ASEAN Heritage Parks

DEFINITION

Existing protected areas of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) member countries which have been recognised as regionally important based on their conservation value.

DESCRIPTION

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Heritage Parks have been defined as *"Protected areas of high conservation importance, preserving in total a complete spectrum of representative ecosystems of the ASEAN region"*.[1] Under this definition, ASEAN member states have declared certain national parks and reserves as ASEAN Heritage Parks based on their uniqueness, diversity and outstanding values, in order for their importance as conservation areas to be appreciated regionally and internationally.[2] ASEAN Heritage Parks are therefore protected areas which have obtained an additional recognition in order to differentiate them from the rest in terms of regional importance. The principles of the ASEAN Heritage Parks are as follows:[1]

1. Maintenance of the essential ecological processes and life-support systems;
2. Preservation of genetic diversity;
3. Maintenance of species diversity of plants and animals within their natural habitat;
4. Ensure sustainable utilization of resources; and
5. Provision of opportunities for outdoor recreation, tourism, education and research to make people recognize the importance of natural resources.

SUPPORTED BY

Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Declaration on Heritage Parks and Reserves. The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) serves as the secretariat of the ASEAN Heritage Parks Programme and supports the ASEAN Heritage Parks through financing projects such as:[3]

- The Biodiversity and Climate Change Project (BCCP) which supports the implementation of ASEAN Heritage Parks Programme to help address biodiversity and climate change issues.

- The Small Grants Programme (SGP), funded by the German development bank KfW. The SGP is currently active in Indonesia, Myanmar and the Philippines and its grants support conservation planning, core activities, management, educational campaigns and sustainable livelihoods.

YEAR OF CREATION

1984

COVERAGE

Regional network of 33 terrestrial and marine sites (2013) within ASEAN countries. Following the 4th ASEAN Heritage Parks Conference (2013), future plans include an inclusion of more areas into the ASEAN Heritage Parks network to increase the representation of diverse ecosystems, including marine areas, flyway network sites and biodiversity corridors.[4]

CRITERIA

The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity serves as the secretariat of the ASEAN Heritage Parks Programme and is responsible for reviewing nominations of sites. ASEAN Heritage Parks are recommended on the basis of the following:[5]

- *Ecological completeness* – an intact ecological process and the capability to regenerate with minimal human intervention.
- *Representativeness* – embodies the variety of ecosystems or species representing or typical of the particular region.
- *Naturalness* – must be, for the most part, in a natural condition such as a second growth forest or a rescued coral reef formation, with the natural processes still going on.
- *High conservation importance* – has global significance for the conservation of important or valuable species, ecosystems or genetic resources; creates or promotes awareness of the importance of nature, biodiversity and the ecological process; and evokes respect for nature when people see it, as well as a feeling of loss whenever the natural condition is lost.
- *Legally Gazetted Area* – Must be identified, defined and allocated by law or any legally accepted instrument of the ASEAN Member States; must be used primarily as protected areas with well-defined boundaries.
- *Approved Management Plan* - Must have a management plan duly approved by authorities of the respective ASEAN Member Country.

Additional criteria may include transboundary status, uniqueness, high ethno-biological significance and importance for endangered or precious biodiversity.

MANAGEMENT

Following the 4th ASEAN Heritage Parks Conference (2013), the ACB is in the process of developing the ASEAN Heritage Parks Regional Action Plan (2014-2020) as a cooperative framework.[4] However, individual states are responsible for their respective heritage sites, which should be managed to maintain those features meeting the nomination criteria. There is a list of measures within the management guidelines that includes prohibition of the introduction of exotic species, special protection or endangered species of flora and fauna and animals of higher trophic levels, regulation of exploitation

and other energy-draining activities along migratory routes, strict regulation on the use of chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides etc. [6] Under the Declaration of the ASEAN Heritage Parks, all ASEAN member states have to designate at least one ASEAN Heritage Park. [2]

BUSINESS RELEVANCE

Legal and compliance - ASEAN Heritage Parks are nominated based on legally protected areas. Business activities in the underlying protected area may therefore be regulated. The sites receive some international funding for enhancement of facilities and/or improvement of the site. The ASEAN – Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) is the law-enforcement network of the ASEAN regional group [7] which primarily deals with illegal wildlife trade.

Biodiversity importance - These areas are designated on the basis of high conservation importance among other criteria, and therefore are likely to contain highly vulnerable and/or irreplaceable species and habitats. As site-scale areas, these sites are highly relevant to business in terms of mitigating and avoiding risk from biodiversity loss and identifying opportunities associated with their conservation.

Socio-cultural values - While there are no socio-cultural values included within the criteria for designation, local communities and/or indigenous peoples are often involved as partners in the management of the sites. Therefore traditional practices, local resource use and involvement of local people in protection can be expected within these sites.

REFERENCES & WEBSITE

1. ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity website
2. Governments of the Member States of the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). 2003 ASEAN Declaration on Heritage Parks.
3. Arida, C. The ASEAN Heritage Parks Programme: Regional cooperation to effectively manage ecologically representative protected areas in Southeast Asia (2013).
4. Conference Report: 4th ASEAN Heritage Parks Conference. (2013).
5. ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity. Criteria for ASEAN Heritage Parks.
6. ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment, Japan International Cooperation Agency & UNEP. ASEAN Heritage Parks and Reserves. (1988)
7. ASEAN - Wildlife Enforcement Network.



Kerinci Sablat National Park (ASEAN Heritage Park), Indonesia.

Byelikova Oksana/Shutterstock.com

Category:

Protected areas

Tools

The Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT) provides a visualisation and GIS download tool for protected areas, including the IUCN category where known.

The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) provides the information including descriptive profiles and maps on ASEAN Heritage Parks as part of biodiversity information sharing service (ASEAN Clearing House Mechanism).

Protected Planet a tool for visualizing information on protected areas at the site level, country level, regional level and global level. This includes information on the IUCN category where known. Protected Planet brings together spatial data, descriptive information and images from the World Database on Protected Areas, WikipediaTM and PanaramioTM.

Links

ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity

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