

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS

DISTRIBUTION OF SELECTED SITES

Data on the 2,293 IBAs in the Asia region have been analysed using the site-selection criteria followed in this report (see 'Introduction', p.2). In total, 1,111 IBAs have been identified that contain areas that qualify as potential Ramsar Sites (Figure 3); note that although wetlands are the dominant habitat in many of these IBAs, some of them are predominantly non-wetland in character but contain within them wetland habitats that qualify under the Ramsar Criteria as being of international importance. At least one IBA qualifying as a potential Ramsar Site has been identified in each of the 28 countries and territories in the Asia region.

The IBAs qualifying as potential Ramsar Sites are spread across the entire Asia region, from the Arctic tundra in the north to the tropical islands in the south. There are notable concentrations of these IBAs in the basins of many of the region's large rivers and their tributaries, including the Amur, Ussuri and Sungari rivers (south-east Russia and north-east China), Yellow and Yangtze rivers (eastern China), Indus river (Pakistan), Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers (northern India), Ayeyarwaddy river (Myanmar), Chao Phraya river (Thailand) and Mekong river (Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam). Many IBAs qualifying as potential Ramsar Sites are located on or near the coasts of the Arctic Ocean (northern Russia), Pacific Ocean (eastern Russia and eastern Japan), Indian Ocean (India, Sri Lanka, British Indian Ocean Territory and Indonesia), Bering Sea and Sea of Okhotsk (Russia), Sea of Japan (Russia, Japan and Korea), Yellow Sea (China and Korea), East and South China Seas (southern Japan, China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam and the Philippines), Arabian Sea (Pakistan and India), Bay of Bengal (India, Bangladesh and Myanmar) and Gulf of Thailand (Thailand and Cambodia). Other areas with significant concentrations of IBAs qualifying as potential Ramsar Sites are the Arctic tundra (northern Russia), Eurasian steppes (southern Russia, Mongolia and northern China) and parts of the Qinghai-Tibetan plateau (China, northern India and Bhutan). Potential Ramsar Sites are relatively sparse in some of the region's high mountain ranges, the tropical islands of eastern Indonesia, Timor-Leste and the Philippines, and in central Russia (where the paucity of sites identified might reflect a lack of ornithological data rather than a lack of important wetlands).

RAMSAR DESIGNATION PROCESS

A total of 144 Ramsar Sites have been designated by the Contracting Parties within the Asia region (as defined here), as of August 2005. Of these 144 Ramsar Sites, 123 (85%) overlap with one or more IBAs.

Table 1 shows progress with the designation of the qualifying IBAs as Ramsar Sites in the 28 countries and territories in the Asia region. Of the 1,111 IBAs in this region that qualify as potential Ramsar Sites, the wetlands within 120 (11%) have actually been designated as Ramsar Sites. However, 65 of these 120 sites only partially overlap with Ramsar Sites, meaning that there is a need to consider whether to extend the boundaries of these Ramsar Sites to include any additional areas of internationally important wetland habitat. A total of 991 (89%) of the qualifying IBAs have no part of their area designated as a Ramsar Site as yet, with nearly all countries and territories in the region having at least one such undesignated IBA.

Suncheon Bay, one of the many potential Ramsar Sites on the Yellow Sea coast of Korea. (PHOTO: PAE SEONG-HWAN)



Table 1. The number of IBAs that contain areas that qualify as potential Ramsar Sites, and the progress in designation of these areas as Ramsar Sites.

Territory	Designation progress			Total
	Complete	Partial	Lacking	
Bangladesh	2		6	8
Bhutan			9	9
British Indian Ocean Territory	1		9	10
Brunei			5	5
Cambodia		3	30	33
China (mainland)	11	8	205	224
Hong Kong		1		1
India	11	5	159	175
Indonesia	1	1	47	49
Japan	1	12	112	125
Laos			10	10
Macao			1	1
Malaysia		1	17	18
Maldives			1	1
Mongolia	2	11	26	39
Myanmar		1	34	35
Nepal	1	3	6	10
North Korea			25	25
Pakistan	9	6	18	33
Philippines	2	2	12	16
Russia (Eastern)	7	7	118	132
Singapore			2	2
South Korea	1		38	39
Sri Lanka	1	1	23	25
Taiwan			33	33
Thailand	4	3	17	24
Timor-Leste			2	2
Vietnam	1		26	27
	55	65	991	1,111