



Gift of the United States Government



"Everything is not as beautiful as we wish but it'll be motivating us to move forwards and not to give up"

Pham Ngoc Thao

The fifth cohort (school year 2017-2022)

Major: Law

A story of a new generation of prosecutors to combat wildlife trafficking (CWT)



OVERVIEW

Funded by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), the US Department of State since 2018, WCS has worked closely with the Ha Noi Procuratorate University (HPU), the primary training institution of the Viet Nam's Supreme People's Procuracy (SPP), to enhance capacity of future prosecutors in the process of exercising the right to prosecute and supervise judicial activities in handling violations related to endangered and rare animals through integrating and institutionalizing counter wildlife trafficking (CWT) into the university's training curricula. Since HPU was officially established in 2013 - formerly known as the Hanoi Procuracy College, every year, the HPU organizes enrolment and pre-service education, major in law, for about 500 undergraduate and postgraduate students. At the same time, HPU also provided intensive professional training and in-service training courses for about 2,000-2,500 officers and prosecutors. Currently, HPU's training curricula include very limited contents on wildlife crime as part of the environmental and economic crimes section of the criminal legislation module.

500

undergraduate and postgraduate students participate in pre-service education annually

2,000-2,500

officers and prosecutors are provided in-service training courses annually

The role of people's procuracy in handling wildlife-related cases



During 2019-2020, WCS supported HPU to develop an elective course **"The role of people's procuracy in handling criminal wildlife-related cases"** of the Professional Education Knowledge Section. This course then become an official course in the training program for undergraduate students in Law of the HPU according to Decision No. 402/QĐ-T2-DT of the HPU's Rector dated June 19, 2019. Then, in Decision No. 1142/QĐ-T2-DT dated December 22, 2020, the HPU's Rector assigned the Faculty of Criminology and Criminal Investigation to deliver this course to HPU's students from the academic year 2021 – 2022.

The textbook and lesson plan for the course were developed and pretested with more than 50 fourth-year students of the fifth cohort (school year of 2017-2022) at the HPU in January 2021. The HPU also included the topic on wildlife crime in the list of research topics for its students' research competition in the school year of 2020-2021. Among 18 groups registered to participate in the competition, the group of students including Nguyen Duc Tai, Le Van Cong, Phan Thi Kieu Lan and Lo Thi Hong Hanh chose to work on *"Violations in management and protection of endangered and rare wildlife – Theoretical and practical issues"*. This research was awarded the third prize by the assessment of the Council for Scientific Research Award for students at the university level.

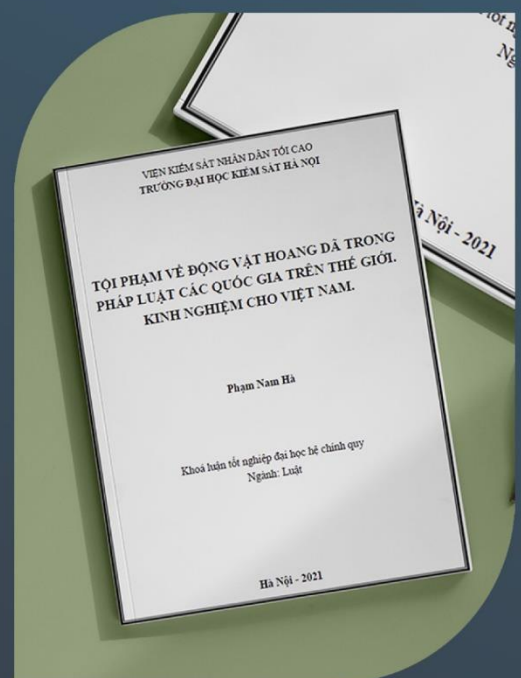
Especially, among 74 students who were selected to write graduation thesis (out of 395 students of the fifth cohort), 2 students chose to look deeper into the wildlife trafficking topics - Pham Nam Ha, “*Wildlife crime in the international legal framework and lesson learned for Viet Nam*” and Pham Ngoc Thao, “*Wildlife crime prevention in Viet Nam*”. One of these two students, Ms. Pham Ngoc Thao, noted “Until now I know that wildlife plays an important role in human life, so I decided to choose a topic related to wildlife conservation, first of all to raise my awareness, then to contribute to educating and disseminating laws and practice the rights to prosecution in handling wildlife crime”.

With support from WCS staff, providing her with references and illegal wildlife trade (IWT) data, Thao completed her thesis with 3 chapters on the situation of wildlife crime in Viet Nam in the period of 2015-2019 together with associated causes and forecasting the situation of wildlife crime and solutions to improve quality of CWT work in Viet Nam.

Thao wishes that she could have had the chance to present her understanding of the IWT issues and her thesis to law enforcement and judicial officers and the public audience to call their attention and emphasize the importance of CWT efforts, and the role of all citizens in wildlife protection. However, this was prevented by COVID-19 restrictions. “With the acquired knowledge, I hope to be able to contribute my humble energy to the conservation of wildlife to save the endangered and rare species of both Viet Nam in particular and in the world in general to ensure that criminals and offenders of wildlife abuse are detected and handled promptly, strictly, with the right people, with the right crime, and in accordance with the law”, Thao stated.

In August 2021, WCS and HPU organized a training course on cooperative teaching methods with the participation of learners to update and strengthen teaching skills for permanent and visiting lecturers. Subsequently, in the middle of November 2021, an advanced training for trainer course on skills for designing class activities was also held for more than 40 lecturers of the HPU’s Department of Criminology and Criminal Investigation and Department of Criminal Law and Criminal Prosecution who will formally deliver the course “The role of people’s procuracy in handling criminal wildlife-related cases” for the third and fourth-year students during this 2021-2022 school year.

WCS believes the integration of CWT in the training curricula of the HPU will not only improve knowledge and skills for lecturers, officials, prosecutors, and students, but also create systemic changes in preparing human resources for the judicial sector. At the same time, the efforts of WCS and the HPU also contribute to ensuring that the impacts of INL-funded projects in Viet Nam are sustainable and long-term through training and building capacity for the future generations of prosecutors.



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