

# Chapter 7



Vuthy Pril

## **Southeast Asian Conservation Officer** **with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

On October 25th, 1999, Vuthy Pril became Minnesota's first Southeast Asian Conservation Officer. That was an exciting day for Vuthy, because he worked hard to reach this goal. He is now working for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. He will help newcomers learn about the regulations for fishing and hunting in Minnesota, and how to conserve our natural resources.

Vuthy was born in Batnambang, Cambodia. His parents' main work was farming. He and his older sister helped their parents raise farm animals, such as cows, horses, chickens and pigs. He enjoyed going to school with his friends.

Everyone fished in the rivers, and everyone hunted to feed their families. People could also fish in other people's rice paddies, as long as they didn't destroy the plants. It was understood that people didn't own the fish, just the land. "We always did this back home. We fished as much as we wanted, we hunted as much as we wanted, nobody told us what to do," said Vuthy.

Everything changed in 1975, when the Communists overthrew the Cambodian government. People had to leave their homes and live in the jungle. He had only been able to go to school for five years, and now he was forced to quit. Many children, including Vuthy and his sister,

were separated from their parents, and had to work from morning to night. Vuthy was very skilled with a sling shot. He used it to hunt for birds and other small animals. Hunting gave them enough to eat. “You had to hunt and fish in order to survive,” said Vuthy.

After four years, they overthrew the Communist government, and the Cambodian government was back. The Pril family tried to move back into their home, but it had been destroyed. A huge dam had been built on their land. They built a small shack and lived in it for a year. Then they left for a refugee camp in Thailand. It took 2 years before they were accepted to come to the US. “That was one of the happiest moments in my life. We were going to live in a successful and peaceful country,” said Vuthy. They arrived in Minnesota in 1983.

Vuthy finished high school and went on to college. He became interested in a law enforcement job. He wanted to work outdoors. Vuthy also liked the idea of working with his own Southeast Asian community. A friend told him about the DNR job, and he decided to apply for the job. Vuthy was accepted into ELCOP, which stands for Enforcement Liaison Community Officer Program. This program was started to encourage Southeast Asian immigrants to become Conservation Officers.

Vuthy is enthusiastic about being a Conservation Officer. These officers are sometimes called the “hunting or fishing police.” They are responsible for encouraging the legal and wise use of our natural resources. They also teach people how to use outdoor areas safely, and how to hunt and fish legally in Minnesota. Vuthy will be in contact with all kinds of people, and he will be a special liaison to the Southeast Asian community. “It’s always different. It’s a good job.”

Immigrants come from all over the world to settle in Minnesota. Many of them come from countries where there are no conservation laws. They often have problems because they do not understand Minnesota’s hunting and fishing laws. “Due to the language and cultural differences, many people still don’t understand the rules and regulations. As a Minnesotan of Southeast Asian heritage, I believe I can help them understand these rules. I can provide information.”

“The rules and regulations here are hard to understand. For people who do not have proficiency in English, it’s even harder.” Vuthy’s advice to newcomers is, “Study hard to learn English, and to learn how things are done in this country.”

Some immigrants do not understand that, in the United States they must ask the land owner before they can hunt on private land. The land owner must say that it is okay. If they don’t ask, it can cause problems with the land owners. Vuthy works with hunters to help them find places where they can hunt legally.

“Back home it’s different. People are hungry. They want to catch as many fish as they can, either to sell them or to eat them,” said Vuthy. “It’s different here. No one is dying from hunger, so they should be able to understand. We have to enforce the laws so everyone, including our children, will have a chance to catch fish and hunt animals in Minnesota. We live here now, and we have to conserve the natural resources.”

**To learn more about hunting and fishing, or to speak with Vuthy, contact:**

Vuthy Pril, Southeast Asian Conservation Officer  
MN DNR, Division of Enforcement  
500 Lafayette Road  
St. Paul, MN 55155-4047

Phone: 651-779-7493

Email: [vuthy.pril@dnr.state.mn.us](mailto:vuthy.pril@dnr.state.mn.us)

**To turn in poachers:**

TIP Line (Turn in Poachers)

Phone: 1-800-652-9093



**For information on DNR Enforcement Liaison Community Officer Jobs, contact:**

Emma Corrie, Enforcement Recruitment Coordinator  
MN DNR, Division of Enforcement  
500 Lafayette Road  
St. Paul, MN 55155-4049

Phone: 651-297-2449

Email: [emma.corrie@dnr.state.mn.us](mailto:emma.corrie@dnr.state.mn.us)

or

MN DNR, Bureau of Human Resources  
500 Lafayette Road  
St. Paul, MN 55155-4049

Phone: 651-296-6493

**To get information on fishing and hunting licenses, and season information, visit:**

The DNR Web site

web site: [www.dnr.state.mn.us](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us)

# Exercise 1

## Reading Comprehension

Write answers to the following questions.

1. When did Vuthy Pril become a conservation officer?

---

2. What was his family's work in Cambodia?

---

3. How many fish could they catch in Cambodia?

---

4. Why did everything change in 1975?

---

5. When did Vuthy's family arrive in Minnesota?

---

6. How did he learn about the DNR job?

---

7. What does ELCOP stand for?

---

8. What are his job duties?

---

9. Why do immigrants have problems with Minnesota hunting and fishing laws.

---

10. What does Vuthy think newcomers should do?

---

11. Why is it different back home in Cambodia?

---

12. Why should people follow the hunting and fishing rules in Minnesota?

---

## Exercise 2

### False Sentences

Use the information in the story to find the incorrect words in the following sentences.  
Cross out the incorrect words, and write the correct words above them.

1. In 1999, Vuthy Pril became Wisconsin's first Southeast Asian Conversation Officer.
2. In Cambodia, people could drive in other people's parking lots.
3. "We danced as much as we wanted, we sang as much as we wanted, nobody told us what to do."
4. Everything changed in 1975, when the colonists overthrew the autocratic government.
5. Vuthy used a shotgun to hunt birds and other large animals.
6. Vuthy was very sad to come to the US and live in a successful and careful country.
7. The ELCOP program was started to discourage Southeast Asian immigrants to become Reservation Officers.
8. They are responsible for promoting the legal and wide use of our notable resources.
9. They teach people how to use outdoor areas slowly, and how to drive and fish legally in Minnesota.
10. "Due to luggage and cultural differences, many people still don't expand rules and regulations."
11. He tells newcomers, "Study hard to learn Spanish, and to learn how things are made in this country."
12. "We have to enforce the views, so our children will have a chance to catch cold and hunt animals."

## Exercise 3

### Grammar Lesson

#### Making questions

#### Rules:

Where asks about places or locations.

Who asks about people.

When asks about time.

What ask about things or ideas.

How much or how many asks about an amount.

To make a simple past tense question use “did.” In questions with “did,” the second verb is never past tense.

#### Examples:

Everyone fished in the rivers. Where did everyone fish?

We fished as much as we wanted. How much did they fish?

They arrived in Minnesota in 1983. When did they arrive?

Make past tense questions about the following sentences.

1. He and his older sister helped their parents.

2. He enjoyed going to school.

3. Everyone fished in the rivers.

4. We fished as much as we wanted.

5. The Communists overthrew the government.

6. The Pril family tried to move back into their home.

7. It took 2 years before they were accepted to come to the US.

8. He became interested in a law enforcement job.

9. He wanted to work outdoors.

10. Vuthy liked the idea of working with his own community.

11. He decided to apply for the job.

## Hunting and Fishing

There are laws for hunting and fishing in Minnesota. These are called “game” laws, and they have three different goals:

1. To protect wildlife and fish
2. To keep hunting and fishing fair for everyone
3. To keep people safe when they hunt or fish

In many countries, there are no limits on the number or kind of fish you can catch, or the number or kind of animals that you can hunt. It is a surprise to many newcomers that they need to buy a license to go hunting and fishing. It is also a surprise that even when they have a fishing license, or a hunting license, there are still times when it is not legal to hunt or fish. The times when it is legal to hunt and fish are called “seasons.”

Almost every fish and animal has a different set of laws, saying when it is legal and illegal to catch it or kill it. This makes learning the regulations difficult. It is important for you to learn them, so you can fish and hunt legally. If you break these laws you can be fined and/or lose your fishing and hunting equipment.

Different fish have different seasons and different limits. For example, you can catch Sunfish all year, but not other fish. You can only fish for Northern Pike from the last half of May, through the middle of February. You can’t fish for them the other months of the year.

There is also a limit to the number of fish you can keep each time you go fishing. This is called a “possession limit.” When Northern Pike are in season, you can keep only 3 per day. If you catch and keep more than 3 Pike in one day, you may be fined.

How can you know which fish will bite on your line before you catch them? The answer is that you can’t. However, if you catch a fish that you can’t legally keep, it is your duty to put it back in the water. This is called “catch and release.” One of the biggest Minnesota fish is the Muskie. Most Muskies are caught and released. When we do this, another angler can have the fun and excitement of catching this big fish.

## Hunting and Fishing (Continued)

While you can catch and release fish, you can't do the same thing when you hunt animals. You have to learn how to identify Minnesota birds and animals. You must know what you are hunting, and be sure that it is legal to hunt it before you kill it. You must also have the proper hunting license.

There are some animals that are protected by US laws and can never be hunted. For example, some water birds like the loon, are illegal to hunt. For other water birds, like ducks and geese, there is a hunting season and a hunting license is needed. There are possession limits for ducks and geese, too. If you shoot too many birds in one day, you can be fined.

If you hunt big game illegally, for example killing a deer out of season, you can be fined. You will lose your gun, and even your car can be taken from you. Hunting animals or catching fish illegally is called poaching. If you see someone poaching, you should call the "Turn In Poachers" hotline, at 1-800-652-9093. You don't have to tell them your name, and you may get a reward.

If we all follow the hunting and fishing laws, our children and grandchildren will be able to enjoy hunting and fishing, just as much as we do today.

### Exercise 4

#### Reading Comprehension

Write answers to the following questions.

1. How can you know what kind of fish is biting on your line?

---

2. What should you do if the fish is out of season?

---

3. What must you know about an animal before you kill it?

---

4. What is an animal that can never be hunted?

---

5. What can happen if you break hunting or fishing laws.

---



## Exercise 5

### Vocabulary

Draw a line to match the vocabulary words with their definitions.

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. Possession limit         | A. When you break the law, and you must pay money to the government                                  |
| 2. <u>License</u>           | B. The time that it is <u>legal</u> to hunt certain kinds of animals, or catch certain kinds of fish |
| 3. <u>Season</u>            | C. Taking animals <u>illegally</u>   |
| 4. <u>Poaching</u>          | D. To put live fish back in the lake or river after you catch them                                   |
| 5. <u>Fined</u>             | E. Breaking the law  |
| 6. <u>Catch and release</u> | F. A permit from the government to hunt or fish  |
| 7. <u>Illegal</u>           | G. Animals that can never be hunted  |
| 8. <u>Angler</u>            | H. The number of fish that you can <u>legally</u> have at one time                                   |
| 9. <u>Protected</u>         | I. A person who fishes   |

## Exercise 6

### Minnesota Fishing Guide

Use your “Minnesota Fishing Guide” to write answers to the following questions.

1. At what age to children need a fishing license?

---

2. How long can you use a fishing license?

---

3. What is the season for walleyes?

---

4. How many walleyes can you legally catch in one day?

---

5. How many northern pike can you catch in one day?

---

6. What is the season for largemouth bass?

---

7. How many sunfish can you catch in a day?

---

8. What's the smallest muskie that you can catch and legally keep?

---

9. What's the season for catfish?

---

10. How many bullheads can you catch in a day?

---