

Tanguar hoar wetlands

Community based sustainable management



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Tanguar hoar is a unique wetland ecosystem in northeastern Bangladesh that is of both national and global significance. The wetlands were designated a Ramsar site (Wetland of International Importance) in 2000, and declared an Ecologically Critical Area in 1999 by the Bangladesh government.

Tanguar hoar plays a critical ecological role in Bangladesh. The wetland supports freshwater fish spawning grounds and directly sustains the livelihoods of over 56,000 people from 88 surrounding villages and contributes to national food production and security. Wetland resources were threatened by over-exploitation arising from the competitive fishery leasing system in operation, as well as from competing land uses such as cattle grazing and commercial duck farming.

IUCN Bangladesh has worked in the wetlands since 2002 to establish an innovative co-management system that allows the sustainable use of natural resources, applying the “wise use” principles. The initiative has increased the capacity of local communities to effectively manage the wetland, and created alternative income generation options to reduce dependency on natural resources.

An historic milestone was achieved in the management and conservation of the Tanguar hoar wetlands and its rich biodiversity when the traditional leasing system was abandoned by the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) in favour of a community-based management system. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation supported the MoEF initiative, who then nominated IUCN Bangladesh to implement the project. The first phase of the project started in December 2006, with a second phase, due for completion in April 2012, commencing in May 2009.

The development objective of the current work is to establish a functional co-management system for conservation stabilization and sustainable use of the natural resources of the wetlands that also generates opportunities for significant improvements to the livelihoods of rural communities and contributes to the costs (cost recovery processes) incurred by management.

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