

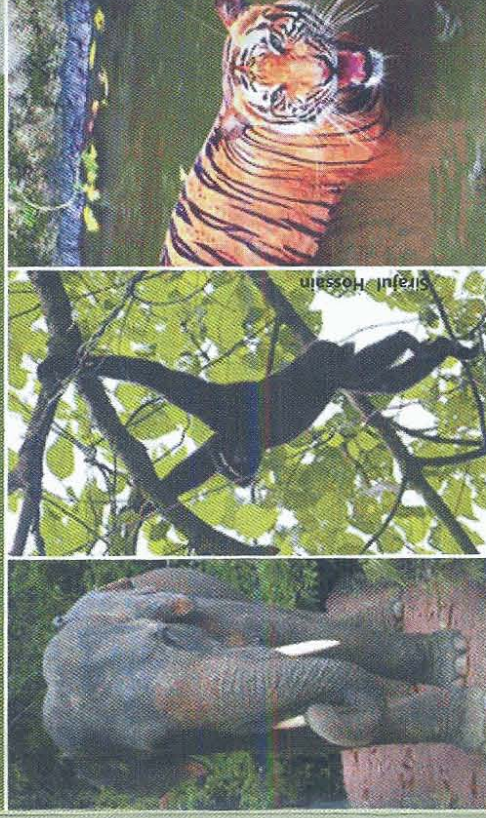
The Protected Areas of Bangladesh

A System of Nature Areas
Managed for You
by the Forest Department



Nishorgo Program of
Bangladesh Forest Department

Saving nature for future generations







Nishorgo: Bangladesh's Protected Areas
Management Program
Forest Department
Ministry of Environment and Forests
People's Republic of Bangladesh

www.nishorgo.org

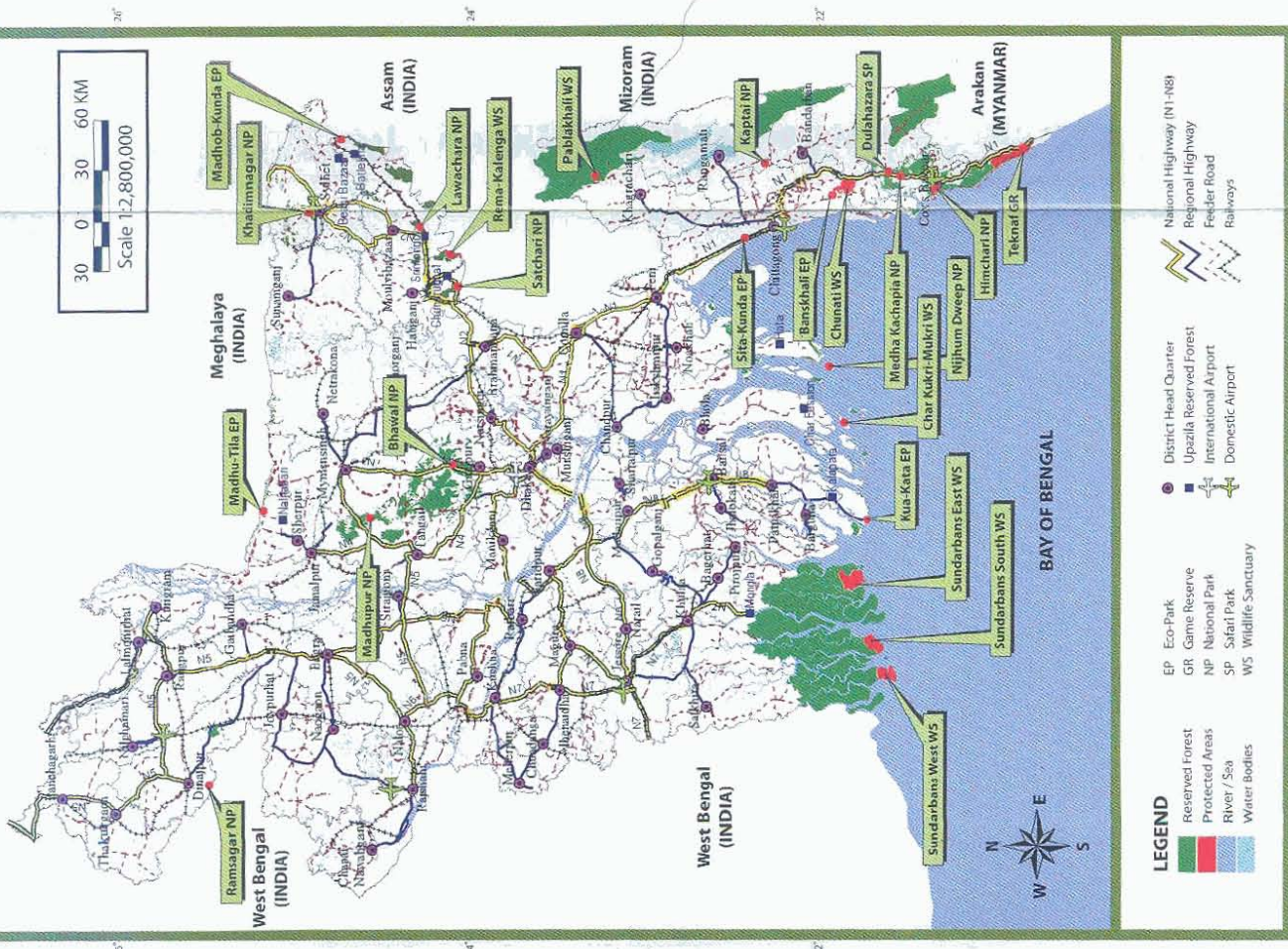
If I want to Visit one of the Protected Areas, Where do I get Information?

The Forest Department is working to facilitate access to up-to-date information about the Protected Areas. More information can be obtained in a number of ways:

-  Contact Forest Department's Public Relation Officer
-  Go to Nishorgo Program's website: www.nishorgo.org for information on each of the PAs. There also look for the contacts for the local Eco Tour Guides at 5 pilot sites.
-  Purchase the booklet "Protected Areas of Bangladesh: A Visitor's Guide" available at local book-stores.
-  Ask your favorite Tour Operator for more information.

Printing Courtesy:
 USAID
U.S. Agency for International Development

Protected Areas and Eco-Parks of Bangladesh



What are the Protected Areas?

In recent decades, Bangladesh has seen its natural forests shrink, prey to population growth, demand for forest products and land conversion to settlements or agro-forestry. Natural forests provide many benefits to the country. They absorb carbon from the atmosphere, harbor thousands of species of plants and animals, regulate water runoff and provide a place where our young can observe and appreciate the wonder of the nature.

Recognizing the severity of the problem, the Forest Department is taking steps to stem the loss of natural forests. One of the most urgent steps is to conserve remaining forest ecosystems in a network, or system, of Protected Areas (PA). These areas are designated under the Wildlife (Preservation) (Amendment) Act, 1974, and include Wildlife Sanctuaries, National Parks and Game Reserves. Currently, 19 Protected Areas covering 2,45,813 hectares exist throughout the country, covering an estimated 1.6% of the country's surface area.

Where are the Protected Areas?

Forest Department established Protected Areas in all the four identified bio-ecological zones (tropical evergreen and semi-evergreen forests, moist deciduous forests, mangrove forests, and reed-land and wetland forests). The Forest Department oversees Protected Areas declared under the Wildlife Act. There are a few other lands in the country protected under recognized IUCN protection categories. These include the Ramsar site at Tanguar Haor and six sites are protected as Ecologically Critical Areas (ECA) under the Environment Conservation Act.

See overleaf for location of the Protected Areas managed by the Forest Department.

What Can Visitors Expect to Find at the Protected Areas?

The quality of wildlife conservation and visitor services varies greatly between Protected Areas. Although the Government has been systematically increasing investment in smaller conservation activities such as Eco-Parks, the larger PA system still needs much more time and resources to reach high standards of service. Visitors should check available resources (see information below) about the quality and services available before scheduling a visit.

What is the Forest Department Doing to Improve Protected Areas?

At all the 19 Protected Areas in the country, the Forest Department is working to put in place management approaches based on open dialogue, participation of key local stakeholders, and sound technical knowledge. The Department has made it a determined policy to put in place collaborative management (or "co-management") approach at all Protected Areas in the country.

The comprehensive Program for improving the management of Protected Areas across the country is called "Nishorgo". Under the Nishorgo Program, the Department endeavors to undertake the following activities at all Protected Areas of the country:

- Identify a Co-Management Council and executive Committee to work with Forest Department on management and provide a platform for constructive feedback and exchange;
- Develop Participatory Management Plans for each PA that give local stakeholders rights to benefit from conservation;

- Stimulate locally-owned and operated nature tourism activities that bring economic revenue into the local community;
- Build nature-friendly visitor facilities, including Visitors' Centers, hiking trails, rest rooms and the like;
- Manage and segregate those visitors seeking a picnic experience from those seeking a quiet nature experience;
- Empower and give voice to the disadvantaged local stakeholders, in particular through their involvement in the Council;
- Apply best practices in forest restoration to bring back some of the glory of our past forests.

This new approach to PA management has now been tested at five pilot PAs since 2003, and it is working well. The pilots have made it clear that participation will be a central feature of management of all the country's PAs.

Are any New Protected Areas Being Added to the Existing System?

Yes, the Forest Department has now stepped up the pace of adding areas to the PA System. This is done in context of the Forest Policy of 1994, which states that "Attempts will be made to increase the amount of the Protected Area by 10 percent of the Reserved Forest land by the year 2015" (item 8), implying an additional 153,000 ha of such Areas. More recently, the Nishorgo Vision 2010 calls for an increase in the Protected Area system to 3% of surface area. To this end, the Fashiakhali Wildlife Sanctuary and Khadeem nagar National Park have both been added recently, and more sites are in preparation stage.