



Cambodia becomes the 116th Contracting Party

8 July 1999

Cambodia



UNESCO has informed the Ramsar Bureau that on 23 June 1999, Cambodia completed the necessary formalities for its accession to the Convention, as amended by the Paris Protocol of 1982 and the amendments to Articles 6 and 7 (the "Regina Amendments", 1987). Cambodia thus becomes the 116th Party to the Convention, and the treaty will come into force for Cambodia on 23 October 1999. Three Wetlands of International Importance were designated at the time of accession.

"Boeng Chhmar and Associated River System and Floodplain" (28,000 hectares), a lake formed amid inundated forest in the northeast fringe of Tonle Sap lake, consists of permanent open water surrounded by a creek system and flooded forest and becomes one with Tonle Sap in the wet season. Chhmar Lake is a good example of near-natural wetlands that play a substantial hydrological and biological role in the natural functioning of two major rivers, Stoeng Stoung and Stoeng Chikreng. The complex creek system associated with plant communities and the seasonal fluctuation of the water regime make the area ecologically rich and extraordinarily productive in nutrients and harvestable products. The area supports a large assemblage of plant species and fish and waterbird species, many of which are listed as rare, vulnerable, or endangered. The Tonle Sap lake region as a whole is vital in the economy of Cambodia in supplying fish to the population, and several million people depend upon its productivity. The land in the area is state-owned and managed by the Department of Fisheries, with a few floating villages located inside the site.

"Koh Kapik and Associated Islets" (12,000 ha) are alluvial islands immediately off the mainland of Koh Kong Province. Two major rivers flowing into the area bring a freshwater influence and create sand flats in some places. The site is classified in two wetland types (Estuarine waters, and Intertidal mud, sand, or salt flats) and listed under old Criteria 1(b) and 1(c) as 'good representative examples' and 2(c) for its special value to endemic plant or animal species. The Ramsar Information Sheet reports that "the site has been chosen because of the representative status of the mangrove system which is common to the region but under heavy threat in many parts of the country". The area plays a critical role in providing a nutrient source supporting coastal fishery in the near-shore and offshore of Cambodian marine waters. The remaining relatively-intact mangroves are said to have assumed increased importance in providing nursery and feeding grounds for various invertebrate species since the substantial removal of mangrove forests in nearby Thailand. The area of the site is state-owned and lies within the Peam Krasop Wildlife Sanctuary. The first phase of a Coastal Zone Management Project funded by DANIDA has just been completed and a second phase is under consideration.

"Middle Stretches of the Mekong River North of Stoeng Treng" (14,600 ha) is a stretch of the river characterized by strong turbulent flow with numerous channels between rocky and sandy islands that are completely inundated during high water and higher alluvial islands that remain dry. It lies about 5km from the town of Stoeng Treng where the Tonle San joins the Mekong northwards to the south of the Laos border. The site qualifies under old Criterion 1(d) on wetland types that are unusual in the biogeographical region, as well as under old Criteria 2(c) and 2(d) on special value as habitat for plants or animals at a critical stage of their biological cycle. The river bed and its islands are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Fisheries, and the surrounding area is only sparsely populated. The site is extremely important for fisheries and also for transport (as there are few roads in the area), and the flooded forest provides refuge for rare species of fish, dolphins, and birds.

Cambodia's new designations, totalling 54,600 ha, are the 997th, 998th, and 999th Wetlands of International Importance in the Ramsar List and bring the worldwide total of designated area to 71,220,794 hectares.

Source URL: <https://www.ramsar.org/news/cambodia-becomes-the-116th-contracting-party>