

Brief on two month-survey of Wildlife Hunting in Phong Dien nature reserve

In June and July 2001, the project team including project leader and two local people, in collaboration with Phong Dien Forest Protection Department, have conducted hunting surveys in core zone and buffer zone of Phong Dien nature reserve. This was within the framework of project entitled “Understanding the impacts of hunting on Edwards's Pheasant *Lophura edwardsi* at Phong Dien Nature Reserve, Vietnam: towards a strategy for managing hunting activities” funded by Withley Award Foundation for International Nature Conservation.

Research methods were used to collect information

Wildlife survey is sensitive issue required that a series of different approaches be used to obtain the most accurate information possible from different groups of people. Following methods have been used to collect information throughout the two months of survey.

Interview authorities

Members of Forest Protection Department (FPD), commune leaders were interviewed to assess the challenges faced when trying enforce the wildlife hunting/trade regulations in the area. The authorities also helped in support interviewer promptly find the “hotpot” villages and a list of people involved in hunting at high level.

Interaction with villagers and hunters

By acquainting with villagers, leader of the village, hunters/trappers (hereinafter called hunters) and wildlife traders were introduced. Villagers also helped to cross-check obtained information. During initial meetings with hunters in the core buffer zone area, the team was accompanied by a local guide. The guide would take part in the introduction and emphasise the scientific nature of the study. This helped to reassure the interviewees that there was little threat posed by speaking with the team.

Interview were made as informal as possible, starting with general question about themselves, their family, their village, Phong Dien nature reserve, and conservation awareness activities took place in the area. This helped to obtain useful background information on the respondent's standard of living as well as establish their knowledge of wildlife hunting and trading activities.

In order to gain systematic and comparable data a designed questionnaire (see attachment) were used for each hunters or traders during the interview.

Generally, the local in the buffer zone communes were very familiar with survey teams, therefore were unlikely to challenge the team's motives.

Interview wildlife traders

The team was introduced to traders by acquaintance and villagers, hunters, to reassure them the team posed no threat. It was explained that the purpose of the visit was to observe and study the different animal species in the area. A questionair was also designed for each wildlife trader. Conservation was once made as informal as

possible and questions were easily directed towards the trade topic. Traders were visited several time throughout the survey period, pursuing more detailed question regarding the trade in each metting, and to observe the hunted animal if possible. Occationally trader could provide accurate names of other traders, hunters as contacts for futher infomation.

Snaring survey in the forest

In June and July 2001 project team in collaboration with Phong Dien district FPD conducted two field surveys with total of 20 days in order to move snares/traps and to enforce forest protection regulation on other illegal activities. This helped to confirm information provided by hunters and traders, and better understand the situation of hunting in the Phong Dien nature reserve.

Preliminary observation

During the survey period, 8 villages were visited in three buffer zone communes in Phong Dien District. Of which Tan My, Khe Tran, Ha Long were primary focused. Total 46 people, comprising 28 hunters, 7 wildlife traders and 11 well known villagers, were interviewed. Majority were farmers.

Data collected during this survey will be used to produce the final report, however, based on obtained information and according to their different purposes for hunting, it suggests that five groups of people were identified as key performers in hunting and trading activities in three buffer zone communes Phong Son, Phong Xuan, Phong My in Phong Dien District.

(i) Hunters: group of people do hunting for commercial purpose and they are commercially associated with wildlife traders and wild meat restaurant. This group is also distinguished into two smaller groups:

- People themselves do hunting traditionally in their free time. Of this group, most come from local people both minority and Kinh (major Vietnamese). All animal species are possibly hunted by this group.
- People do hunting to order of wildlife traders. Contrary to prior group, most of hunters are Kinh people from neighbour areas, normally from three neighbour provinces Quang Binh, Quang Tri, Quang Nam. They are also commercially associated with external traders. Hunters stay long time in the forest and their hunting objectives are valuable species such as Bears, Tigers, Gibbons, Jellow tortoise. Five hunters from Quang Binh province were observed in the forest during survey.

(ii) Loggers: Phong Dien nature reserve supports number of valuable timber tree species. This resources continues to be extracted at high level, even though this activity is illegal. Loggers went in party and stay long time, at least one month, in the forest. During logging time they were also involved in hunting in order to increase source of protein in thei meals. Loggers and their tent were frequently observed in main stream and in block of good forest in the Phong Dien nature reserve (see attached picture). Similar to hunters, loggers were poor people while logging were high risk, so most of them were prepaid by timber traders for logging to order.

(iii) Opportunistic hunters: Most of this group are local villagers who live in the villages closed to the forest. They hunted and trapped individually or in smal groups in the forest at certain times of the year, normally after the harvest. Villagers also go to set the traps near their houses and return to check on next day. They also collect animals by chance when either they are protecting their field or when they go into the forest looking for other forest products. Animals were trapped for both domestic consumption and sale depend upon species.

(iv) Wildlife traders: Villager or town people who act as a mid-way point between local hunters in surrounding villages and larger traders in Hue city or beyond. They are a collecting, holding and re-distributing point for

animals in surrounding area. They have links with traders in other areas within and outside their district. They are also play role as a pre-finance supporter to hunters.

(v) Wild meat restaurants: Wild meat restaurants are normally located in town or commune centre, averagely one in each commune. The restaurants serve in public meat of common hunted species such as wild pigs, munjacts, serows, saranus. They bought both dead and alive animals.

Current situation of trapping activities in the forest

In first survey from 11/6/01-21/6/01, survey team have discovered 250 wire snares used to catch large mammals, in the forest area near stream junction of Tam Dan and Rao Trang. This is a "hotpot" of hunting in Phong Dien nature reserve. It was noticeable that traps were only managed by a trapper Nguyen Anh living in neighbour Huong Tra district. In tis survey, 170 soft snares used to cacth birds were also discovered. All traps have been confiscated and destroyed.

In ten days of next survey (28/6/01-8/7/01), on the path to other "hotpot" area of junction of Khe Lau stream and 15 trail (it was famous Ho Chi Minh trail in American War), survey team also discovered 86 box traps, 130 wire snares in the forest. In addition survey team have confiscated a number of hunted animals from hunters (will be detailed discription in final report). Hunters who were observed in the forest did hunting commercially and most of them came from neighbour district and provinces.

The collected data reveals that wildlife hunting in Phong Dien nature reserve are at unsustainable level.

General assessment

Hunting and trapping of wildlife have long been customary activities in this area. In spite of conservation awearness programme, hunting remains a widespread and common activity and pose the most significant threat to a number of mammal and bird species of critical conservation concern of Phong Dien nature reserve. Wire snare is a common trapping method that is used popularly while hunting activity with guns is likely to be great lower than years following second Indochina War. This not only because of the decline in shifting cultivation but also because there were many guns available after war, and these were used widely for hunting. However, many of these have been confiscated or returned to various government agencies. Furthemore, the sharp decline in mammal abundance during and after the war has deterred many hunters: there are no noe fewer animals to hunt. Low mammal abundance may also help explain the increased use of snares. Snares are extremely cheap, can be used to capture a wide range of mammals and birds, and allow animal to be captured alive with less investment of time and effort. By using wire snares, villagers trap and collect an extremely wide range of species: it would seem that most species of mammal and bird are taken when the opportunity arises.

Efforts to control on-going hunting have met little success so far. The FPD has few resources with which to enforce controls on hunting, or incentives to do so. A recent WWF-supported "awareness" since 1999, initiative led to some short-term removal of snares in the forest and propagation of conservation awareness in buffer zone communities and schools. It seems to have generated considerable local support. However, to be effective, hunting management efforts will need to be sustained and beside increasing awearness activities, the enforcement of wildlife trade regulation needs to be strengthened focusing on wildlife traders and commercial hunters.

Questionnaire for hunting survey in Phong Dien nature reserve



Introduction (Establishment of Phong Dien nature reserve, objectives of survey ...)

Date:

Respondent details

Name Age Ethnic

Classification Village hune

Time of settlement:

General hunting/trapping activities

1. What animal species have hunted or observed in this forest area?

Species (1)	Where was the last time observed ? How to observe? (2)	Use (3)	Sell (4)	Status (5)	
				Presently	in 1990
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					

2. Above mentioned species, what were commonly hunted/trapped? How to catch them?

3. Current occurrence status of above species in forest of Phong Dien: (use to fill column (5))

Species:

Extinct ①

rare ①

Uncommon ②

Common ③

(extinct: no specimens encountered for five years, rare: one to four specimens, uncommon: 4-10 specimens, and Common: over 10 encountered per year)

- compare to 1990 (10 years ago):

Sharp decrease (- -)

Slight decrease (-)

similar (=)

Increase (+)

Explaining why:

4. Seasons for hunting/trapping? What is the best period?

5. How many times did you go hunting per year? How many days in each time?

compare to 10 years ago: lesser 0 similar 0 more 0

explain why:

6. What methods did you usually use to catch animals? (describe each method and what animals will be caught):

- Other methods you have known:

- How many traps (snares, boxes) did you use each time?

- Did you make traps yourself or you buy it from others? How much did it cost?

7. Where did you often set the traps? (describe the location, habitat types)

8. In your village, how many people who do hunting/trapping do you know?

- compare to 10 years ago: lower 0 similar 0 higher 0

-Explain why:

Edwards's Pheasant Interview

9. Have you observed Edwards's Pheasant (Local name Ga Loi Lam)?

10. Do you know other pheasant species? (check by pictures and fill the below table)

Species (1)	Where the last observation made? and How? (2)	Satus	
		Presently	1990
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

11. When was the last time you observed the Edwards's Pheasant and above species? Where and How? (describe location and habitat types) (use to fill column (2)).

12. What is current situation of mentioned species in the area? (fill the column (3))

Extinct ① *rare* (one or two encountered a year) ①

uncommon (three to five encountered) ② *common* (more than five) ③

compare to 10 years ago:

sharply decrease (- -) *slightly decrease* (-) similar (=) *increasing* (+)

explaining:

13. How often did you observe Edwards's Pheasant in the forest?

one time per year 0 one to five 0 whenever go to the forest 0

- How do you recognize Edwards's Pheasant in the forest? and other pheasant species?

14. Edwards's Pheasant was objective of hunting/trapping, wasn't it? yes 1 no 1

explain why:

15. What methods were used to catch Edwards's Pheasant and other birds?

16. Were Edwards's Pheasant and other birds accidentally caught by other traps?

yes 1 no 1

why kind of traps:

17. Edwards's Pheasant were caught alive or dead?

18. What happened to hunted/trapped Edwards's Pheasant?

sell 1 *eat* 1 *feed as a pet* 1

other purpose:

19. If sell, where did you sell and what prices?

Other information

20. How do you rank your household economy compare to other households in the village ?

hunger 1 *poverty* 1 *medium* 1 *higher medium* 1

explain ranking:

21. What is the most obstacle to the development of your household economy?

22. How important were hunting products to your household?

21. Have you heard about the establishment of Phong Dien nature reserve?

- What are your point of view to this plan?

22. Do you have any ideas to control the wildlife hunting in the area?

23. Do you know any programme/projects taking place in the area?

If so

- Did people support the programme/projects?

ñĩng hé / kh«ng quan t©m / kh«ng ñĩng hé /

- *How people were involved in the activities of programme/project?*

- *What did people learn from above activities?*

- *To be effective, do you have any recommendations?*

Note