

NEWS RELEASE... NEWS RELEASE... NEWS RELEASE... NEWS RELEASE...

## **BirdLife affirms continued support to an ASEAN Heritage Park in Vietnam**

For further information, please contact: Dang Nguyen Hong Hanh Tel: (84-4) 722 3864 Fax: (84-4) 722 3835  
Hanh@birdlife.netnam.vn

Aug. 07, 2006



Chestnut-eared Laughingthrush *Garrulax konkakinhensis* (globally Vulnerable) was discovered at Kon Ka Kinh in 1999 (BirdLife)

**BirdLife International<sup>1</sup> Vietnam Programme** – Recently Mr. Tran Van Thieu, Director of Kon Ka Kinh National Park (KKK NP), Gia Lai Province, paid a visit to the BirdLife office in Hanoi. At the meeting with Mr. Jonathan C. Eames, the Programme Manager of BirdLife International *in Indochina*, on behalf of the NP, he expressed his sincere thanks to BirdLife’s continuous support over the past years and looked forward to cooperating with BirdLife in conserving biodiversity values of the NP. BirdLife affirmed its continued support to the NP in future.

Back in 1999, as part of the European-Union-funded project entitled *Expanding the Protected Areas Network in Vietnam for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, BirdLife worked in collaboration with the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute to formulate an investment plan for Kon Ka Kinh Nature Reserve (KKK NR) that was later approved by Gia Lai Provincial People’s Committee and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in the same year. Subsequently, KKK was upgraded to national park status in 2002. KKK NP was one of the four ASEAN Heritage Parks in Vietnam added to the ASEAN Declaration on Heritage Parks by environment ministers of the ASEAN nations when the Declaration was

amended in December 2003.

Situated on the Kon Tum plateau in the central Annamite mountains, KKK NP contains 33,565 ha of natural forest, equivalent to 80 percent of the total area of the NP. The NP supports a range of montane habitat types. Of particular importance are 2,000 ha of mixed coniferous and broadleaf forest containing *Fokienia hodginsii* (Near Threatened). The NP also supports some of the most intact faunal and floral communities in the central Annamites, notably a number of globally threatened mammal species, including Grey-shanked Douc *Pygathrix cinerea* (Endangered), Yellow-cheeked Crested Gibbon *Hylobates gabriellae* (Vulnerable) and Tiger *Panthera tigris* (Endangered). Six restricted-range bird species have been recorded at the NP, among which the Chestnut-eared Laughingthrush *Garrulax konkakinhensis* (Vulnerable) is endemic to the Kon Tum plateau and was discovered at Kon Ka Kinh in 1999 by Mr. Jonathan C. Eames. For these reasons, KKK qualifies as an Important Bird Area<sup>2</sup> (IBA).

In spite of the continuing efforts of the NP’s staff, illegal timber extraction by outsiders remains a major threat to biodiversity at KKK. A recent incident of illegal logging activity that took place four months ago

drew a lot of attention from the public. In search of high profits, hundreds of people rushed into KKK and surrounding forests to look for *Dysoxylum loureiri*, a valuable tree species, in high demand in China, where it is used as a key ingredient in traditional medicine. Thanks to strong action from the NP and local authorities, these activities were halted, and many illegal loggers were arrested.

In 2003, with the assistance of BirdLife, Gia Lai Provincial People's Committee developed a project entitled *Making the link: the connection and sustainable management of Kon Ka Kinh National Park and Kon Cha Rang Nature Reserve* (KCR NR) that was approved by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in the following year. In early 2006, this project was endorsed by the Ministry of Planning and Investment and is planned for implementation in the last quarter of the year. The goal of this medium-sized project is the long-term conservation of the unique biological attributes of the Central Annamites Priority Landscape in Vietnam, in which KKK NP and KCR NR are two global priority sites. The project aims to establish a foundation of support and management to maintain the biological integrity and connectivity of KKK NP and KCR NR, thus catalyzing sustainability of protected areas, provide a possible route for long term financing of protected areas and mainstream biodiversity in production landscapes.

BirdLife wishes great success to this newly-funded UNDP/GEF project, which gives to other protected areas in the country a good example of protected area management in an increasingly decentralized system.

ENDS

#### NOTES FOR EDITORS

- 1) **BirdLife International** is a global alliance of conservation organisations working in more than 100 countries worldwide who, together, are the leading authority on the status of birds, their habitats and their conservation. Further information about BirdLife's work in Vietnam can be found at [www.birdlifeindochina.org](http://www.birdlifeindochina.org).
- 2) **Important Bird Areas (IBAs)**: With the aim of conserving sites of global biodiversity importance, BirdLife International has a programme to identify and conserve Important Bird Areas (IBA). IBAs are areas of international importance for bird conservation that meet internationally recognised criteria. IBAs are not only important for birds but, typically, support a wide range of other important animal and plant species.