



# Conserving small carnivores in Vietnam



Trần Quang Phương, Nguyễn Văn Nhuận, Nguyễn Văn Thái, Leanne Clark, Scott Robertson



The Small carnivore Conservation Program (SCP) of Cuc Phuong National Park is a unique centre working to improve the conservation of small carnivores in Vietnam.

The SCP was established in 1995 when two young Owston's Civets were confiscated from hunters and bought to Cuc Phuong National Park.

The program receives support from a range of international donors, regional zoological associations, IUCN/SCC Specialist groups and is endorsed by the World Association of Zoos and Aquaria (WAZA).



Owston's civet (*Chrotogale owstoni*)



In 2003 nine restaurants were surveyed in one city in Vietnam. An estimated 350 civets were sold each month.

Vietnam hosts a diverse range of small carnivore species, including, Owston's civet, Large-spotted civet, Spotted linsang, Fishing cat, Marbled cat, Asian Golden Cat, and Stripe-backed weasel.

Small carnivores are among Vietnam's most threatened species, with eleven species included in the IUCN Red List 2004.

The major threat is the illegal hunting and wildlife trade, with a continually growing demand for animal products as traditional medicines, pets, ornaments, and particularly for meat in wildlife meat restaurants.

Given the abundance of wildlife meat restaurants in Vietnam, this practice poses a serious threat small carnivore conservation in the region.

Valerie White Charitable Trust

## Breeding and Rescue Centre for Owston's Civets

Since 1995, Owston's Civets have been cared for in captivity in Cuc Phuong. Over time, 14 Owston's civets have been rescued from wildlife traders, and 33 animals have been born within the centre.



In 2005 the International Breeding Loan Program was initiated. We now have six civets (one confiscated animal and five born in Cuc Phuong) now living in three different zoos in the UK.



Masked palm civet caught on camera trap in Cuc Phuong

## Field program

The distribution of small carnivores in Vietnam is poorly understood.

The SCP uses hunter interviews, camera trapping, night spotting and other survey techniques to identify priority areas for small carnivore species.

This information helps to shape management guidelines and conservation action plans for protected areas in Vietnam.

## Raising Awareness

Foreign and domestic visitation to Vietnam's national parks is increasing. In partnership with Cuc Phuong's tourism department, the SCP has implemented a program to develop understanding of the value and threats to small carnivores in Vietnam. The program has included Visitor questionnaires, Interpretive trail signs, workshops and training tour guides.



Ranger training in Cuc Phuong National Park

## Student and Ranger training

The SCP runs a training program for university students and Vietnamese rangers. Training is provided in small carnivore survey techniques and wildlife

protection laws. Both national and international laws are covered. Over 200 Vietnamese forest rangers have been trained in small carnivore conservation and protection.

