overall decreases in other parts of the island, Sumatran rhino populations in Bukit Barisan Selatan National Park and Way Kambas National Park in Lampung increased by between 24 and 30 animals (to a total of 60 and 85 in each park, respectively). Coordinator of the RPU Arief Rubiyanto stated the increase was unexpected, considering the many threats to the rare animals from poachers and territorial encroachment due to illegal logging and forest conversion activities. RPU patrolling activities in both parks and the curbing of poaching contributed to the improved numbers. In recognition of his efforts, Rubiyanto received the Disney Conservation Award from the Walt Disney Corporation.

Climate Change Effects on Indonesia

As the world approaches the 13th Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, appreciating the impact of climate change in Indonesia provides useful background to understand the perspective and sense of urgency that the Indonesian delegation will bring to the negotiations in Bali.

The average worldwide temperature change over 140 years has been .75 degree Celsius, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. By comparison, looking at the available data and averaging for a 100-year period in Indonesia, the temperature change for July has been 1.40 degrees in Jakarta (West Java), 1.55 degrees in Medan (North Sumatra), 3.29 degrees in Surabaya (East Java), and 3.41 degrees in Cilacap (Central Java).

From 1925-2000, the monthly rainfall during the middle of the rainy season in Indonesia increased by an average of 18 percent. In general, rainfall increased by up to 75 mm throughout the most populated areas of Indonesia (Java, Sumatra). However, in most of Kalimantan, rainfall decreased by as much as 25 mm. The starkest decreases were in the far east of Indonesia, including Papua, ranging from 25 to over 100 mm.

According to data from the Indonesian National Agency for Meteorology and Geophysics (BMG), there has been significant increases in the variability in the start of the dry and rainy seasons in past 15 years. This extreme variability and unpredictability in the weather is hurting farmers, fishermen, and the general populace. In response, the Ministry of Environment (MOE) has identified the agriculture and fisheries sectors as its top priorities in its climate services program.

2007 Seed Award to Vietnamese Sustainable Development Project



A successful blend of traditional knowledge, science and business acumen for Vietnamese minority groups resulted in world-wide recognition. © Seed Initiative

The Seed Initiative (Supporting Entrepreneurs for Environment and Development) encourages local entrepreneurs, communities, companies and others to join forces in partnerships for sustainable development. Awarded once every two years, the Seed Awards

program publicly recognizes the contribution of innovative, entrepreneurial partnerships to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

Out of 230 applicants, the Bridging the Gap partnership in Vietnam was one of five chosen for the 2007 Seed Award. The northern mountain region of Sa Pa, one of the poorest regions in Vietnam, is rich in biodiversity, as well as cultural diversity and is an acknowledged national center of expertise in the use of traditional me-

dicinal plants. Recognizing over-exploitation as a threat to the forests, the partnership focuses on sustainable cultivation techniques of traditional medicinal plants to create high value-added products. Bridging the Gap has identified active ingredients through traditional knowledge as well as scientific testing to develop marketable products based on essential oils. Besides linking rural communities with domestic and international markets, the partnership ensures the intellectual property rights of local communities are secured. Bridging the Gap's comprehensive and participatory approach contributes both to biodiversity conservation and to improving the livelihoods of the ethnic minority groups.

The Seed Initiative is sponsored in part by the U.S. Government which hosts the Sustainable Development Partnership's website www.sdp.gov. The site provides one-stop-shopping for information regarding the U.S. Government's partnership efforts to advance economic growth, social development, and environmental stewardship in the developing world.

For more information go to: seedinit.org

Improving Energy Efficiency of Asia's Light Bulbs

Recent research by USAID's ECO-Asia Clean Development and Climate Program (CDCP) has found that up to 50% of compact florescent lamps (CFLs) produced in Asia are sub-standard, or "shoddy"—meaning that they provide less light, or burn out faster than advertised, or than required by national standards.

Recognizing the urgent need for quality control to improve energy efficiency, on October 25-26 in Bangkok ECO-Asia CDCP organized a workshop of 86 experts and officials from nine Asian countries and the United States, who endorsed the formation of the Asian CFL Quality Association. The new association will serve as a platform for developing technical and policy proposals for coordinated action to improve the quality of energy-saving CFLs sold in Asia.

The experts and officials agreed that there is an

urgent need for an umbrella association to coordinate work on CFL quality. ECO-Asia CDCP will initially serve as the Association's Secretariat and will work with key regional partners during the coming months to design and launch the Association.

The U.S. Department of State and the ASEAN Centre for Energy co-sponsored the workshop with USAID. Workshop participants included major lighting suppliers such as Philips, OSRAM, GE, and a number of smaller suppliers; national lighting associations from China, India, Indonesia, and the Philippines; international agencies and initiatives such as the International CFL Harmonisation Initiative, the Efficient Lighting Initiative, the Global Environment Facility; and national officials working in the area of energy efficiency, product standards, and product testing.

For more information go to: usaid.eco-asia.org

Curbing the Illegal Trade in Ramin Wood

What is ramin wood and why is it banned from international trade?

Ramin (*Gonystylus* spp) wood comes from peat swamp forests of Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines and highly desired because of its ease of crafting and lightness in color. Persistent smuggling of ramin, which is listed in Appendix II under the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES), means that it ends up as products sold in European and North American stores such as baby cribs, fine picture frames, pool cue sticks and window blinds. Curbing the illegal trade in ramin would help stop or slow the devastating forest loss which also translates to loss of habitat for endangered species such as orangutans. In fact, ramin grows in fragile peat swamp ecosystems, which are vulnerable to clear-cutting by companies that practice illegal logging for conversion to oil palm plantations. At border check points where the illegal ramin trade occurs, customs officials in the region do not have the capacity to identify ramin wood.

To address these concerns, the U.S. Forest Service designed a regional workshop in Singapore from October 30th - November 2nd for customs officials, representatives of CITES Management Authorities, and forestry agencies from Singa-

pore, Malaysia, Indonesia and China on practical identification techniques and distributed materials and equipment to distinguish ramin wood products in trade. The specific goals of the workshop were to provide the equipment, knowledge, and experience necessary for the participants not only to identify ramin, but also to be able to train their colleagues in the same techniques in their home countries.

The train-the-trainer workshop was made possible in part with financial support from the U.S. Department of State and USAID, and in partnership with Singapore's Agri-food and Veterinary Authority (the CITES Management Authority of Singapore), Malaysian Timber Industry Board (MTIB) and TRAFFIC.

Although Singapore and China are not countries where ramin grows, Singapore is a ramin transshipment country while China is a major ramin importing country for furniture production before re-exporting. Participation of these two countries therefore

will significantly have an impact on the fight against illegal ramin trade.

"This training program reflects an important commitment by key government agencies from the United States, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and China to work together in an effort to curb trafficking in one type of timber that everyone agrees should be controlled," noted U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Claudia McMurray, who took part in the workshop.



Jerry Kurniawan, Customs Department of Indonesia, analyzed 52 samples of wood through a 14x hand lens to determine if it is ramin wood. © TRAFFIC Southeast Asia

Pandemic Planning in Cambodia

Cambodia's National Center for Disaster Management (NCDM), the coordinating body for the implementation and management of the Comprehensive National Pandemic Plan, initiated the first steps in the Siem Reap pilot pandemic planning exercise from November 5 - 17. A pandemic planning tool developed by United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Automated Disaster and Emergency Planning Tool (ADEPT), has been identified by the NCDM and World Health Organization as the process they would like to use in the provincial pilot.

ADEPT has been developed and used for com-

prehensive, integrated national public health and hospital preparedness planning, but is currently being adapted for a multi-sectoral model for pandemic emergency response planning. Cambodia will be the first country in Southeast Asia to pilot this provincial level pandemic response planning process. Plans to pilot in Vietnam, Thailand and Laos are currently under discussion with their national partners. Support for the collaborative projects in these countries is being provided through the CDC Southeast Asia Global Disease Detection Response Network, headquartered in Bangkok, in collaboration with the CDC Emergency Response Office and the CDC Influenza Division.

Vietnam Shares Avian Flu Lessons with Egypt

In November, a delegation from the Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture, traveled to Cairo to share lessons learned in Vietnam's experience with avian influenza with Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture representatives.

Head of the delegation, Dr. Hoang Van Nam, stated that Vietnam's efforts to stop avian influenza—rapid culling, surveillance, closing urban bird markets, poultry movement control, and public awareness campaigns—have been effective, but also led to decreased poultry demand in the local market. He mentioned that Vietnam's effort to prohibit waterfowl breeding has been abandoned.

Dr. Nam said that in August 2005, Vietnam began massive, nationwide poultry vaccination program with a focus on areas of previous outbreaks. According to him, the Government administered 365 million doses of H5N1 and 275

million doses of H5N2 in Phase I (2005 - 2006) and that plans for Phase II (2007 - 2008) include 250 million H5N1 doses and 9 million H5N9 doses. He added that the vaccines currently in use, imported from China, are "acceptable" based on genetic testing and went on to explain that the Government provides vaccines free to small farmers.

In his conclusion, Dr. Nam discussed challenges such as farmer cooperation during long periods with no outbreaks, maintaining high commitment from local authorities over time, vaccine delivery to remote areas, the need to build veterinarian and epidemiology capacity, and the high costs of importing vaccines and training people in each province to administer them. He ended with comments on studies planned or underway that will examine local vaccine production, vaccine efficacy trials, risk reduction strategies for free-range ducks, the role of migratory birds, humane culling methods, and decision models for controlling outbreaks.

Future of Forests in Asia

What are the new challenges for forests in Asia and how will we adapt? What will Asia's forests look like in the future? Those questions and others were discussed at the Future of Forests in Asia and the Pacific: Outlook 2020 conference sponsored by the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission and UN Food and Agriculture Organization, October 16-18.

Old challenges of increasing population and poverty alleviation still exist; however, Asia's forests face new challenges such as increasing decentralization, urbanization, globalization and trade. Asia's increase in demand for forest products along with institutional weakness and governance issues, translates to unsustainable rates of logging in some of the world's most important forests in terms of biodiversity and providing food and shelter for forest dependent communities.

Yet, an increase in community based management, a rise in corporate and social responsibility amongst the private sector, increased cooperation in ASEAN, and the expansion of protected areas are indicators of some progress.

Asia and the Pacific saw an increase in forest cover from 2000-2005, but upon closer examination, the increase was due only to China's new, large forest plantations. The rest of Southeast Asia saw a decrease in forest cover. With deforestation as the largest source of emissions in the developing world, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD) or giving developing countries incentives to avoid deforestation, may be one viable solution among others. REDD is a top agenda item in the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference hosted by Indonesia.

The need to work collaboratively across private and public sectors, non-governmental organizations, and multilaterals cannot be overemphasized. Conference participants also underscored the importance of the links between forest issues and trade, finance and energy. Climate change may captivate the world's attention with the UN Climate Change Conference, but Asia's tropical forests are an integral part of the world's ecological health and can't be ignored when talking about climate change.

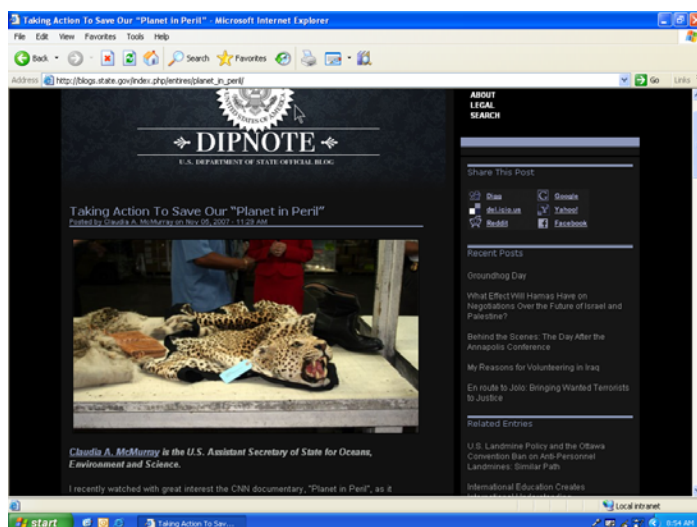
For more information go to: www.fao.org/forestry/site/39701/en/

Highlight a Website: Dipnote

The "Highlight a Website" section features an interesting site related to environment, health, science or technology that we find interesting or noteworthy. We hope to make this a regular feature and welcome suggestions for the next edition.

This edition's featured website is the U.S. Department of State's blog site called, "Dipnote" (blogs.state.gov). On November 5, Assistant Secretary Claudia McMurray discussed the fight to stop the trade of illegal wildlife and wildlife products.

To view this blog entry go to: http://blogs.state.gov/index.php/entires/planet_in_peril/



In the Spotlight: *Rare*



Rare Pride campaign's flagship species in Laos PDR was the great hornbill. © Rosemary Godfrey/Rare

Rare, a rapidly growing, U.S.-based conservation organization, works in over 40 countries to equip people in the world's most threatened natural areas with the skills and motivation they need to care for their natural resources.

Rare's flagship program is the "Pride campaign." A hybrid of traditional education and private sector marketing strategies, the campaigns inspire people to take pride in, and protect the charismatic species and natural treasures that make their regions so unique.

The 18-month campaigns are run by local leaders trained in social marketing at one of *Rare*'s university centers in the UK, Mexico, or Indonesia, and, coming in 2008, in China. *Rare* trains Pride campaign managers drawn mostly from local and international NGOs, including The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International and WWF. *Rare* also frequently forms partnerships with governments to train nature reserve managers. In Asia, *Rare* has conducted Pride campaigns in China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Lao PDR, and Thailand.

Rare has trained 120 local leaders in the developing world, whose campaigns have influenced 6.8 million people living in 2,400 remote communities. Pride campaigns have inspired communities to create new protected areas, reduce forest fires and unsustainable agriculture, launch community recycling programs and environmental groups and helped save multiple species on the brink of extinction.

Here's a Pride campaign story from Lao PDR:

After being trained by *Rare*, Soulisak Vannalath launched a Pride campaign to protect the dwindling forests near the Nam Kading Protected Area, a 939-square-mile treasure in central Laos. Vannalath used everything from billboards to pop songs to stakeholder meetings to inform villagers living near Nam Kading about the threats of habitat loss and the bushmeat trade, as well as the importance of conserving the area's precious forest resources.

His messages hit home, and local villages began to understand how forest protection had a direct impact on local livelihoods. Villagers realized that depleting forests leads to floods, landslides and increased sedimentation in rivers with a resulting decline in local fish populations—a realization that moved the community to action. Nine villages near the Tad Vangfong River worked with Vannalath and local authorities to establish a new Fish Conservation Area (FCA), the largest-ever FCA created in Laos. These villages also established sustainable management and use regulations for the FCA and proudly display signs that mark the area as a designated fish conservation zone. The success of Vannalath's Pride campaign has inspired other area villages to establish their own FCA.

Vannalath received the 2006 *Rare* Grant for Continuing Conservation award which will help ensure that momentum he generated during his campaign is sustained in the long-term.

For other great *Rare* stories go to: www.rareconservation.org



Pride campaign manager, Soulisak Vannalath (right), invented a game to show communities the link between forest cover and runoff. © Rare

Upcoming Events

December 2007

- World AIDS Day, December 1
- UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, December 3-14, 2007, Bali, Indonesia (<http://unfccc.int/2860.php>)
- IPAPI Ministerial Conf on Avian and Pandemic Influenza, December 4-6, 2007, New Delhi, India
- Greater Mekong Subregion Academic and Research Network, December 12-14, 2007, Pattaya, Thailand (www.gmsarn.org)
- Sustainable Forest Management and Poverty Alleviation: Roles of Traditional Forest-related Knowledge, December 17-20, Kunming, Yunnan Province, China (www.apafri.org)

January 2008

- International Coral Reef Initiative General Meeting and launch of the International Year of the Reef, January 22-25, Washington, DC (www.icriforum.org/router.cfm?show=html/login.htm)
- Bangkok International Conference on Avian Influenza: Integration from Knowledge to Control, January 23-25, Bangkok, Thailand (www.biotec.or.th/AIConf2008/home/index.asp)

February 2008

- Health of Marine Ecosystems of Southeast Asia, Towards an Integrated and Holistic Strategy, AEHMS, February 18-20, Hanoi, Vietnam (www.aehms.org)
- Forest Insects as Food: Humans bite back, February 19-21, Chiang Mai, Thailand, (www.fao.org/forestry/site/33592/en/)

March 2008

- Washington International Renewable Energy Conference (WIREC 2008), March 4-6, 2008 (www.wirec2008.gov)

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