

NATIONAL

Threatened Birds, Mammals Found in Oddar Meanchey Forests

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Oddar Meanchey province's forests are home to nine globally threatened mammals and seven threatened bird species, a new survey released Friday found.

The wildlife assessment of Oddar Meanchey's forest, carried out by Pact Cambodia, Birdlife International and the Forestry Administration, recorded 174 different bird species and 26 mammal species in four community forest areas covering about 34,000 hectares.

Nine of these mammals are listed on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species, such as the Sun Bear and the Northern Pig-tailed Macaque.

Three other endangered species were also recorded: the Pileated Gibbon, the Sunda Pangolin and the Banteng.

Threatened bird species recorded include the Green Peafowl, the Greater and Lesser Adjutant and the Great Slaty Woodpecker.

The findings will help generate global climate change funding for a carbon finance project in the province, which aims to protect 64,000 hectares of forest, project



Oddar Meanchey Biodiversity Assessment 2011
A Golden Jackal at Sorng Rokavorn community forest, one of 26 mammals found in Oddar Meanchey province in a new survey.

staff said.

Pact's community forestry program director Amanda Bradley said the survey was important for the project, which uses carbon funding from the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation mechanism.

REDD allows industrialized countries to offset their greenhouse gas emissions by funding forest protection in developing countries.

Ms Bradley said high levels of biodiversity would help generate more

REDD funding for the project, which since 2008 has worked on mapping and protecting 13 community forest areas covering 64,000 hectares in Oddar Meanchey.

"We hope that the assessment will mean the project gets a gold level certification.... [Then] project credits are higher priced," she said. "We're hoping to bring the project to the [carbon credit] market this year."

Ms Bradley said the project was expected to generate \$30 million during the next three decades.

Sa Thlai, the chief of Oddar Meanchey's community forest network, said local villagers were employed to prevent illegal land clearing and wildlife hunting, adding that villagers were allowed to collect nontimber products such as rattan and edible vegetables from the forest.

But he said an influx of migrant families and families of RCAF soldiers stationed along the border with Thailand were putting pressure on the forests.

"It is very hard for communities to conserve the forest because of lack of transportation and means," he said.

Keo Omaliss, deputy director at the Ministry of Environment's wildlife and biodiversity department, said the project in Oddar Meanchey was far ahead of four other REDD projects under way in the country.

Mr Omaliss also said the government learned Friday that it would receive \$3.6 million from an international donor organization, the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, to help the further develop its national policy on carbon finance projects.

He said the support was "a breakthrough," as it would help bolster forest protection in Cambodia, which had suffered from declining support in recent years.