



Biodiversity values of Meinmahla Kyun Wildlife Sanctuary Ramsar Site and development of ecotourism for the communities

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FFI-Myanmar Programme

The 8th Asian Wetland Symposium

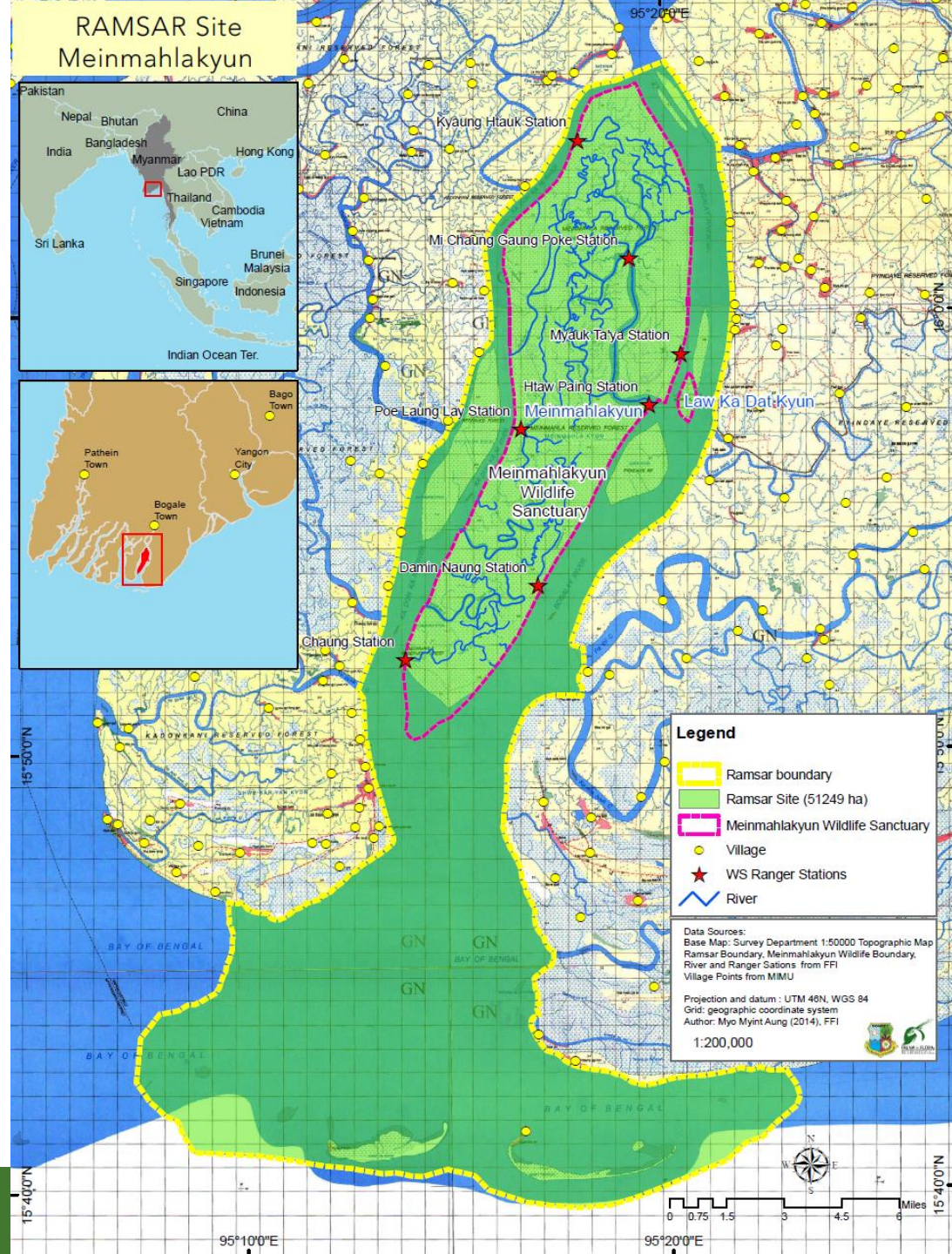
7-11 November 2017, Saga, Japan



Meinmahla Kyun Wildlife Sanctuary and Ramsar Site

Location: Bogalay Township,
Pyarpon District,
Ayeyarwady Region,
Myanmar

GPS location of center point:
15°52'45.21"N,
95°15'35.56"E.



Back ground

A scenic sunset over a body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright, golden glow and a long, shimmering reflection on the water's surface. In the foreground, the dark silhouette of a boat is visible on the left. To the right, there are silhouettes of trees and reeds along the shoreline. The sky is a soft, hazy orange.

Wildlife Sanctuary

Establish: 5th January 1994

Area: 13669.87 Ha

Ramsar Site

Establish: 2nd February 2017

Area: 51249 Ha

Management authority:

Forest Department,

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental
Conservation, Myanmar

Stronghold area of estuarine crocodile *Crocodylus porosus* in Myanmar



Biodiversity list

Bird: 188 species

(1 CR, 2 EN, 1 VU, 11 NT)

Mammal: 15 species

(1 EN, 4 VU, 1 NT)

Amphibians & Reptile: (1 VU) 38 species

Flora (including mangrove) 81 species

Mangrove: (1 CR & 1 EN) 29 species

Orchid: 6 species

Fish: 110 species

Crustacean: 27 species





Sandy shore habitat and birds



29/04/2016 10:25

Mud habitat and crocodile



Bird among the mangrove roots

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IUCN listed Bird species

Total bird recorded: 188 species: IUCN categories: 15 species

Common name	Scientific name	IUCN Category	Max No observed
Lesser Adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>	VU	1 (5)
Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>	NT	75 (110)
Great Thick-knee	<i>Esacus recurvirostris</i>	NT	1
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	NT	43 (120)
Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	NT	36
Asian Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus semipalmatus</i>	NT	2
Nordmann's Greenshank	<i>Tringa guttifer</i>	EN	46 (48)
Great Knot	<i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>	EN	260
Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	NT	5
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	NT	250
Spoon-billed Sandpiper	<i>Calidris pygmeus</i>	CR	1 (1-2)
Red-necked Stint	<i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	NT	250
Brown-winged Kingfisher	<i>Pelargopsis amauroptera</i>	NT	2 (4)
Mangrove Pitta	<i>Pitta megarhyncha</i>	NT	5 (12)
Red-breasted Parakeet	<i>Psittacula alexandrii</i>	NT	30+

IUCN listed Mangrove species

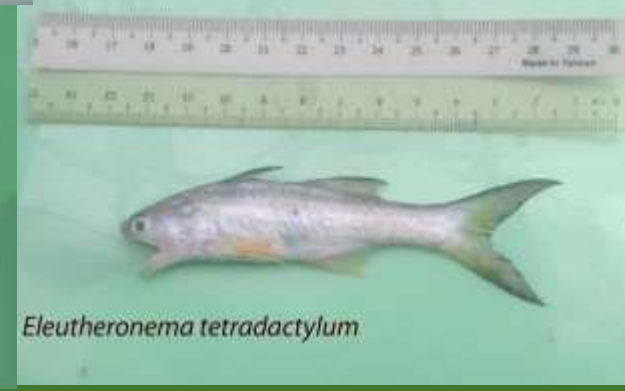
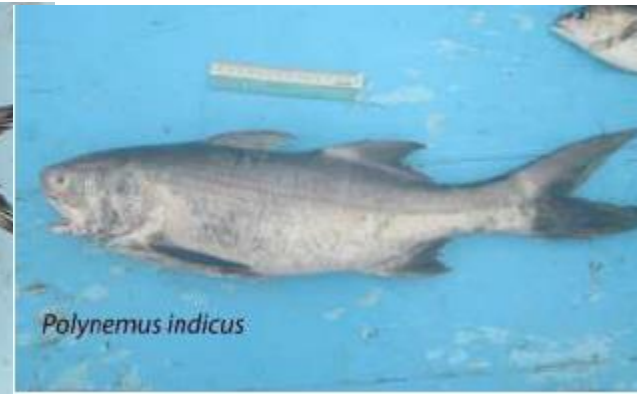
Total mangrove species in Myanmar: 44 species

Total mangrove species recorded in MMH Kyun: 29 species (66% of Myanmar)

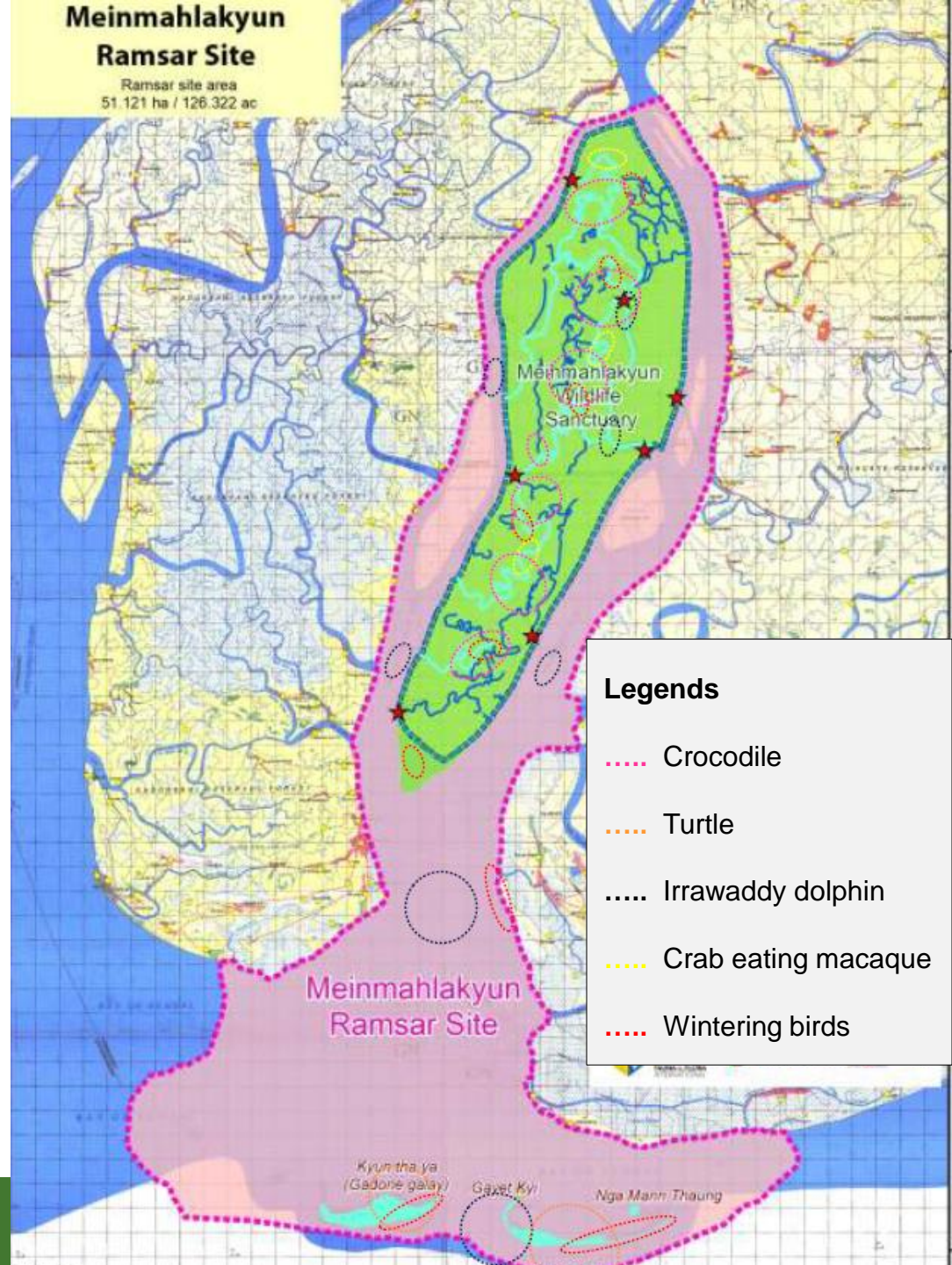
Family	Species	IUCN category	Max No observed
Lythraceae	<i>Sonneratia griffithii</i>	CR	<200
Malvaceae	<i>Heritiera fomes</i>	EN	common
Lythraceae	<i>Sonneratia</i> hybrids/sp.	EN	<5

Some Fish species

Total fish species recorded: 110 species



Biodiversity distribution map





Biodiversity

Biodiversity



Mangrove





Mangrove





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Livelihood

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Village life style



16/03/2016



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အခြေခံပညာမှလတန်း
ရွှေပြည်သာကျေးရွာ

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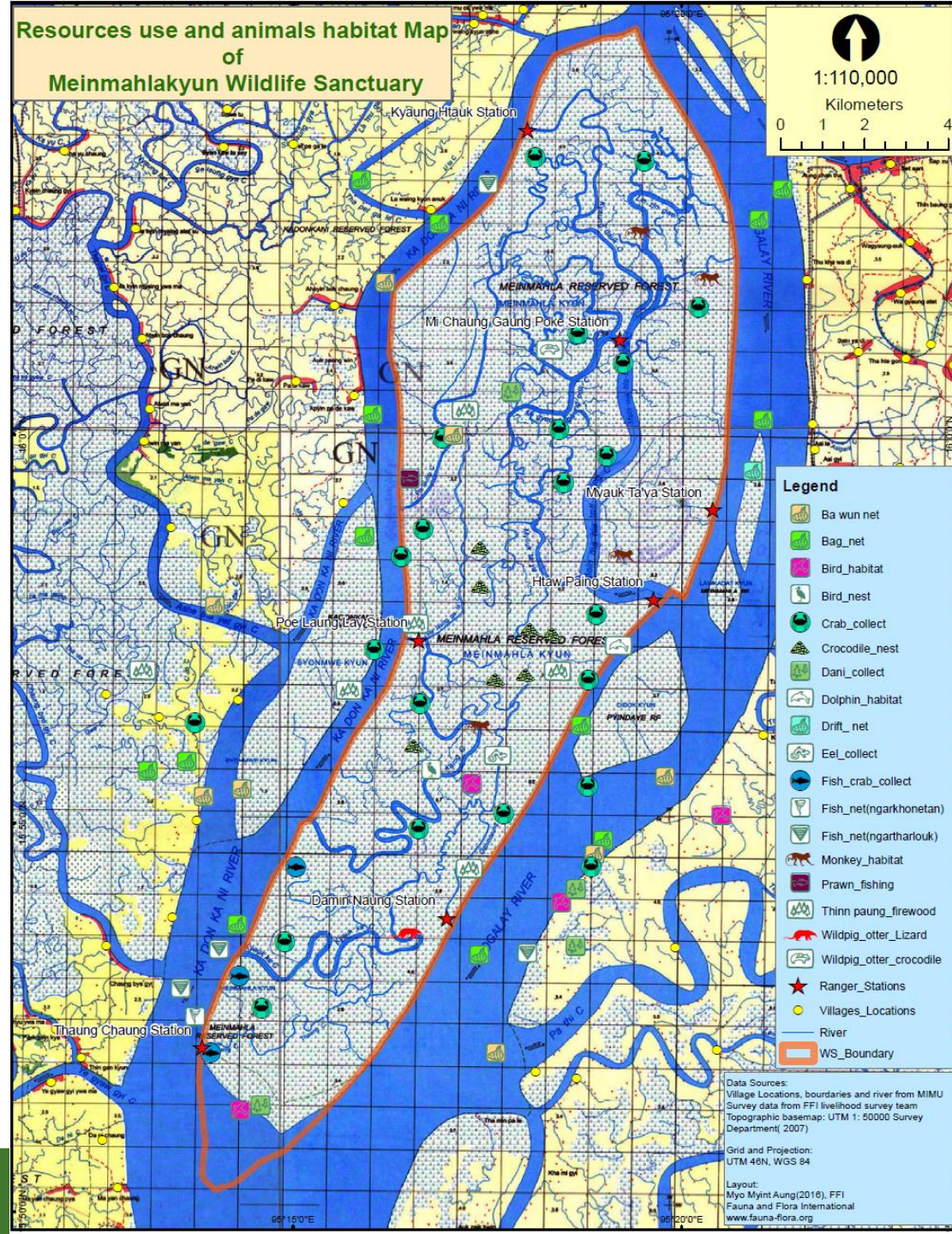


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Cultural values



Resource use map in the Meinmahla Kyun Wildlife Sanctuary



Main threats to the wildlife sanctuary and Ramsar Site

1. Impoverishment of local communities
2. Depend mainly on natural resources
3. Vulnerable environment
4. Unsustainable livelihood
5. Limited alternative livelihood opportunity
6. Migrants
7. Weak law enforcement
8. Limited collaboration experience



SOLUTION??????

**ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOOD:
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATORY
SUSTAINABLE ECOTOURISM**

Experience the Delta – Meinmahla Kyun Wildlife Sanctuary

Only a short trip from Yangon, Meinmahla Kyun Wildlife Sanctuary (MKWS) is great destination for adventurous travelers who want to experience wildlife in Myanmar and see life in the Ayeyarwaddy Delta Region. Key attractions are:

- MKWS is an uninhabited, creek-lined island surrounded by nature
- It's the best place in Myanmar to see wild saltwater crocodiles, night or day (year-round). Night-time boat trips viewing crocodiles by spotlight are particularly exciting.
- Mangrove, forest and coastal birds; eagles and kingfishers in particular (year-round)
- Possibility of seeing the rare Irrawaddy Dolphin (especially November – February)
- Large migratory waterbird population (late October – early March)
- Witnessing local livelihood activities in the Delta, particularly fishing and crabbing
- Local food including fresh crabs, fish and prawns



Delta Life



Crocodile spotting



Crocodiles hatch in September



Crab collecting and fresh local food

Sample Itinerary – Meinmahla Kyun Wildlife Sanctuary

Short trip (2 days / 2 nights)

Day 1: Overnight boat from Yangon, or early morning bus (2.5 hours from Dallah); Boat from Bogalay to Byone Mwe Island in the morning (2 hours); Visit to the mangrove nursery in the late morning; Afternoon trip to Htaw Paing Station through the creeks of Meinmahla Kyun while observing wildlife (crocodiles and birds, particularly); Night crocodile-spotting boat trip; Overnight at Htaw Paing station, or FREDa Guesthouse.

Day 2: Morning dolphin spotting on the Kadonkani or Bogalay rivers + visit to a local village. Boat back to Bogalay; Afternoon/evening boat or bus to Yangon.

Of course you might want to stay to explore the area for longer – two days is just the minimum

Getting There

To reach Meinmahla Kyun, you should first go to Bogalay and register at the Wildlife Sanctuary Headquarters. It is a good idea to let them know in advance that you are coming. Ask a Myanmar-speaker to call the Wildlife Sanctuary office in Bogalay for you: **Ph. (045) 45578.**

The Sanctuary staff can help you arrange a boat (approx. 70,000 kyat per day depending on fuel usage – holds six passengers comfortably) and accommodation at one of the island's ranger station (10,000 kyat per person – very basic). Alternatively, you can contact FREDa (see below) to book at their guesthouse, and possibly organise a boat. You can also find a boat and boat driver when you get to Bogalay.

Transport to Bogalay

Car: By private car the trip to Bogalay takes around 4 hours from downtown Yangon.

Bus: By bus from Hlaing Thar Yar Bus Station, it takes around 3.5 hours (departures approx. every two hours; 3,000 kyat). By minivan from Dallah, it takes just over 2.5 hours to Bogalay (regular departures from near where the Yangon – Dallah ferry docks; 4,000 kyat).

Boat: Shwe Pyi Tan express boat takes 6 hours (6am departure from Yangon; 12,000 kyat); IWT ferry takes 12 hours (6pm departure from Yangon; \$25 – cabin berth).

Once you are in Bogalay, you should go to the Meinmahla Kyun Wildlife Sanctuary Headquarters to register. This only takes an hour or so and does not cost anything. You can explore Bogalay while you wait. The office is in the Forest Department complex towards the northern end of the Strand Rd. If you have trouble finding it, you can show people the Burmese below:

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Accommodation

FREDa Guesthouse has four rooms total. FREDa is an NGO that has been working on mangrove restoration in and around Meinmahla Kyun. They are happy to accommodate tourists and with enough notice they might also be able to help with arranging boat transportation and some basic guiding.

They will use any profits they make from the guesthouse to support their existing environmental conservation work. The price is 15,000 kyat per person per night.

Three ranger stations on MKWS (Htaw Paing, Kyaung Htauk and Thauang Chaung) are concrete, permanent structures, with two single beds (bamboo matting, no mattress). Additional matting and mosquito nets for another two people can be provided. The toilet is an outside squat. Ask at the Sanctuary Headquarters if you want to stay in the ranger stations.



Contacts for FREDa:

Email: fredamyanmar@gmail.com

Ph: (01) 243 827

Web: www.fredamyanmar.com



Sea Turtle Islands

Around 10km south of Meinmahla Kyun are five islands where sea turtles nest (October – March). The biggest of these are **Gayetgyi and Gadongalay Islands**, which also have small villages. Local Department of Fisheries staff on both islands can show visitors the conservation program (nest relocation) and also natural nests.

It is possible to stay overnight on Gadongalay Island. Currently visitors are staying in a private home. However, this can only accommodate a few visitors and it is highly recommended that visitors should camp on the island rather than stay in this home. There are no tents on the island currently, but tour operators could take their own. FFI is currently attempting to set up a tourist camping program on Gadongalay Island. M will be provided as we progress with this. For now, please contact the MKWS Park Warden for more info.

The highlight of staying overnight on Gadongalay Island is joining the local Fisheries Department officer the local volunteers, on a night-time walk along the beach at high tide to search for sea turtles (you are w go on the search).

Getting There: Gadongalay Island is around 75 minutes from Kadonkani Village or Thaung Chaung Ranger Meinmahla Kyun (ie. the southern-most ranger station) and estimated two hours by boat from Ayar Village.

Kadonkani Village to Ayar Village River Cruise

The one-hour cruise along the stream connecting Kadonkani Village to Ayar Village provides a fascinating slice of Delta life from the water. The scenery is attractive and varied enough to remain interesting while villages are relatively frequent. Kadonkani and Ayar villages boast no major attractions, but both are pleasant and relatively lively port towns, which are not as overtly poor as many other villages in this region. Ayar Village's location on the mouth of the Ayeyarwaddy River is another potential drawcard for tourists.



Wildlife Around MKWS

By incorporating the sea turtle islands, Kadonkani Village and Ayar Village into a tour, either of the following regional itineraries could be sold as more varied "Delta Experience" tours.

Pure Wildlife (4 Days/3 Nights)

Day 1: Morning bus/car from Yangon, arriving Bogalay (4 hours) lunchtime; Large boat to Byone Hmwe Kyun (2 hours); Visit to mangrove nursery in the late afternoon; Evening crocodile night spotting; Overnight in FREDA guesthouse.

Day 2: Either paddle or motor through inland waterways looking for crocodiles or crocodile nests; Visit the Thaung Chaung mudflats for birdwatching; Overnight in FREDA guesthouse or Thaung Chaung Station.

Day 3: Visit to Gadongalay Island (for sea turtles) and overnight camp on the island.

Day 4: Morning return to Bogalay; Onwards to Yangon after lunch.

Wildlife and Delta Life – (4 Days/3 Nights)

Day 1: Yangon to Bogalay by boat or bus. Registration formalities completed at MKWS Headquarters while tourists have lunch and explore the Strand Rd. Onwards by boat (3 hours) or bus (1.5 hours) to Kadonkani or Thaung Chaung Station. Possible night-spotting. Overnight.

Day 2: Morning visit to Kadonkani. Boat trip along the river to Ayar Village (1 hour). Short stop in Ayar Village and lunch. Boat trip to Gadongalay Island (2 hours). Explanation of turtle conservation program. Overnight camping on Gadongalay Island.

Day 3: Morning boat to Thaung Chaung ranger station (1.5 hours). Meinmahla Kyun exploration during the day and night spotting, while moving northwards. Night-spotting after dark. Overnight at FREDA Guesthouse, Htaung Paing ranger station or Kyaung Htauk station.

Day 4: Possible second day of Meinmahla Kyun exploration, returning to Yangon, via Bogalay, in the evening. Alternatively, returning the next morning.

This itinerary provides a good mixture of wildlife, scenery and cultural interaction, while showing a clear and direct benefit to a local community (the camping on Gadongalay Island).

Broader Delta Itinerary

Although not directly investigated, tour operators might want to look into expanding this tour into an even broader Delta itinerary. Private boats carrying six passengers comfortably (as pictured on page 2) can be hired at a base rate of around 50,000 kyat plus fuel per day. It would be possible to continue from MKWS to Mawdin or Myaungmya by private boat and then continue by public ferry to Patheingyi, and then on to Ngwe Saung or Chaung Tha beach. Other variations are also possible within this region.

Costs

Item	Cost (kyat)	Notes
Travel to and from Bogalay	See page 2	Private car, bus and boat are possible
Entry fee	Free	Not yet in place
Large private boat (6-8 pax)	70,000	Per day (approx). Depends on fuel.
Food and water	10,000	Per person, per day
One night at FREDA guesthouse	15,000	Per person
One night in Ranger Station	10,000	Per person
Local boat and Ranger Guide hire	30,000	Per day, boat holds 3 people
Night spotting	15,000	Per boat for 2 hours, boat holds 3 people
Camping on Gadongalay Island	30,000-40,000	Recommended – split between turtle conservation program and community fund for local village

*Note that aside from the FREDA guesthouse, prices are estimates and open to negotiation. There is currently no set pricing structure for accommodation or boat hire.

Organize study trip to the communities



Bird watching training to the community





Web sites relevant to Meinmahla Kyun

<http://www.go-myanmar.com/bogale/>

http://wikitravel.org/en/Meinmahla_kyun

http://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g3576010-d6484234-Reviews-Meinmahla_Kyun_Wildlife_Sanctuary-Ayeyarwady_Region.html

Thank you

