

Background

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of protected areas in Vietnam. It charts the development of the Special-use Forests system from the establishment of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's first protected area at Cuc Phuong in 1962, through to the current policy of the government of Vietnam to expand the system of Special-use Forests to 2 million ha by the year 2010. It also reviews current developments in the institutional and legislative frameworks for the designation and management of wetland sites and marine protected areas. Finally, it summarises changes in protected areas since the publication of the first edition of the sourcebook in February 2001 (BirdLife International and FIPI 2001).

What are protected areas in Vietnam?

To date, the only protected areas to have been decreed by the government of Vietnam are Special-use Forests, which mainly comprise terrestrial forest sites but also include a small number of wetland and marine sites. Prior to 1995, the national system of Special-use Forests was managed by the former Ministry of Forestry. In 1995, the Ministry of Forestry was integrated within the newly formed Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), and management responsibility for the national Special-use Forests system was transferred to this ministry.

In addition to the Special-use Forests system, there exist plans to develop systems of marine protected areas and wetland protected areas (MOSTE/NEA 2000, Nguyen Chu Hoi 2000). Following Decision No. 192/TTg of the Prime Minister, dated 17 September 2003, on a Strategy for Vietnam's Protected Areas System, and Decree No. 109/CP of the Prime Minister, dated 23 September 2003, on the Conservation and Development of Wetlands, management responsibility for the three protected areas systems is divided as follows:

- MARD is responsible for the national Special-use Forests system;
- the Ministry of Fisheries (MOFI) is responsible for the national marine protected areas system;

- the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) is responsible for the national wetland protected areas system.

In addition, MONRE, as the national focal point for the Ramsar Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity, is responsible for nominating Ramsar Sites and Biosphere Reserves.

Table 2 shows the number of decreed and proposed protected areas in Vietnam, based on the data contained in this sourcebook. All protected areas decreed or proposed in Vietnam to date are either Special-use Forests or marine protected areas. Although a list of wetlands of national importance has been prepared, it is not clear how this list may relate to any national wetland protected areas system that may be developed in the future. In addition to the protected areas listed in Table 2, Can Gio Biosphere Reserve, while not decreed or proposed as a national protected area, is also included in the sourcebook.

Table 2: Decreed and proposed protected areas in Vietnam as of 1 February 2004

Category	Decreed	Proposed	Total
Special-use Forest	95	88	183
Marine Protected Area	0	24	24
Total	95	112	207

Special-use Forests

Evolution of the Special-use Forests system

Before 1986, the only protected areas in Vietnam were protected forests; after this time, protected forests were renamed Special-use Forests. Responsibility for the development and management of the national Special-use Forests system lies with MARD. According to Article 31 of Vietnam's Forest Law, Special-use Forests are *"forests used for protection of natural resources, samples of the nation's ecosystems, and animal and plant genetic resources. Special-use Forests are developed for scientific research, protection of historical and cultural legacies, and recreation purposes. Special-use Forests are divided into three categories: national park, nature reserve and cultural and*

historical site". The establishment and development of Vietnam's Special-use Forests system can be divided into three periods:

1960 to 1974

The origins of the Special-use Forests system can be traced back to 1960, when President Ho Chi Minh announced Ordinance No. 18/LCT: the Law on Organisation of the Government Council of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. This ordinance included a proposal to establish the General Department of Forestry. In 1962, on the advice of this department, the government established Cuc Phuong Protected Forest (now Cuc Phuong National Park), the first protected area in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Following the establishment of Cuc Phuong Protected Forest, and in spite of the on-going Second Indochina War, the General Department of Forestry continued to undertake forest surveys in northern Vietnam, and identified 49 protected forests. Despite these efforts, the high demand for timber during the war and lack of resources meant that these areas received few management inputs. Forest degradation continued to occur.

1975 to 1986

Following reunification in 1975, attention focused on the identification and survey of potential protected forests throughout the now-unified country, including the Central Highlands and the Mekong Delta. The establishment of 10 protected forests, with a combined area of 44,310 ha, was decreed by Decision No. 41/TTg of the Prime Minister, dated 24 January 1977. These were Ba Be, Ba Mun, Ba Vi, Bac Son, Ban Dao Son Tra, Den Hung, Pac Bo, Rung Thong Da Lat, Tam Dao and Tan Trao. The establishment of Nam Cat Tien National Park was then decreed in 1978, followed by that of Chu Mom Ray Nature Reserve in 1982, Con Dao National Park in 1984 and Cat Ba National Park in 1986 (MARD 1997).

After 1984, more attention was paid to the development of the national protected forests system. Institutions in the forestry sector, in cooperation with national and local institutions from other sectors, identified and surveyed a number of forest areas of

high conservation importance, and formulated proposals for their conservation.

On 9 August 1986, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers issued Decision No. 194/CT. This landmark decision decreed the establishment of a further 73 Special-use Forests nationwide, with a combined area of 769,512 ha. These Special-use Forests comprised two national parks, 46 nature reserves, and 25 cultural and historical sites (MARD 1997). The Special-use Forest system set out in Decision No. 194/CT aimed to be representative of the full range of biogeographical, latitudinal and climatic variation in Vietnam.

1987 to present

In this period, the process of identifying and establishing Special-use Forests continued, and received the support of government institutions at all levels. In addition, the process was supported by a number of international conservation NGOs, including BirdLife International, Fauna & Flora International, IUCN and WWF. As a result of the efforts of government institutions and NGOs, the establishment of a number of new Special-use Forests was decreed: Yok Don National Park in 1991, U Minh Thuong Nature Reserve in 1993, Xuan Thuy, Tram Chim and Tien Hai Nature Reserves in 1994, Ta Kou and Ke Go Nature Reserves in 1996, Thanh Phu Nature Reserve in 1998, and Lung Ngoc Hang Nature Reserve in 2002. In addition, the management category of a number of Special-use Forests was revised from nature reserve to national park. The addition of new areas brought the total number of decreed Special-use Forests to 95, comprising 27 national parks, 40 nature reserves and 28 cultural and historical sites, with a total decreed area of over 1,800,000 ha. It is not possible to give a definitive figure for the total area of decreed Special-use Forests in Vietnam, because, for each Special-use Forest, the area defined in the investment plan usually differs from the indicative area included on the government decree.

One of the most noteworthy achievements during this period was the preparation, approval and implementation of investment plans for many Special-use Forests. Biodiversity survey work during this period led to many discoveries, including those of several previously undescribed mammal and bird

species, such as Saola *Pseudoryx nghetinhensis* in 1992, Large-antlered Muntjac *Muntiacus vuquangensis* in 1993, Black-crowned Barwing *Actinodura sodangorum* and Golden-winged Laughingthrush *Garrulax ngoclinhensis* in 1996, and Annamite Muntjac *M. truongsongensis* in 1997. These discoveries highlighted the richness of Vietnam's fauna and flora, and focused the attention of the government and international organisations on the development of the national Special-use Forests system.

In 1994, Vietnam ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity. One of the main recommendations of Vietnam's national planning response to this convention, the *Biodiversity Action Plan for Vietnam*, was to strengthen the Special-use Forests system (Government of SRV/GEF 1994). At the end of the 1990s, in response to this recommendation, the Vietnamese government and MARD formulated a policy to expand the coverage of the national Special-use Forests system to 2 million ha. To this end, in 1997, MARD hosted a national conference on the Special-use Forests network at Cuc Phuong National Park, which formulated several recommendations for expanding the national Special-use Forests system.

As part of the European Union-funded project *Expanding the Protected Areas Network in Vietnam for the 21st Century*, the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute (FIPI) and BirdLife International identified and prioritised a number of sites for inclusion in an expanded Special-use Forests system, and advanced the gazettement process for key sites. Subsequently, the Forest Protection Department (FPD) of MARD and WWF implemented a Danida-funded project entitled *Strengthening Protected Areas Management in Vietnam*. One of the outputs of this project was a Strategy for Vietnam's Protected Areas System.

In 2003, a list of Special-use Forests to be established by the year 2010 was prepared by the FPD of MARD, and submitted to the government for approval (FPD 2003). This list integrates the recommendations made at the Cuc Phuong conference with those made by the EU and Danida-funded projects. If this list is approved, the number of decreed Special-use Forests in Vietnam will increase to 121, comprising 27 national parks, 57 nature

reserves and 37 cultural and historical sites, with a total area of 2,518,339 ha (FPD 2003).

Special-use Forests today

Special-use Forest is one of the three main forest management categories in Vietnam, the others being production forest and protection forest. Special-use Forests are designated on the basis of their importance for conservation of Vietnam's biodiversity or cultural and historical heritage. Special-use Forests are divided into three categories: national parks, nature reserves, and cultural and historical sites. Special-use Forests are usually terrestrial forest areas but, in some cases they also include wetlands and/or marine areas. This introduces the potential for overlap with systems of wetland protected areas and marine protected areas that may be developed in the future (see below).

A number of laws, decrees, directives and other official documents have direct or indirect relevance to the management of Special-use Forests and other protected areas (see Table 3). Until January 2001, the principal legal and regulatory framework for Special-use Forests in Vietnam was laid out in Decision 1171/QĐ of the Minister of Forestry, dated 30 December 1986. Special-use Forest categories were outlined in Articles 2 and 3 of this decision, and management regulations were outlined in Articles 11 and 12.

On 11 January 2001, new regulations for the management of Special-use Forests were promulgated by Decision No. 08/TTg of the Prime Minister. Article 6 of Decision No. 08/TTg classifies Special-use Forests into three categories: national parks, nature reserves, and cultural and historical sites. Decision No. 08/TTg further divides nature reserves into two sub-categories: strict nature reserves and habitat/species conservation areas. The protected area categories in Decision No. 08/TTg broadly follow those defined by IUCN in 1992 (see Box 1). Decision No. 08/TTg also states that the Ministry of Culture and Information should take responsibility for the establishment and management of cultural and historical sites, coordinating with MARD for the development, management and protection of the forests at these sites.

Table 3: Laws, regulations, decrees and official government decisions regarding the management of Special-use Forests

Legal Document	Date
1. Management regulations for production forests, protection forests and Special-use Forests: attached to Decision No. 1171/QĐ of the Minister of Forestry	30 December 1986
2. Law on forest protection and development	19 August 1991
3. Decree No. 18/HĐBT on endangered species and management and conservation mechanisms	17 January 1992
4. Decision No. 327/CT on use of open land, bare hills, forest, coastal alluviums and water bodies	15 September 1992
5. Decree No. 14/CT on penalties/fines in forest protection and management	5 December 1992
6. Directive No. 130/TTg on protection and management of endangered plant and animal species	27 March 1993
7. Decree No. 77/CP on penalties/fines in forest protection and forest resources management	29 November 1996
8. Directive No. 359/TTg on urgent measures to protect and develop wild animal species	29 May 1996
9. Official Letter No. 2472/NN-KL-CV on strengthening wildlife protection and development	24 July 1996
10. Decree 163/CP on allocation and lease of forest land to organisations, households and individuals for long-term forestry purposes	16 November 1999
11. Decision No. 08/TTg on the management of Special-Use Forest, protection forest and production forest	11 January 2001
12. Decision No. 192/TTg on a strategy for Vietnam's protected areas system	17 September 2003

Box 1: IUCN protected area classification

In 1992, at the Fourth World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas, at Caracas, Venezuela, protected areas were defined as: *"areas of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means"*. Following this congress, IUCN devised a six-category protected area classification:

- I. strict nature reserve or wilderness area
- II. national park
- III. natural monument
- IV. habitat/species management area
- V. protected landscape/seascape
- VI. managed resource protected area.

Source: IUCN (1994)

Article 8 of Decision No. 08/TTg outlines the principal objective of buffer zones to be to "reduce encroachment" of local residents into Special-use Forests, and specifies that all activities undertaken in

buffer zones should aim at supporting the conservation, management and protection of Special-use Forests, including restricting access to "outside residents" and prohibiting illegal exploitation of protected species.

The overall management of the national network of Special-use Forests is primarily the responsibility of the FPD of MARD. However, various organisations are involved in Special-use Forest management at the provincial, district and site levels. The day-to-day management of Special-use Forests is the responsibility of a management board established for this purpose. To date, management boards have been established for 106 Special-use Forests, including 68 of the 95 decreed Special-use Forests, and all 27 national parks.

Currently, the management boards of eight national parks (Ba Vi, Bach Ma, Ben En, Cat Ba, Cat Tien, Cuc Phuong, Tam Dao and Yok Don) are under the direct management of MARD. The management boards of all other Special-use Forests are under the management of the relevant provincial (or city) people's committee, sometimes via the provincial FPD or department of

agriculture and rural development. The members of Special-use Forest management boards are usually drawn from staff of the relevant provincial FPD, although, in some cases, they are drawn from other organisations, for example, forest enterprises.

Wetland protected areas

Towards a national system of wetland protected areas

Wetlands are among the most threatened habitats in Vietnam, they also support some of Vietnam's most threatened species. For instance, 20 of Vietnam's 40 globally threatened bird species are wetland-dependent, including White-shouldered Ibis *Pseudibis davisoni*, Black-faced Spoonbill *Platalea minor* and Bengal Florican *Houbaropsis bengalensis* (BirdLife International 2001).

Until very recently, government policy towards wetlands focused on promoting their exploitation and conversion to other uses. The first official policy to address wetlands was formulated in 1994 and embodied in Prime Ministerial Decision No. 773/TTg on the Exploitation and Utilisation of Uncultivated Lands, Estuary and Coastal Mudflats, and Water Bodies in the Plains and Basins. This policy promoted the conversion of wetlands into agricultural land.

Although some wetlands are included within the national Special-use Forests network, for example at Cat Tien, Mui Ca Mau, Tram Chim, U Minh Thuong and Xuan Thuy National Parks, wetlands remain notably under-represented. In addition, the management objectives of Special-use Forests are generally focused on the conservation of terrestrial forests, not wetlands.

Wetland protected areas today

By ratifying the Convention on Biological Diversity, the government of Vietnam committed itself to establishing a representative network of wetland protected areas. The *Biodiversity Action Plan for Vietnam* included a list of 61 important wetland areas (Government of SRV/GEF 1994). Subsequently, in 2000, the then National Environmental Agency (NEA) of the former Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment (MOSTE) (now the National Environmental Protection Agency of MONRE) identified 79 wetlands of national importance (see Table 4) (MOSTE/NEA 2000). Of the wetlands

included on the MOSTE/NEA list, 23 are included within decreed Special-use Forests, 14 are included within proposed Special-use Forests, and a further seven are included within proposed marine protected areas. Given the large degree of overlap between this list and the developing Special-use Forests and marine protected areas systems, its relationship to any national wetland protected areas system that may be developed in the future is currently unclear.

Table 4: Wetlands of national importance according to MOSTE/NEA (2000)

Site	Province	Area (ha)
Tinh Doi	An Giang	1,672
Tra Su*	An Giang	939
Ho Cam Son*	Bac Giang	2,620
San Chim Bac Lieu*	Bac Lieu	132
San Chim Vam Ho	Ben Tre	5
Thanh Phu*	Ben Tre	8,000
Dam De Gi	Binh Dinh	600
Dam Thi Nai*	Binh Dinh	5,000
Dam Tra O	Binh Dinh	1,600
Ho Nui Mot	Binh Dinh	1,100
Ho Bien Lac*	Binh Thuan	2,000
Bai Boi*	Ca Mau	8,555
Dat Mui*	Ca Mau	4,388
San Chim Ca Mau*	Ca Mau	2
San Chim Dam Doi*	Ca Mau	132
Vo Doi*	Ca Mau	3,724
Lung Ngoc Hoang*	Can Tho	2,777
San Chim Thoi An	Can Tho	1.3
Ho Ba Be*	Cao Bang	450
Ea Ral*	Dak Lak	102
Ho Lac*	Dak Lak	12,744
Nam Ca*	Dak Lak	1,240
Trap Kso*	Dak Lak	96
Ho Tri An	Dong Nai	32,300
Nam Cat Tien*	Dong Nai	4,300
Tram Chim Tam Nong*	Dong Thap	7,612
Ayun Ha	Gia Lai	700
Bien Ho*	Gia Lai	300
Ho Tay	Ha Noi	526
Ho Dong Mo, Ngai Son	Ha Tay	900
Ho Suoi Hai	Ha Tay	1,200
Ho Ke Go*	Ha Tinh	3,000
Vuc Nuoc An Duong	Hai Duong	10
Cua Song Thai Binh*	Hai Phong	2,000

Site	Province	Area (ha)
Cua Song Van Uc*	Hai Phong	1,500
Thuy Nguyen	Hai Phong	1,000
Can Gio*	HCM City	2,215
Ho Hoa Binh*	Hoa Binh	72,800
Ha Tien*	Kien Giang	10,000
Kien Luong*	Kien Giang	4,000
U Minh Thuong*	Kien Giang	21,000
Ho Ia-ly	Kon Tum	6,450
Da Nhim	Lam Dong	900
Da The	Lam Dong	500
Dan Ki A	Lam Dong	300
Tuyen Lam	Lam Dong	200
Lang Sen*	Long An	3,844
Xuan Thuy*	Nam Dinh	12,000
Vung Ven Bien Nghia Hung*	Nam Dinh	9,000
Van Long*	Ninh Binh	3,500
Dam Nai*	Ninh Thuan	700
Dam Chinh Cong	Phu Tho	500
Cua Song Ba	Phu Yen	1,000
Dam O Loan*	Phu Yen	1,570
Ho Cu Mong*	Phu Yen	3,000
Ho Song Hinh	Phu Yen	4,100
Vung Ro*	Phu Yen	-
Vung Trao	Phu Yen	5,000
Dong Phong Nha*	Quang Binh	41,132
Ho Cam Khanh	Quang Binh	8,590
Ho Phu Ninh*	Quang Nam	3,600
Ho Thach Nham	Quang Ngai	3,600
Cua Song Tien Yen	Quang Ninh	5,000
Dau Tieng	Tay Ninh	5,000
Tien Hai*	Thai Binh	12,500
Vung Ven Bien Thai Thuy*	Thai Binh	13,100
Ho Nui Coc*	Thai Nguyen	2,600
Ho Ben En (Song Muc)*	Thanh Hoa	3,000
Ho Yen My	Thanh Hoa	95
Dam Cau Hai*	TT Hue	12,000
Pha Tam Giang*	TT Hue	8,000
Duyen Hai	Tra Vinh	2,000
San Chim Chua Hang	Tra Vinh	-
San Chim Tra Cu	Tra Vinh	2
Dam Vac	Vinh Phuc	250
Ho Chinh Cong	Vinh Phuc	400
Ho Chu	Vinh Phuc	300
Ho Thac Ba*	Yen Bai	19,000
Bau Xen	unclear	200

Sites marked with an asterisk are included in the sourcebook.

On 23 September 2003, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 109/CP on the Conservation and Development of Wetlands. This decision provides the legal basis for promoting sustainable management of wetlands in Vietnam. The decision stipulates that MONRE will play a state management role in the conservation and sustainable exploitation of wetlands, including formulating policy and legislation. The decision also stipulates that wetland protected areas need to be managed and restrictedly exploited, and identifies the activities that are to encouraged and prohibited at these areas. This is the first time that wetlands have gained official recognition as a distinct land-use or conservation management category. To date, however, proposals to designate a national network of wetland protected areas have not been formulated.

Based on the Prime Ministerial decision, MONRE will issue the *Strategic Action Plan on the Conservation and Sustainable Exploitation of Wetlands to 2010*. This strategic action plan will be an orientation document for the implementation of the Prime Ministerial decision, as well as Vietnam's commitments under the Ramsar Convention. The strategic action plan will provide guidance for policy makers, managers and researchers in conserving and exploiting wetlands in Vietnam.

Marine protected areas

Vietnam's marine biodiversity

With approximately 3,260 km of coastline (excluding islands), marine resources constitute an important natural asset for Vietnam. The diversity of marine natural resources makes an important contribution to the national economy, through the provision of marine products (fish, invertebrates, algae, etc.), energy (crude oil and gas), raw materials (mineral resources), storm protection and recreation.

While information on Vietnam's marine biodiversity is incomplete, 11,000 species have so far been recorded in Vietnam's marine and coastal waters (Nguyen Chu Hoi *et al.* 2000). Species diversity is known to increase from north to south, and fish abundance is higher in offshore than in inshore coral reefs (Chou 2000). Vietnam's known diversity of hard corals is comparable with that of Indonesia or the Philippines (Chou 2000). In addition, several species of

marine turtle continue to nest along Vietnam's coastline and on offshore islands (ADB 1999).

Marine protected areas today

Currently, there is no legislative or institutional framework for marine protected areas in Vietnam (ADB 1999, Azimi *et al.* 2000). The current institutional situation is unclear because different aspects of marine resource management are the responsibility of different ministries, in particular, MOFI, MONRE and MARD (NEA/IUCN 2000). For this reason, there are no decreed marine protected areas, although a pilot site is being established at Hon Mun, with support from the World Bank/GEF/Danida-funded *Vietnam Marine Protected Area Pilot Project*.

Efforts have been underway for several years to develop a legal and institutional basis for marine protected area establishment and management, and it would appear that these efforts may shortly bear fruit. Hai Phong Institute of Oceanography, on behalf of the former MOSTE/NEA, compiled a shortlist of 16 proposed marine protected areas to be included in a national marine protected areas system (Nguyen Chu Hoi *et al.* 1998). On the basis of this document, the government of Vietnam set a target of formally establishing 15 marine protected areas by 2010 (MOSTE/NEA 2000). Table 5 list all sites that have been proposed as marine protected areas to date, by either Hai Phong Institute of Oceanography (Nguyen Huy Yet and Vo Si Tuan 1995), the former MOSTE (Nguyen Chu Hoi *et al.* 1998) or the Asian Development Bank (ADB 1999).

Current institutional responsibilities for marine resource management

Discussions on the legal and institutional status of marine protected areas are ongoing. Key to these discussions are collaborative arrangements between the different government stakeholders involved, at central and provincial levels (Nguyen Chu Hoi 2000). It is likely that MOFI will have overall management responsibility for the marine protected areas system but that sites with a terrestrial as well as a marine component will be managed by MARD together with MOFI. This situation is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Management regulations for marine protected areas are also under discussion but these are likely to be broad and flexible, in order to allow

management regulations to be tailored to specific geographical areas and management requirements.

Global conventions

A number of sites in Vietnam have been designated under global conventions. Some, but not all, of these sites have also been decreed or proposed as national protected areas.

Ramsar sites

Vietnam became a contracting party to the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, commonly known as the Ramsar Convention, on 20 January 1989. The convention provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. There are presently 138 contracting parties to the convention, who, together, have nominated 1,314 Ramsar sites, covering a total area of 111 million ha. On 20 September 1988, the Ramsar Convention Bureau designated Xuan Thuy as Vietnam's first Ramsar site, and, in 1995, the Ramsar site was extended to include the contiguous Tien Hai Nature Reserve. However, in the 15 years since Vietnam became a contracting party, progress in implementing the convention has been slow and Xuan Thuy/Tien Hai remains Vietnam's only Ramsar site. Proposals for additional sites have been prepared but it remains unclear when, or if, new sites will be formally designated. Candidate sites for Ramsar designation include Tram Chim National Park, an area supporting some of the last remaining areas of seasonally inundated grasslands in the Mekong Delta; Thai Thuy proposed nature reserve, which supports intertidal flats and mangroves in the Red River Delta; the wetlands of Cat Tien National Park; and Tam Giang-Cau Hai proposed marine protected area.

World heritage sites

The objective of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World's Cultural and Natural Heritage, commonly known as the World Heritage Convention, is to conserve cultural and natural sites selected by the statutory body of the convention, the World Heritage Committee. This international agreement was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1972. The convention and the World Heritage Committee work to ensure that the

outstanding values of listed sites are preserved for all humanity, and to ensure their protection through closer cooperation among nations. There are currently 176 contracting parties to the convention, including Vietnam. Currently, there are five world heritage sites in Vietnam: Ha Long bay, the complex of Hue monuments, Hoi An ancient town, My Son sanctuary and Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park. Of these Ha Long bay and Phong Nha-Ke Bang are included, partly or fully, within decreed Special-use Forests.

Biosphere reserves

Biosphere reserves are designated as part of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme. The purpose of biosphere reserves is the conservation of ecosystems and the species they contain. In addition, biosphere reserves must be integrated into their social, economic and cultural environment, and, for this purpose, local populations should be involved as much as possible in their conservation and management. On 21 January 2000, the mangroves of Can Gio, in Ho Chi Minh City, were recognised as Vietnam's first biosphere reserve. Subsequently, Cat Tien National Park and the Cat Ba archipelago were recognised as Vietnam's second and third biosphere reserves in 2002 and 2003 respectively.

Changes in the last three years

In the three years since the publication of the first edition of the sourcebook, Vietnam's protected areas systems have undergone a number of changes. This section provides a brief review of these changes, as a measure of progress over the period.

One of the major changes to the national Special-use Forests system has been an increase in the number of national parks from 11 to 27. This increase has been achieved by revising the management category of and, in some cases, expanding existing nature reserves. All of the new national parks are under the management of the relevant provincial people's committee. In addition, management responsibility for one of the existing 11 national parks, Ba Be, has been transferred from MARD to the provincial people's committee.

Over the last three years, only one new Special-use Forest has been decreed: Lung Ngoc Hoang. The only other change to the number of decreed Special-use Forests included in the sourcebook is that Yen Tu,

which was treated as a single site in the first edition, is treated as two separate sites in the second edition.

In addition to changes in the number and status of decreed protected areas, several have undergone significant changes in area. The most notable changes in area have been the expansion of Yok Don National Park from 58,200 to 115,545 ha, and the inclusion of part of the Ke Bang limestone area within the newly established Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park, increasing the area from 41,132 to 85,754 ha.

The other major changes to the national Special-use Forests system have been the formulation of proposals for the establishment of new Special-use Forests. The second edition of the sourcebook includes 22 proposed Special-use Forests not included in the first edition. Most of these Special-use Forests have been proposed in the last three years, often by the relevant provincial FPD, although a few were proposed earlier but were overlooked during the compilation of the first edition. At least eight of these proposed Special-use Forests already have established management boards.

A proposed list of Special-use Forest to be established by the year 2010 has been prepared by the FPD of MARD (FPD 2003). This list contains 121 Special-use Forests, including 33 that have not been decreed by the government of Vietnam to date. However, a number of proposed Special-use Forests are not included on the list, including 16 sites with established management boards, and some of the most important sites in Vietnam for global biodiversity conservation, such as Sao La and Ngoc Linh (Quang Nam) proposed nature reserves. Consequently, further revisions to the list may be desirable before it is approved by the government.

The major developments regarding wetland protected areas over the last three years have been the establishment of MONRE, a new government ministry with responsibility for development of a national wetland protected areas system, and promulgation of Prime Ministerial Decision No. 109/CP, which provides the legal basis for promoting sustainable management of wetlands in Vietnam.

Regarding marine protected areas, the major developments have been the establishment of Vietnam's first pilot marine protected area at Hon Mun, and the preparation of the Danida-funded project *Support to the Marine Protected Area Network in*

Vietnam, which will support the establishment of a second pilot marine protected area at Cu Lao Cham. To date, however, the legislative and institutional arrangements for the development of a national marine protected areas system have not been finalised.

Conclusions

To date, Vietnam has made considerable progress towards the goal of establishing national systems of protected areas representative of the nation's biodiversity and natural ecosystems. In the future, Vietnam's protected areas systems will continue to evolve in terms of both coverage and institutional arrangements, and it seems likely that the next few years will see the establishment of additional protected areas, particularly wetland and marine protected areas. This expansion process will be set against considerable institutional change in the forestry, fisheries and environment sectors. It is hoped that this sourcebook will serve both as a measure of progress so far, as well as a baseline for future achievements.

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Table 5: Proposed marine protected areas in Vietnam

Proposed Marine Protected Area	Province/City	Proposed by		
		Nguyen Huy Yet and Vo Si Tuan (1995)	Nguyen Chu Hoi <i>et al.</i> (1998)	ADB (1999)
Bac Lieu bird sanctuary	Bac Lieu			✓
Bai Boi	Ca Mau			✓
Bai Tu Long (Ba Mun)	Quang Ninh			✓
Ban Dao Son Tra	Da Nang			✓
Binh Chau-Phuoc Buu	Ba Ria-Vung Tau			✓
Cac Dao Vinh Ha Long	Quang Ninh	✓		✓
Can Gio	Ho Chi Minh City			✓
Con Dao	Ba Ria-Vung Tau	✓	✓	✓
Cu Lao Cham	Quang Nam	✓	✓	✓
Cu Mong	Phu Yen			✓
Dam Doi	Ca Mau			✓
Dat Mui	Ca Mau			✓
Dao Bach Long Vi	Hai Phong	✓	✓	✓
Dao Cat Ba	Hai Phong	✓	✓	✓
Dao Co To	Quang Ninh	✓	✓	✓
Dao Con Co	Quang Tri	✓	✓	✓
Dao Ly Son	Quang Ngai	✓	✓	✓
Dao Phu Quy	Binh Thuan	✓	✓	✓
Dao Tran	Quang Ninh		✓	✓
Deo Ca-Hon Nua	Phu Yen			✓
Hai Van-Hon Son Tra	Thua Thien Hue and Da Nang		✓	✓
Hon Cau-Vinh Hao	Binh Thuan	✓	✓	✓
Hon Me	Thanh Hoa		✓	✓
Hon Mun	Khanh Hoa	✓	✓	✓
Nai	Ninh Thuan			✓
Nam Du	Kien Giang	✓		✓
Nha Phu-Hon Heo	Khanh Hoa			✓
O Loan	Phu Yen			✓
Phu Quoc	Kien Giang	✓	✓	✓
Quy Nhon	Binh Dinh			✓
Tam Giang-Cau Hai	Thua Thien Hue		✓	✓
Thai Thuy	Thai Binh			✓
Thanh Phu	Ben Tre			✓
Tho Chu	Kien Giang	✓		✓
Thuy Trieu	Khanh Hoa			✓
Tien Hai	Thai Binh			✓
Truong Sa	Khanh Hoa		✓	
U Minh Thuong	Kien Giang			✓
Vo Doi	Ca Mau			✓
Xuan Thuy	Nam Dinh			✓