

Protection for Javan Rhino in Vietnam improves, but unfortunately too late for one individual, which may be the last

By Sarah Brook WWF Vietnam

In response to the somewhat poor recent implementation by Cat Tien National Park and the Forest Protection Department of the snare removal patrolling in Cat Loc, WWF agreed with CTNP to send an enforcement consultant to the park, to provide training for the rangers in GIS use, data collection and snare removal methodology and to supervise patrolling in the field.

This was a great success, with far greater patrolling effort and coverage achieved, with more than 30 large snares removed from the park during this monthly patrol and several long snare lines destroyed.

The rhino survey, conducted at the same time as the snare removal, really helped to determine the level of threat to wildlife within Cat Loc. Extensive long lines of snares were found in some locations within the core zone, with animal remains in some.

In addition to this, large snares were fairly frequently found strategically positioned along large animal trails, including a trail leading to a wallow used predominantly by rhino. Hunting camps were encountered on each visit to some of the wallow and swamp areas, where animals will visit more frequently during the dry season and hence attract professional hunters to the area.

Hunting camps were destroyed by patrols and the survey teams with each encounter, but unfortunately were always re-erected before the next visit, with patrolling effort currently not being high enough to



Snares removed from Cat Loc during one day's survey by the rhino survey team, including one large snare, for Gaur and other large mammals

afford complete protection to Cat Loc's wildlife.

Nothing emphasises this more by the tragic find of a rhino skeleton in late April. Local villagers found the skeleton of a large mammal when in the forest harvesting seasonal nuts. They reported this to a friend who called the Forest Protection Department, who went to the site to retrieve the remains. The skeleton was confirmed as a rhino, a bullet was found in the lower leg and the horn had been forcibly removed, pointing to poaching being the culprit.

WWF are now working with the authorities to ensure that a full criminal investigation is undertaken, to try to bring the perpetrators to justice.



Remains of a mousedeer found in Cat Loc, victim of snaring.



CTNP rangers destroying a recently used hunting camp