



## Beung Kiat Ngong

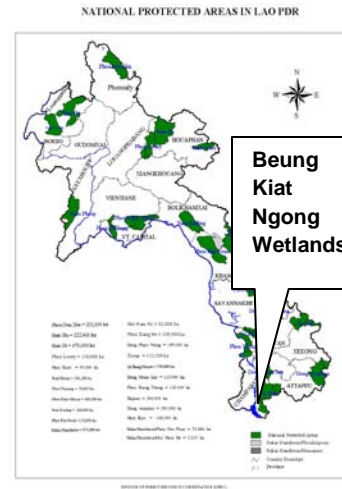
Ramsar site in LAO PDR since September 2010



Beung Kiat Ngong is in Champassak Province of southern Lao PDR is an open wetland area. The Beung Kiat Ngong Wetlands complex is made up of diverse wetland types, including swamps, lakes, peat lands and marshes. The edge of the wetland is forested, and is surrounded by large trees, including species typically found in the south and east of Lao PDR.

The forest is rich due to the quality soil and abundance of water, and seasonal and perennial flooded grasses are found here. The Beung Kiat Ngong Wetlands is also one of the only places in Lao PDR where peatland areas can be found. The wetlands support livelihoods of approximately 7,400 people. In addition to being recognized as a Ramsar site, it is also recognized by Conservation International as an Indo-Burma Biodiversity Hotspot of the Central Indochina area (tropical lowland plain).

### 1. Location



Beung Kiat Ngong wetlands has a catchment of more than 6,000 ha, of which 2,360 ha are a part of Xe Pian National Protected area. It is located in southeastern Pathoumphone District, about 70 km from Pakse.

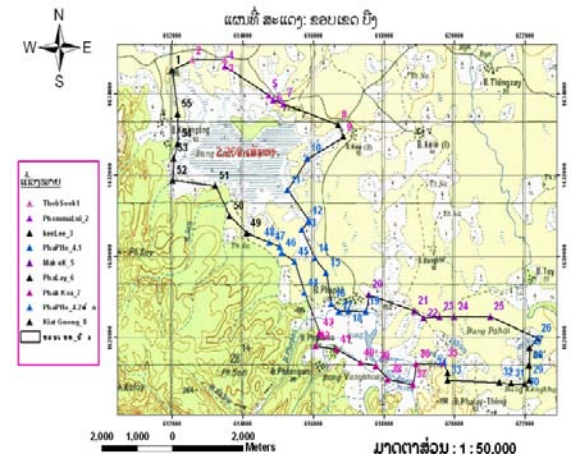
Beung Kiat Ngong includes about 400 ha of high quality peat land and about 1,000 ha of seasonal semi-peatland with a low quality of peat.

### 2. Governance and population

A total of 20 villages with a population of 7,400 (3,800 females) live within the wetland site boundaries. Of these villages, 12 are within the core protected area and 8 are in the close vicinity and also utilize the wetlands.

### 3. Ecosystem services:

Local people rely on the wetlands for their livelihoods, which are mainly derived from fishing and collecting wild vegetables. It was estimated in 2008 that the wetlands provide US\$ 897,607 (Khamli-bounthavi, 2008) of annual direct economic value. In 2009, an

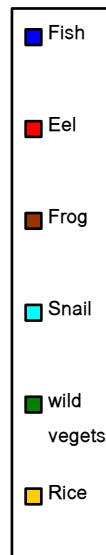
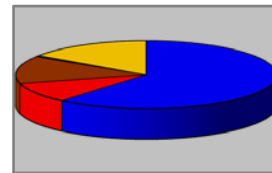


IUCN study revised this figure to US \$849,682 of economic benefits annually from fish, NTFP and agricultural products coming from the wetland. These ecosystem services can be summarized as follows:

- **Provisioning:** Supports grazing of cattle, buffalo and elephants; In 2011, WREA estimated that approximately 10,000 tourists per year visit Pathoumphone District bringing in earning from elephant trekking, selling handicrafts, guiding tours, and guest houses/homestays; supporting rice cultivation; and, harvesting of malva nuts and other non-timber forest products.



- **Regulating:** Flood mitigation; Storing and maintaining ground water; nutrient trapping; Sequestering carbon in peat land; and, Water purification.



- **Cultural values:** The area is characterized by rural Lao Loum culture, including a continuing traditional elephant mahout culture. There is a population of domesticated elephants in the area. The wetlands area also contains an important cultural site, Phou Asa temple located at western side of the wetland. .

- **Supporting:** Passage for a variety of fishes to move upstream along these rivers and streams, as well as providing spawning

grounds (during wet season); Sediment trapping; habitat for key conservation species (Fishing Cat, sambar, and Malayan snail-eating turtle) and economic species (Malva Nut); Bird feeding grounds and nesting site.

#### 4. Threats and objectives of the Ramsar site

Key threats to conservation and sustainable management of the site include: peat extraction; overharvesting of fish, aquatic resources, and non-timber forest products; increasing cattle and buffalo population; and, insufficient human and financial resources to implement regulations and a management plan.

#### 5. Objectives of Ramsar site management:

- To protect wetland site based on the wise use concept. **The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands defines wise use of wetlands as “the maintenance of their character, achieved through the implementation of ecosystem approaches, within the context of sustainable development”.** In the case of Beung Kiat Ngong this means management should prioritize sustainable use of aquatic species and non-timber forest products, peatland restoration as well as drought and flood protection.
- To maintain and rehabilitate the site for local livelihood through sustainable use, community management of fisheries, and tourism.

These objectives are carefully being incorporated into a long term Management Plan for the site, which is expected to be complete in June 2012. The Management Plan is being formulated through a highly participatory process which brings together village, district and provincial stakeholders.