



Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme

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The Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme (MWBSP) is a joint programme of the four riparian governments of the Lower Mekong Basin – Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam – managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the Mekong River Commission (MRC), in collaboration with other key stakeholders. With funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNDP, The Royal Netherlands Government, MRCS, the Water and Nature Initiative (WANI) and other donors, the programme tries to address the most critical issues for the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in the Mekong wetlands.

The programme aims to strengthen the capacity of organisations and people to develop sustainable livelihoods and manage wetland biodiversity resources wisely.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT UNIT
PO Box 4340
082/02 Fa Ngum Road,
Vientiane, Lao PDR
Tel: ++856 (0) 21 240 904
Fax: ++856 (0) 21 216 127
Email: mekongwetlands@iucnlaos.org
Website: www.mekongwetlands.org



Wetlands in the Lower Mekong Basin

A JOINT UNDP - IUCN - MRC GEF-FUNDED PROGRAMME



Some Basic Facts About Wetlands

What are wetlands?





Wetlands are simply ecosystems where the presence of water (either temporarily or permanently) has a significant influence on its ecological character. For the purpose of the Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme (MWBP), the Ramsar Conventions definition of wetlands is adopted as the working definition.

“Wetlands are areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres.”

Wetlands functions and values

Wetlands in the Mekong basin perform a range of ecosystem services. The following table provides an illustration of the range of functions and services that might be provided by the different types of wetlands that occur in the Mekong basin.

Key to table:

-  Low
-  Medium
-  High
-  Not known

The information in the table represents an expert opinion for a global average pattern for wetlands; there will be local and regional differences in relative magnitudes.

For more information please visit:
www.mekongwetlands.org

Functions and values of wetlands and its importance to human well being

(MILLENNIUM ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT, 2005)

Services	Comments and Examples	Permanent and temporary rivers and streams	Permanent lakes, reservoirs	Seasonal lakes, marshes, swamps and floodplains
Provisioning				
Food	Production of fish, wild game, fruits, grains, etc.	●	●	●
Fresh Water	Storage and retention of water; provision of water for irrigation and for drinking.	●	●	●
Fiber & Fuel	Production of timber, fuel wood, peat, fodder, aggregates.	●	●	●
Biochemical products	Extraction of materials from biota.	●	●	○
Genetic Materials	Medicine, genes for resistance to plant pathogens, ornamental species, etc.	●	●	○
Regulating				
Climate Regulation	Regulation of greenhouse gases, temperature, precipitation, and other climatic processes; chemical composition of the atmosphere.	●	●	●
Hydrological regimes	Groundwater recharge/discharge; storage of water for agriculture or industry.	●	●	●
Pollution Control & Detoxification	Retention, recovery and removal of excess nutrients / pollutants.	●	●	●
Erosion protection	Retention of soils and prevention of structural change (e.g. coastal erosion, bank slumping etc.).	●	●	●
Natural Hazards	Flood control, storm protection.	●	●	●
Cultural				
Spiritual & Inspirational	Personal feelings and well-being, religious significance.	●	●	●
Recreational	Opportunities for recreational activities.	●	●	●
Aesthetic	Appreciation of natural features.	●	●	●
Educational	Opportunities for formal and informal education & training.	●	●	●
Supporting				
Biodiversity	Habitats for resident or transient species.	●	●	●
Soil Formation	Sediment retention and accumulation of organic matter.	●	●	●
Nutrient Cycling	Storage, recycling, processing and acquisition of nutrients.	●	●	●
Pollination	Support for pollinators.	●	●	●