

# **\*\*NEWS RELEASE\*\***

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## **Cambodia Creates First Park to Protect Carbon and Wildlife Forest stores carbon and provides key habitats**

### **For monkeys, tigers, and elephants**

### **Wildlife Conservation Society conducted key research**

### **That led to park's creation**

### **Creation of park is part of WCS's new**

### **"Carbon for Conservation" initiative**

**NEW YORK (October 22, 2009)** — The government of Cambodia has transformed a former logging concession into a new, Yosemite-sized protected area that safeguards not only threatened primates, tigers, and elephants, but also massive stores of carbon according to the Bronx Zoo-based Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), which worked closely with governmental agencies to help create the protected area.

The Royal Government's Council of Ministers recently declared the creation of the Seima Protection Forest, which covers more than 1,100 square miles along Cambodia's eastern border with Vietnam.

"We commend the Royal Government of Cambodia for their decision to protect this important refuge for the region's wildlife and also for safeguarding stocks of carbon," said WCS Asia Program Director Colin Poole.

Seima is the first protected area in Cambodia created with the conservation of forest carbon as one of its key goals. WCS is helping to measure carbon stocks contained in Seima Protection Forest to calculate the total amount of carbon dioxide emissions that will not be released to the atmosphere as a result of the project's work on reducing deforestation.

This effort will support WCS's "Carbon for Conservation" initiatives to help provide incentives to people to protect their forest in high-biodiversity landscapes, which are being developed in conjunction with negotiations on a proposed international policy known as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD). In addition to work in Cambodia, WCS is supporting similar efforts in Bolivia, Guatemala, Chile, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Madagascar, and Indonesia.

"In addition to safeguarding the wildlife of Cambodia, Seima Protection Forest will serve as an important model for demonstrating how REDD could be implemented on the ground," said Dr. Jane Carter Ingram of WCS's Conservation Support Team. "Forests provide numerous benefits for both wildlife and rural communities, so efforts such as these will help on local, regional and global scales."

The newly designated protected area contains 23 species of carnivore, including seven cat species, two bears, and two species of wild dog. Researchers have recently discovered species new to science, including one species of bat and two species of frog.

Seima will also continue to benefit local hunters and farmers from the Bunong ethnic minority, who have used the forest for many generations and will retain access in the newly designated protected area.

In addition to providing assistance to the Royal Government in the wildlife surveys used to establish Seima, WCS also works with law enforcement agencies to strengthen on-the-ground protection and engages with local communities on issues integral to balancing conservation with sustainable development such as land titling and natural resource usage.

The Wildlife Conservation Society's conservation work in this area is supported by: Asian Development Bank, Eleanor Briggs, Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA), Department for International Development (DFID) United Kingdom, The East Asia and Pacific Environmental Initiative, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Liz Claiborne and Art Ortenberg Foundation, New Zealand Aid, Panthera, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and The World Bank.

**The Wildlife Conservation Society** saves wildlife and wild places worldwide. We do so through science, global conservation, education and the management of the world's largest system of urban wildlife parks, led by the flagship Bronx Zoo. Together these activities change attitudes towards nature and help people imagine wildlife and humans living in harmony. WCS is committed to this mission because it is essential to the integrity of life on Earth. Visit [www.wcs.org](http://www.wcs.org).

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