Cha La Bird Sanctuary Nature Reserve

Alternative site name(s)
Cac San Chim, Cai Nuoc, San Chim Ca Mau
Province(s)
Ca Mau
Status
Decreed
Management board established
Unknown
Latitude
8°58'N
Longitude
105°06'E
Bio-unit
05a - Mekong Delta

Hoàng Sa

Trường Sa

Conservation status

Cha La bird sanctuary, together with Bac Lieu and Dam Doi bird sanctuaries (see separate site cards), was included on Decision 194/CT of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, dated 9 August 1986, as a 500 ha nature reserve with the name Cac San Chim (MARD 1997). An investment plan for Cha La bird sanctuary, prepared in 1999, proposed establishing a 14 ha nature reserve. This investment plan was approved by Ca Mau Provincial People's Committee on 12 October 1999 (Cai Nuoc District DARD 2000).

Cha La bird sanctuary, together with Dam Doi bird sanctuary, is included on the 2010 list as a single nature reserve with a total area of 500 ha, under the name San Chim Ca Mau. Bac Lieu bird sanctuary is listed as a separated nature reserve, under the name San Chim Bac Lieu (FPD 1998).

Topography and hydrology

Cha La bird sanctuary is a 14 ha patch of mangrove forest surrounded by agricultural land that is irrigated by a system of canals and supports a number of settlements.

Biodiversity value

Cha La bird sanctuary supports mangrove forest dominated by the palm *Phoenix padulosa* together with *Nypa fruticans*, *Bruguiera parviflora*, *Excoecaria agallocha* and, on the ground, *Acrostichum aureum*. Lianas such as *Flagellaria indica* and *Sarcolobus globosus* are also present.

Many waterbird species are known to breed at this site, the most abundant being cormorants, herons and egrets. Cha La bird sanctuary is particularly noteworthy for the presence of Darter *Anhinga melanogaster*, Asian Openbill *Anastomus oscitans*, Black-headed Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* and Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*.

Conservation issues

The principal threat to the bird populations at Cha La bird sanctuary is poaching. Both young birds and eggs are taken illegally for food and sale in local markets. The bird sanctuary is situated close to human settlements and is surrounded by agricultural land. Pesticides are widely used on the adjacent rice fields where many of the birds feed, thus posing an additional threat to their survival. According to Cai Nuoc District DARD (2000), the nature reserve has one guard station and a single member of staff.

Other documented values

Cha La bird sanctuary has long been a popular destination for tourists visiting the Mekong Delta. The bird sanctuary attracts both domestic and foreign tourists, and several tour companies operate excursions to the site. Tourism infrastructure at Cha La bird sanctuary is underdeveloped at present. If the site was well managed and protected, however, it would have potential as a site for recreation, conservation education and scientific research.

Related projects

No information.

Literature sources

Buckton, S. T., Nguyen Cu, Ha Quy Quynh and Nguyen Duc Tu (1999) The conservation of key wetland sites in the Mekong Delta. Hanoi: BirdLife International Vietnam Programme.

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Scott, D. A. (1989) A directory of Asian wetlands. Gland: IUCN.