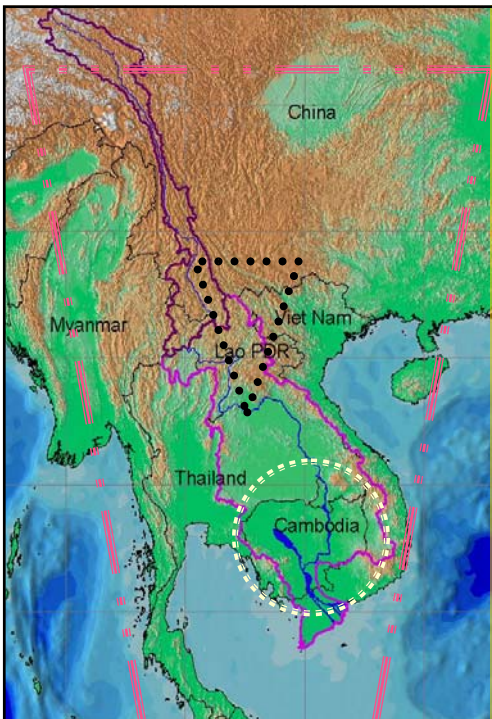


The Tonle Sap Great Lake

A Unique Ecosystem for Cambodia and for the World

By Long Kheng,
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Cambodia



Where is
Cambodia?

■ Tonle Sap Great Lake



The Tonle Sap Great Lake a Priceless Natural Heritage



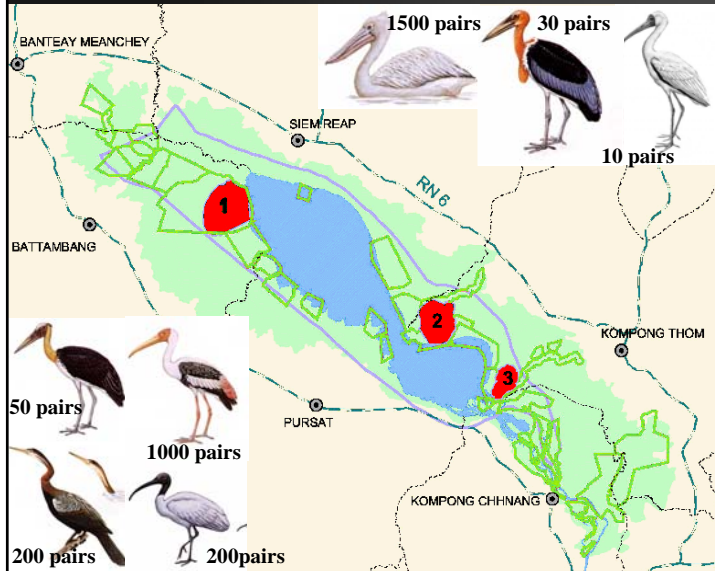
Global Significance for Biodiversity

- Unique and pristine natural habitat
 - Most extensive and intact example of flooded forest in South East Asia
 - Unique plant association, with many near-endemic species
- High global importance for wildlife conservation, particularly for waterbirds (16) and reptiles (6)
 - Last stronghold for 8 globally threatened waterbirds
 - Significant populations of threatened reptiles
 - Critical site for survival of endangered fish & mammals



top priority wetland for conservation in Asia
urgent action needed to avert extinctions

Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve



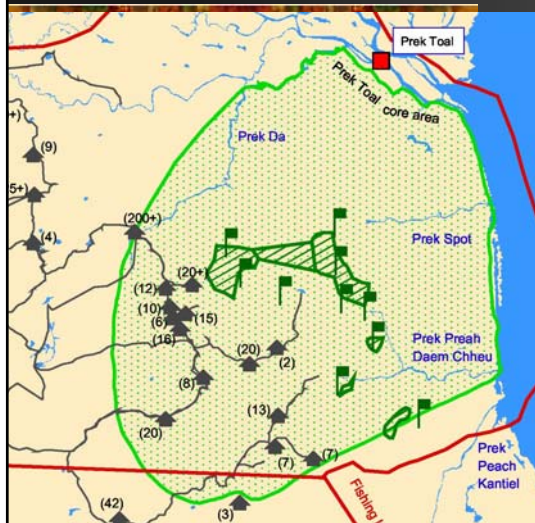
The three core areas

1-Prek Toal
Waterbird
breeding site

2-Boeng Chhma
Important
feeding site

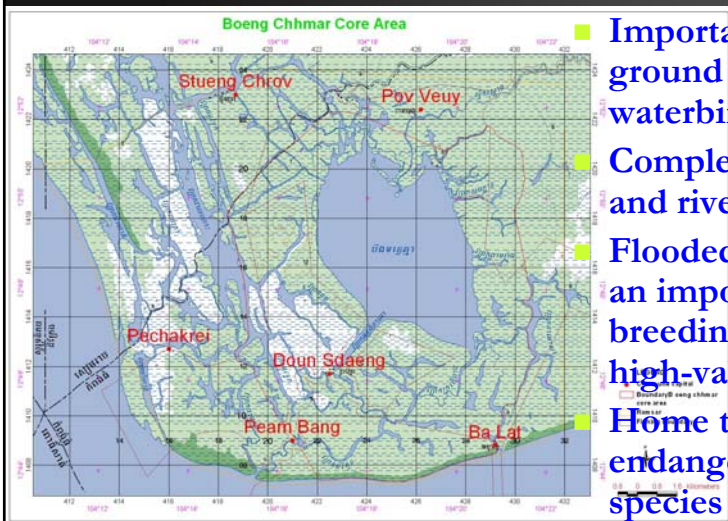
3- Stung Sen
Pristine forest
habitat

Significance of Prek Toal Core Area



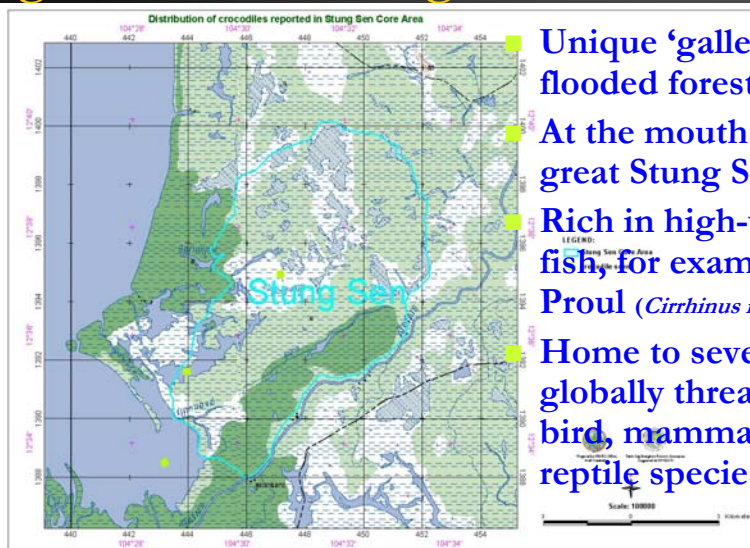
- Crucial nesting area for many bird species
- Least disturbed flooded forest
- Rich in small fishes, a major source of income
- High Ecotourism potential
- Home to many endangered species including crocodiles

Significance of Boeng Chhmar Core Area



- Important feeding ground for migratory waterbirds
- Complex wetland and river system
- Flooded forest area is an important breeding ground for high-value fish
- Home to several endangered fish species

Significance of Stung Sen Core Area



- Unique 'gallery' flooded forest
- At the mouth of the great Stung Sen river
- Rich in high-value fish, for example Trei Proul (*Cirrhinus microlepis*)
- Home to several globally threatened bird, mammal, and reptile species

History of the Conservation Program

- 1993: Designated as a Multiple Use Protected Area
- 1994: Location and significance of bird colonies studied
- 1996 Statistics gathered on collection by local people: 26,000 eggs & 2,600 chicks harvested
- 1997: Local awareness efforts to curtail collection
- 1998: Environmental research station established
- 1999: Boeng Chhmar designated as a RAMSAR Wetland site
- 2000: Extensive waterbird survey all around the lake
- 2001: The three core areas are designated as the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve
- 2001- 2004: Local conservation teams established and local rangers keep a permanent watch in order to enforce the law

Project Activities (cont.)

■ Constructions



■ Prek Toal Core Area Management Centre

■ Built Protected Area Management Centre

- Prek Toal Core Area Management Centre- Concreted building funded by ADB inaugurated on Nov 24, 2005
- One floating centre- Funded by EU/SPEC

Conservation Activities (cont.)

- Establish & train local conservation team



- Construct tree-top platforms for permanent colony watch



Project Activities (cont.)

- **Core Area Management Plan**
- **Consultation workshops: commune-village level, provincial and national levels**



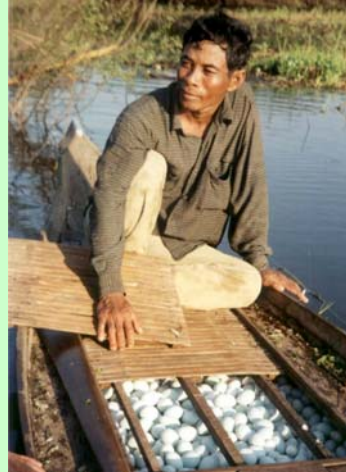
- Surveys for Identification of the Issues and Actions Raised

Conservation Activities

- Regular bird colony population counts



- Patrolling and law enforcement



Conservation Activities

- Environmental Education



- Ecotourism training



Conservation Activities

■ Community Development

➤ *Fish raising*



➤ *Chicken raising*

➤ *Micro-credit* (52 families)

➤ Build houses for poor families

Results and Achievements

■ Effective waterbird protection

- Many sites now protected
- Year-round patrol allows early location of colonies
- Breeding success: from 50% (2001) to >90% (2005)

■ Curtailing of bird collection:

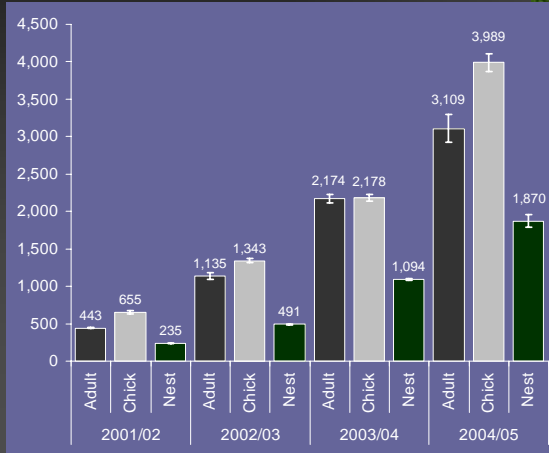
- Dramatically reduced egg collection

■ Better understanding of breeding biology and conservation needs



Oriental Darter

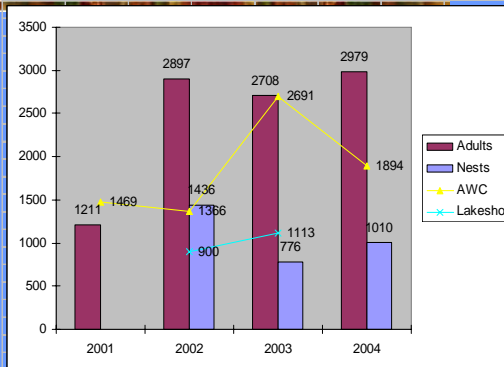
Largest colony in the Asia



Spot-billed Pelican

Population: stable or declining??

1500 pairs – GT(Vu)



102 trees 242 trees 326 trees 200 trees

➤ Most significant colony in the world (30% wp)

- Breeding: November to May
- Mix species colony
- Adult and chick similar
- Still don't know the significant population change
- At least 5 years to access the monitoring result

Program Strengths

- Employing 28 local villagers, including 12 former collectors
- Low budget – high effectiveness
- Popular Ecotourism site, close to Angkor
- Management fully transferred to Ministry of Environment



Future Conservation needs

An example of global significance:

- Spot-billed Pelican
 - 1500 pairs
 - Most significant colony in the world
 - Conservation activities are urgently needed to preserve this species



Conclusions

- Entirely unique area, both for Cambodia and for the World
- Highly successful conservation program
- Vital region for Cambodian culture, economy and food security
- Fast growing ecotourism revenue
- Conservation activities are enhancing the world-wide reputation of the MoE and the Royal Government of Cambodia



Thanks for Your Attention !
