

Engagement für das Schuppentier in Vietnam



Nach über fünf Jahrzehnten traf ich meinen englischen Austauschpartner aus Schülertagen, Peter Hadfield, wieder. Er ist ein anerkannter Journalist und arbeitet u.a. für die BBC. Ich bat ihn, für

die "FT-Seite" einen kurzen Artikel über sein neuestes Projekt zu schreiben. Sein Text in Englisch ist gut zu lesen. Ein Wort musste ich allerdings googeln: "pangolin" = Schuppentier. Interessante Lektüre! Klaus Schenck

One of the best lessons I have learned in life is that if you do a job you love, life is like a permanent holiday. And that's the job I've been lucky enough to have for the last 34 years.

I work as a freelance journalist, mostly in radio, for the BBC in the UK, CBC in Canada and ABC in Australia. Most of my reporting is in East Asia. For 16 years I was a correspondent in Tokyo, but for the last 20 years I have been based in Australia. Most of what I do now are half-hour feature stories.

I have just returned from Malaysia, where I was doing a story on the destruction of mangroves to make way for shrimp farms. The assignment took me down the west coast of Malaysia and up several rivers by boat.

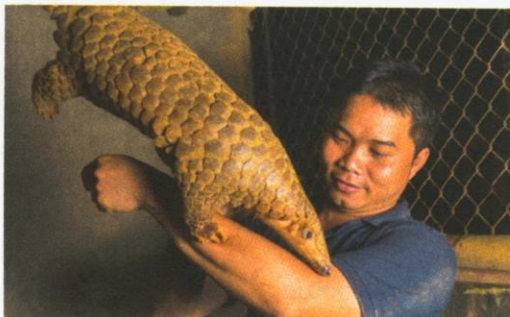
And before that I was in Vietnam, doing a story about an environmental group called Save Vietnam's Wildlife which I will tell you a bit about.

The NGO was founded by a man called Thai Van Nguyen, who managed to successfully expand a non-government

organization in a country where the government usually likes to have complete control. As a child, he had been upset at the sight of a local poacher killing a pangolin mother and her baby, and that became his motivation to try to stop the illegal poaching and trafficking of pangolins.

As an adult, Thai started his NGO and collected enough donations to begin anti-poaching patrols. Soon his team was rescuing animals from traps in one of Vietnam's largest national parks, Pu Mat, and caring for them in rescue centres. The rescue centres also looked after animals that had been intercepted from animal-smuggling gangs. If the animals were well enough after treatment, the rescue centre staff would re-release them back into the wild.

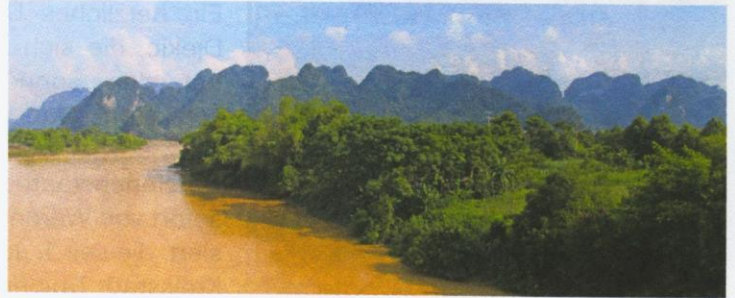
I went to Cuc Phuong national park to interview Thai. Then I went to Pu Mat national park, in the central highlands of Vietnam, to spend the day on patrol with the anti-poaching team. Pu Mat a dense forest that stretches all the way to the



border of Laos. It's broken only by huge stumps of rock that rise out of the jungle. On the edge of the forest is the Save Vietnam Wildlife rescue centre.

While I was there, I stumbled across met two German volunteers, David and Dorothy, from Baden-Wuerttemberg.

"We're here for one year," David explained, "to clean the enclosures and prepare food for the animals. We don't have any experience, we just heard about this on the internet through a program called [bezert?]. There were other people trying to get into the programme, so I'm



"We've only been here a month," said Dorothy, "but we're learning more and more every day. They're teaching us so we can do a lot of the work ourselves, it's really good. A lot of the animals come to the rescue centre after traffickers try to smuggle them across the borders, and the police find them."

David and Dorothy showed me round the enclosures, where gibbons, slow loris, pangolins and turtles were being cared for.

"Only one keeper here can speak English, so there's a language barrier," said Dorothy. "That's one of the difficulties."

"The other difficulty is that we get a lot of invitations," said David. "We thought it would be so remote and quiet here in the national park, but we get invited to these huge weddings all the time."

Apart from rescuing animals and catching poachers, one of Save Vietnam Wildlife's most important roles is education. They're hold special classes in the schools, teaching children about the importance of Wildlife.

"Vietnamese people love animals," Thai told me, "but they love them in the wrong way. They see animals either as pets or as food. We're trying to show them that animals are important for Vietnam, and important for our ecosystem. Their home is not your home – their home is the forest."

Artikel und Fotos: Peter Hadfield