

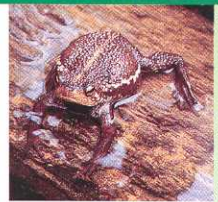
Asian Wetland Inventory

A comprehensive Information Base for Wetland Conservation and Sustainable Development

Wetlands

Wetlands represent a large variety of inland and coastal habitats, which share a common characteristic: namely land that is saturated with water permanently, seasonally or intermittently. Wetlands are critically important ecosystems that provide local and globally significant social, economic and ecological benefits. They have a multitude of functions, all of which provide services of inestimable value to society. Among other things, they control floods, protect coastal zones and contribute to the hydrological characteristics of river systems. Wetlands host a great diversity of species and are of cultural and economic importance to local and indigenous communities.

Although wetlands in Asia support some of the world's most significant biodiversity and are a globally important resource for billions of people, their destruction and degradation continues unabated. In the last 50 years it is estimated that over 60% of all wetlands in the region have been degraded.



Swamp toad,
Tasek Bera, Malaysia

Wetlands International

Wetlands International



Sacred Lotus



Floodplain Wetlands

Wetlands International / R. Jaensch

What is an Inventory?

Reliable knowledge is the basic resource on which decisions concerning the conservation, management and wise use of wetlands should be made. An inventory is a stock-taking exercise aimed at locating areas that meet the accepted definition of wetlands, facilitating basin wide mapping, determining and recording the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of wetlands, and identifying their functions and values.

Wetland inventory provides a basis for collecting reliable knowledge and making informed decisions concerning the conservation and wise use of wetlands. A wetland inventory can assist Governments and the public to identify wetlands of national and international importance and serve as a basis for prioritising conservation and development initiatives in conjunction with the sustainable management of natural resources, in particular, water, fisheries, forestry and other land uses.

The Asian Wetland Inventory

A standardised protocol for wetland inventory has been developed through the Asian Wetland Inventory (AWI) in

order to provide an information resource for the assessment and monitoring of wetlands. It builds on past inventory protocols that have been successfully developed. It has also provided support for the development of the proposed Ramsar Inventory Protocol. The main results to be achieved through this programme are:

- Increased awareness of the importance of wetlands and the need for a standardised inventory among relevant national government agencies across Asia.
- A dynamic and standardised Geographical Information System (GIS) and integrated relational database that can provide core data / information on Asian wetlands to guide and support planning and conservation efforts by national governments, International Conventions, NGOs and others.
- A strengthened network of personnel trained in data collection techniques and skills for implementation of the AWI at national and local level.
- Established national inventory programmes and databases in all participating nations.
- Established network of regional training programmes in wetland inventory.
- A monitoring programme for regular revision and updating information on wetlands of national and international importance in Asia.



Asian Wetland Inventory

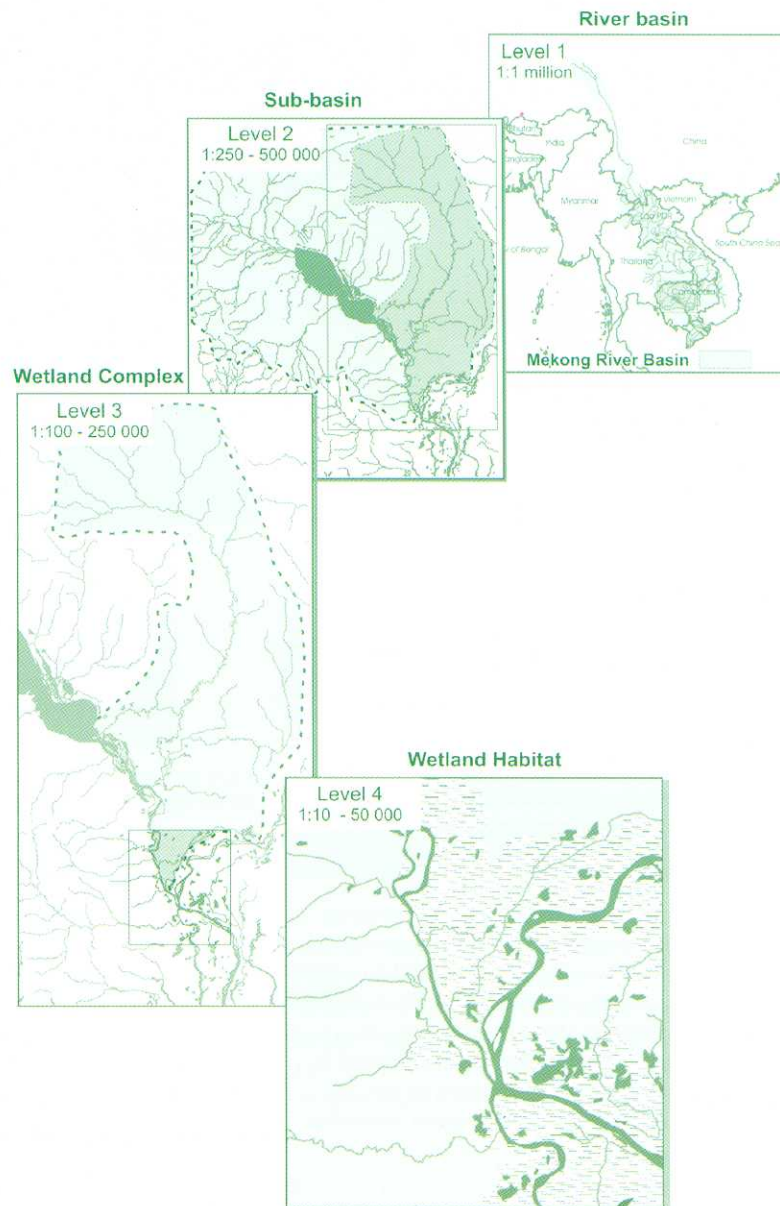
Why is the AWI needed and how it was conceived

In 1999, Wetlands International undertook a global review of wetland inventories on behalf of the Ramsar Convention. The review demonstrated that the existing inventory base was inadequate. Lack of a standardised, systematic approach to wetland inventory across the Asian region has made it impossible to accurately assess the extent, pressures and degree of degradation of Asian wetlands.

Recognizing this urgent need, the contracting parties of the Ramsar Convention called on participating governments to collaborate with Wetlands International to review and further develop existing models for wetland inventory.

Responding to this call, the **AWI** programme was initiated by Wetlands International in 1999 with initial funding support from the Ministry of Environment Japan and the endorsement of the Standing Committee of the Ramsar Convention.

Wetlands International, in collaboration with the Australian National Centre for Tropical Wetland Research (NCTWR), the Wetland Inventory and Monitoring Specialist Group (WIMSG) and the Japanese National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES-CGER) has been responsible for the initial development of the project.

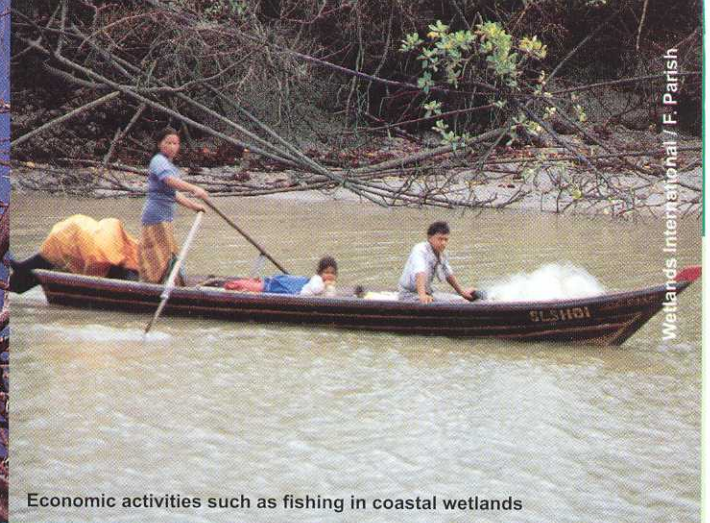


Wetlands International / J. Howes

Sustainable forestry in mangroves

Figure 1: Wetland inventory hierarchical methodology - the four level approach.

Wetlands International / T. Mundkur



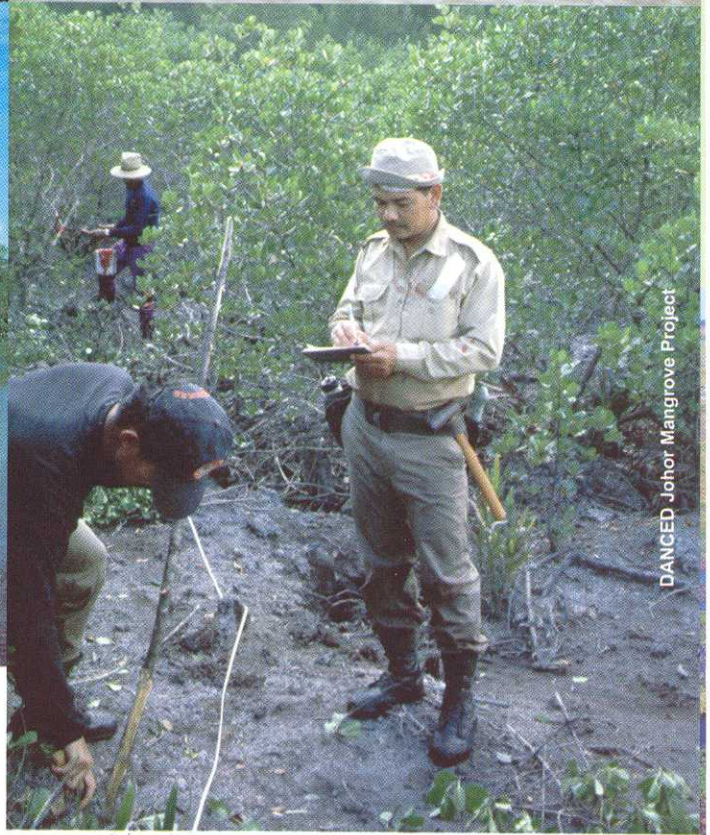
Wetlands International / F. Parish

Economic activities such as fishing in coastal wetlands



Wetlands support local communities

Wetlands International / M. Silvius



DANCED Johor Mangrove Project

Mangrove Survey and Inventory

What's unique about the AWI?

The **AWI** provides an effective tool for collecting core information for managing natural resources derived from or dependant on wetlands.

The key feature of the **AWI** is the use of a hierarchical, map-based approach to define the most appropriate land and resource management units at four levels of detail (see Figure 1). The level of detail is related to the scale of the maps that are contained within a standardised GIS format.

The hierarchical approach allows for a strategic assessment of information needs at different geographical scales. It further provides a framework for considering individual habitats and sites within and outside of established jurisdictional boundaries.

Geographical coverage of the AWI

The **AWI** will cover all of Asia including those countries and territories in western and central Asia, Russia eastwards of the Ural Mountains, and southern and eastern Asia (see Figure 2).

The AWI and other international frameworks / initiatives

The **AWI** is seen as an effective tool for the following conventions and international frameworks.

- Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS or Bonn Convention)
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and /or Desertification, (CCD)
- Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention)
- Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy: 2001-2005
- The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

By providing a standardised information base for different international conventions, the **AWI** can assist in integrating and extending the work of these bodies.

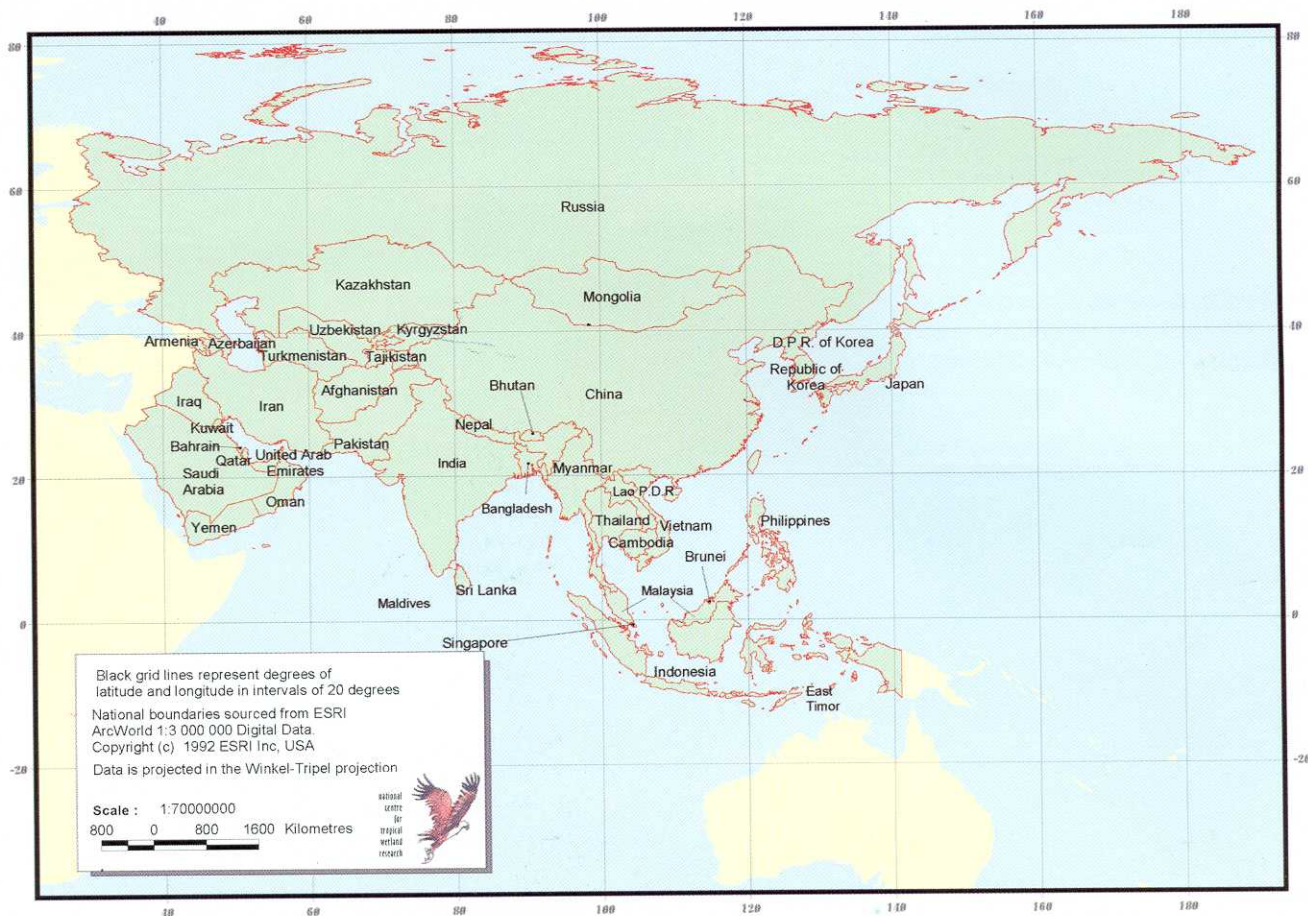


Figure 2: Countries and territories included in the Asian Wetland Inventory

The boundaries, colors, denominations and any other information shown on this map do not imply, on the part of Wetlands International and its partners, any judgement on the legal status of any territory, or any endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

Stakeholders of the AWI

- Government agencies responsible for wetlands
- Conventions, International development agencies and supra-national organisations
- Research institutions
- Non-governmental organisations

How to be part of the AWI

- Request a presentation by a member of the **AWI** team.
- Promote governmental support and endorsement for a national wetland inventory.
- Encourage governmental agencies to establish a position for an **AWI** liaison officer.
- Submit requests for in-country **AWI** training.
- Seek support for **AWI** implementation at a national, sub-regional and regional level.

Endorsers and Partners

- Standing Committee of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
- Ministry of the Environment, Japan
- National Centre for Tropical Wetland Research (NCTWR), Australia
- National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES-CGER), Japan
- AEON Foundation, Japan



national
centre
for
tropical
wetland
research



Ministry of the Environment, Japan

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