



INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR
CONSERVATION OF NATURE

ASIA REGIONAL OFFICE

ANNUAL REPORT 2018

About IUCN

IUCN is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together.

Created in 1948, IUCN is now the world's largest and most diverse environmental network, harnessing the knowledge, resources and reach of more than 1,300 Member organisations and some 15,000 experts. It is a leading provider of conservation data, assessments and analysis. Its broad membership enables IUCN to fill the role of incubator and trusted repository of best practices, tools and international standards.

IUCN provides a neutral space in which diverse stakeholders including governments, NGOs, scientists, businesses, local communities, indigenous peoples organisations and others can work together to forge and implement solutions to environmental challenges and achieve sustainable development.

Working with many partners and supporters, IUCN implements a large and diverse portfolio of conservation projects worldwide. Combining the latest science with the traditional knowledge of local communities, these projects work to reverse habitat loss, restore ecosystems and improve people's well-being.

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Our Work in Asia

TRANSBOUNDARY PROJECTS

Mangroves for the Future (MFF)

MFF is a partnership-based initiative promoting investments in coastal ecosystems to support sustainable development. The project is active in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Pakistan, Seychelles (not in map), Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam. MFF is led by IUCN and UNDP, works with institutional partners: FAO, UNEP, and Wetlands International, and is financially supported by Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)

CEPF is a funding mechanism that enables civil society to participate in the conservation of some of the world's most critical ecosystems. It is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank. IUCN leads the Regional Implementation Team in the Indo-Burma hotspot. The project is active in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam, parts of southern China.

Building River Dialogue and Governance in the Mekong Region (BRIDGE)

BRIDGE promotes a shared vision for sustainable use of water resources in the 3S river basin (the Sekong, Sesan and Sre Pok TRANSBOUNDARY rivers of Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam) through hydrodiplomacy, knowledge sharing and enhancing leadership capacity. The project is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

Mekong WET: building resilience of wetlands in the Lower Mekong Region

Mekong WET aims to build climate resilience by harnessing the benefits of wetlands, and by addressing the commitments to the Ramsar Convention, of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Through its focus on wetland ecosystems, the project also supports governments in implementing their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans under the Convention on Biological Diversity and pursuing their commitments on climate change adaptation and mitigation under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Measuring, Understanding and Adapting to Nexus Trade-offs in the 3S River Basins (3S Nexus)

The Sekong, Sesan and Sre Pok – collectively the 3S Basins – are transboundary tributaries of the Mekong River in Lao PDR, Cambodia and Viet Nam. The 3S Nexus project compiles data and information on the 3S basins in order to identify trade-offs in decision-making and the social and economic risks that accompany these decisions, and arranges dialogues between the countries to incorporate the findings and recommendations from the Nexus assessment in regional decision-making processes.

Monitoring the Illegal Killings of Elephants (MIKE) Programme

MIKE Asia programme's main objective is to identify spatial, temporal and other trends in elephant mortalities by collating and analysing data on elephant carcasses collected by management agencies. Other objectives include support for law enforcement activities, capacity-building for front-line field staff and limited provision of field equipment to sites. The programme's analytical outputs and field activities support international decision-making related to elephant conservation in Asia.

BANGLADESH

STATE MEMBER SINCE 1973

OFFICE ESTABLISHED 1992

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Improving conservation of gyps vulture species including the white-rumped vultures
- Preventing transmission of Avian influenza from wild to domesticated birds
- Preparing a scoping study to declare the the Nijhum Dwip seascape a Marine Protected Area
- Implementing management plan for dolphin conservation and dolphin sanctuaries management for the Gangetic dolphin and the Irrawady dolphin
- Implementing Biodiversity Conflict Mitigation around the Refugee Camp of Cox's Bazar District

TRANSBOUNDARY PROJECTS

- Mangroves for the Future
- BRIDGE GBM
- TROSA
- MIKE

BHUTAN

STATE MEMBER SINCE 2012

TRANSBOUNDARY PROJECTS

- BRIDGE GBM
- TROSA
- MIKE

CAMBODIA

OFFICE ESTABLISHED 1992

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Working with government and partners on forest landscape restoration projects
- Cooperating with the Ministry of Environment (MOE) to establish a karst protected landscape in Kampot Province

TRANSBOUNDARY PROJECTS

- MFF

- MIKE
- CEPF
- BRIDGE
- 3S Nexus
- Shared Resources, Joint Solutions (SRJS)
- Mekong WET

CHINA

STATE MEMBER SINCE 1996

OFFICE ESTABLISHED 2003

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Supporting the government of the People's Republic of China with the effective management of protected areas
- Supporting the government of the People's Republic of China in identifying tentative sites for Green Listing as well as enhancing capacity on Green Listing
- Conducting training on wetland management for the site managers of Yellow Sea region
- Implementing forest landscape restoration initiatives in partnership with the National Forest and Grassland Administration of the Peoples Republic of China
- Evaluating current situation of Animal Releases in China and Research on Rational Release Strategies

TRANSBOUNDARY PROJECTS

- CEPF
- BRIDGE GBM

INDIA

STATE MEMBER SINCE 1969

OFFICE ESTABLISHED 2007

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Developing conservation strategies for rare, endangered and threatened species
- Addressing critical impacts of climate change on water,

energy, livelihoods, and biodiversity, as well as to build climate resilient strategies for reducing communities and ecosystem vulnerabilities in the Indian Himalayan region

- Developing robust biodiversity conservation and management standards for Tata Steel, Ultratech Cement company of Aditya Group and Tata Power Company Limited
- Assisting ITC Company Limited to establish sustainable agriscapes
- Developing a 'Toolkit for Management and Restoration of Mining Areas in India'
- Implementing the CITES-related 'Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants programme in South Asia' initiative for supporting relevant Asian Elephant Range Countries to report on elephant mortality data

TRANSBOUNDARY PROJECTS

- MFF
- BRIDGE GBM
- TROSA
- World Bank Hydrodiplomacy project
- MIKE

INDONESIA

COUNTRY PROGRAMME OFFICE ESTABLISHED 2015 (HOSTED BY WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL)

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Catalysing processes contributing to forest landscape restoration in line with the Bonn Challenge Commitments through application of the ROAM toolkit

TRANSBOUNDARY PROJECTS

- MFF
- MIKE

JAPAN

STATE MEMBER SINCE 1995

LIAISON OFFICE ESTABLISHED 2009

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Jointly working on expanding the scope of the Asia Protected Areas Partnership

KOREA (DPRK)

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Facilitating the trilateral Working Group on the conservation and sustainable management of the intertidal and associated coastal wetlands of the Yellow/West Sea including representatives from China, DPRK and RoK
- Supporting the implementation of the Ramsar Convention in the DPRK by supporting a number of national workshops, trainings and field visits and organising a regional workshop on the management of the wetlands of the Yellow/West Sea

KOREA (ROK)

STATE MEMBER SINCE 2006

FRAMEWORK DONOR TO IUCN

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- IUCN Asia Regional office is collaborating with ROK on the implementation of a number of World Conservation Congress Resolutions

TRANSBOUNDARY PROJECTS

- APAP

LAO PDR

STATE MEMBER SINCE 1969

OFFICE ESTABLISHED 1992

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Protecting globally significant gibbon populations
- Supporting the government of Lao PDR in effective conservation and

management of wetlands to enable dependent communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change

- Mainstreaming Gender in the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan (NBSAP) Implementation and Monitoring, aligned with the SDGs

TRANSBOUNDARY PROJECTS

- CEPF
- BRIDGE
- 3S Nexus Project
- Mekong WET

MALAYSIA

STATE MEMBER SINCE 1961

TRANSBOUNDARY PROJECTS

- APAP
- MIKE

MALDIVES

PROJECT OFFICE ESTABLISHED 2009

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Supporting the government of the Maldives to strengthen sustainable management of coastal resources

TRANSBOUNDARY PROJECTS

- MFF

MONGOLIA

STATE MEMBER SINCE 2015

TRANSBOUNDARY PROJECTS

- APAP

MYANMAR

STATE MEMBER SINCE 2018

OFFICE ESTABLISHED 2018

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Piloting wetland co-management model in the Gulf of Mottama
- Supporting the government of Myanmar in designing the GEF Forest Landscape Restoration Initiative
- Mainstreaming Gender in the

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan Implementation and Monitoring, aligned with the SDGs

TRANSBOUNDARY PROJECTS

- MFF
- CEPF
- TROSA
- SRJS

NEPAL

STATE MEMBER SINCE 1974

OFFICE ESTABLISHED 1995

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Facilitating ways to enhance livelihoods and food security via improved agroforestry and community forestry systems
- Developing the interactive, cutting-edge JaiBik Map to fill biodiversity knowledge gaps
- Strengthening Capacities for Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit sharing, according to Global Environment Facility criteria
- Reducing Impacts of Linear Infrastructure on Tiger's Habitat in Nepal's Chitwan National Park – a UNESCO Site

TRANSBOUNDARY PROJECTS

- BRIDGE GBM
- TROSA

PAKISTAN

STATE MEMBER SINCE 1975

OFFICE ESTABLISHED 1985

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Developing technical capacities for water governance in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas
- Addressing sea intrusion through restoration of mangrove ecosystems in the Indus Delta
- Supporting the updating of

the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

- Supporting the government of Pakistan to promote sustainable forest management
- Assisting the private sector to support mangrove restoration and related sustainable livelihood initiatives
- Safeguarding the biodiversity and livelihoods of local communities in selected locations of the northern areas of Pakistan from the impacts of the infrastructure development projects namely China Pakistan Economic Corridor

TRANSBOUNDARY PROJECTS

- MFF

SRI LANKA

STATE MEMBER SINCE 1987

OFFICE ESTABLISHED 1988

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Advising INSEE Cement on restoration of its quarries, species conservation in its quarry areas and characterisation of the quarry landscapes
- Conservation of the Dugong in the transboundary Gulf of Mannar area
- Coordinating efforts towards the sustainable management of the Kelani River Basin
- Creating a Biodiversity Credit Accrual System with Public and Private Sector Collaborations
- Supporting the government to develop biodiversity management plans for irrigation and water reservoir-related projects to mitigate human-elephant conflict
- Conserving sea turtles and

coastal habitats around Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort

TRANSBOUNDARY PROJECTS

- MFF
- MIKE

PHILIPPINES

TRANSBOUNDARY PROJECTS

- SRJS

THAILAND

STATE MEMBER SINCE 1962

OFFICE ESTABLISHED 2001

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Establishing the Thailand Business and Biodiversity Platform
- Supporting Marriott Hotels and Resorts to enhance the sustainability of their supply chain
- Conserving habitats for globally important flora and fauna in production landscapes
- Assisting the government of Thailand and local communities in the conservation of the Kaeng Krachan Forest Complex, nominated as a World Heritage Site
- Tackling marine plastics in Thailand: from community-based actions to policies with pilot activities in Koh Yao Noi

TRANSBOUNDARY PROJECTS

- MFF
- CEPF
- Mekong WET
- MIKE

VIET NAM

STATE MEMBER SINCE 1993

OFFICE ESTABLISHED 1993

FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

- Promoting community-based sea turtle conservation in

Quang Tri Province

- Demonstrating mangrove shrimp sustainable polyculture models involving local communities and the private sector
- Convening partnerships between government, business and civil society to improve environmental management of Ha Long Bay and the Cat Ba Archipelago
- Piloting flood-base livelihoods in support of a water retention strategy for the upper Mekong Delta, Vietnam
- Establishing the Kien Luong Karst Species and Landscape Conservation Area
- Supporting the government of Viet Nam in identifying tentative sites, and enhancing capacity, for Green Listing

TRANSBOUNDARY PROJECTS

- MFF
- MIKE
- CEPF
- BRIDGE
- 3S Nexus Project
- Mekong WET

Working for People and Nature

The IUCN Programme provides the framework for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the conservation work undertaken by the Commissions and the Secretariat, with and on behalf of IUCN Members.

The IUCN Membership endorses a new Programme every four years during the IUCN World Conservation Congress, the world's largest conservation event, which aims to improve how societies manage our natural environment for human, social and economic development.

The IUCN Programme (2017–2020) was approved in September 2016 at the IUCN Congress in Honolulu, Hawai'i. It aimed to mobilise communities to act collectively and at all levels to prevent the loss and degradation of biodiversity, by halting the species extinction crisis and by ensuring ecosystem integrity in order to enhance the resilience of healthy natural ecosystems on which all human societies depend; and to promote equity and social justice, particularly in the context of conservation work.

The IUCN Programme 2017–2020 responds to the challenge posed by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to make systemic changes to shift the trajectory of the world towards sustainability, promotes concerted action

at all levels to achieve the SDGs, and emphasises the urgency of such action. It is aligned with IUCN's Mission: "To influence, encourage, and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable."

The Programme builds on IUCN's niche as the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it. It has three priority areas:

- **Valuing and conserving nature** enhances IUCN's heartland work on biodiversity conservation, emphasising both tangible and intangible values of nature.
- **Promoting and supporting effective and equitable governance of natural resources** consolidates IUCN's work on people-nature relations, rights and responsibilities, and the political economy of nature.
- **Deploying nature-based solutions to societal challenges** expands IUCN's work on nature's contribution to tackling problems of sustainable development, particularly in climate change, food security and social and economic development.

The IUCN Programme



The Programme is implemented through the combined efforts of six IUCN Commissions, Members and the Secretariat. This annual report provides an update on progress in Asia within each of the three Programme areas.



Valuing and Conserving Nature

Collecting Lepironia grass in Phu My Nature Reserve in Vietnam © IUCN

Nature and biodiversity are fundamentally important. The earth's ecosystems, species and genes, and the processes that maintain them are vital to the health of the planet and essential to human wellbeing. But nature is declining at unprecedented rates. With extinction rates far higher than natural levels, animal, plant and fungus species have never been more threatened.

Asia, one of the planet's mega-diverse places, is also one of the fastest growing regions in the world. Risks of species extinction, deforestation and coral loss are among the highest. The task to secure ecosystems and species in this region has never been more urgent.

Valuing and conserving nature is at the core of IUCN's work. IUCN believes that it is not too late to act to halt the loss of biodiversity and support its recovery. Toward this end, the Union works to enable transformative changes across the economic, policy and societal sectors, facilitating commitments to action locally and internationally, bringing a wide range of stakeholders together to ensure coordinated efforts in conservation.

FOSTERING PROTECTED AREA PARTNERSHIPS

Protected areas are key to biodiversity conservation. Protected areas help reduce the risk of natural disasters, provide clean water and air, enhance food security, mitigate climate change, and provide jobs, homes and livelihoods to tens of thousands of people throughout Asia. But these areas are increasingly under threat from habitat loss and fragmentation, invasive alien species, pollution, over-exploitation and climate change.

The Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP), established in 2014, serves as a regional platform for collaboration to secure the region's protected areas and to promote a region-wide understanding of their contribution to the health of our societies and economies. IUCN serves as a co-chair of the partnership together with the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea (MOEK) (IUCN State Member), which succeeded the Ministry of Environment of Japan (IUCN Government Agency Member) in 2017.



Field tour of APAP members in Pyeongchang, Korea © IUCN

Over the last year, APAP has evolved into a truly regional platform for protected areas in Asia. APAP welcomed five new Members in 2018. APAP welcomed four new Country Members: the State Forestry and Grassland Administration of the People’s Republic of China in January; Sabah Parks of the Federation of Malaysia in September; the Environmental Protection Agency of the Republic of Maldives in December; and the Protected Area Management Division, Department of Forestry, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, also in December. In March, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) joined as the very first Associate Member.

APAP now has 19 Country Members from 16 countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, People’s Republic of China, Republic of India, Republic of Korea, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam; and one Associate Member, bringing total membership in 2018 to 20.

The partnership held its 4th Steering Committee meeting – so far its largest and most diverse – in Bangkok, Thailand in July. The meeting affirmed that



APAP members at the 4th technical workshop in Korea © IUCN



APAP Members in Pyeongchang, Korea © IUCN/Minsum Kim



A small elephant herd roaming at Taokocha Reserve Forest of Sherpur in Bangladesh © Sultan Ahmed/Bangladesh

APAP is continuing to make significant progress, and is continuing to evolve in response to its Members' needs. In June, APAP held a technical workshop, the fourth in a series, in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea. The event addressed the effective management of protected areas, and focused in particular on Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) and the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas – the new international standard for protected areas management. In 2018, APAP also facilitated the translation of a key IUCN publication on protected areas, A Global Register of Competences for Protected Area Practitioners, into Nepali and Myanmar languages.

Last year, APAP's achievements were introduced in the global stage. On 21 November, APAP organised a side event at the 2018 UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD

COP14) in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt. At the event, APAP shared some of the lessons learned from the partnership and explored its role in helping achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Following the events in 2018, APA believes that the next few years will be critical, as the partnership moves from its development phase into active implementation and delivery.

SAFEGUARDING SPECIES KEEPING AN EYE ON ELEPHANTS

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) – Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme is an international collaboration that measures the levels, trends and causes of elephant mortality, thereby providing an information base to support international decision-making related to conservation of elephants.



Participants learn SMART concept and tools for elephant monitoring during a workshop organised by the MIKE programme in Thailand © IUCN/MIKE programme

Since 2017, IUCN Asia has been implementing the MIKE Asia programme in two sub-regions: South Asia (via the IUCN India Country Office in New Delhi); and Southeast Asia (through the IUCN Asia Regional Office in Bangkok), forming part of the wider Asia Wildlife Law Enforcement and Demand Reduction Management Project funded by the European Union. With the re-launch of MIKE in Asia in the same year, the programme now provides a global monitoring system for both Asian and African elephants, complementing the on-going work by IUCN Africa.

In 2018, the MIKE Asia programme received and transmitted new data to CITES to bridge the information gap regarding elephant mortality levels in certain elephant range states in Asia. New and innovative data analysis, solutions for human-elephant conflict and other trainings had also been provided as part of the programme.

There are currently 28 sites participating in the MIKE programme in Asia, distributed across 13 countries: India has 10 sites, followed by two sites each in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand, and one site each in Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam.

In India, IUCN is leading the implementation of the CITES MIKE South Asia programme, which collects and analyses elephant carcass reports from the 15 MIKE sites across Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Key partners are the forest departments, the Asian Elephant Specialist Group, and IUCN Members in the range countries. IUCN also developed and implemented the Komban Decision Support System, a software system that empowers forest managers to view wildlife related data (such as human-wildlife conflict patterns, or wildlife crime) in an interactive online dashboard



Endemic Water Onion (*Crinum thaianum*) in Thailand © IUCN/Flora and Fauna Project

and map, to help identify spatio-temporal patterns and develop customised solutions to problems related to elephant conservation in the north Bengal landscape.

SECURING THE TIGER'S SURVIVAL

Tigers are the top predator in Nepal; their survival is vital in balancing the ecosystem. Unfortunately, their habitats are being degraded and fragmented due to the increasing intrusion of linear infrastructure development, such as highways, railways, and the like. IUCN conducted study on Chitwan National Park with the aim of reducing linear infrastructure within the park and its impacts on the tiger and its habitat by providing science-based information to decision makers. The study results showed upgrading and expansion of roads inside the park can significantly decrease tiger populations immediately, with the effects lasting at least ten years in the future, and beyond. By establishing the 'Tigers in Nepal' project, IUCN will help tigers, and the people with which it co-exists, to adapt to the challenges of climate change by identifying potential new tiger habitat and corridors in Nepal. Meanwhile, in India, which is believed to harbour more than half of the world's remaining wild tiger population, IUCN is implementing the Integrated Tiger

Habitat Conservation Programme (ITHCP) with three national and five transboundary projects in the country.

HELPING FLORA AND FAUNA FLOURISH

Through the project "Conserving Habitats for Globally Important Flora and Fauna in Production Landscapes (FF)", IUCN is working to conserve habitats of three endangered species namely, the Eastern sarus crane (*Grus antigone sharpii*), the spoon-billed sandpiper (*Eurynorhynchus pygmeus*) and the endemic water lily (*Crinum thaianum*).

The project's aim is to mainstream the conservation of globally important and endangered biodiversity into the management of production landscapes through improved management of critical habitats. IUCN is collaborating with the Thailand Environment Institute (TEI), the Bird Conservation Society of Thailand (BCST) under the guidance and supervision of the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP), and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) with financial support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF).



Spoon-billed sandpiper (*Calidris pygmaea*) in Thailand © IUCN/Flora and Fauna project

In 2018, the project held four meetings to facilitate discussion and planning for conserving habitats of the selected endangered species. The meetings also served to develop a network on natural resources and species conservation, to promote public participation, and to share experiences and information on species conservation.

In Nepal, IUCN is developing an interactive portal of the country's mammalian species in order to address emerging conservation and development challenges posed by climate change on habitat shifts and species distribution. So far, data modeling of 75 species has been completed using the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ categories for abundance, status, distribution and habitat requirements in Nepal.

IUCN is also supporting the work on marine strandings in India. In 2018, IUCN India compiled a one-year report on marine wildlife strandings off the coast of Goa and submitted it to Goa Forest Department. In total, 115 strandings of cetaceans and marine turtles were reported, and live individuals were rescued with support from the Forest Department.

In Sri Lanka, IUCN has been shining a spotlight in the dugong, classified as Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List, to promote conservation among three local communities and to support the Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) (IUCN Government Agency Member) the agency responsible for marine parks. Education and awareness campaigns on pollution, Illegal, Unreported and Uncontrolled (IUU) fishing, and knowledge of climate change impacts helped the communities connect human actions to species decline. Once aware, fishermen started seeking more sustainable fishing methods. IUCN and DWC worked with communities on a management approach that will protect marine resources including seagrass. As part of the approach, DWC declared several areas equivalent to around 20% of the country's coastline as marine protected areas with mechanisms to provide benefits to local communities through tourism and sustainable harvesting.

IUCN Sri Lanka also embarked on a national initiative to support the Marine Environment Protection Authority in preparing the Policy Strategy and National Action Plan for Marine Environment Protection in Sri Lanka (2030). The plan calls for multi-sector and multi-stakeholder coordination, including local and international partnerships using modern information and communication approaches.



Nam Hinboun River, Phou Hin Poun, Lao PDR © IUCN/CEPF - Elaine Mumford



CEPF: PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY BY EMPOWERING PEOPLE

Encompassing more than two million square kilometres of tropical Asia, Indo-Burma is one of the most 16 threatened of the world's 36 biodiversity hotspots, with only 5% of its natural habitat remaining in relatively pristine condition. The Indo-Burma Hotspot – comprising Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam and parts of southern China – is one of the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund's (CEPF) focus areas of investment. CEPF is an innovative grant-making mechanism that aims to protect Earth's most biologically rich yet threatened areas.

IUCN is leading the second phase (2013–2019) of CEPF's investment in the Indo-Burma hotspot, collaborating with the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden and the Myanmar Environment Rehabilitation–Conservation Network, to form the CEPF Regional Implementation Team (RIT). Since 2013, CEPF has awarded 98 small grants to over 60 civil society organisations throughout the region (of which a number are IUCN NGO Members).

In 2018, CEPF awarded 12 grants, with a total value of about US\$ 240,000, to 12 different grantees, including eight local groups. These grants have been used to safeguard globally threatened species, empower local communities to engage in conservation and management of key biodiversity areas, and strengthen the capacity of civil society to work on biodiversity, communities and livelihoods at regional, national, local and grassroots levels.

Examples of these projects include the work of Viet Nam NGO Center for Plant Conservation, which implemented a project to support local communities in conserving threatened plant species in Bat Dai Son, Ha Giang Province, Vietnam; and the Community Observer Association's initiatives to mainstream karst biodiversity conservation into policies, plans and business practices in Kayin State in Myanmar. CEPF recognises that sharing stories and lessons learned is crucial to the success of conservation efforts. Storytelling about biodiversity also helps drive policy change and can encourage more investments in conservation. To strengthen the communications capacity of conservation practitioners in Asia, IUCN works closely with communication practitioners from the civil society organizations receiving CEPF grants to reinforce strategic communications and help distribute inspiring stories to a broader public.

Promoting and Supporting Effective and Equitable Governance of Natural Resources

IUCN's vision is "A just world that values and conserves nature". Without good governance systems in place, effective environmental policies and laws cannot be realised. Good governance around natural resources is at the heart of IUCN's contribution to sustainable development, ensuring that decisions that affect natural resources at local, national, bilateral and multilateral levels are well-informed, implemented equitably and are gender responsive.

In Asia, IUCN works with partners from all sectors of society – communities, civil society, private sector, academia, and government – to ensure that good governance of natural resources is not only conserving nature and strengthening its ability to support life on earth, but is also creating multiple benefits for all sectors of society.

SECURING ASIA'S WATER AND WETLANDS

Sustainable water resource management is a key issue across Asia where water stress and the degradation of watersheds and wetlands is a critical challenge. IUCN champions water resource management and is uniquely positioned to encourage cross-border cooperation on water issues.

Fostering collaboration across shared river basins IUCN works to promote dialogue and governance across boundaries in shared river basins in Asia through the Building River Dialogue and Governance (BRIDGE) project. Through this initiative, IUCN builds on its strength as a convening power to engage and build links between government bodies and civil society organisations at the local, national and regional levels.



Participants during the regional cooperation and improving flood resilience workshop, part of the GBM CSOs Networking Meeting in Assam, India © IUCN

The goal of BRIDGE is to enhance cooperation among riparian countries by applying water diplomacy at multiple levels by supporting the capacities of countries sharing river or lake basins to implement effective water management arrangements through a shared vision, benefit-sharing principles and transparent and coherent institutional frameworks. In Asia, BRIDGE operates in the Mekong Basin and the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) basin, with funding in the GBM through the Transboundary Rivers of South Asia (TROSA) programme of Oxfam Novib, and The Asia Foundation (TAF).

In the GBM basin shared by Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India and Nepal, IUCN assisted the formation of the GBM CSO Network, which comprises around thirty groups. To promote better understanding on how CSOs can enhance better understanding on shared water governance, IUCN supported the development of several studies and stakeholders surveys in 2018. The results of these studies and surveys were published in three reports in the same year: the GBM CSO Network- Monitoring and Evaluation Framework; Strengthening CSO engagement in water governance – Government perceptions and strategies in the GBM; and the Contribution and influence of CSOs on water governance in the GBM basins.

Throughout the year, IUCN and BRIDGE also supported several workshops with the GBM CSO network and government partners. Among these were a dialogue on nature-based solutions in river basin management and a learning exchange with media in June. Through these workshops, the project aims to enhance the capacities of key stakeholders in order to foster better understanding on issues and solutions, and how media and communications can be leveraged in getting messages across and raise awareness on water governance.

The continued regional engagement of the network will ultimately support the emergence of a strong and credible 'regional water governance institution of CSOs in the GBM' that can foster multi-level, transboundary cooperation among governments and other key stakeholders.

While river basins are a significant factor in geopolitics and are cultural and economic backbones of basin nations, the level of transboundary cooperation and awareness of water governance across stakeholders in the region is still generally low. To address this gap, IUCN undertook the Regional Capacity Building: Water Governance Project with funding from the World Bank. The project aimed to develop training modules on water governance in the South Asian context for professionals, diplomats and government officials. In





A family tends to a mangrove nursery in Southern Thailand. © IUCN/Siriporn Sririam

2018, the project launched and piloted a training package comprising five content modules and two practical modules, contributing to the overall goals of increasing the availability of high quality training modules on water governance, and building knowledge and capacity across the region in support of transboundary basin-focused dialogue and cooperation, diplomacy, and basin governance related to cooperative water governance.

SUPPORTING THE WISE USE OF WETLANDS

The wetlands of the Indo-Burma region are among the most critical and diverse in the world. These wetlands not only support a vast diversity of flora and fauna, but are also crucial to the well-being of millions of people in the region. In the Lower Mekong Delta, for example, wetlands support the world's most productive inland fisheries (valued at approximately US\$ 3 billion per year) and provide up to 80% of rural communities' animal protein. The

coastal mangroves that fringe the coasts of Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Viet Nam also provide valuable natural services, helping mitigate the impacts of climate change by acting as significant carbon sinks.

In the region, IUCN promotes the wise use of wetlands so that these healthy ecosystems can continue providing benefits to communities and to society as a whole. IUCN works on wetlands in the Indo-Burma Region through the Indo-Burma Ramsar Regional Initiative (IBRRI), which was launched in 2016 under the leaderships of



the governments of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam, who are contracting parties of Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. IUCN Asia acts as the secretariat for this initiative, providing support for improved implementation of the objectives of the convention.

In 2018, a significant milestone was achieved under this initiative with the launch of the IBRRI Strategic Plan for 2019–2024. The plan, which will help IBRRI fulfill its aim to support the

effective implementation of the Ramsar Convention in the Indo-Burma region, consists of five operational objectives that align with the Ramsar Convention's 4th Strategic Plan. Broadly, these objectives are: 1) to share knowledge; 2) ensure the conservation of key wetland species; 3) help develop and strengthen policy on wetlands; 4) raise awareness and promote education; and 5) ensure that the Regional Initiative is sound and sustainable.

The IBRRI Strategic Plan is expected to play an important role in assisting Ramsar authorities and communities in developing adaptation plans and enhancing the ecosystem services of wetlands. Following the launch of the strategic plan, the IBRRI secretariat will hold national meetings to present it to local stakeholders, and to develop country workplans for its implementation.

Climate-proofing valuable wetlands
Wetlands suffer from excess flooding and loss of biodiversity due to climate change. This can be detrimental for livelihoods of the communities surrounding the wetland because they depend on wetlands for food, irrigation, income, among others. Climate adaptation programmes in wetlands is therefore a priority.

In Lao PDR, IUCN has been implementing the Climate Adaptation in Wetlands Areas (CAWA) initiative in two Ramsar wetlands sites in the country. The initiative includes training government agencies and communities on adapting to climate change and assessing possible livelihood adaptation activities that can be implemented in and around the wetland areas. In 2018, the project facilitated an on-site wetland management training program for wetland managers and local

communities in Xe Champhone and Beung Kiat Ngong to address a range of wetland, ecosystem and Ramsar site management aspects including identifying and managing threats and pressures on wetlands, and developing wetland management plans and monitoring programs.

The initiative facilitated the development of climate change and vulnerability assessment reports for Xe Champhone and Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar sites, the assessment of important species in the identified sites, the development of priorities for landscape restoration to help improve wetland management, and the identification of spatial priorities for the re-opening of wetlands to maintain water flow required for ecological functioning, biological connectivity and habitat maintenance. The work to support wetlands in Lao PDR will continue with further studies on conservation of important species and management of invasive species, climate adaptation and landscape restoration in order to continue reducing pressure on wetlands and improving alternative livelihoods for communities.

CREATING RESILIENT LANDSCAPES AND COMMUNITIES

In the Lower Mekong, IUCN is helping to change the way countries think about energy, food, and water and thereby reduce the threat of hydropower on regional food security and biodiversity. In the Mekong Delta, IUCN is showing how flood friendly farming can replace farmers' third rice crop and thereby contribute to a more biodiverse and resilient landscape.

In the past couple of years, IUCN and Stimson Center have written

policy papers and provided over 20 briefings for government agencies in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam, on the feasibility of substituting high-risk Mekong mainstream dams with solar and wind power and with dams on tributaries that have much lower impact on fisheries and sediment flows.

Meanwhile, in the Mekong Delta, IUCN is demonstrating how floating gardens, lotus, aquaculture, are other flood-tolerant crops are economically and environmentally superior to intensive rice farming. IUCN has organised a series of visioning workshops in the provinces of the upper delta to secure the political support for the transformation of a million hectares of intensive rice farming into flood-friendly alternatives. To support this transition at scale, IUCN is helping the World Bank prepare a US\$ 40 million GCF proposal for the Plain of Reeds and the Long Xuyen Quadrangle. Until they were diked for a third rice crop in the 2000s, these two wetlands that form the Mekong floodplain used to serve as massive sponges that regulated the Mekong flow, lessening floods in the wet season and drought in the dry season. By partially restoring their natural functions, the project will diversify livelihoods, increase biodiversity, and reduce climate risk in the delta.

In the coastal provinces where mangroves are trapped between rising sea level and dirt dikes, IUCN continues to advocate moving from a “line of defense” to a “zone of defense” by relocating intensive shrimp farms inland and allowing the mangrove veneer to recover into an integrated mangrove-shrimp forest that traps sediment, thereby offsetting sea level rise, and produces high-value organic shrimp and other seafood.

In Nepal, IUCN implemented Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) approaches both on the ground and in national policy by continuing efforts underway in the Panchase area of western Nepal, and initiating new projects in the Chilime sub-watershed of Rasuwa district. At the national level, IUCN is working to support the development of a common methodology to conduct research to make a better case for EbA, integrating the principles into national climate adaptation policy and planning processes through advocacy, institutional strengthening and community-based learning.

CONSERVING FORESTS TO ENHANCE CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND PROMOTE LIVELIHOODS

In Nepal, IUCN, together with the Ministry of Forests and Environment (MoFE) and National Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), developed and submitted a proposal to Green Climate Fund (GCF) secretariat. The proposal focuses on enhancing climate resilience of vulnerable communities and ecosystems in the Gandaki River Basin, which is one of the biggest river basins of Nepal, occupying around 21 percent of the country’s land area. In 2018, IUCN Nepal also completed the project “upscaling production and consumption of bio-energy to reduce carbon emissions and enhance local employment”. The project, which aimed to contribute significantly to sustain the production and supply chain of bio-energy, had the dual goals of decreasing carbon emissions and increasing enterprise and business potential. Through the promotion of green businesses, such as charcoal production, IUCN was able to link incentives, such as income generation, with ecologically sound outcomes.



With the implementation of the second phase of Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) programme in Nepal in 2018, IUCN helped forest and farm producers and their organisations to develop climate resilient landscapes, strengthen enterprises, generate work opportunities for women and youth, and create a more enabling policy environment for the rural poor. Alongside this project, IUCN also piloted work in the country to enhance livelihoods of people through



A monkey in a mangrove forest in Thailand © IUCN/Siriporn Sririam



River gypsies in Bangladesh © IUCN



Freshwater turtle in Xe Champhone Ramsar site in Lao PDR © IUCN

identifying, testing and adopting best agro forestry options to bring back abandoned agricultural land in the mid-hills of Nepal. The identified best-bet options will help to address the issue of land underutilisation and abandonment, and support to develop national action plan for scaling up best bet agroforestry options.

In India, IUCN continued to implement the large grant project funded by the Government of India on building resilience among the local communities in the Indian Himalayas. The project, titled “Coping with



Women carrying fodder from the forest in Nepal © IUCN/Amit Poudyal

uncertainties: Building Community Resilience and Ecosystem Based Adaptation to Climate Change in the Indian Himalayan Region”, is being implemented in three Himalayan states: Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim, encompassing several components including energy, biogas, disaster risk reduction, and capacity building of local communities.

In 2018, as part of its efforts to enhance community-based adaptation to climate change, IUCN with support from technology partner, E-Hands Energy (India) Private Limited, promoted the

use of solar energy as an alternative source of energy for the welfare of Himalayan communities. Following a participatory system, the project installed solar rooftop systems in places of common use by local communities, thus exposing a large number of people to the potential of solar energy for lighting, heating and cooking purposes. IUCN, together with local NGO partner Uttaranchal Youth And Rural Development Centre (UYRDC) and technology provider Pan Himalayan Grassroots Development Foundation, also set up biogas units as a pilot demonstration in 20 households in the Balkila Watershed. Each unit produces 3-4 hours a day of clean cooking fuel. Apart from meeting the daily household fuel needs, this also helps to reduce the pressure on forests, while strengthening local livelihoods, and reducing the drudgery of the local women.

IUCN further conducted trainings on disaster risk reduction for local communities in Fozal Watershed in Himachal Pradesh, with the aim to build understanding among the local communities about the types of disasters their villages are vulnerable to, and train them on emergency responses to such disasters. In line with the efforts to promote landscape restoration, the project included a component to establish a community nursery to raise different fodder species in the Balkila Watershed in Uttarakhand. Planting fodder trees in and around croplands would provide women in the community easy access to high-yield, nutritious fodder for livestock. This would also help reduce the drudgery of collecting fodder from distant forests, thus also helping prevent forest degradation, while generating income for the locals.

In Thailand, with support from Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund (KNCF), IUCN is implementing the project “Conserving the proposed Kaeng Krachan World Heritage Site”, which aims to contribute to the conservation of the Kaeng Krachan Forest Complex. Through a community-based tourism initiative in Pong Leuk and Bang Kloi villages, a community cultural and biodiversity map and a community cultural heritage guidebook was published.

SUPPORTING BIODIVERSITY TARGETS

In 2018, IUCN provided technical support to the Government of Nepal to accede the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity (also known as the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing, or ABS). Following the accession, support continues on implementation of the Nagoya Protocol by assisting the government in formulating appropriate laws, regulations, policies and strategies. IUCN facilitated series of discussions to update the draft ABS bill and ensure it is fit to the current national context. In Thailand, IUCN is engaging local communities in participatory management processes and benefit sharing to contribute to the achievement of Aichi Targets 5 and 11. To this end, IUCN is providing support on Land Use Survey in 45 target sites in Kaeng Krachan National Park to formulate Community Land Use rules and regulations.





Mangroves for the Future:
Strengthening Coastal Resource Management in Asia for 11 Years



Healthy coastal ecosystems provide food and livelihoods for millions of people in Asia. They protect people living near the coast from storms, tidal waves, and reduce the risk of natural disasters. These ecosystems are increasingly under threat from unsustainable use and the impacts of climate change.

Mangroves for the Future (MFF) is a partnership-based initiative working throughout Asia to support investments in coastal ecosystems for sustainable development. The goal is to promote healthy ecosystems through an approach that applies knowledge, empowers communities, and enhances governance to secure livelihoods and build resilience to climate change.

Celebrating its 11th year in 2018, MFF has brought together over 300 Members, from government agencies to grassroots civil society groups, in 11 countries across Asia. These Members are strengthening the resilience of communities whose lives and livelihoods depend on coastal resources.

In 2018, MFF maintained its work to leverage and scale up MFF investments, share knowledge and influence national policy development. In October, The 15th MFF Regional Steering Committee was successfully convened in Indonesia, bringing together 72 representatives from government, civil society, international donors, and institutional partners.

Throughout the year, MFF's grants facility continued to be an important mechanism for supporting strategic actions to address priorities for sustainable coastal ecosystem management. Five Small Grant projects were completed in 2018 along with 19 Special Grant projects. Since its inception, MFF has overseen more than 380 grant projects implemented primarily by local civil society organisations, delivering on-the-ground results for the wellbeing of coastal ecosystems and communities.

MFF completed a review of Small Grant Facility (SGF) projects during Phase 3 of MFF, focusing on projects implemented in India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam. The review emphasised the value of the SGF in addressing priority issues in target areas and provided recommendations for MFF moving forward. Recommendations included supporting larger projects over a longer duration, and modifying the grant facility governance structures to include more representation from sub-national government agencies.

Building on MFF's longstanding commitment to Integrated Coastal Management capacity development, MFF, in partnership with the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), completed a Training of Trainers course with 25 staff from 12 national universities and training institutions in five MFF member countries. MFF continues to support these universities and training institutions by providing advice on course structure, training materials and case studies.

Continuing the emphasis on knowledge sharing as a core aspect of its work, MFF launched its online Knowledge Hub. The hub provides access to a wealth of publications, videos and images from the programme. It also contains Solutions and Knowledge Networks; Solutions are short case studies of some of MFF best projects, and Networks are informal collections of experts in a particular field with a common desire to share knowledge, solutions, and experience across organisational boundaries. The programme also launched the report *Turning Tides – A look back at 2017*, which presents stories of change from MFF projects, and the video, "Mangroves for the Future: A look back", an inspirational film which describes how MFF has evolved since its beginnings in 2006. The film highlights the benefits the programme has brought to coastal ecosystems and communities.

MFF also stepped up efforts during the year to engage private sector in sustainable coastal management. In 2018, the programme signed a letter of cooperation with Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) to undertake joint efforts in private sector engagement.

In terms of the gender aspect of coastal management, data from the MFF program confirms the successful implementation of the MFF Regional Gender Mainstreaming Strategy. Seventy eight percent of MFF's Small Grant Facility projects



have contributed to addressing women's needs and interests, and of these projects, 75% provided education, skills development and awareness to women and their families while others focused on the development of women-led livelihood initiatives. MFF also completed its Regional Gender Study in 2018. The study showed that many countries in Southeast Asia are not adequately integrating gender considerations



Young mangroves in Thailand © IUCN/Siripon Sririam



Mudskippers in mangrove flats in Thailand © IUCN/Siripon Sririam

into their national policies for fisheries and coastal resource management. The research also revealed the challenges of integrating gender in sub-national programmes relating to coastal and fishery resources management. The results of the study, conducted jointly with the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), and the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC), were presented at a workshop in Bangkok in November.

Moving forward, MFF will continue to support a diverse range of projects in the region and strive to identify best practices that harness and utilise the diverse knowledge generated by the programme to date. MFF will be seeking opportunities to scale up the programme to further strengthen climate resilience actions. Future direction will build on the existing principles of MFF and its key success factors: its governance structure, grant modalities, partnership-based focus and, most importantly, country-level ownership.





A woman collects shellfish in the mangrove area in Pyinbugyi Island, Myanmar © IUCN/MFF



Deploying Nature-based Solutions to Societal Challenges

Wetland area in Maldives © Munshidha Ibrahim

Nature-based solutions (NbS) are actions to protect, manage and restore natural or modified ecosystems, which address societal challenges, effectively and adaptively, while providing human wellbeing and biodiversity benefits. Through the application of the Union's knowledge of ecosystem management, forest conservation, gender-responsive approaches and protected areas, environmental law or sustainable business strategies, IUCN has shown how NbS can contribute to restoring landscapes, replenishing river flows and reconnecting fragmented ecosystems.

IUCN Asia works to catalyse nature-based solutions in the region. Nature can play a strong role in tackling the challenges. Nature's solutions are at our fingertips, they

are cost-effective and we know how to implement them. In the region, IUCN promotes nature-based solutions to mitigate and adapt to climate change, secure water, food and energy supplies, reduce poverty and drive economic growth.

RESTORING FOREST LANDSCAPES

Forest landscape restoration (FLR) is the ongoing process of regaining ecological functionality and enhancing human well-being across deforested or degraded forest landscapes. FLR is more than just planting trees – it is restoring a whole landscape to meet present and future needs and to offer multiple benefits and land uses over time.



Planting trees to achieve commitment under the Bonn Challenge in India © IUCN

FLR is being applied in many Asian landscapes through country and IUCN-supported initiatives. The popularity for the potentials of FLR is partially catalysed by the increasing recognition of the Bonn, as well as the results of applying Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM), an FLR planning toolkit produced by IUCN and World Resources Institute (WRI).

Since the First Asian Ministerial Roundtable meeting on Bonn Challenge held in South Sumatra, Indonesia in May 2017, regional momentum on supporting FLR has accelerated, helping the Bonn Challenge to pass the 150 million milestone. Such political momentum continued with high-level roundtables in the succeeding years. In all regional Bonn Challenge roundtables, IUCN has

played a critical facilitating role to support countries on developing regional cooperation mechanisms and learning. The discussion and outputs from these learning exchanges indicated that there were widespread FLR practices in this region and beyond, combining the dual objectives of restoring ecological integrity and enhancing human wellbeing. To deliver the multiple ecosystem services and benefits for society and communities, there is a strong call for an enabling policy framework and integration of different financial resources for restoration work in Asian countries.

ROAM provides a flexible and affordable framework approach for countries to rapidly identify and analyse forest landscape restoration (FLR) potential and locate specific areas of opportunity at a national or



Forest Landscape Restoration in Pakistan © IUCN/Pakistan

sub-national level. From 2016 to 2018, ROAM has been applied in six Asian countries: India, Indonesia, Vietnam, China, Myanmar and Pakistan. The total completed assessment areas are 76,507,693 hectares, with over 1 million ha and FLR priority areas identified.

Various countries have demonstrated their success in restoration. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province in Pakistan is the first Bonn Challenge pledger in the world to announce their achievement in reaching their Bonn Challenge commitment through the successful completion of the Billion Tree Tsunami project. It is now looking at progressing to more ambitious national targets such as the Ten Billion Tree Tsunami project.

IUCN has been supporting the Government of India in mapping the progress towards the Bonn Challenge pledge. A joint publication by the Government of India and IUCN called *Bonn Challenge and India: Progress on restoration efforts across States and Landscapes* was launched in 2018, which found that India has already brought 9.8 million hectares under restoration. This report is unique as it included efforts by government agencies, NGOs and private companies. IUCN India also implemented a project to assess restoration opportunities using the ROAM framework in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand. The study recommendations were validated by the senior government officials from the state of Uttarakhand, and were also presented



Women-led community tree planting in Pakistan © IUCN/Pakistan

at a roundtable organised in the central Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The final report of the ROAM study was launched in September 2018 by the Minister of Environment.

In Sri Lanka, IUCN embarked on the project “Restoration and management of a degraded fern land adjacent to Kanneliya Forest Reserve”. The initiative, which is spearheaded by IUCN Sri Lanka in partnership with Biodiversity Sri Lanka, the Forest Department, and private sector partners, aims to reforest 10 hectares in the Kanneliya Conservation Forest by applying an ecological restoration modelling approach. As the preliminary step of the

project, a detailed plan has been developed for the restoration and management of the identified block. This scientific approach to ecosystem valuation and to measuring benefits to biodiversity is expected to create a transformational change in the way ecosystem services are estimated and in decisions on conservation-related investments.

Moving forward, IUCN in the region will continue to look for opportunities to advance forest landscape restoration in Asia region, both at operational as well as policy levels.

Business and Nature: A Partnership for Change

In order to transform the way business values, manages and invests in nature, IUCN engages companies and key sectors to identify their impacts on biodiversity and create innovative solutions to address this challenge. Engaging businesses is crucial in order to help conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.



Globally, IUCN's Business and Biodiversity Programme focuses on three key areas of work to drive the changes required to deliver on IUCN's global conservation and sustainable development goals. These are: valuing biodiversity; promoting biodiversity net gain; and investing in nature.

Asia, which is now the global engine of economic growth, is also a hotspot of environmental degradation. As a response to this challenge, IUCN Asia aims to build action-based relationships with businesses that go beyond Corporate Social Responsibility obligations, but which addresses the root causes of many of today's environmental problems.

In India, IUCN continued to support Tata Steel with its implementation of Biodiversity Management Plans at their mining sites. IUCN supported Tata Steel in undertaking its 2nd Biodiversity Indicator and Reporting System (BIRS) assessments at all the mining sites to monitor impact on habitats. Additionally, IUCN organised awareness programmes on biodiversity

related topics such as invasive species management, nursery establishment among others, for Tata Steel staff and local communities. IUCN's success in partnering with Tata Steel was recognised when the company won the CII Biodiversity Excellence Award in 2018.

In 2018, IUCN also developed the Global Biodiversity Guidance document for Tata Power to integrate global standards on biodiversity into its corporate policies. To further disseminate this, IUCN organised an International Workshop on Integrating Biodiversity into Power Sector in March in New Delhi. Tata Power is planning to rollout the Global Biodiversity Guidance for their renewable business division.

In the past few years, IUCN has been working with the Aditya Birla Group (ABG) in India to develop their group-level Biodiversity Policy. In April 2018, ABG, a global conglomerate based in India, adopted its Biodiversity Policy becoming the first conglomerate to have a biodiversity policy and the technical standard to implement it. Ultratech Cement Limited, an ABG



Ms. Jittinan Ruangweerayoot, Director of Biodiversity Division, Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP) – Thailand (left) and Ninnart Chaithirapinyo, Chairman, Toyota Motor Thailand (right) share a toast during the soft launch of the B-DNA platform at the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP 14) in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt © IISD/Kiara Worth (enb.iisd.org/biodiv/cop14/side-events/20nov.html)

company and the largest cement manufacturer in India, also adopted a Corporate Biodiversity Policy in the same month. Tata Steel and Aditya Birla Group participated in the IUCN Business Week 2018 and presented their achievements on biodiversity conservation, including their bottom up approach of developing Biodiversity Policies.

Under the sustainable agriscapes initiative, IUCN India continued working with ITC in 2018, the third year of partnership. The work focused on the technical front and initiated pilot interventions on improving the health of priority ecosystems. Pilots were initiated in three different clusters as per their key ecosystem issues, which involved management of invasive species, and nature based solutions to farming, among others. Several training sessions were held for the local communities on nature based agriculture, biodiversity conservation, and organic farming.

Throughout the year, IUCN India's Leaders for Nature (LfN) programme trained over 150 corporate executives from 12 large corporations (including Aditya Birla Group, ACC, Ambuja, Tata Steel, Tata Power, Tata Sons, Rio Tinto, Apollo, etc.) on biodiversity related topics. IUCN also collaborated with the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM) and TERI School of Advanced Sciences (TERI-SAS) to organise a webinar for corporates on "Youth Leadership and intergenerational partnership for conservation". LfN organised master classes and in-company sessions and webinars on the circular economy and the rehabilitation of mining areas for its member companies. Activities such as nature walks and a clean-up drive were also arranged as part of the LfN programme in 2018.

In Sri Lanka, IUCN supported the sustainability efforts of INSEE Cement quarry operations by rescuing and re-locating of selected plants and less mobile fauna in areas ear-marked for limestone mining. IUCN Sri Lanka also provided guidance on the restoration of mine sites. At the INSEE quarry site, almost 700,00 m² of land has been rehabilitated over the last nine years. Monitoring studies by IUCN proved that 6-10 year old restored habitats have higher forest species diversity than 30-year old, unrestored quarry sites which have gone through natural regeneration. IUCN involvement identified the most critical habitats and marked them



as no-mine areas. This experience demonstrates the value of nature solutions to minimise the damage by extractive industries.

To promote private sector capital in forest conservation and demonstrate the positive results in enhancing natural capital in a quantitative way, IUCN, in partnership with Biodiversity Sri Lanka and the Forest Department, created an innovative pilot project to pool investments of 10 like-minded corporations in the conservation of ecosystems. A site covering 10 hectares of degraded area within the Kanneliya Conservation Forest became the first ecological restoration approach in the country jointly funded by private sector actors, where ecosystem benefits and biodiversity improvements are being tracked and attributed to the individual investments. The joint investment allowed the Forest Department to use IUCN techniques to quantify biodiversity credits accrued over a period, and to provide a unique opportunity for companies to highlight their social responsibility towards nature conservation.



Melaleuca forest in the nesting season, Tram Chim National Park in Viet Nam © Nguyen Van Hung

In November 2018, IUCN Asia, in partnership with Toyota Motor Thailand (TMT), launched Thailand's first Business and Biodiversity Platform, called the Thailand Biodiversity Network Alliance, or B-DNA. Thailand B-DNA is the first and only one platform of its kind in the country. It was established to strengthen the private sector's role in nature conservation, with a focus on biodiversity, the Sustainable Development Goals, and Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The platform was launched in a side event at the 14th Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD COP 14) in Egypt.

During the year, IUCN continued to expand partnerships with new Marriott resorts, developing education and conservation projects. IUCN and Marriott resorts hosted two conservation centered events: *Promoting best practices in coastal marine conservation in collaboration with private sector partners* and the *Bamboo shark release and reef cleanup* at Phuket Marriott Resort and Spa, Merlin Beach. Marriot received a Responsible Thailand award in

the Marine, Nature, and Heritage category from the Tourism Authority of Thailand, in recognition of the Marriott-IUCN partnership conservation initiatives on the premises: the Reef Education Center and the Butterfly Sanctuary.

IUCN Thailand also worked with Coca-Cola to tackle marine plastics issue in Thailand. IUCN and Coca-Cola Thailand are working closely to implement the project "Tackling marine plastics in Thailand: From community-based actions to policies". The project's phase 1 (2018–2019) aims to achieve transformative awareness and instrumental change in people's behavior towards solid waste management. Coca-Cola, IUCN and the communities on Koh Yao Yai are working together to strengthen awareness and develop the potential of waste management in communities in the area, and support the management of environmentally responsible tourism activities.



Collaboration for a Better Future

Fruit stand in the night market, Port of Dhaka © IUCN/Ann Moey

With a history spanning seven decades, IUCN has lived up to its stature as a democratic membership union. IUCN in Asia has seen a significant growth in organisational membership. In 2018, 14 new Member organisations joined, highlight of which is the state membership of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, three Government Agencies and 10 NGOs, with a total of 268 members.

By becoming part of the world's largest and oldest environmental network, IUCN Members work together to help find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges. They act collectively to lead, govern and set the organisation's strategic agenda. In turn, Members benefit from IUCN's scientific credibility, its unsurpassed knowledge base and convening power, extensive networking opportunities and access to high-level political, economic and social decision making.

By joining us, Members are able to advance their own causes, strengthen their credibility and capacity through association, and add to our collective strength in overcoming barriers to a sustainable future.

To find out how your organisation can be a part of IUCN, please contact our Membership Manager Mr Raj Kumar:
Tel: +66-2-6624029, Ext 117
Email: raj.kumar@iucn.org

Our Members in Asia – 2018

BANGLADESH

State

Ministry of Environment and Forest

National NGOs

Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies
Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association
Bangladesh POUSH
Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad BRAC
Brotee Samaj Kallyan Sangstha
Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Services
Center for Natural Resource Studies
Centre for Coastal Environmental Conservation
Centre for Sustainable Development
Coastal Area Resource Development and Management Association
Community Development Centre
Development of Biotechnology & Environmental Conservation Centre
Environment and Social Development Organization
Jiban Bikash Karjocrom
Nature Conservation Management
Prokriti O Jibon Foundation
Shushilan
Unnayan Onneshan
WildTeam

Indigenous Peoples' Organizations

Bolipara Nari Kalyan Somity
Gram Unnayan Sangathon

BHUTAN

State

Ministry of Agriculture and Forests

National NGOs

Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation
Royal Society for Protection of Nature

CAMBODIA

National NGOs

Culture and Environment Preservation Association
Fisheries Action Coalition Team
Mlup Baitong
The NGO Forum on Cambodia

CHINA

State

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Government Agencies

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
Haikou Municipal Government

National NGO

All-China Environment Federation
Aquameridian Conservation & Education Foundation
Beijing Forestry Society
Beijing Xicheng District Evergreen Center For Sustainable Development
Biodiversity Committee, Chinese Academy of Sciences
Centre for Biodiversity and Indigenous Knowledge
Chengdu Bird Watching Society
China Association for NGO Cooperation
China Association of National Parks and Scenic Sites
China Biodiversity Conservation

and Green Development Foundation

China Green Carbon Foundation
China Mangrove Conservation Network (legal name: Putian Green Sprout Coastal Wetlands Research Center)

China Wildlife Conservation Association

Chinese Society of Forestry
Eco Foundation Global
Elion Foundation

Friends of Nature
Friends of the Country Parks
Green Hunan

Guangdong Operation Earth Environmental Service Center
Guangdong Forest Parks Association

Guangzhou Green City Environmental and Cultural Development Center

Nanjing Institute of Environmental Sciences, Ministry of Environmental Protection

Shan Shui Conservation Center
Shangri-La Institute for Sustainable Communities

Shenzhen Mangrove Wetlands Conservation Foundation

Shenzhen Spring Environmental Protection Volunteer Association

Shenzhen Dapeng Coral Conservation Volunteer Federation
Society of Entrepreneurs & Ecology

The Jane Goodall Institute China
World Wide Fund for Nature - Hong Kong SAR

Xiamen Green Cross Association
Yunnan Green Environment Development Foundation

Affiliate

Mt. Huangshan Scenic Area Administrative Committee

INDIA

State

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Government Agencies

National Board for Wild Life, Ministry of Environment and Forests

Wildlife Institute of India
Gujarat Ecology Commission

National NGOs

Aaranyak
All India Disaster Mitigation Institute
Applied Environmental Research Foundation
Association for Rural Area Social Modification, Improvement and Nestling
Balipara Tract & Frontier Foundation
Bombay Natural History Society
Centre for Environment Education - Nehru Foundation for Development
Centre for Media Studies
COORG Wildlife Society
Development Alternatives
Foundation for Ecological Security
Green Future Foundation
Gujarat Ecological Education and Research Foundation
Gujarat Ecology Society
Gujarat Institute of Desert Ecology
Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage
InsPIRE Network for Environment
Institute for Integrated Rural Development
International Society of Naturalists
Keystone Foundation
M.S. Swaminathan Research

Foundation

Nature, Environment and Wildlife Society
OMCAR Foundation
Regional Centre for Development Cooperation
Sahjeevan
Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History
Society of Hill Resource Management School
TERRE Policy Centre
The Corbett Foundation
Wildlife Conservation Trust
Wildlife Protection Society of India
Wildlife Trust of India
World Wide Fund for Nature - India
Zoo Outreach Organisation Trust

INDONESIA

Government Agencies

Directorate General Ecosystem and Natural Resources Conservation, Ministry of Environment and Forestry

National NGOs

Coral Triangle Center
The Indonesian Biodiversity Foundation
The Samdhana Institute
Incorporated
World Wide Fund for Nature - Indonesia

Affiliate

Center for International Forestry Research

JAPAN

State

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

Government Agency

Ministry of the Environment, Japan

National NGOs

Japan Centre for Human Environmental Problems
Japanese Association of Zoos and Aquariums
Kamehameha Okoku
Keidanren Committee on Nature Conservation
Nature Conservation Society of Japan
Nihon Gan-wo Hogo suru Kai
Nihon Umigame Kyougikai
Ramsar Network Japan
Save the Dugong Campaign Center
Seibutsu Tayosei Japan
(Biodiversity Network Japan)
Shizen Kankyo Kenkyu Senta
The Asahi Glass Foundation
Wild Bird Society of Japan
World Wide Fund for Nature - Japan
Yasei Seibutsu Hozenron
Kenkyukai

KOREA (DPRK)

Government Agency

Ministry of Land and Environment Protection

National NGO

Nature Conservation Union of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

KOREA (ROK)

State

Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea

Government Agencies

Cultural Heritage Administration
Jeju Special Self-Governing Province, Bureau of Environment Conservation
Korea Forest Service
Korea National Park Service

National NGOs

DaeJayon
Gotjawal Trust of Jeju
Jeju provincial Council for Sustainability Development
Korea Environmental Education Network
Korean Association for Conservation of Nature
Korean Environmental Law Association
Korean Society of Environmental Impact Assessment
Korean Wetlands Society
Local Agenda21-Seogwipo City
National Nature Trust
Sah-dahn-beob-in Jeju Gukje
Noksaek-Seom Forum
Sustainable Environmental Education Center of Jeju Special Self-Governing Province
The Ecological Society of Korea
The Korean Society of Conservation Biology
The Korean Society of Oceanography
World Heritage Promotion Team of Korean Tidal Flats

LAO PDR

State

Ministère des Affaires étrangères

National NGO

Lao Biodiversity Association

MALAYSIA

State

Department of Wildlife and National Parks - Peninsular Malaysia

Government Agencies

Sabah Wildlife Department
Sarawak Forestry Corporation Sdn Bhd
The Sabah Parks Board of Trustees

National NGOs

Malaysian Nature Society
Marine Research Foundation
World Wide Fund for Nature - Malaysia

MALDIVES

National NGO

Live & Learn Environmental Education

MONGOLIA

State

Ministry of Environment, Green Development and Tourism

National NGO

Hustai National Park Trust

MYANMAR

State

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation

National NGOs

Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Association
Forest Resource Environment Development and Conservation Association
Friends of Wildlife

NEPAL

State

Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation

International NGOs

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
Red Panda Network

National NGOs

ASHMITA Nepal
Association for Protection of the Environment and Culture
Batabaraniya Susan Karya Samuha Nepal
Bird Conservation Nepal/Nepal Panchhi Samrakchyan Sangh
Centre for Rural Technology
Environmental Camps for Conservation Awareness
Himali Prakriti
Hoste Hainse
Khoj Tatha Bikas Kendra, Nepal
Manab Kallyantatha Batabaran Samrak Kendra
National Trust for Nature Conservation
Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists

Relief Fund for Wildlife Victims
 Samrachayan Bikash Foundation
 Sana Standhari Prani
 Samrakshan Tatha Anusandhan
 Foundation
 SAVE THE PLANET Mission2020
 NEPAL
 Watawaranka Lagi Yuwa Sanjal
 (Youth Alliance for Environment)
 Wildlife Conservation Nepal
 Wildlife Watch Group
 Women in Environment/Mahila
 Batabaran Samooaha
 Yuwa Jagaran Paryabaraniya
 Munch

PAKISTAN

State

National Council for Conservation
 of Wildlife, Ministry of Climate
 Change

Government Agencies

Azad Jammu & Kashmir
 Environmental Protection Agency
 Government of Gilgit-Baltistan
 Lahore Waste Management
 Company National Institute of
 Oceanography
 Planning and Development
 Department, Government of
 Balochistan
 Planning and Development
 Department, Government of
 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
 Sindh Coastal Development
 Authority, Planning &
 Development Department,
 Government of Sindh
 Sindh Wildlife Department

International NGO

Aga Khan Rural Support
 Programme

National NGOs

AWAZ Foundation Pakistan:
 Center for Development Services
 Azat Foundation
 Baanhn Beli
 Balochistan Rural Support
 Programme
 Centre for Peace and
 Development
 Global Change Impact Studies
 Centre
 H.E.J. Research Institute of
 Chemistry
 Haashar Association
 Health and Nutrition
 Development Society
 Human Resource Development
 Network
 Indus Earth Trust
 Institute of Rural Management
 Khwendo Kor
 Leadership for Environment and
 Development
 Legends Society
 New World Hope Organization
 Pakistan Institute of Labour
 Education and Research
 Participatory Village
 Development Programme
 Research and Development
 Foundation
 Rural Aid Pakistan
 SACAN Foundation
 Saibaan Development
 Organization
 Sarhad Rural Support
 Programme
 Scientific and Cultural Society
 of Pakistan

Shehri: Citizens for a Better
 Environment
 Shirkat Gah - Womens Resource
 Centre
 Society for Empowering Human
 Resource
 South Asia Partnership -
 Pakistan
 Strengthening Participatory
 Organization
 Sungi Development Foundation
 Sustainable Development Policy
 Institute
 Taraqee Foundation
 Thardeep Rural Development
 Programme
 Trust for Conservation of
 Coastal Resources
 Water, Environment and
 Sanitation Society
 World Wide Fund - Pakistan

PHILIPPINES

International NGO

Non-Timber Forest Products -
 Exchange Programme Asia

National NGOs

Ecological Society of the
 Philippines
 Foundation for the Philippine
 Environment
 Haribon Foundation for the
 Conservation of Natural Resources
 Mindoro Biodiversity
 Conservation Foundation, Inc.
 World Wide Fund for Nature -
 Philippines



Mount Annapurna and its associate glacier in Nepal © IUCN/Amit Poudyal

SINGAPORE

National NGOs

Asia-Pacific Centre for Environmental Law
Nature Society (Singapore)
Singapore Zoological Gardens

SRI LANKA

State

Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment

Government Agencies

Department of National Zoological Gardens
Department of Wildlife Conservation
Forest Department
Ministry of Agriculture, Land, Irrigation, Fisheries, Animal Product & Health, and Agrarian Development (Western Province)
Ministry of Agriculture, Land, Irrigation, Fisheries, Animal Product & Health, and Agrarian Development (Western Province)

National NGOs

Federation of Wildlife Conservation
Sevalanka Foundation
Small Fishers Federation
Wildlife and Nature Protection Society of Sri Lanka

THAILAND

State

Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation

International NGOs

International Network of Engaged Buddhists
Regional Community Forestry Training Center

National NGOs

Freeland Foundation
Good Governance for Social Development and the Environment Institute Foundation
Mai Khao Marine Turtle Foundation
Seub Nakhasathien Foundation
Thai Conservation of Forest

Foundation

Thai Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

VIET NAM

State

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

National NGOs

Center for Environment and Community Research
Central Institute for Natural Resources and Environment Studies
Centre for Marinelif e Conservation and Community Development
Centre of Live and Learn for Environment and Community
Greenviet Biodiversity Conservation Centre
Thailand Environmental Institute Foundation
Viên Kinh tế sinh thái

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Ms Ann Moey

ann.moey@iucn.org



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Focal Point in Asia:

Ms Maeve Nightingale

maeve.nightingale@iucn.org



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Focal Point in Asia:

Mr Anshuman Saikia

anshuman.saikia@iucn.org



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Mr Alessandro Badalotti

alessandro.badalotti@iucn.org



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Focal Point in Asia:

Mr Raphael Glemet

raphael.glemet@iucn.org



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Asia: 263

Focal Point in Asia:

Dr Scott Perkin

scott.perkin@iucn.org

Key Contacts in Asia

Chairs of National Committees

Bangladesh

Mrs Hasna Moudud
Coastal Area Resource Development and
Management Association (CARMA)

India

Mr C. K. Mishra
Ministry of Environment, Forests
and Climate Change

Japan

Mr Tsunao Watanabe
Japan Wildlife Research Centre

Nepal

Mr Yogendra Chitrakar
Environmental Camps for
Conservation Awareness

Pakistan

Mr Amjad Rashid
Taraqee Foundation

Korea (ROK)

Prof. Youngbae Suh
Seoul National University

Sri Lanka

Mr Koraloge Ajith Silva
Ministry of Mahawali Development
and Environment

Thailand

Dr Prasert Sornsathapornkul
National Parks, Wildlife and Plant
Conservation Department

Viet Nam

Dr Hoang Van Thang
Central Institute for Natural Resources and
Environment Studies

Representatives of Countries without National Committees

Bhutan

H.E. Lyonpo Yeshey Dorji
Ministry of Agriculture and Forests

Cambodia

Mr Sophana Om
Mlup Baitong

China

Prof. Ma Keping
Biodiversity Committee, Chinese
Academy of Sciences

Indonesia

Mr Ir. Wiratno
Directorate General Ecosystem and Natural
Resources Conservation, Ministry of
Environment and Forestry

Korea (DPR)

Mr Ho Myong Hyok
Ministry of Land and Environment Protection

Lao PDR

Mr Anouparb Vongnorkeo
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Malaysia

Mr Abdul Kadir bin Abu Hashim
Department of Wildlife and National Parks -
Peninsular Malaysia (DWNP)

Malaysia

Ms Zameela Ahmed
Live & Learn Environmental Education

Mongolia

Mr Batjargal Khandjav
Ministry of Environment, Green
Development and Tourism

Myanmar

Mr U Myint Aung
Friends of Wildlife

Philippines

Ms Maria Belinda E. de la Paz
Haribon Foundation for the Conservation
of Natural Resources

Singapore

Prof. Koh Kheng Lian
Asia-Pacific Centre for Environment Law
(APCEL)

IUCN Regional Councilors (Non-Voting Members)

Japan

Amb. Masahiko Horie

Korea (RoK)

Prof. Youngbae Suh

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Malaysia

Prof. Amran Hamzah

Pakistan

Mr Malik Amin Aslam

IUCN Asia Region Offices

Asia Regional Office

63 Sukhumvit Soi Road 39
Klongton - Nua, Wattana
Bangkok 10110, Thailand
Tel: +66 (2) 662 4029
Fax: +66 (2) 662 4387
Email: asia@iucn.org

Bangladesh Country Office

House B-138 (Level 5&6), Road 22,
Mohakhali DOHS, Dhaka 1206,
Bangladesh
Tel: +880 (2) 989 0395
Fax: +880 (2) 989 2854

Cambodia Project Office

6B Street 368,
Boeng Keng Kang III,
Khan Chamkar Mon
P.O. Box 1504,
Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Tel: +855 (23) 222 311
Fax: +855 (23) 222 312
Email: info.cambodia@iucn.org

China Country Office

5 - 1 - 72, Tayuan Diplomatic
Compound No. 1,
Xin Dong Lu, Chaoyang District,
Beijing 100600, China
Tel: +86 (10) 8532 2699
Fax: +86 (10) 8532 2693

India Country Office

C-10, Gulmohar Park
New Delhi - 110 049, India
Tel: +91 (11) 2652 7742
Fax: +91 (11) 2652 7742

Lao PDR Country Office

326/25 Sibounheuang 26 Road
Ban Sibounheuang
P.O. Box 4340 Vientiane, Lao PDR
Tel: +856 (21) 216 401
Fax: +856 (21) 216 127
Email: info.lao@iucn.org

Nepal Country Office

Kupondole, Lalitpur
P.O. Box 3923 Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: +977 (1) 552 8781
Fax: +977 (1) 553 6786
Email: info-np@iucn.org

Pakistan Country Office

1 Bath Island Road,
Karachi 75530, Pakistan
Tel: +92 (21) 3586 1540
Fax: +92 (21) 3582 5760
Email: cro.pk@iucn.org

Sri Lanka Country Office

53 Horton Place
Colombo 07, Sri Lanka
Tel: +94 (11) 269 4094
Fax: +94 (11) 268 2470
Email: iucn.sl@iucn.org

Thailand Country Office

Biohouse, Floor 6,
55 Soi Phrompong
Klongton - Nua, Wattana
Bangkok 10110, Thailand
Tel: +66 (2) 662 4029
Fax: +66 (2) 662 4387

Viet Nam Country Office

1st floor, Building 2A
Van Phuc Diplomatic Compound
298 Kim Ma Street
Ba Dinh District, Hanoi
Viet Nam
Tel: +84 (4) 3726 1575
Fax: +84 (4) 3726 1576
Email: info.vietnam@iucn.org

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Editorial Coordinator

Ann Moey, IUCN Asia

Compiling and Editing

Vanessa Carriedo, IUCN Asia
Lea Guerrero

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Dennis Lee

Available from Asia Regional Office

63 Sukhumvit Road Soi 39
Klongton - Nua Watthana
Bangkok 10110, Thailand
Tel: 66 (2) 662 4029
Fax: 66 (2) 662 4387
asia@iucn.org
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INTERNATIONAL UNION
FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

ASIA REGIONAL OFFICE
63 Sukhumvit Soi 39
Klongton - Nua, Wattana
10110 Bangkok, Thailand
Tel +66 (2) 662 4029
Fax +66 (2) 662 4387
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