Local Bird and Mangrove Survey Report

October 26th, 1999
Undertaken by: Chea, Rattana, Virak, An, Vanntha and Melissa
Final Report prepared by: An and Melissa

Re: Discussion of this survey process, plus results

Introduction:
Part of IDRC’s requirements for project completion is the compilation of information in an ‘technical report’ format for each of the five Participatory Management of Mangrove Resources (PMMR) project components. Various team members are responsible for compiling relevant information and completing each report.

When completing the local resource use patterns technical report, it was realized that both local and scientific information of bird and/or mangrove species was missing. In fact, we realized that we’d gathered relatively little scientific information about the wildlife sanctuary in the last two years. Hence, two survey’s were designed: one focusing on mangrove species i.e. habitat, threats and uses; and, the other focusing on bird species i.e. habitat and threats.

Method:

The team worked individually with villagers to identify relevant species using picture books of different mangrove and bird species. One book, Plants in Mangroves, consisted of local Thai mangrove species and the other book, Birds of Cambodia, consisted of birds spotted throughout Cambodia. These two books were the most relevant books for the area.

Team members spent anywhere from 1 – 2.5 hours with individuals, families or groups to identify different species.

Time-line: October 14th – 25th

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 14</td>
<td>Planning / explanation of survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 15 - 19</td>
<td>Visit Peam Krasaop, Toul Kaki, Koh Kang, Koh Kapic, Koh Sralao</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 20 - 24</td>
<td>SWOTS analysis; type information into computer; compile information into two documents; check information</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 25 – 26</td>
<td>Final editing of data; type report</td>
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People Interviewed:
For our mangrove survey, we held one discussion group per village. Such groups varied in size from a handful of people to over twenty people depending upon the availability and interest of local people.

Former charcoal producers were especially interested and knowledgeable regarding mangrove species and their uses. Long-term residents complimented this information while adding more in-depth information regarding uses of the mangroves. Unfortunately, it was difficult to find some of the long-term residents that we were hoping to talk with. Further work can be done to enhance this information.

More groups of people were interviewed about bird species, perhaps 3 groups per village. This was done because there are more bird species in the area, and we had more bird books that we could use within our group discussions. In total, over 30 people were interviewed for the bird survey. More people could relate to bird species as many species one finds throughout Cambodia, not just in the mangrove environment.
Results: see attached pages

Analysis:

The following SWOTS analysis was undertaken by the PMMR team after we had completed our survey work, while we were inputting data into Excel. We choose to examine our fieldwork process while this was still fresh in our minds.

Local Bird and Mangrove Survey Analysis

October 23, 1999 – PMMR team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Opportunity</th>
<th>Threats</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used guideline books for birds/mangroves</td>
<td>People confused the bird species (birds looked similar, knew some from home provinces); people know the picture, not the Khmer name</td>
<td>Identify local bird and mangrove species</td>
<td>Identify local bird and mangrove species</td>
<td>Use info in PKWS to potentially publish a book; share this book with local villages and concerned institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good relationship with local people</td>
<td>Sometimes people were bored i.e. survey takes time, and then gave answers quickly</td>
<td>Support from local authority; can learn who knows a lot about birds and mangroves</td>
<td>A few people still uncomfortable to give names; some people are too busy or are not at home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guideline paper: easy to follow; survey well-explained</td>
<td>Sometimes people not so clear as to habitat or threats</td>
<td>A chance to do some environmental education; made us realize that charcoal producers also had a lot of local knowledge</td>
<td>Can work on a management plan for future conservation</td>
<td>Use this information for future research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good experience for field work</td>
<td></td>
<td>A good chance for ‘learning-by-doing’ from survey and computer work</td>
<td></td>
<td>Can work on a management plan for future conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People worked hard</td>
<td>Didn’t inform villagers that we were coming; some potential informants were busy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Our team now understands how to conduct a survey; when possible will talk to local authority to check on timing</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The SWOTS analysis indicates how positive this experience was for the team. Using a guidebook enabled villagers to easily participate, from young children to elders. People were positive about the process, and many willingly spent a number of hours with our team discussing what they knew of different birds and/or mangrove species.

Mangrove Survey

The mangrove survey results indicate that there is more information held in PKWS than previously thought. Obtaining the Khmer names for these species and the local uses is really important. This information serves as an excellent base, and can be further built upon. Spending time in the field with elders is an important next step.

Accessing local information about mangrove species has been a major challenge faced by this project. Simply asking people about traditional medicine and mangrove uses produced little answers in the past; using a picture book and a group interview format worked far better. We included charcoal producers in our survey work this time, which illustrated how aquatinted these people are with their environment, even though they are relative newcomers to the area. Also, people know that our project is researching about the environment, and are far more comfortable in working with our team. This process highlights just how difficult it is to access information, and that the team must be flexible in its approach and persistent in trying different formats to access information.
Bird Species

Certainly these results indicate the vast amount of local information that villagers hold. While information regarding bird habitat was often conflicting, this is because of the migratory nature of birds: they are seen in many locations, not just their preferred habitat.

Peoples’ enthusiasm with the bird survey dwindled towards the end. This can be seen in the number of people that identified bird species towards the end of the survey and the lack of detail given regarding the bird species. When people became restless, they often identified a bird without giving very accurate information. Considering that people were looking at over 200 bird species, it is understandable why peoples enthusiasm lessened. It would have been more realistic to divide the book, and have people look at different sections of the book for bird identification. This would have allowed more time to discuss bird species not seen in the guidebook; unfortunately, most people had little energy for this after spending a number of hours with our team. Again, this can be follow-up work that we do.

Computer inputting

Data entry was a challenge. Only two team members held limited experience with Excel. Therefore, data was lost a number of times and the entire process took far more time than necessary. On the other hand, there are now two well-trained team members on Excel!

Given time constraints, we decided that we would input the data in the computer in English. We decided this for two reasons: there was a lot of data to input and the team’s typing skills in Khmer are slow; and, we wanted to finish these reports before November. Unfortunately, this takes a certain persistence with translation, and perhaps some of the information was not translated properly or the meaning was lost with hasty translation. We went over the information a number of times to control this and believe that we captured the main intent of people’s ideas.

Local Expectations

Expectations were raised through this research process. As a team, we realized that there was a lot of research that we still need to do. It struck everyone that, as a team, we have the skills to conduct further research and analysis. We are all interested in doing more work on mangrove species, and also thinking about aquatic species in the mangroves.

Villagers, as always, were wondering what we would do with the information and why we were talking with them yet again. During our SWOTS analysis we wondered if a realistic output for the next phase of our project would be the compilation of local and scientific knowledge of mangrove and/or aquatic species?

We used our time with villagers as a chance to conduct some informal environmental education work which was well-received. The field work was useful for getting us to think more about environmental education, and what form this could take.

Conclusions:

Conducting this research was a useful process. We strengthened our planning, survey and analytical skills through this survey work. Adequate time was spent planning the survey so that all team members understood the objectives of carrying out the two surveys. The fieldwork itself was generally fun for both our team and villagers. This was a chance for us to learn from local people, and the photos enabled people to easily identify what they knew. After our fieldwork, we analyzed our fieldwork and thought about what we would do differently next time.

While it took time to transfer this information into the computer: first translating everything into English and then formatting/analyzing the information in Excel our persistence paid off as we figured out how to input, summarize and manage all of our data. This was an excellent chance for our team to ‘learn-by-doing’.