

# Tra Su Proposed Nature Reserve

## Alternative site name(s)

None

## Province(s)

An Giang

## Area

2,000 ha

## Coordinates

10°33' - 10°36'N, 105°02' - 105°04'E

## Agro-ecological zone

Mekong Delta

## Decreed by government

No

## Management board established

No

## Investment plan prepared

No

## VCF eligibility criteria met

B

## Social screening criteria met

None

## Conservation needs assessment prepared

No

## Operational management plan prepared

No

## Tracking tool completed

No

## Map available

Yes

## Management history

Tra Su is not included on any government decision regarding the national Special-use Forests system (MARD 1997). Following a survey by BirdLife International and the Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources, Tra Su was identified as a key site for wetland biodiversity conservation in the Mekong Delta. Consequently, the two organisations proposed that the site be designated as a protected area by the provincial authorities (Buckton *et al.* 1999).

On 23 June 2003, An Giang Provincial People's Committee submitted Official Letter No. 22/TT-UB to MARD, to request permission to prepare an investment plan to establish a nature reserve at Tra Su. Subsequently, MARD approved the provincial people's committee's request, by Official Letter No. 1609/CV-BNN-KL dated 25 June 2003, and assigned Ho Chi Minh City Forest Inventory and Planning Sub-institute to assist with the preparation of the investment plan.

To date, an investment plan has not been prepared, and a nature reserve management board has not been established for Tra Su. The site is currently under the management of An Giang Provincial Protection and Special-use Forest Management Board, under An Giang Provincial FPD. Seven protection staff are currently based at the site, at a single guard station (An Giang Provincial Protection and Special-use Forest Management Board *in litt.* 2003).

Tra Su is included on a list of Special-use Forests to be established by the year 2010, prepared by the FPD of MARD, as a 1,000 ha nature reserve (FPD 2003); this list has not yet been approved by the government.

## Topography and hydrology

Tra Su is located in Van Giao commune, Tinh Bien district, An Giang province. The site is located in the Mekong Delta, and has very flat topography. The site is seasonally inundated by floodwaters from the Bassac River.

## Biodiversity values

Tra Su supports a small block of *Melaleuca* plantation and seasonally inundated grassland and swamp. Previously, *Melaleuca* forest extended beyond the site but this has now been converted to rice cultivation. The site is bisected by a canal, with mature *Melaleuca* plantation and patches of open swamp to the west, and young *Melaleuca* plantation and seasonally inundated grassland to the east (Buckton *et al.* 1999).

One area of young *Melaleuca* plantation at the site holds a sizeable breeding colony of waterbirds, including over 300 Purple Herons *Ardea purpurea*, Black-crowned Night Herons *Nycticorax nycticorax* and Little Cormorants *Phalacrocorax niger*, and very

small numbers of breeding Oriental Darters *Anhinga melanogaster*, a globally near-threatened species. The site also supports several small colonies of Asian Golden Weaver *Ploceus hypoxanthus*, another globally near-threatened species, although the fragmented nature of the site means that this population may not be viable in the long term (Buckton *et al.* 1999).

Tra Su is located about 10 km south of Boeung Prek Lapouv Important Bird Area (IBA) in Cambodia, one of the largest remaining areas of natural and semi-natural habitats in the Mekong Delta. Boeung Prek Lapouv IBA supports large numbers of non-breeding large waterbirds, including the globally threatened Sarus Crane *Grus antigone* and Spot-billed Pelican *Pelecanus philippensis*, and the globally near-threatened Painted Stork *Mycteria leucocephala* (Seng Kim Hout *et al.* 2003). Whether any of these species of conservation concern may visit Tra Su during the non-breeding season has not yet been assessed. However, in May 2003, four adult Milky Storks *M. cinerea* were recorded at Tra Su (Robson 2003); this is the only confirmed recent record of this species from Vietnam.

## Conservation issues

Buckton *et al.* (1999) identified the main threats to biodiversity at the site to be: continued planting of *Melaleuca* in areas of open swamp; and the small size and highly fragmented nature of the habitat. In addition, Buckton *et al.* (1999) noted that, although the bird colony is given protection by site staff, any commercial exploitation of *Melaleuca* in the vicinity is likely to cause the colony to disperse. Moreover, Buckton *et al.* (1999) observed that grassland areas are threatened by gradual encroachment by *Melaleuca* and the exotic *Mimosa pigra*.

## Other documented values

The site performs a number of economically important ecosystem functions, including regulating acidity in surrounding agricultural land. pH readings as low as 2.9 in surrounding paddyfields indicate severe acidity problems, while, within the site, the pH has been measured as 6.3 (Buckton *et al.* 1999).

## Related projects

No information.

## Conservation needs assessment

A conservation needs assessment has not been conducted for the site.

## Operational management plan

An operational management plan has not been prepared for the site.

## Eligibility against VCF criteria

The site is ineligible for VCF support because it does not meet the criteria for supporting forest biodiversity of international importance. In addition, the site is not under appropriate conservation management.

Criterion	Eligibility
A <sub>I</sub>	
A <sub>II</sub>	
B <sub>I</sub>	Proposed Special-use Forest
B <sub>II</sub>	Nature Reserve
B <sub>III</sub>	Under provincial management
C <sub>I</sub>	
C <sub>II</sub>	

## Social screening requirements

A social screening report has not been prepared for the site.

Criterion	Eligibility
A	
B	
C	
D	

## Literature sources

Buckton, S. T., Nguyen Cu, Ha Quy Quynh and Nguyen Duc Tu (1999) The conservation of key wetland sites in the Mekong Delta. Hanoi: BirdLife International Vietnam Programme.

Buckton, S. T., Nguyen Cu, Ha Quy Quynh and Nguyen Duc Tu (2000) [The conservation of key wetland sites in the Mekong Delta]. Hanoi: BirdLife International Vietnam Programme. In Vietnamese.

Robson, C. (2003) From the field. OBC Bulletin 38: 72-79.

Seng Kim Hout, Pech Bunnat, Poole, C. M., Tordoff, A. W., Davidson, P. and Delattre, E. (2003) Directory of important bird areas in Cambodia: key sites for conservation. Phnom Penh: Department of Forestry and Wildlife, Department of Nature Conservation and Protection, BirdLife International in Indochina and the Wildlife Conservation Society Cambodia Program.