Wild life in Myanmar

Like all [Southeastern Asian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southeastern_Asia) forests, the forests of Myanmar can be divided into two categories: [monsoon forest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monsoon_forest) and [rainforest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainforest). Monsoon forest is dry at least three months a year, and is dominated by [deciduous](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deciduous) trees. Rainforest has a rainy season of at least nine months, and are dominated by [broadleaf evergreen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broadleaf_evergreen).

In the region north of the [Tropic of Cancer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tropic_of_Cancer), in the [Himalayan region](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Himalayas), [subtropical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subtropical) broadleaf evergreen dominates to an elevation of 2000m, and from 2000m to 3000m, [semi-deciduous](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semi-deciduous) broadleaf dominates, and above 3000m, evergreen [conifers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conifer) and [subalpine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subalpine) [forest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forest) are the primary fauna until the [alpine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alpine_climate" \o "Alpine climate)[scrubland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scrubland).

The area from [Yangon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yangon) to [Myitkyina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myitkyina) is mostly monsoon forest, while peninsular Malaysia south of [Mawlamyine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mawlamyine" \o "Mawlamyine) is primarily rainforest, with some overlap between the two. Along the coasts of [Rakhine State](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rakhine_State) and [Tanintharyi Division](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanintharyi_Division" \o "Tanintharyi Division), [tidal forests](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Tidal_forests&action=edit&redlink=1) occur in [estuaries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Estuary), [lagoons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lagoon), [tidal creeks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tidal_creek), and [low islands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Low_island). These forests are host to the much-depleted [Myanmar Coast mangroves](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myanmar_Coast_mangroves) habitat of [mangrove](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mangrove) and other trees that grow in mud and are resistant to [sea water](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sea_water). Forests along the beaches consist of [palm trees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palm_trees), [hibiscus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hibiscus), [casuarinas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casuarina), and other trees resistant to storms.

**Myanmar’s Illegal Wildlife trade to go on screen**

Myanmar is most affected by wildlife poaching and trafficking. From last December to May alone, five elephants have been reported killed in the outskirt of Yangon, according to the forest department.

The problem is not new but still prevalent. To fight the plight, WWF had launched the Mo Mo campaign last year to raise awareness and protect the elephants.

However, although the campaign resonated in the heart of Yangonites, illegal trafficking still plagues Myanmar. This month, three cases of illegal wildlife trade were reported in Mandalay and Magway regions. Over there and on the Chinese border, illegal market boast skulls, tusks and skin of the rarest and most endangered species in the country – such as elephants, tigers and pangolins.

Doubling down on the effort to fight illegal wildlife trade, the union parliament passed the Protection of Biodiversity and Protected Areas Law last May which establishes mandatory prison sentences for poaching or trading of protected species.

Along with the new policy, the UK Government, and the Luang Prabang Film Festival in cooperation with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) launched a short film competition to raise awareness about illegal wildlife trade in Myanmar.

“This is an opportunity to present films raising awareness about the terrible issue of illegal wildlife trade in Myanmar,” said David Hall, deputy head of mission of the UK Embassy to Burma, adding that Myanmar is the third country with the most illegal wildlife trade, which amounts to an estimated $19billion per year worldwide.

To raise awareness, the #IWT Mekong Short Film competition invites filmmakers from the Mekong countries - Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam - and foreign filmmakers residing in those countries to participate.

Three winners will be invited to present their films in the UK during the 2018 London Conference on illegal Wildlife Trade next November.

The 1st prize is worth USD 5000, the 2nd $4000 and the 3rd Prize $3000 while Viral Prizes amount to $2000 USD. A student prize will also reward a young filmmaker of $1000. Moreover, Special regional prizes worth USD 2000 each will be awarded to the best contributions from each country.

Most of the awardees will also be offered a roundtrip flight and accommodation to participate to the 9th Luang Prabang Film Festival from December 7 to 12. To participate, filmmakers need to submit a film of up to six minutes about illegal wildlife trade by August 15.

“This is a great opportunity for us to tell the world what is happening, regardless of whether we win or lose the competition,” says Ko Thet Htoo, a 38-years-old photographer and filmmaker from Myanmar.

Thet Htoo has been passionate about elephants since 2013. Last year, he presented his very first documentary “Victim to Victim” at the Wathann Film Festival held at Waziya Cinema, Yangon. His 16-minutes-long documentary presents the two sides of the elephant-human conflict: the economic necessity of poachers and the disappearing of the species.

“We can’t look at the problem only from one side,” he said. “Food scarcity has forced the elephant to intrude into human territory. Most villagers respect elephants. However, some people who saw the price of rice and sugar fall are now cash trapped and indebted. Misery and a lack of education have pushed them into poaching, a lucrative business. To solve this problem, we must change everything including the education system and sanctuaries for animal,” he adds.

To help the creative minds, interested filmmakers are welcomed to contact WWF for information on illegal wildlife trade in Myanmar.

“This is a great way to add national voices to the fight against illegal trade. Myanmar is on the frontline and while steps are being taken to combat it, all sectors must come together if we are to keep Myanmar’s wildlife for future generation,” said Mr Christy Williams, country director of WWF-Myanmar.

As an example of best-practices, he pointed out at India’s tiger resorts attracting tourists and generating incomes while protecting wildlife.

Currently WWF is launching a campaign in Yangon region against poaching and the use of bush-meat in restaurants. We sure hope that concerted effort and involving filmmaking on the issue will contribute to the cause.

For more information about the film festival, please visit. [*www.lpfilmfest.org/IWTmekong.*](http://www.lpfilmfest.org/IWTmekong.%C2%A0)

**Seeing through Asia’s growing smog problem**

Of the seven million people around the world who die prematurely from air pollution every year, four million are in Asia. This is a sobering statistics.

Air pollution is also the main environmental cause of disease. Given the scale of its impact, it was fitting and timely theme of the United Nations’ World Environment Day last Wednesday.

Governments in Asia have been trying to address this devastating challenge as their economies have grown exponentially over the past few decades, leading to increased urbanization and rising energy demand.

South Korea, for example has just announced it will spend 2.2 trillion won (US$ 1.9 billion) to fight its growing air pollution problem.

India has launched a National Clean Air Program to reduce its PM2.5 and PM10 levels by 20-30 percent by 2024. For the third years in row, the country’s renewable power investments surpassed that for fossil fuels, and the recent election results raise hopes that the country’s pro-renewables policy will continue.

Malaysia is encouraging commercial and industrial buildings to use solar energy by offering lower electricity tariffs and tax incentives under the Net Energy Metering scheme.

In Myanmar, the new Sustainable Development Plan encourages green investments and prioritises the use of the country’s abundant renewable energy sources, including solar, wind, hydro and geothermal power.

But overall, Asia’s air pollution has not improved. Next year, it could even get worse because the region’s economies are projected to be larger than the rest of the world combined

Asia can mitigate this threat by speeding up its transition to renewables, complemented with natural gas, and curbing its reliance on coal, which emits harmful air pollutants like sulphur dioxide, particulate matter and nitrogen oxides.

It will be a massive task that will depend not only on policymakers but also on businesses, environmental and city experts, and individuals, working together.

ASEAN will need to move quickly. Some 90 million people are expected to move into its cities by 2030 and it has set a target of 23pc renewables in its primary energy mix by 2025, a hefty 250pc increase from 2014.

**Eco-friendly solution to the plastic problem**

<https://www.mmtimes.com/news/eco-friendly-solution-plastic-problem.html>

**More Than 300 Species in Myanmar Endangered: Report**

YANGON- Myanmar is home to endangered species, according to the latest research by the International Union for Conversation of Nature(IUCN0), including birds, orangutans, elephants, deer, freshwater turtles, pangolins and tigers.

The figure from Swiss-based conversation group was cited in a report, “Larger than Tigers,” launched I Yangon on Tuesday by the E.U and Wildlife Conversation Society(WCS).

There are more than 5,000 species threatened with extinction in Asia and about 800 endangered species in the Greater Mekong Region, which includes Cambodia, Laos Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. According to the report the biodiversity of the greater Mekong is under threat because of habitat loss and exploitation.

In Myanmar, more than 300 species are facing the threat of extinction, said WCS national environment coordinator Naw May Lay Thant.

“There are many threats to conversation efforts. Mainly, the habitats have vanished or the quality of habitats has declined. The excessive exploitation for illegal trade of wildlife and forest products is the biggest threat,” she said.

According to the report, plants and wildlife are exploited to make traditional herbal medicines, clothes and accessories, for food and for pets. It says hunting and poaching was found in about 70 percent of sanctuaries. The annual illegal wildlife trade in Southeast Asia and the Pacific region is worth about 17 billion euros ($ 19.2 billion).

In May, Myanmar’s Parliament passed the Protection of Biodiversity and Conservation Areas Law, which prescribes harsh penalties for hunting and illegal wildlife trading as defined by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Violators can face up to 10 years in jail.

In October, the Yangon Region government also imposed a ban on selling items made with wildlife parts at souvenir shops or selling wildlife curries at restaurants.

However, due to strong financial incentives, the illegal wildlife trade remains rampant.

“It is very dangerous to hunt tiger, but the profit from selling tiger is very big. Since the profit is greater than the cost, they will continue hunting no matter how dangerous it is, because there is such a huge demand for it,” said WCS program director U Saw Tun.

He said it was important to maintain biodiversity because the extinction of ecosystems or forests can ultimately lead to the extinction of mankind.

The World Wildlife Fund (Myanmar) has also warned that Myanmar’s elephant population could disappear in the next decade if the government fails to effectively prevent poaching.

Preparation of the “Larger than Tigers” report took two years and involved 28 authors with input from 382 experts from more than 150 organizations who participated in workshops or provided information and comments, across over 25 countries in Asia.

E.U. Ambassador to Myanmar Kristian Schmidt said the bloc would support Myanmar in maintaining its biodiversity and developing a green economy.

At an event in Naypyitaw in October, Myanmar authorities destroyed hundreds of seized elephant tusks, pangolin scales and other animal parts worth a combined $1.3 million on the black market.

Among globally threatened species, those found in Myanmar include the elephant, tiger, dolphin, pangolin, bear, python, turtle, banteng, takin, hairy-nosed otter, and more.



Myanmar (also known as Burma) is the second largest country in mainland Southeast Asia and is home to a wealth of biodiversity.

The country still retains large tracts of forest that harbour charismatic species such as the red panda and the Myanmar snub-nosed monkey. The latter was only discovered in 2010 by Fauna & Flora International (FFI) and our partners, and is only found in Myanmar and China.

Myanmar is also home to some of Southeast Asia’s most extensive and least disturbed coastal and marine ecosystems, which include coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass beds. All told, over 800 marine fish species are found here, as well as nine seagrass species and 51 corals.

In stark contrast to the country’s biological riches, at least a third of its people currently live below the poverty line and the majority depend on natural resources for their survival.

Despite their high dependence on natural resources, women and men living locally have, in the past, been excluded from decisions concerning the country’s protected areas. Happily, this situation is slowly changing and, for the first time, grass-roots organisations are being established to address issues of environmental governance and human welfare.

The opening up of Myanmar after decades of military rule and isolation has created an exciting window of opportunity to shape the future of conservation in the country. The pace of change is so great, however, that we need to act quickly if we are to make the most of this opportunity to protect the country’s rich natural environment.