Thailand designates Lower Songkhram River

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Thailand

Thailand has named Lower Songkhram River as its 15th Wetland of International Importance, taking the total area of its “Ramsar Sites” to more than 400,000 hectares. The Wetland (no. 2420 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance) covers a 96-kilometre stretch of river that flows into the greater Mekong River.

Numerous ecosystem types are present across the Site including river, floodplain and marshy environments. Heavy rainfall and occasional backflow from the Mekong during July and August cause extensive flooding and form a massive shallow lake covering an area of about 96,000 hectares.

The Wetland supports a large fishery, which provides seasonal employment, income and food to many thousands of households; it is also important to wildlife because of its dam-free access for fish and other aquatic life as well as for the annual “floodpulse” phenomenon. Biological diversity is highlighted by the 192 species of fish recorded. Threatened species include the critically endangered Baer’s pochard (Aythya baeri), the endangered sutchi catfish (Pangiasianodon hypophthalmus) and the vulnerable king cobra (Ophiophagus hannah).

Habitat changes from altered rainfall patterns and invasive alien species are major threats. Five national and provincial departments manage the Site.

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