

# BANGLADESH

LAND AREA 148,393 km<sup>2</sup> HUMAN POPULATION 128,310,000 (865 per km<sup>2</sup>)  
NUMBER OF IBAs 19 TOTAL AREA OF IBAs 5,396 km<sup>2</sup> STATUS OF IBAs 11 protected; 2 partially protected; 6 unprotected



The mangrove forests and associated intertidal wetlands in the Sundarbans (IBA 10) support large numbers of congregatory waterbirds, including several threatened species. (PHOTO: REZA KHAN)

## KEY HABITATS AND BIRDS

- The original vegetation of much of Bangladesh was tropical forest and grasslands, but most of these habitats have been cleared. Only a handful of significant areas of forest now remain in the lowlands and hills (*Biome AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest*, *Biome AS09: Indochinese tropical moist forest* and *Biome AS11: Indo-Malayan tropical dry zone*), principally near the north-east border with India and in the Chittagong hill tracts in the south-east of the country.
- Only a few small fragments of natural grassland (*Biome AS12: Indo-Gangetic plains* and *EBA 131: Assam plains*) are known to survive on the plains of Bangladesh, mostly associated with freshwater wetlands, but it is possible that some undiscovered grasslands might survive and support significant populations of threatened grassland specialists such as Marsh Babbler *Pellorneum palustre*.
- The coastal wetlands of Bangladesh support the largest known concentrations of three threatened waterbirds, Spotted Greenshank *Tringa guttifer*, Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus* and Indian Skimmer *Rynchops albicollis*, and the *haor* wetlands in the north-east support important populations of several other waterbirds, notably the threatened Baer's Pochard *Aythya baeri* and Pallas's Fish-eagle *Haliaeetus leucoryphus*.

## CONSERVATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROTECTED AREAS SYSTEM

The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) is responsible for protection of the environment within Bangladesh's legislative framework, including through environmental impact assessment. The principal activities undertaken by the MoEF are the survey

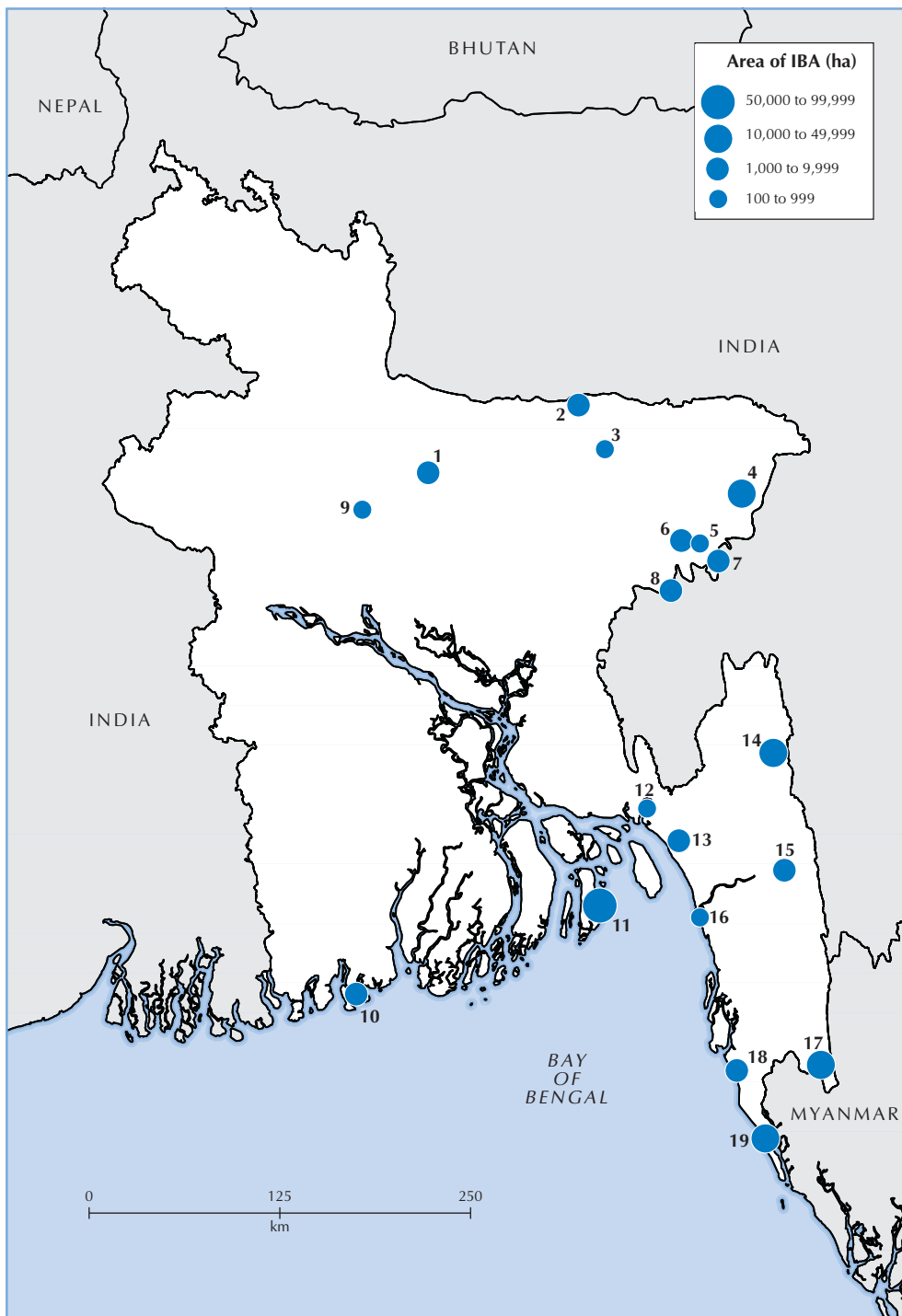
and conservation of flora, fauna, forests and wildlife, the prevention and control of pollution, and the afforestation and regeneration of degraded areas. Through the collection and dissemination of environmental information, the MoEF aims to create environmental awareness among all sectors of the country's population.

The main acts and rules relevant to the conservation of wildlife and habitats in Bangladesh are: the Wildlife Preservation Act, 1974 (Amendment Act 1994); the Forest Act, 2000 (Amending Act, 1927); the Environment Conservation Act, 1995; the Environment Conservation Rules, 1997 and the Environment Court Act, 2000.

At 2001, the Government of Bangladesh had declared 14 protected areas under the Bangladesh Wildlife Preservation Act, including five national parks, eight wildlife sanctuaries and one game reserve. These have a total area of c.2,278 km<sup>2</sup> or just over 1.5% of the country's land area, and are managed by the Wildlife Division under the Forest Department of the MoEF. In addition, the government recently declared six Ecologically Critical Areas (ECA) under the Environmental Conservation Act, with a total area of 2,097 km<sup>2</sup> or just under 1.5% of the land area of Bangladesh.

## OVERVIEW OF THE INVENTORY

- Of the 19 IBAs in Bangladesh, 11 support globally threatened species, 10 have biome-restricted species and nine qualify as IBAs because they hold large congregations of waterbirds.
- Bangladesh's IBAs cover less than 4% of the total land area of the country, reflecting the great reduction and fragmentation of natural habitats in the country. However, additional sites are likely to be added to this preliminary list of IBAs in the future.
- Ten IBAs (53%) contain examples of terrestrial forest ecosystems, which together cover all significant areas of forest



**Map 1.** Location and size of Important Bird Areas in Bangladesh.

known to remain in Bangladesh. They include the Indo-Malayan tropical dry forests in Madhupur National Park (IBA 1) to the north of Dhaka, three IBAs in north-eastern Bangladesh where Indochinese tropical moist forest is the dominant biome, and six IBAs in the Chittagong hill tracts in the south-east of the country, where Indochinese tropical moist forest and Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest are the main habitats.

- Five IBAs contain freshwater ecosystems and some also have remnants of natural grassland. Tanguar Haor (IBA 2) and Hakaluki Haor (IBA 4) in north-east Bangladesh are outstanding because of their breeding population of Pallas’s Fish-eagle, and for their large wintering concentrations of waterbirds, including Baer’s Pochard.
- Coastal ecosystems are represented at five IBAs. The intertidal mud and sand flats of the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna delta (IBA 11) IBA support the largest known concentrations of Spotted Greenshank, Spoon-billed Sandpiper and Indian Skimmer in the world. The Sundarbans (IBA 10) is globally

outstanding for its vast mangrove forests and associated intertidal wetlands.

### CONSERVATION ISSUES

- Bangladesh’s forest IBAs are being affected by selective logging and cutting, forest grazing and conversion to agricultural land. The freshwater wetland IBAs are under pressure from drainage and conversion to agricultural land, and fisheries. Large-scale commercial hunting of waterbirds is a problem at both freshwater and coastal wetlands, and coastal IBAs are also affected by conversion to aquaculture and cutting of mangroves. Human disturbance of birds is a problem at many IBAs.
- Of Bangladesh’s 19 IBAs, 11 (58%) are wholly within protected areas, two (11%) are partly within protected areas, and six (32%) are unprotected. The most important gap in the national protected areas system is the intertidal wetlands in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna delta (IBA 11).

SOURCES OF IBA DATA

An initial list of IBAs in Bangladesh was prepared by Enam Ul Haque (Bangladesh Bird Club). This was further developed by Mike Crosby, in consultation with Paul Thompson, to produce the IBA list presented here. The information on Bangladesh’s conservation infrastructure and protected areas system was taken from Ministry of Environment and Forests (2001).

REFERENCES

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (2001) *State of environment Bangladesh 2001*. Bangladesh: Ministry of Environment and Forests. (downloaded on 30 June 2004 from: <http://www.moef.gov.bd/>)

**Table 1.** Important Bird Areas in Bangladesh.

R = IBA is wholly or partially a Ramsar Site; WH = IBA is wholly or partially a World Heritage Site

<b>1</b>	<b>Madhupur National Park</b>	<b>Protected</b>	■ A3
Coordinates 24°45'N 90°05'E Altitude 15 m Area 8,436 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest ■ Biomes AS11: Indo-Malayan tropical dry zone			
<b>2</b>	<b>Tangur Haor and Panabeel</b>	<b>Protected<sup>R</sup></b>	■ A1 ■ A4i,iii
Coordinates 25°08'N 91°02'E Altitude 5 m Area 1,566 ha Habitats Wetlands ■ Threatened species <i>Aythya baeri</i> , <i>Haliaeetus leucoryphus</i> , <i>Aquila clanga</i> ■ Congregatory waterbirds <i>Phalacrocorax niger</i> , <i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i> , <i>Anas strepera</i> , <i>Anas acuta</i> , <i>Anas querquedula</i> , <i>Anas crecca</i> , <i>Netta rufina</i> , <i>Aythya ferina</i> , <i>Aythya nyroca</i> , <i>Aythya fuligula</i> , <i>Fulica atra</i> , <i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i>			
<b>3</b>	<b>Aila Beel</b>	<b>Protected</b>	■ A1 ■ A4i,iii
Coordinates 24°53'N 91°12'E Altitude 5 m Area 160 ha Habitats Wetlands ■ Threatened species <i>Aythya baeri</i> , <i>Haliaeetus leucoryphus</i> ■ Congregatory waterbirds <i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i> , <i>Anas strepera</i> , <i>Anas acuta</i> , <i>Anas querquedula</i> , <i>Anas crecca</i> , <i>Aythya ferina</i> , <i>Aythya baeri</i> , <i>Aythya nyroca</i> , <i>Aythya fuligula</i> , <i>Fulica atra</i>			
<b>4</b>	<b>Hakaluki Haor</b>	<b>Protected</b>	■ A1 ■ A4i,iii
Coordinates 24°39'N 92°05'E Altitude 5 m Area 20,400 ha Habitats Wetlands ■ Threatened species <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i> , <i>Leptoptilos dubius</i> , <i>Aythya baeri</i> , <i>Tringa guttifer</i> ■ Congregatory waterbirds <i>Phalacrocorax niger</i> , <i>Dendrocygna javanica</i> , <i>Anas strepera</i> , <i>Anas acuta</i> , <i>Anas querquedula</i> , <i>Anas crecca</i> , <i>Aythya ferina</i> , <i>Aythya nyroca</i> , <i>Aythya fuligula</i> , <i>Fulica atra</i>			
<b>5</b>	<b>Lawachara / West Bhanugach Reserved Forest</b>	<b>Protected</b>	■ A1 ■ A3
Coordinates 24°21'N 91°48'E Altitude 30–60 m Area 900 ha Habitats Forest ■ Threatened species <i>Ardea insignis</i> , <i>Gyps bengalensis</i> , <i>Gallinago nemoricola</i> , <i>Columba punicea</i> , <i>Pellorneum palustre</i> ■ Biomes AS09: Indochinese tropical moist forest			
<b>6</b>	<b>Hail Haor</b>	<b>Partially protected</b>	■ A1 ■ A4i,iii
Coordinates 24°22'N 91°41'E Altitude 5 m Area 8,906 ha Habitats Wetlands ■ Threatened species <i>Aythya baeri</i> , <i>Haliaeetus leucoryphus</i> , <i>Aquila clanga</i> ■ Congregatory waterbirds <i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i> , <i>Dendrocygna javanica</i>			
<b>7</b>	<b>Rajkandi Reserved Forest</b>	<b>Unprotected</b>	■ A3
Coordinates 24°15'N 91°55'E Altitude 50–100 m Area 1,000 ha Habitats Forest ■ Biomes AS09: Indochinese tropical moist forest			
<b>8</b>	<b>Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary</b>	<b>Protected</b>	■ A3
Coordinates 24°5'N 91°37'E Altitude 30–50 m Area 1,095 ha Habitats Forest ■ Biomes AS09: Indochinese tropical moist forest			
<b>9</b>	<b>Jamuna-Brahmaputra river</b>	<b>Unprotected</b>	■ A1 ■ A4i
Coordinates 24°30'N 89°40'E Altitude 5–20 m Area 200,000 ha Habitats Wetlands ■ Threatened species <i>Gyps bengalensis</i> , <i>Rynchops albicollis</i> ■ Congregatory waterbirds <i>Anas strepera</i> , <i>Anas acuta</i> , <i>Anas querquedula</i> , <i>Anas crecca</i> , <i>Aythya ferina</i> , <i>Aythya nyroca</i> , <i>Aythya fuligula</i>			
<b>10</b>	<b>Sundarbans (East, South, West Wildlife Sanctuaries)</b>	<b>Protected<sup>R,WH</sup></b>	■ A1 ■ A4iii
Coordinates 21°50'N 89°40'E Altitude 0–3 m Area 139,699 ha Habitats Forest; Wetlands ■ Threatened species <i>Pelecanus philippensis</i> , <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i> , <i>Leptoptilos dubius</i> , <i>Haliaeetus leucoryphus</i> , <i>Heliopais personata</i> , <i>Eurynorhynchus pygmeus</i> , <i>Rynchops albicollis</i>			

Tangur Haor (IBA 2) supports very large concentrations of wintering waterbirds. (PHOTO: TORBORG BERGE)





Important Bird Areas in Asia – Bangladesh

Table 1 ... continued. Important Bird Areas in Bangladesh.			
<b>11</b>	<b>Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna delta</b>	<b>Unprotected</b>	■ A1 ■ A4i,iii
Coordinates 22°18'N 91°10'E Altitude Sea-level Area 75,000 ha Habitats Forest; Wetlands ■ Threatened species <i>Eurynorhynchus pygmeus</i> , <i>Tringa guttifer</i> , <i>Rynchops albicollis</i> ■ Congregatory waterbirds <i>Anser indicus</i> , <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> , <i>Numenius arquata</i> , <i>Eurynorhynchus pygmeus</i> , <i>Tringa guttifer</i> , <i>Rynchops albicollis</i>			
<b>12</b>	<b>Muhuri Dam</b>	<b>Unprotected</b>	■ A4i
Coordinates 22°51'N 91°28'E Altitude Unknown Area 500 ha Habitats Grassland; Wetlands ■ Congregatory waterbirds <i>Anas strepera</i> , <i>Anas penelope</i> , <i>Anas acuta</i> , <i>Anas querquedula</i> , <i>Anas crecca</i> , <i>Aythya nyroca</i> , <i>Aythya fuligula</i>			
<b>13</b>	<b>Hazarikhil Wildlife Sanctuary</b>	<b>Partially protected</b>	■ A3
Coordinates 22°40'N 91°40'E Altitude Unknown Area 2,903 ha Habitats Forest ■ Biomes AS09: Indochinese tropical moist forest			
<b>14</b>	<b>Pablakhali Wildlife Sanctuary</b>	<b>Protected</b>	■ A1 ■ A3
Coordinates 23°11'N 92°17'E Altitude 100–300 m Area 42,087 ha Habitats Forest ■ Threatened species <i>Haliaeetus leucoryphus</i> ■ Biomes AS09: Indochinese tropical moist forest			
<b>15</b>	<b>Rampahar-Sitapahar Wildlife Sanctuary</b>	<b>Protected</b>	■ A3
Coordinates 22°30'N 92°20'E Altitude Unknown Area 3,026 ha Habitats Forest ■ Biomes AS09: Indochinese tropical moist forest			
<b>16</b>	<b>Patenga Beach</b>	<b>Unprotected</b>	■ A1 ■ A4i
Coordinates 22°14'N 91°48'E Altitude Sea-level Area 500 ha Habitats Forest; Wetlands ■ Threatened species <i>Tringa guttifer</i> , <i>Eurynorhynchus pygmeus</i> ■ Congregatory waterbirds <i>Charadrius mongolus</i>			
<b>17</b>	<b>Sangu Matamuhari</b>	<b>Unprotected</b>	■ A3
Coordinates 21°25'N 92°35'E Altitude 200 m Area 20,000 ha Habitats Forest ■ Biomes AS08: Sino-Himalayan subtropical forest; AS09: Indochinese tropical moist forest			
<b>18</b>	<b>Himchari National Park</b>	<b>Protected</b>	■ A3
Coordinates 21°22'N 92°02'E Altitude Unknown Area 1,729 ha Habitats Forest ■ Biomes AS09: Indochinese tropical moist forest			
<b>19</b>	<b>Teknaf Game Reserve</b>	<b>Protected</b>	■ A1 ■ A3
Coordinates 21°00'N 92°14'E Altitude 5–700 m Area 11,615 ha Habitats Artificial landscapes (terrestrial); Forest ■ Threatened species <i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i> , <i>Leptoptilos dubius</i> , <i>Aquila heliaca</i> , <i>Rynchops albicollis</i> ■ Biomes AS09: Indochinese tropical moist forest			