

## News

### Southern Cardamom REDD+ project launched

The Cardamom Rainforest Landscape is critical for biodiversity conservation and ecosystem services, supporting more than 50 IUCN threatened vertebrate species while being Cambodia's most important watershed and largest climate regulator and carbon sink. The Southern Cardamom REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) Project is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Environment of the Royal Government of Cambodia, Wildlife Alliance and Wildlife Works Carbon and will provide sustainable long-term financing to support the protection of almost 500,000 hectares in the Southern Cardamom National Park and Tatai Wildlife Sanctuary, Koh Kong Province. We estimate that the project will generate avoided emissions of more than 115 Million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e over its 30 year lifespan. Project activities will include effective and results-based law enforcement patrolling combined with community development activities, particularly community-based ecotourism and sustainable agricultural development which will address the drivers of deforestation in the landscape. A fund will also be provided to support scholarships for children from project communities to address one of the critical drivers of poverty in the landscape: low education rates and limited opportunities for post-primary school education. Developed under the Voluntary Carbon and Climate, Community and Biodiversity standards for the voluntary carbon market as one of the Ministry of Environment's three REDD+ pilot projects, the project is designed to be fully aligned with the Cambodian National REDD+ Strategy and thus eligible for future compliance carbon payments. Full documentation regarding the project can be found at <http://www.vcsprojectdatabase.org/#/ccb-all-project-details/PL1748> and <https://www.wildlifealliance.org/redd/>

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### A new marine conservation research scholarship for Cambodian university students

In the 2014 issue of the *Cambodian Journal of Natural History*, Kathe R. Jensen and Ing Try drew attention to circumstances hindering effective science-based management of Cambodia's marine environments. Issues such as a lack of meaningful funding for basic ecological research and low involvement of Cambodian nationals in such programmes have arguably led to a lack of interest in the field and shortages in related capacity. At the same time, the traditional way of life of many coastal communities is increasingly threatened by rapid development and uncontrolled resource extraction which have the potential to devastate marine ecosystems if not properly mitigated. As a consequence, strong understanding of the ecological and socio-cultural circumstances of a given region is necessary to make well-informed management decisions, and where information is lacking, the ability to conduct research is crucial.

The PADI Foundation Scholarship for Cambodian Marine Conservation Research has been founded to develop pertinent research capacity in Cambodia. Thanks to financial support from the PADI Foundation in California, Cambodian university students will have the opportunity to conduct fully-funded thesis research with Marine Conservation Cambodia (MCC). The scholarships will cover all costs for a several-month stay in the coastal region of Kep, where experienced MCC staff will provide training in scuba diving and survey methods for marine life, thereby strengthening interest and expertise in marine ecology. Students will acquire multiple scuba certifications and complete a research project on any aspect of marine conservation science agreed upon by the student, MCC and academic supervisors. Students should aim to become culturally-competent leaders in local marine conservation and to establish a self-sustaining, regional interest in Cambodia's marine environments. Further information can be obtained from the contact person below.

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