IUCN in Bangladesh

charting the course

2000 - 2005











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Cover photos: Top- Left: Freshwater wetland, Manikganj; Right: Fisher folks in the St. Martins Island by Ali Reza. Top middle- Fishermen, Sundarbans by Rashiduzzaman A., Bottom middle- Bird-nest of Baya by Monurizzaman K. Bottom- Using freshwater from a natural stream, Bandarban by Ali Reza.

IUCN IN BANGLADESH

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Sundarbans: mangroves breathing Photo: *Ali Reza*

Ali Reza

Traditional *Marma* Cottage

Ali Reza

Long-tailed shrike

IUCN

Plantdiversity

LIST OF ACRONYMS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ARD	Asia Regional Directorate
BEMP	Bangladesh Environment Management Programme
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
ECA	Environment Conservation Act
ECA	Ecologically Critical Area
ECR	Environment Conservation Rules
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FCDI	Flood Control, Drainage and Irrigation
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
ICTPs	International Conventions, Treaties and Protocols
MoEF	Ministry of Environment and Forest
NCS	National Conservation Strategy
NCSIP	National Conservation Strategy Implementation Project
NEMAP	National Environment Management Action Plan
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development
NRM	Natural Resource Management
SEMP	Sustainable Environment Management Programme

FOREWORD

Foreword

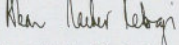
Bangladesh sits astride one of the largest deltas of South Asia — the Padma-Meghna-Jamuna. As such, it is home to many species of plants and animals. Many of these species are globally threatened, such as the Asian Elephant, the Royal Bengal Tiger, Gharial, the Ganges River Dolphin and the Hoolock Gibbon. Five species of threatened marine turtles nest along Bangladesh's coastline and two globally important migratory-bird-flyways (the East Asia-Australian flyway and the Central Asia-Indian flyway) converge here. Each year, some one million waterfowl winter in Bangladesh, including such globally endangered species as the Spoonbill Sandpiper, Asian-Dowitcher, Nordman's Greenshank and Spotted Redshank, A broad range of ecosystem types are found in Bangladesh, including tropical evergreen forests, moist deciduous forests (*Sal* forests), mangrove forests, riparian and coastal wetlands, and the littoral, sub-littoral and benthic communities of the Indian Ocean. Over 50% of Bangladesh may be classified as wetlands. Together with neighbouring India, Bangladesh supports the largest remaining mangrove forest in the world — the Sundarbans. Today, however, this diversity and the ecosystems that support it are under threat. Land scarcity, population pressure, poverty and dependence on natural resources for subsistence living are the overriding factors that have been reducing the resilience of nature.

Efforts have been made by the Government to reverse this trend, such as the preparation and implementation of the National Conservation Strategy (NCS), preparation of the National Environment Management Action Plan (NEMAP) which then led to the preparation and implementation of the Sustainable Environment Management Programme (SEMP) and the Bangladesh Environment Management Programme (BEMP). These initiatives have all been supported by IUCN. The IUCN Bangladesh office has contributed substantially to both the NCS and NEMAP processes, and been actively involved in the implementation of the SEMP.

IUCN's interest in the country dates back to 1972, when the Government of Bangladesh joined IUCN as a State Member. Its involvement in this effort to prepare an NCS eventually led to the establishment of a Country Office in October 1991. Since then, IUCN Bangladesh has grown and multiplied its activities in such spheres such as environmental policies, institutional capacity building, environmental planning and assessment, sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem management and habitat conservation, biodiversity conservation, demonstration through field level implementation, environmental awareness and education, and environmental law. All these programmes are run in partnership with IUCN's institutional members in Bangkok.

To strengthen its programme activities, IUCN Bangladesh seeks to adopt the Union's global vision of "a just world that values conservation" and to work through four broad themes: knowledge, empowerment, governance and operations.

Over the next six years (2000-2005) IUCN Bangladesh will be operating under four broad thematic units: Biodiversity Conservation; Natural Resource Management; Environmental Law, Policy and Assessment; and Water, Wetland and Disaster Management. It is envisaged that, IUCN Bangladesh, through these planned programmes, will establish demonstrable examples for the better management and conservation of the country's natural endowments.



Aban Marker Kabraji
Regional Director, IUCN Asia
12 December, 2000

1 PROLOGUE

The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh joined IUCN as a State Member in 1972. IUCNB (IUCN Bangladesh) activities began in the mid-1980s when preparation of Bangladesh National Conservation Strategy (NCS) was taken up. Since then, IUCNB as well as its member organisations (14 so far) and national experts have been actively involved in various country, regional and global environmental and conservation events, including the Union's global Commissions activities. The Country Office was formally set up in 1991.

The programme areas of IUCNB have grown steadily over the past years and many diverse issues have come under its consideration and operation expanses. New initiatives have been emerging and there is much to do when we set about mending and conserving the country's ramshackle environment canopy; there are new challenges as well as opportunities. Therefore, it is time for IUCNB to pause and ponder over the pros and cons, for making discrete decisions about the future agenda that should sustain and augment its activities.

Keeping the above in mind, IUCN Bangladesh Country Office has developed this strategic document which seeks to provide the requisite direction to the work both at hand and which it proposes to undertake in the near future. The programme document has been framed following a series of consultations involving IUCN's constituencies including the IUCN Asia Regional Directorate (ARD), members/partners, staff members and donors, over a period of five long months, through eliciting, evaluating, sifting out and incorporating views and opinions about the past as well as the envisaged activities.



Mostak Ahmed

Earthen pottery used in Bangladesh

2 TIME FRAME

The plan period spans the first six years of the current millennium, that is, the years 2000 to 2005. IUCNB programme will be a rolling one and its subsequent versions will be developed by maintaining conformity with the Five-Year Plans of Government of Bangladesh (GOB) as well as the Quadrennial Plans of IUCN which are approved by the IUCN members at the World Conservation Congress. It will be reviewed and modified, as necessary, on an annual basis.

3 THE CONTEXT

The alluvial deposits carried down mostly by the two mighty rivers— the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, for thousands of years have formed Bangladesh, the largest delta in the world. In a total area of 147570 sq. km. Bangladesh harbours a great diversity of flora and fauna. Even today, Bangladesh has more fish species than can be found in the whole continent of Europe. More than 600 bird species are still there in this country. The world's largest mangrove forest, the Sundarbans in the south supports the majestic Bengal Tigers and hoards of wildlife. The country's landscape is characterised by lush green growths everywhere that cradle numerous species of plants that vary with the different climatic regimes enjoyed by Bangladesh.

The environment as well as the rich biodiversity of the country, however, is now faced with gloomy consequences. Natural resources are being overly exploited by the ever-increasing population that is threatening the delicate and fragile balance of ecosystems. A recent study by IUCN Bangladesh revealed that a total of 54 species of fish, 41 species of birds, 66 species of amphibians and reptiles and 40 species of mammals are under different degrees of extinction threats. Habitat loss and population pressures are two of the overriding factors here.



Ali Reza

Baya, a bird

The country population now stands at a staggering 128 million, increasing at the rate of 1.8% annually. This population explosion has been putting tremendously increasing pressure on the country's natural resource base, resulting in many such problems as decline in soil fertility, massive deforestation, conversion of valuable wetlands into paddy fields and depletion of almost all other natural resources.

Though Bangladesh looks lush green, it is a forest poor country. The forest cover has shrunk to a mere 6% today from 20% in 1927. The remaining forest cover can broadly be categorised as (a) hill forests in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and Sylhet regions, (b) *sal* forests on the Pleistocene terraces and (c) the mangroves in the southern estuarine regions. Inventories show that massive overall depletion has taken place in all of the forest areas. Land scarcity, population pressure, poverty and dependence on forests for fuel, food and fodder make it impossible to keep the pockets undisturbed. With the shrinking of the forest cover, forest biodiversity is also at stake. Ethnic communities traditionally dependent on the forests for both livelihood and medicine have now been rendered marginalised— without food, shelter and medicine.

Lack of and in cases, absence of effective legal safeguarding system is one of the main reasons for the degradation of the country's natural resources. The Constitution of Bangladesh does not explicitly clarify the question of protecting its natural environment and biodiversity. All government activities are controlled via diverse sectoral approaches and hence conflicts arise because of overlapping responsibilities and contradictory jurisdictions of different government agencies for managing the resources. Though some positive initiatives viz., National Environmental Policy, National Environment Management Action Plan (NEMAP), Environment Conservation Act, 1995; Environment Conservation Rule 1997; National Conservation Strategy Implementation Programme (NCSIP) etc. have been taken to date towards safeguarding the nature, little could be done to avert the alarming trends of deterioration. Many of the policies have not been enacted as envisaged and most of the environmental legislation happen to be non-functional.

In a country like Bangladesh with a huge population and scanty and depleting resource base, it is not easy to strike a balance between economic growth and conservation needs. With our GDP of a mere $250 or even less, many challenges lie ahead in the path of ascertaining sustainable growth. It will require reforming the policies, legislation and use regime, improved governance, strengthening of institutions, capacity building of the Government and civil society and active participation of all the stakeholders, to begin with.

In the context of Bangladesh's environmental laws and policy development and other paramount initiatives, the 1974 Wildlife Act, series of studies in the '80s (ESCAP, IUCN), 1989 NCS (National

Major Conservation Issues

- Biodiversity loss
- Fresh water body depletion
- Forest loss and degradation
- Soil erosion
- Loss of key ecosystems
- Unsustainable resource harvesting
- Water and air pollution
- Climate change

Major Contextual Factors

- Poverty
- Underdevelopment, food and economic security
- Institutional factors: legal, regulatory and managerial arrangement at local and national level
- Governance and accountability relationship
- Political decision making and patronage
- Demographic evolution
- Health and education

Ali Reza

Conservation Strategy) First Draft, 1992 Environmental Policy, NEMAP (National Environment Management Action Plan), 1995 ECA (Environment Conservation Act), 1997 ECR (Environment Conservation Rules), and sectoral policies viz., Water, Fisheries, Forestry, etc. can be listed. Besides, NCS Implementation Programme, SEMP (Sustainable Environment Management Programme costing US $ 26 m), BEMP (Bangladesh Environment Management Programme costing US $ 12 m), Bangladesh Agenda 21, Coastal Biodiversity Project, Coastal Greenbelt Plantation Project, the Sundarbans Biodiversity Project, Ramsar site (Sundarbans), World Heritage Site (Sundarbans), 7 ECAs (Ecologically Critical Areas), 14 PAs (Protected Areas) etc. policies and initiatives can also be added as effected to date. As regards the latest interventions in this sector, it may be worthwhile to mention here that being entrusted by the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) and supported by the IUCN Environmental Law Centre, IUCNB is currently developing a detailed proposal towards the formulation of an 'umbrella law' for facilitating natural resource management in the country.

4 IUCN – THE WORLD CONSERVATION UNION

IUCN is a global alliance of governmental and non-governmental organisations that have come together to assist societies to conserve nature and ensure the equitable and sustainable use of natural resources.

IUCN began in 1948 as the first international organisation concerned with conservation around the world. It brings together 78 States, 112 government agencies and a diverse range of 735 non-governmental organisations, and some 10000 scientists and experts in a unique world partnership spread across the world.

As a union, IUCN seeks 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 World Conservation Union builds on the strengths of its members, networks and partners to enhance their capacity and to support global alliances to safeguard natural resources at local, regional and global levels.

Its three pillars support the Union's work and programmes: Membership, Secretariat and Commissions. The membership makes the Union's policies and approves its work programme. The secretariat co-ordinates the implementation of the approved policies and programmes, and serves the membership. It also undertakes programme implementation on the Union's behalf. The commissions are standing institutions made up of volunteer experts and scientists, who technically backstop the Union's work. Presently, there are six such commissions with more than 10,000 experts in them.

IUCN Mission Statement

IUCN's global mission is 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 IUCN Commissions

- Species Survival Commission (SSC)
- The World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)
- Commission on Environmental Law (CEL)
- Commission on Education and Communication (CEC)
- Commission on Environmental Economics and Social Policy (CEESP)
- Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM)

Globally, IUCN performs three important functions: (a) research on conservation issues, most notable being its work on "Red Data Books" of plants and animals; (b) using the research findings to develop, articulate and advocate conservation related policies, plans and other instruments; and, (c) assisting communities, locally and globally, in implementing the various policies and instruments as required by its mission.

Recently, the IUCN Global Programme has been involved in a programme visioning and planning process. This has resulted into "a just world that values conservation" as the Union's vision. To this end, the organisation would seek the attainment of the following two (proposed) goals:

A. The extinction crisis and massive loss of biodiversity are universally adopted as a shared responsibility, resulting in action to reduce this loss of biodiversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems.

B. Ecosystems are maintained and where necessary restored, and any use of natural resources is sustainable and equitable.

IUCN recognises that poverty and inequity, trade and uncontrolled globalisation, and wealth and consumption constitute three broad social and economic phenomena that are the major drivers of extinction and loss of ecosystem integrity. IUCN has now developed a result based approach for its global programmes to achieve its overall goals. Seven Key Result Areas of work have been defined which represent prioritised areas of IUCN's work and under which it will deliver important results in the coming years. Capacity building will underpin all IUCN's work, and its approaches are characterised by strengthening Knowledge, Empowerment, Governance and Operations, as enunciated below:

Knowledge: generating, integrating, managing, and disseminating knowledge for the conservation, sustainable and equitable use of nature and natural resources;

Empowerment: enhancing the willingness, responsibility, exercise of rights, capacity, and skills of people and institutions to plan, manage, conserve and use nature and natural resources in a sustainable and equitable manner;

Governance: achieving systematic improvement of and coherence between law, policy, and economic instruments and institutions for the conservation and sustainable and equitable use of nature and natural resources; and

Operations: ensuring the development of IUCN as a dynamic institution. Effective management, information, finance, human resources and communication systems provide the foundation for effective delivery and use of knowledge, empowerment and governance.

IUCN Key Result Areas (KRA)

- **KRA 1:** Effective management and restoration of Ecosystems
- **KRA 2:** Key institution, agreements, processes and policies
- **KRA 3:** Incentives and finance
- **KRA 4:** Equitable sharing of costs and benefits
- **KRA 5:** Assessment of biodiversity and related social and economic factors
- **KRA 6:** Important management and communication system
- **KRA 7:** Effective, efficient, and accountable governance and management of the Union

5 IUCN IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

In South and Southeast Asia (S&SEA) Region, IUCN has been running country programmes in Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam. In 1997, a decision was taken to reorganise the individual country programmes under a regional umbrella and the S&SEA (South and Southeast Asia) region was founded. In 1999, the region was expanded into Asia Regional Directorate (ARD) by bringing in China, Japan and Korea under this region.

Beside the country programmes, the IUCN S&SEA also has a set of regional programmes in Biodiversity Conservation, Sustainable Use of Natural Resources, Forestry, Monitoring and Evaluation, Environmental Impact Assessment etc. In addition, regional initiatives in environmental economics and law are also envisaged.

As a part of strengthening IUCN's work in the region, a programme planning process for the region was undertaken last year. The initial consultation process is complete, which has resulted in defining the following goals and priorities for the IUCN Programme in the region:

- ecosystems, habitats and species are conserved and rehabilitated;
- inequities in the use and management of natural resources within and among nations, communities and gender groups are reduced;
- natural resources are used and managed on a more sustainable basis; and,
- resources necessary to meet the programme goals are adequate, available and effectively and efficiently deployed.

The key strategic issues to be addressed in the pursuit of these goals over the next few years would include:

- water resource management;
- underdevelopment;
- demographic momentum;
- changes in the economics of agricultural and forest sectors; and,
- restoration and regeneration of natural resource base.

IUCN South & Southeast Asia Country Offices

1. IUCN-Bangladesh
2. IUCN-Cambodia
3. IUCN-Lao PDR
4. IUCN-Nepal
5. IUCN-Pakistan
6. IUCN-Sri Lanka
7. IUCN-Thailand
8. IUCN-Vietnam

Regional Thematic Programmes

1. Biodiversity Conservation
2. Sustainable Use
3. Environmental Law
4. Environmental Impact Assessment
5. Forest Conservation
6. Aquatic Ecosystem
7. Monitoring & Evaluation

6 IUCN BANGLADESH: AN INTRODUCTION

Established in October 1991, the Bangladesh Country Office (and previously through its liaison office which had been established in 1989) has been providing support to national institutions—both government, and non-government by advising on: environmental planning and assessment, sustainable management of natural resources, formulating environmental policies, habitat conservation and ecosystems management, biodiversity conservation, demonstration of applications of knowledge through the field project it supervises and supports, institutional capacity strengthening; environmental education and awareness promotion, and environmental law.

Taking advantage of IUCN's unusual structure, the emphasis of IUCN Bangladesh's work has been on networking and partnership. IUCN Bangladesh provides a neutral forum where organisations from different sectors can meet, exchange views and plan actions together.

IUCN has been catalysing the participation of different sectors in conservation initiatives addressing the policy, legislative, scientific, socio-economic and community involvement aspects. The work is mostly done by and through local institutions and national experts.

IUCN also has been facilitating debates on key conservation issues, building bridges between government and the non-government sector. Working closely with its members and other partners, IUCN seeks to help Bangladesh to develop a sustainable future, particularly when the importance of managing natural resources is specially vital in Bangladesh as the majority of the people live in rural areas and are heavily dependent on them for their livelihood.

The Vision: Vision of IUCN Bangladesh is of an environmentally aware, educated, conscious, willing, and capable society conserving and sustainably using its natural resources to the benefit of its own and the world community at large.

The Mission: Globally, IUCN seeks "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 global mission of IUCN shall remain the mission of IUCN Bangladesh, while the enhancement of quality of life in general, community and specially women's empowerment, NCS adoption and implementation, SEMP and BAP implementation and such other pursuits shall continue to inspire and augment IUCN's work in Bangladesh.

The Objectives: The objectives that have helped IUCNB formulate and develop its programmes are as follows:

- Integration of sustainability and conservation principles and systems into the country's economic planning and development;
- Developing national capabilities for promoting and managing sustainable use of the biodiversity resources, including habitats, species and genetic stock;
- Providing assistance in establishing and effectively managing a national protected areas system as a vital contribution to the nation's economic development; and
- Building and expanding IUCN's constituency of members and partners in Bangladesh and involving them in national programme definition, delivery and monitoring.

As a decentralised country programme within a global secretariat and union, IUCNB develops within a certain shared fundamental principles, enjoying simultaneous access to the regional and global resources of the Union. It is the combination of principles and resources that can generate the significant desired contribution that IUCN can make in Bangladesh. An institution's core competence derives from its structure, composition, role and functions. IUCNB's core competences include:

- Providing an impartial platform where both government and non-government actors work together
- An effective network of members with anchorage in social, economic, legal, natural sciences and education
- Access to knowledge base and world class expertise as an integral part of the regional and global IUCN networks
- Capacity for bringing together key stakeholders to facilitate informed dialogues on conservation and environmental issues
- Acceptance as facilitator in policy dialogues
- A concentration of in-house expertise in ecosystem management, biodiversity conservation and natural resource management and committed staff.



Ali Reza

Freshwater wetland, Manikganj

7 MEMBERS OF IUCN IN BANGLADESH

During the last two decades, and more specifically, since the establishment of a regular country office of IUCN in Bangladesh back in 1991, this international intergovernmental organisation has enlisted fourteen members in Bangladesh including ministries, government agencies, institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This growth is an indication of enhanced national recognition of IUCN as a global union dedicated to conservation. Apart from these members, with whom IUCNB maintains close and diverse professional relationships, it also works in close collaboration with a number of other partners, viz. government agencies, NGOs, universities, media and other communication and service organisations, in a bid to harness and positively exploit the potentials of such bodies on issues of mutual interest, to support the global mission of IUCN.

The current membership comprises two distinct categories, viz. state membership and NGO members. The state membership is being held by the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) which is the Government appointed counterpart of IUCN in Bangladesh. The NGO membership comprises almost all the leading environment and conservation activist organisations in the country.

IUCN MEMBERS

1. Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS)
2. Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA)
3. Bangladesh POUSH
4. BRAC
5. Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP)
6. Centre For Sustainable Development (CFSD)
7. Centre for Natural Resource Studies (CNRS)
8. Coastal Area Resource Development and Management Association (CARDMA)
9. Comilla Proshika Centre for Development (CPCD)
10. Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB)
11. Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF)
12. Wildlife and Nature Conservation Studies in Bangladesh (WNCSB)
13. Wildlife Society of Bangladesh (WSB)
14. Nature Conservation Management (NACOM)

8 ACHIEVEMENTS OF IUCN BANGLADESH

8.1 The Bangladesh NCS

In 1980, Bangladesh endorsed the World Conservation Strategy, and in 1987, following a number of technical missions and seminars, Bangladesh requested for IUCN's help in preparing a National Conservation Strategy (NCS). The NCS was prepared in two phases, the first leading to a Strategy Prospectus, and a second, which ended in 1991 with the submission of the completed Strategy to the Government. In 1996, following another ministerial meeting, the Chairman of the IUCN National Committee was requested to prepare another chapter as addendum, updating the Strategy in the light of the changes that had occurred since the submission of the first draft. In 1997, the NCS was again formally submitted for endorsement by the Cabinet. The Cabinet reviewed the document in early 1998 and suggested for drafting it in Bengali. IUCNB assisted the MoEF to complete the tasks and the document has since been placed before the Inter-Ministerial Committee for review. The NCS now awaits the formal and final acceptance by the Cabinet.

The NCS has played an important pioneering role in catalysing environmental awareness and the development of environmental policy in Bangladesh. It facilitated (a) the creation of a Department of Environment within a new Ministry of Environment and Forests (1989); (b) in the approval of a National Environment Policy in 1992; and (c) the progressive development of different versions of the National Environment Management Action Plan (NEMAP) starting in 1992 up to the adoption of its final version in 1995. In January 1995, the NCS Implementation Project- Phase I was launched by the MoEF with assistance from IUCN in monitoring, training and the provision of international expert support.



IUCN

Aquatic plants

8.2 The National Environment Management Action Plan (NEMAP)

The NEMAP was a pioneering environmental planning exercise carried out by the MoEF with support from UNDP. IUCN participated in the preparation of the NEMAP to assist in the communication programme associated with the Plan. IUCN played an important role in ensuring wide publicity of the NEMAP process.

The objectives of the NEMAP were similar to those of the NCS. The key advancement achieved comprised in its emphasis on action and a commitment to extensive participation of the stakeholders in the planning and implementation of programmes and projects. The NEMAP was an essential step beyond the NCS, but it did, in no way, replace it; the NEMAP should lead to effective implementation of the NCS.

8.3 Green Accounting Initiative in Bangladesh

This project, initiated in mid-1998, was designed to raise the interest and awareness in a broad group of people and institutions in the integration of environmental economics into policy and decision making in Bangladesh. The project included four main components:

- Preparation of an overview paper on environmental economics, valuation and accounting and their possible application in Bangladesh;
- Building of an environmental economics network;
- Case studies to demonstrate how valuation and environmental accounting can be a useful tool in Bangladesh; and
- Workshops to discuss the case studies and proposals for a more substantial environmental economics programe.

8.4 Improvement of Policy, Legislation and Institutional Capacity for Sustainable Management of Wetland Ecosystem

By implementing this one-year project in 1998 with financial support from the Ford Foundation, IUCNB developed an outline of a national wetland policy, drafted rules and regulations related to wetland management and also formulated EIA guidelines for assessment of the development proposed for wetlands.

8.5 Study of Environmental Impact of 1998 Flood

The Flood of 1998 has been labelled as the "Flood of the Century" considering its duration, expanse and damaging impacts as observed in the city of Dhaka as well as the rest of the country. The Department of Environment (DOE) took the initiative to monitor and assess the damage caused to the overall environment of Dhaka City. A total of 21 different research topics were selected and a rapid appraisal was done basing on the selected topics. IUCNB provided necessary technical assistance to the DOE to conceptualise the project and also participated in two research studies, viz., assessment of the effect of flood on the biodiversity of Dhaka City and drafting a long-tern mitigation plan for flood in Dhaka City. The project developed a holistic perspective of flooding and its damage to physical, biological and human attributes of the city. It also produced a basic database for the policy makers to enable them formulate a long-term plan for flood preparedness in the future.

8.6 Bangladesh Red Book of Threatened Animals

Initiated in 1996, the preparation and production of the Red Books on the Amphibians and Reptiles, Birds, Fish, and Mammals along with a book containing an abridged list of the animals has been completed by IUCNB. The project was financed by the Royal Netherlands Embassy and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The principal aim of the project is to provide information on the status of animal species; draw attention to the importance of threatened animals and extinct animal biodiversity; and raise awareness among the policymakers within and outside the Government of the need for conserving the threatened species. Printing of the English version has been accomplished and work on the Bengali version is due to be completed soon.

8.7 Umbrella Law Concerning Natural Resource Management

Urged by the GoB and entrusted by the MoEF (the GoB counterpart of IUCNB), IUCN Bangladesh accomplished the task of drawing up a detailed proposal for framing a comprehensive legal instrument with a view to effectively facilitating the natural resource management processes and procedures in the country. Supported by the IUCN Environmental Law Centre (ELC), this initiative studied, listed and identified the gaps in the legal regime of the country's environment and natural resource management. The findings should help to resolve the conflicting issues in the existing policies and legal frameworks including notifications and departmental orders issued so far for conservation of natural resources and ecosystem. The study team also identified the major obligations of Bangladesh due to signing various international treaties.

8.8 A Study on Some Aspects of Ecology of the Bengal Tiger in the Sundarbans

In partnership with the Department of Forest and Jahangirnagar University, IUCN Bangladesh conducted the study to assess the ecology of the Royal Bengal Tiger in the Sundarbans Reserve Forest. This study was co-funded by the British Petroleum and the British Council. The aspects covered under this project including the relevant outputs are rendered below:

- Analysis of threats to the habitat of the Bengal tiger;
- Examination of man-tiger conflict situations for minimising conflict;
- Tiger's prey identification and the assessment of their density;
- Assessment of knowledge and the attitude of the local people towards the tiger and its conservation; and
- Inventory of the fauna in the study sites.

9 IUCN BANGLADESH: APPROACH FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

IUCNB operates in a number of contexts, both in Bangladesh and abroad, that influences its behaviour. It functions as a field office of IUCN – The World Conservation Union, an inter-governmental organisation supporting local efforts to promote sustainable development and nature conservation. It is also in the process of organising itself as an institution with a result oriented performance culture that can earn revenue, pay overhead and make it financially sustainable.

In Bangladesh, IUCN seeks to contribute to national development by building capacities in institutions and in people to plan and manage biodiversity resources, including critical habitats and species, for their conservation and sustainable use.

IUCN will facilitate the integration of its members and partners, its commissions and the secretariat in national programme conception, delivery and monitoring. The Union's role will be one of facilitation, advocacy, demonstration and partnership.

IUCN's programme in Bangladesh includes linking activities at national, regional and local levels. Assistance in national policy development and capacity building is associated with the testing and demonstration of management approaches in the field. Some areas within the country will be given special attention from the Government and IUCN because of their outstanding biodiversity values.



Ali Reza

Spotted deer in the Sundarbans

10 IUCN BANGLADESH: THEMATIC PROGRAMMES

IUCNB now focuses its work on four areas of scientific interest viz. biodiversity conservation (BIOCON); natural resource management (NRM); environmental law, planning and assessment (ELPA) and water, wetland and disaster management (WAWDIM). IUCN's heartland, viz. biodiversity and protected areas, IUCNB's statutory obligations and functions as well as the Government's obligations related to the various ICTPs were kept in mind while designating the country thematic programmes for the next six years. Also, the potentials and the capabilities of its members and expert groups, such as, BRAC, BELA, BNBG etc. and the Bangladesh NCS, NEMAP, SEMP, BEMP, BAP and the like dimensions were considered and looked into while the following four programme themes and their respective components were identified.

10.1 Biodiversity Conservation (BIOCON)

The biodiversity conservation programme in Bangladesh will attach priority to the national Biodiversity Action Plan formulation and its effective implementation. Specifically, monitoring and conservation of wildlife – both at population and species level will be supported; equally important will be its support to a comprehensive system of parks and protected areas in Bangladesh. In a bid to conserve agro-biodiversity, concerned policies, legislation and practices will be inventoried, studied and analysed in depth and the environment friendly modes demonstrated, effected and advocated.

Goal

Ecosystems, habitats and species conserved, sustainably utilised and benefits shared.

IUCNB has identified the following three key areas to work under the BIOCON Programme:

- **Species conservation**: Awareness, support and understanding are increased (built) for improved decision making and practice at all levels, for species conservation.
- **Protected area (PA)**: An ecologically representative and financially viable Protected Area system is established that takes account of multiple management objectives, connectivity, equitable distribution of costs and benefits, and the participation of the stakeholders.
- **Agro-biodiversity**: Policies, legislation and practices to find a balance between the present and the future agricultural requirements of people.

10.2 Natural Resource Management (NRM)

Goal

Natural resources are used in a sustainable and equitable manner.

The natural resource management programme of IUCNB will be targeted to assess the degradation and depletion of the country's vital natural resources, especially its land and soils under various ecosystems viz. mangroves, wetlands etc. and arrest the baleful trends and introduce and establish ways of using such resources in a sustainable and equitable manner. It will aim at raising and promoting awareness and understanding of and support for integrated sustainable landuse models and their increased practices. It will also focus on community based collaborative management of natural resources, through utilisation of indigenous knowledge and wisdom and empowerment of women and the disadvantaged. The programme aims to explore, develop and promote alternative sustainable landuse practices such as, nature tourism, forestry, domestication of wild species (e.g. wildlife farming) etc.

The **NRM programme** has been envisaged to address the following working areas:

- **Integrative approach** will focus on promoting sustainable and equitable use of natural resources.
- **Collaborative management** will ensure community participation in all levels of NRM and incorporating local/ indigenous knowledge and traditional practices in NRM planning.
- **Sustainable land use** will look into development, demonstration and establishing sustainable use of land resources.

10.3 Environmental Law, Planning and Assessment (ELPA)

Goal

Adequate legislation for natural resource management in place and environmental planning and assessments effected routinely

The significance of efficient and effective legal regimes for protecting nature and natural resources has elicited common recognition of man, particularly since the 1972 UN Conference on Human Environment. The declaration of the conference, recognising the fundamental rights of man to an environment of quality, underlined the individual's responsibility of protecting and improving the environment for present and future generations. The Bangladesh law and policy instruments addressing the issues relating to natural resource management and protection of environment so far have been strictly sectoral in nature and almost all of them concerned contemporary matters during their framing at different times spread over the last one and a half centuries. Various ministries and departments have traditionally administered the sectoral laws and policies concerning NRM in Bangladesh and their functions and jurisdictions happen to be clearly demarcated and separated by the Government Rules of Business.

It is also commonly understood that the environmental issues are so intricately insulated with different ministries and departments that unification and merger of all these should seem hardly possible. But formulation of certain common and fundamental guiding principles may certainly be accomplished.

ELPA programme aims basically to prepare the ground for formulation of an umbrella law for conservation of natural resources and ecosystems and pave the way for efficient environmental planning and assessment using, for example, System Assessment Method (SAM) etc. **ELPA** activities will be mainly focused on the following clusters:

- **Environmental law** wherein issues like policy instruments, legal mechanisms, review of laws concerning NRM, tenurial rights etc. will be dealt with.

- **Assessment, planning and related issues** will cover assessment and planning, environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), developing and implementing an appropriate green accounting system, capacity building of the existing courts and the judiciary (through organising training sessions, seminars, workshops, awareness raising activities etc.).

- **International protocols** will be reviewed and materialisation of relevant provisions of the ITCPS and especially, the CBD, RAMSAR, IPCC, etc. will be explored.

10.4 Water, Wetland and Disaster Management (WAWDIM)

Globally, water resources have been of interest to IUCN for a long time. And, water happens to be a major natural resource in Bangladesh, though water management has always been rendered complicated by the seasonal aspect viz. its abundance during monsoon vis-a-vis acute scarcity in early summer. Rivers, wetlands and the seasonal floods are the lifeblood of this country. Floods sometimes cause damages; usually, they have been positively influencing the renewal of fish stocks, groundwater and soils. Again, almost all the rivers are susceptible to flow-diversion due to upstream interventions in another country. Optimal utilisation of available water is a major issue. Though IUCNB will not substantially engage itself in the health dimensions of water such as, supply of clean drinking water, it will, however, focus upon developing a holistic, integrated strategy for the provision of safe drinking water. It will address the issues of water quality in different water bodies; assessment, conservation and management of wetlands; water quality, wetlands and biodiversity through attainment of increased awareness and understanding of the nature and effects of quality of return flow on ecosystems; a better understanding of the coping mechanisms and practices of local communities to deal with seasonal fluctuations of surface and ground water for efficient planning; a better understanding of the causes and effects of increasing salinity intrusion/ level in the coastal ecosystem; environmental assessment of the present day water management and practices with focus on fisheries and ecosystems; and raising public awareness of the impacts of climate change and the IPCC/ UNFCCC processes.

Goal

Water resources optimally managed and appropriate natural disasters coping strategies implemented.

WAWDIM programme has been envisaged to build upon the following three clusters of interests:

- **Water management** will cover issues like water quality, transboundary effects, ecosystem management, watershed management, water policy, water budgeting and wetland management.
- **Disaster management** activities will look into issues viz. arsenic contamination of groundwater, management of natural disasters viz. floods, droughts, storm surges, cyclones, sea level rise etc. and disaster-prone coastal zone management.
- **Emerging issues** like climate change as related to water, its impact on ecosystems will be dealt under this working area.

10.5 IUCN Bangladesh: The Crosscutting Themes

IUCNB's experience in some of its thematic programmes has been conducive to the organisation's attainments in the past. Thus, judged by the laid down criteria and based on the experience and

dictates of the programmes, the following cross-cutting themes have been listed that will underpin and support IUCNB's activities in the various technical areas:

- Good governance
- Integration of gender aspects
- Institution building
- Capacity building
- Environmental awareness
- Environmental education
- Support to CBOs (Community Based Organisations).

11 IUCN BANGLADESH: ONGOING AND PLANNED PROJECT

11.1 BIOCON Thematic Programme

Regional project to build capacity for biodiversity conservation in tropical Asia

This project aims to strengthen the capacity of the Bangladesh National Biodiversity Group (BNBG), an innovative forum of biodiversity experts drawn from a wide range of governmental and non-governmental organisations. The project emphasises fortifying BNBG's capability to serve as a multi-stakeholder forum for sharing information, ideas and perspectives on biodiversity; providing information on the status of the key species and ecosystems in Bangladesh; advising the Government on national conservation priorities and assist with the design of programmes and projects; catalysing greater awareness about biodiversity; and promoting and monitoring the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Conservation of Bengal tiger project

It is a joint collaboration project with the WWF. The project is to carry out a survey to update the tiger conservation status in the Sundarbans. The survey will address such ecological questions as tiger ecology, prey species, habitat requirements, poaching, current management capacity and lacking, and benefit from transboundary management.

Delineation of bio zones of Bangladesh

With support from CIDA , IUCNB has undertaken the implementation of this eight-month project that aims to delineate the ecological zones of Bangladesh, developing profiles of each zone. Once such ecological mapping is completed, various government as well as non-government

development agencies including donors will be using the products for sustainable development planning and efficient resource management.

The Sundarbans biodiversity conservation project

A large-scale project for the conservation of biodiversity of the Sundarbans has been initiated by the MoEF with the financial assistance from the ADB. As per agreement, when the project will be launched, IUCNB will carry out biodiversity assessment and conservation monitoring of the project. It will include monitoring of the health of key ecosystem components and species and the preparation of an annual 'State of the Sundarbans' report to be submitted to the Sundarbans Stewardship Commission. IUCNB will also work very closely with the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) team consultants and other research institutes to ensure that the diagnostic aspects of the information gathered by the monitoring cycle are fully utilised.

Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)

In response to the Article 6 of the CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity) entailing its signatories to "develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity", Bangladesh Government has also been quite keen to develop a Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. Accordingly, IUCNB has been facilitating the Government in the process of preparing a proposal and its onward submission to the GEF through the UNDP Country Office for necessary funding to develop such an action plan. The proposal has been duly accepted for necessary funding and the project activities are expected to start soon. To follow it up, IUCNB hosted an international consultative workshop on 13-15 February 2000 for sharing the experiences of different South Asian countries in preparing their respective 'biodiversity action plans'.

Community based conservation and sustainable utilisation of medicinal plants in Chittagong Hill Tracts region

The Chittagong Hill Tracts is very rich in biodiversity and has the highest concentration of tribal communities. The tribal communities have been and still are dependent on the indigenous herbal medicinal cures and products. Hence, the supporting resource base, that is, the medicinal plants have to be conserved, developed and utilized in a sustainable manner. Keeping that in mind, a concept note has been developed and submitted to GEF through UNDP. The DoE will be executing the project in collaboration with IUCN providing necessary technical assistance.

Large scale plantation of rare species of medicinal plants

IUCNB plans to implement the project in association with Ganashasthya Kendra. The overall objective of the project has been identified as the development and conservation of rare medicinal plants and large-scale commercial plantation of other plants and herbs of high market values.

Forestry sector project – Benefit Monitoring

Forestry Sector Project is being implemented by the Forest Department. The purpose of the project is to enhance the conservation of forests in selected protected areas, increase overall wood production and institute sustainable management of forest resources through local community participation, institutional capacity building and policy reform, The project comprises 17 sub-projects covering the north, north-eastern, central part of the country and Bandarbans district in Chittagong Hill Tracts. IUCNB intends to carry out a benefit monitoring and evaluation of the project at the end of the 3rd, 4th and 5th years. This will be done to make a subjective and objective assessment of how the project

performs with respect to the delivery of the intended benefits, and whether any adjustments would be necessary to enhance the effectiveness of the project.

Habitat restoration and conservation of Asian elephants (Elephas maximus)

Wild elephants are, at present, mainly found in the reserved forests of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHTs) North Division, CHTs South Division, Unclassed State Forest (USF) of the Manikchari, and Matiranga and Ramgarh regions under the Khagrachhari Forest Division. Besides, elephants are found in the Sangu and Matamuhuri reserved forests. It is estimated that ,at present, 195 to 234 individuals of wild elephants are resident in the above forest areas.

There are only one wildlife sanctuary and a national park currently in the reserved forests of the CHTs viz. the Wildlife sanctuary is at Pablakhali area of the Kassalong valley and Kaptai National Park at Kaptai. Wild elephants occur in both areas. It should be mentioned here that the Asian Elephant is a globally threatened species; and it is critically endangered in Bangladesh as per the Red Book of Threatened Animals of Bangladesh (2000). IUCNB is planning to facilitate the conservation of these elephants through involving the local communities in restoring the habitat of the elephants in and around the selected protected areas.

Conservation research and action plan for the Asian elephants in Bangladesh

This project will be undertaken to determine the population status of the Asian Elephant and to identify and prioritise the threats to it in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Chittagong, Cox's Bazaar and Teknaf forests. Conservation measures will be suggested to mitigate the threats to the elephant in the wild in Bangladesh. The project has the following specific objectives: 1) determination of the present population size, status and range of the Asian Elephant in Bangladesh; 2) identification and prioritisation of threats that the elephants are faced with; 3) assessment of habitat quality and extents thereof; 4) assessment of crop damage caused by elephants; 5) analysis of human-elephant conflict; and 6) recommendations on better management.

Conservation of the Sal forest in Bangladesh

At present, the major chunks of the *Sal* (*Shorea robusta*) forest are mainly found in the Bhawal-Madhupur Tract located in the central part of the country. There are 176 plant species in the Bhawal-Madhupur Tract, and *Sal* tree (*Shorea robusta)* is the main and dominant species. The main undergrowth is Shoti (*Pennisetum setosum),* however, it is scarce in pure *Sal* forms. Also, the *Sal* forest of Bangladesh was once very rich in faunal species. Asian elephant, Bengal tiger, buffalo, leopard, pea fowl, rhesus monkey, Capped langur, squirrel and jackal have already been extinct while, at present, 21 mammals, 140 birds, 29 reptiles and a good number of amphibians are still found in the *Sal* forest of the Bhawal-Madhupur Tract. The major threats to the *Sal* forest are conversion/capture of forest lands for agriculture, industries, housing, roads etc.; human pressure for fuel wood collection, harvest/ collection of round log for constructions; and pressure of urban visitors (mainly from Dhaka city) for recreation (picnics) and ecotourism purposes. The *Sal* forest of the Bhawal-Madhupur Tract being a distinct ecosystem, it is very suitable for conservation under the 'sustainable use' concept through the participation of people since the occurrence of natural calamities (floods and cyclones) is not significant in the above regions. The proposed project will be implemented in association with the DoF and some local NGOs.

11.2 NRM Thematic Programme

NCS Implementation Project - 1

This five-year project was launched in 1995, and is being implemented by the Ministry of Environment and Forest, with financial support from NORAD and technical and logistical assistance from IUCN. The project consists of two components:

Part A seeks to incorporate NCS recommendations into the forestry, fishery, livestock and crop sectors of the National Agricultural Plan; develop an environmental screening manual for the Planning Commission; organising workshops and short courses for government officials; develop environmental education curricula for primary and secondary school teacher training institutes; and raise public awareness through booklets, leaflets and posters.

Part B entails the preparation of biodiversity conservation and management plans for three areas (Chittagong Hill Tracts, St. Martin's Island and Tanguar Haor); studies of flora, fauna and socio-economic conditions of these areas; and the implementation of the management plans.

Following a mid-term evaluation of the project in May 1997, IUCN's role in the remainder of the project consists in: (i) external monitoring of the project activities, (ii) providing expatriate technical assistance, (iii) offering technical advice on a wide range based selected project topics, (iv) organising training of the key policy and practice people in sustainable resource use in other countries and (v) assisting in developing an internal monitoring system for the project.

Himal initiative in Bangladesh

A small scale project is to be initiated in 2001 in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) under the IUCN RSUP's regional Himal Programme. The overall objective of the project is to develop a replicable model of ecological restoration of degraded ecosystems in the CHTs and their sustainable development and use through community participation.

Sustainable village development programme

The agro-based economy of our country is basically dependent on the situation prevailing in the villages. The villages of the country are no more in a state to provide support to its inhabitants in the manner they could provide decades ago. With the increase in population, pressure on natural resources has also been increasing, which again is affecting the quality of life. On average, in Dhaka city alone, about 2000 people arrive daily from the villages in search of food and shelter and end up living in subhuman condition in slums. To reverse the trend, there is an urgent need to develop our villages in such a manner that every village remains self-sustained in terms of quality of life and quality of environment.

Towards achieving this, a concept of sustainable development, integrating environment with development through establishing Sustainable Village Development Programme (SVDP) has been developed. IUCN proposes to implement this initiative in partnership with BRAC, the world's largest NGO and an IUCNB member.

Capacity enhancement for conservation of threatened species using the Red books of Bangladesh as an education and communication tool

Lack of access to scientific data and information on species has so far precluded conservation of the indigenous fauna of Bangladesh. This particular disadvantage is further compounded by the fact that

the available scientific publications on the subject are accessible to a very limited group of people, and almost none of these documents is in the national language.

An important outcome of the project proposed above is an increased understanding of the need to reverse the current trends of the extinction of the threatened species listed in the Red Books through initiating conservation measures. If this process is to be initiated, however, it is vital that the information provided in the Red Books are disseminated and made available to the very many stakeholders that have a role to play in conserving the threatened fauna of Bangladesh.

The proposed project addresses the urgent need of conserving indigenous vertebrate fauna by using the Bangladesh Red Books as a communication tool. It proposes to use a multi-faceted approach through (a) customised information dissemination to varied target groups; (b) influencing national policy to address issues pertaining to threatened species; (c) creating awareness and enhancing capacity at operational level to address conservation needs of species; (d) communicating the messages related to conservation to the grassroots through community mobilisation and (e) inculcating the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes among the younger generations conducive to conserving indigenous species, with special emphasis on the vertebrate fauna.

Alternative livelihoods and improved resource management in the Sundarbans: an integrated two-country approach

About 6.5 million people live in the Sundarbans – 3 million in Bangladesh and 3.5 million in India. Given the nature of the inter-connected human-induced threats to the Sundarbans, any remedial strategy must take an integrated, comprehensive approach if solutions are to be sustainable and not just temporary, stop-gapping interventions. This project will make the link the needs of the human communities that depend on the natural wealth of the Sundarbans for their livelihoods and the paramount need to manage and conserve the important ecosystem functions that this biologically diverse wetland provides. IUCNB plans to implement the project in association with UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO and FAO.

Biodiversity conservation through community based management of swamp forests

The forested depressed basin in the north-east region of Bangladesh is known as the repository of biodiversity. The basin is characterised by having a number of wetlands including some of international importance, providing home for diverse species of flora and fauna including migratory birds. Fishery, wildlife and other swamp forest resources have socio-economic importance as a source of food, fodder, fuel wood, thatching, income and employment. The reeds are the major source of raw material for pulp industry in the region. Due to natural and anthropogenic interventions, however, over the last two decades, many wetlands housing swamp forests and reed lands have been cleared, resulting in loss of biodiversity and thus threatening the ecosystem and species. All these are collectively contributing to resource scarcity and social conflicts. In this connection, a project proposal has been submitted to the GEF through the UNDP Country Office, which proposes to promote sustainable community based management of wetland resources in selected sites of the project areas. Particular attention will be given to the promotion and development of biodiversity for their *in situ* conservation through restoration and ecological management of habitats with active participation of the local user communities.

Management of Lawachhera National Park

Lawachhera National Park is situated in the West Bhanugachh forest block which is a tropical semi-green forest. Inventory of plant species is yet to be done while there is no complete inventory of the wildlife fauna of the forest. Practices such as routine and illicit felling of trees, single species plantation, and trapping and illegal hunting of wildlife in the National Park and other parts of the forest have

certainly been degrading the habitats and reducing the number of individuals of the wildlife populations. For instance, removal of tall natural Dipterocarp trees has degraded the habitats of Hoolock Gibbon population in the forest, which is Critically Endangered in Bangladesh. This proposed project is planned to be implemented in association with the FD and some local NGOs through which park conservation and management techniques as well as park management guidelines and rules will be made available, community based management of the park will be established, scientific database will be developed, local people's awareness level will be enhanced and relevant personnel will be trained.

11.3 ELPA Thematic Programme

Judiciai and administrative arrangements for management of protected areas and the prosecution of environmental offences

The World Bank, Dhaka office is also a sub-implementing agency for the Sustainable Environment Management Programme (SEMP), entrusted with the responsibility of implementing the 'Capacity Building for Environmental Legislation and Policy Analysis' component. As an activity under this component, the World Bank has contracted out the above titled study in favour of IUCNB for implementation. The specific objectives of this project are to (i) identify and assess the existing management practices, needs and measures pertaining to the management of protected areas; (ii) suggest measures to enhance and strengthen the regulatory arrangements for sustainable management of protected areas; and (iii) evaluate the scope of the 'environmental courts' and suggest measures, if any, for effective functioning of the same to ensure the efficient handling of the environmental offences.

Capacity Building of NGOs in nature and natural resource management and conservation

More than 14,000 active NGOs are currently operating all over Bangladesh. For the improvement of the living conditions of the underprivileged people, most of these NGOs are involved in activities like community development, awareness building, primary healthcare, family planning, adult education, vocational training and poverty alleviation through carrying out various income generating activities. Moreover, they have also demonstrated a commendable ability in disaster management so far. However, the NGOs are lagging behind in taking any holistic approach by integrating the environmental priorities with their socio-economic development goals. IUCNB, therefore, proposes to take an initiative to help enhance the capacity of the NGOs to address the environmental concerns.

11.4 WAWDIM Thematic Programme

Community based haor and floodplain resource management project

It is one of the 26 components of the Sustainable Environment Management Programme (SEMP Component 2.2.1), which is being implemented by IUCN with the Ministry of Environment and Forest in two well defined degraded ecosystems, viz. haor and floodplain, with financial assistance from UNDP. The SEMP Component focusing on community based resource management in wetlands is a response evolving from the concern, need, and actions identified through the National Environmental Management Action Plan (NEMAP) process. The major focus of the programme is to involve community people in planning and implementation of the project activities for the management and sustainable use of the ecosystem resources. These initiatives will contribute towards achieving the overall objective of SEMP, by improving the management of natural resources and ensuring the maintenance of biodiversity and human wellbeing.

Water availability and usage regime in rural Bangladesh

A CWSSP (Community based Water Supply and Sanitation Project) project being implemented by IUCNB, it proposes to develop a clear understanding of the water use regime in rural Bangladesh. This will help identify sustainable water use practices by the rural communities. This may also help in identifying the indigenous knowledge on water conservation for domestic and agricultural purposes. The activities are expected to be completed by March 2001.

Water Sector Improvement Project (WSIP)

Ministry of Water Resources with the financial assistance from the World Bank is planning to implement a pilot project with a view to reforming and/or improving the institutional aspects of Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) per se and also the management bearing of their water schemes. The project is thereby titled as 'Water Sector Improvement Project' (WSIP). The WSIP focuses on institutional reform/improvement aspects of the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB). WSIP would mainly support two activities: (i) decentralisation/management transfer of small and medium scale water schemes from BWDB to Water Management Associations (WMAs); and (ii) institutional improvement of BWDB. IUCNB has been entrusted with the responsibility of developing the 'environmental auditing guidelines and the subsequent environmental management plan' for the project. Once the projected improvements are effected, the WMAs would be owned and controlled by the local community groups.

The project has put special emphasis on the environmental aspects, specifically on the environmental assessment of the water schemes to be handed over to WMAs. The environmental components are likely to deal with issues like screening guideline for water schemes, O & M (operation and management) aspect of the water schemes, their past impact on the environment and mitigation options, environmental monitoring, institutional arrangement for WMAs and their capacity building. The BWDB and the MOWR (Ministry of Water Resources) have identified IUCN Bangladesh Country Office as the agency to support them in implementing their planned activities pertaining to the environment aspects of the project also. Project activities will start as soon as the MOU is signed.

Conservation of coastal marine resources

The coastal ecosystem in Bangladesh extends along the coastline of about 700 kms from the Sundarbans which is shared with India in the southwest, to the southeastern stretch adjoining the border with Myanmar, including the St. Martin's Island ecosystem, interspersed with a number of small island systems in the Bay of Bengal. The environmental database on Bangladesh's coastal resources is extremely scanty and limited at the moment. It is recognised that the challenges to coastal resource management is gigantic for any single organisation. An integrated and multi-disciplinary approach is therefore essential for assuring the sustainability of the coastal ecosystem. IUCNB seeks to strengthen its existing partnerships, and to forge and facilitate new ones by participating in the Regional Technical Assistance (RETA) programme for Coastal and Marine Resources Management and Poverty Alleviation in South Asia.

12 IUCN BANGLADESH: ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

IUCNB had been working as a close-knit organisation till September 1999, when the strategic programme development exercises were undertaken. Thereafter the following structure of the four programme thematic units and the two key functional ones, viz. programme coordination and development unit and the one to handle finance and administration (with the Country Representative at the centre) had been decided to be implemented with effect from January 2000.

It is envisaged that after the first two years of the six-year plan period (2000-2005) will have elapsed, when all the programmes earmarked will be running optimally, the programme components, which will have attained a certain level of maturity, and financial sustainability will have been attained by the thematic units, each unit then would be a sub-cost centre being run by a Unit Head. Each thematic programme at that stage in 2002 would be upgraded as a thematic group, headed by a group head.

Moreover, some of the crosscutting themes and functions such as communication, social dimension and NGOs being looked after by the thematic units could be developed into thematic programmes.



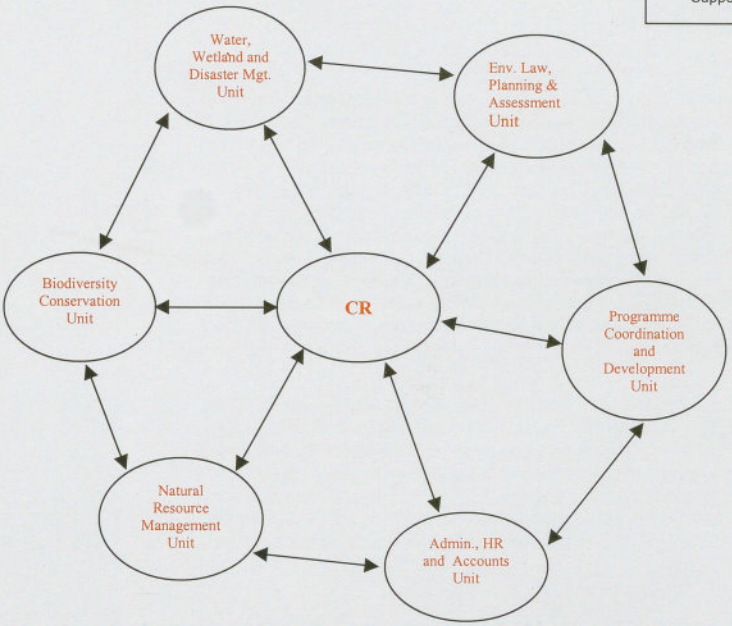
Ali Reza

Riverine ecosystem, Manikganj

Operational Structure of IUCN Bangladesh

Crosscutting Themes

Good governance
Institution building
Capacity building
Gender integration
Env. awareness
Env. education
Support to CBOs



Legend

Theme

Linkages

13 EPILOGUE

Since days of yore, Bangladesh has been regarded as one of the rarest sanctuaries of exotic floral and faunal diversities in the world. For centuries, nay, for millenniums, its incomparably variegated natural treasures have continued to enchant, allure and inspire hordes of expeditioners, globe-trotters, conquerors, relic hunters, pilgrims as well as poets, artists and artistes equally. Till very recent days, we could claim to be nurturing and hosting legions of plants, wildlife and fish species on our limited territorial bounds. But due to the unavoidable onslaught of the compulsive, hurried, jostling and hence unplanned and dehumanising ways of the so-called sweeping development coups, the formerly lauded pristine Bangladesh landscape has now been maimed, moth-eaten and stripped of its laurels of natural endowments.

In an attempt to reverse the trends, IUCN Bangladesh with its members and the grassroots communities they work with pledge to effect a positive difference in the conservation of biodiversity and attainment of development goals through ensuring sustainable natural resource management. IUCNB also aspires to enable the country's law and policy regimes attain the necessary nature-friendly operational mechanisms and instruments through its assessments, resource mustering and advocacy activities envisaged.



R. Amin

Devotees nursing Bostami turtle

PUBLICATIONS OF IUCN BANGLADESH

- Freshwater Wetlands in Bangladesh: Issues and Approaches for Management (1993)
- An Inventory on International Conventions, Treaties and Protocols Related to Environment and the Bangladesh Context (1996)
- Environmental Economics in Bangladesh (1999)
- National Forum on Multi-Stakeholder Sustainability Planning in Bangladesh (2000)
- Linking People With Nature: Biodiversity Conservation Strategy for the Himal Region (2000)
- Red List of Threatened Animals of Bangladesh (2000)
- Red Book of Threatened Fishes of Bangladesh (2000)
- Red Book of Threatened Amphibians and Reptiles of Bangladesh (2000)
- Red Book of Threatened Birds of Bangladesh (2000)
- Red Book of Threatened Mammals of Bangladesh (2000)
- The 1998 Flood: Impact on Environment of Dhaka City (2000)
- Guide to the Sundarbans (2001)
- Red Book of Threatened Animals of Bangladesh (in Bengali) (2001)
- National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (2001)
- Ecology of the Bengal Tiger in the Sundarbans, Bagladesh (2001)
- A Guide for Countries Preparing National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan (in Bengali) (2001)

IUCN - The World Conservation Union was founded in 1948 and brings together 78 states, 112 government agencies, 735 NGOs, 35 affiliates, and some 10,000 scientists and experts from 181 countries in a unique worldwide partnership. Its mission is 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. Within the framework of global conventions IUCN has helped over 75 countries to prepare and implement national conservation and biodiversity strategies. IUCN has approximately 1000 staff, most of whom are located in its 42 regional and country offices while 100 work at its Headquarters in Gland, Switzerland.

