



INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION SCIENCE & EXPLORATION PROGRAM



By elephant back into Hukaung valley

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Highlights

Total Area

- 2,470 mi²
- 6,400 km²

Habitat Types

- rainforest

Wildlife Present

Birds

- great hornbill
- wreathed hornbill
- rufous-necked hornbill
- Green peafowl
- Ruddy-shell ducks
- white-winged wood duck

Mammals

- Leaf deer
- tiger
- Asian elephant
- sambar deer
- Asiatic black bear
- clouded leopard
- macaques
- langurs
- wild pig
- hoolock gibbon

Plants

- rattans
- orchid

WCS involvement

- since 1993



WCS in Myanmar

In 1993, WCS became the first International NGO to initiate a program in the Union of Myanmar. Staffed entirely by Burmese nationals, WCS implements a variety of conservation activities across the country. A primary aim is to work with the Government to increase the area under parks and reserves. To this end, WCS conservationists and Forestry Department staff have surveyed some of the most pristine and isolated forests in the region. One area, the Hukaung Valley, is located in the northern forests of Myanmar. Hukaung contains healthy populations of threatened wildlife including a species new to science, the leaf deer, discovered during surveys in 1996.

The Human Aspect

Few people live directly within the Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, although many live within the Valley itself. Due to seasonal flooding, most people live on the edges of the sanctuary and venture into the park to hunt and collect forest products. The Lisu people, traditionally excellent hunters, will move through the sanctuary for weeks hunting for tigers and meat to sell.

Threats

Hunting remains the biggest threat to the ecosystem and commercial hunting threatens many species, especially tigers. With the Valley placed at the crossroads of India, Myanmar, and China, Hukaung is a growing source of endangered species for international trade. Gold mining has also become a threat to the sanctuary, as economic concerns force local people to find sources of income.

Management, Research, and Ecotourism in Iguela, Coastal Gabon

Protection of Langoue Bai from Logging: Establishment of a New National Park, Gabon

Establishment of Protected Area System, Gabon

Exploratory Surveys, Bhutan

Survey of Endangered Mammals, India

Research on Mongolian Gazelles in the Eastern Steppes, Mongolia

Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, Myanmar

Marco Polo Sheep in the Pamir, Tajikistan

Kaeng Krachen National Park, Thailand

Chang Tang Wildlife Surveys and Reserve Planning, Tibet

Biodiversity Conservation in the Himalayas, Tibet

Exploratory Surveys, Turkey



Newly discovered leaf deer

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WCS Activities

In spite of the enormous challenges facing wildlife conservation in Myanmar, the northern forest complex, which contains the Hukaung Valley, provides an important opportunity for conservation. A dedicated team of Burmese nationals, trained by WCS conservationists, conducted tiger and wildlife surveys across Myanmar. After three years of surveys, the Hukaung Valley stood out as one of the best remaining areas for wildlife in the country, particularly for tigers. Data collected were recently compiled and incorporated into a *National Tiger Action Plan for the Union of Myanmar* (funded by the ExxonMobil sponsored Save the Tiger Fund). Acting on the *Plan's* recommendations, WCS and Forestry Department staff are surveying the entire Hukaung Valley to determine the abundance of tigers and their prey in the region, especially outside the sanctuary. The goal of this survey is to create a large tiger reserve, with the Wildlife Sanctuary as the core, and protected forest surrounding it to act as a buffer to human encroachment. Additionally, research has been initiated on the impact of hunting on the sanctuary's wildlife, and the role of wildlife in local economies.

Important Next Steps

The Hukaung Valley Tiger Reserve, when created, will be the largest tiger reserve in the world, spanning an area of up to 12,000 km². While much remains to be done to turn this reserve into a functioning protected area, WCS is committed to supporting the reserve. Next steps include:

- Monitoring abundance of tigers and other wildlife in the region;
- Training park rangers and other indigenous ethnic groups in park protection and monitoring techniques to increase protection of the sanctuary and data collection;
- Increasing protection of the area by expanding the protected area into neighboring valleys;
- Improve public awareness and develop education curricula addressing the importance of tiger and wildlife conservation to increase support from local people.

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Mission

The Wildlife Conservation Society's International Conservation program saves wildlife and wild lands by understanding and resolving critical problems that threaten key species and large, wild ecosystems around the world.

WCS Strategies

- Site-based conservation
- Research
- Training and capacity-building
- New model development
- Informing policy
- Linking zoo-based and field-based conservation

Support this Project!

Donations can be sent to the attention of:
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