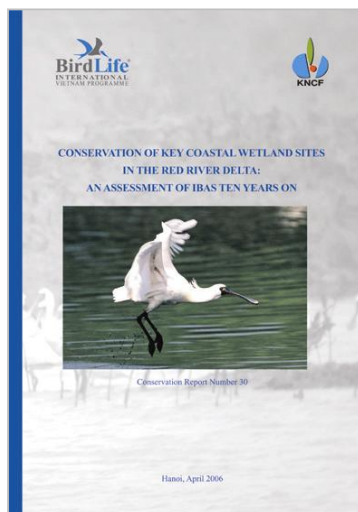


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Biodiversity hangs-on in the Red River Delta

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BirdLife International¹ Vietnam Programme – Today BirdLife International Vietnam Programme officially launches a report entitled *Conservation of key coastal wetland sites in the Red River Delta: an assessment of Important Bird Areas² (IBAs) ten years on*. This report has been produced as a result of work funded by the Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund (KNCF).

BirdLife International Vietnam Programme conducted a series of field surveys to reassess the biodiversity status of six coastal IBAs in the Red River Delta. Project fieldwork was implemented during a five-month period between November 2005 and March 2006. The study, which is the first comprehensive assessment on the biodiversity conservation status in the Red River Delta since 1996, confirms that the single most important site for conservation in the Red River Delta is Xuan Thuy National Park, followed by Thai Thuy, Tien Hai, Tien Lang, Nghia Hung and An Hai.

The coastal zone of the Red River Delta supports large inshore fishery and aquaculture industries which are dependent on the maintenance of the ecological integrity of the mangrove forests, intertidal areas and associated habitats. As a result of an increasing human population coupled with economic growth, utilisation of natural resources has become intensive throughout the coastal zone and may no longer be sustainable. It was predictable that sites without appropriate management would have fared badly since 1996. Nevertheless, it was particularly disappointing to see the decline in the importance of Nghia Hung. In 1996, BirdLife recommended this site was worthy of designation under the Ramsar Convention. Today it would fail to meet the relevant criteria. Like other sites in the Red River Delta, it has mainly suffered because of over-hunting and habitat loss caused by over-exploitation of its natural resources.

“Specific conservation management recommendations for each IBA are presented in this report. However, addressing the major issues of continuing habitat loss and hunting are urgent conservation priorities if the globally important biodiversity in the Red River Delta is to be conserved for future generations,” said Jonathan C. Eames, Programme Manager of BirdLife International in Indochina.

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.
- 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.