

BirdLife recognised in British Honours list

Title Jonathan Eames, programme manager for BirdLife International in Indochina has been awarded an OBE by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in the British New Year's Honours List. The award has been given for services to biodiversity, conservation and civil society development in Vietnam. "This is a great recognition of the work of Jonathan and the entire Indochina Programme, acknowledging the impact that BirdLife is having in the region", said Dr Marco Lambertini, BirdLife's Chief Executive. Eames first went to Vietnam in 1988 and then 1990 on expeditions when access to the country was very limited for foreigners. In 1993, he set up BirdLife's Vietnam Programme which has not only grown within Vietnam but has expanded to a region wide programme including work in Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar. "In the early days a major conservation success was being able to play a leading role in the formulation of the biodiversity action plan. At that time we worked with the Ministry of Forestry with the focus on increasing the size of the protected areas system and eventually succeeded in getting first one then finally about 12 new protected areas gazetted. Despite resourcing and enforcement issues several of these sites have developed, thanks to the Vietnam government's commitment and with continued BirdLife support, into established protected areas. For example the size of Yok Don NP was doubled in part because of BirdLife lobbying", said Jonathan Eames. Eames and the staff of the Indochina programme's work and knowledge of the avifauna of the region has also led to the discovery of four new bird species (Black-crowned Barwing *Actinodura sodangorum*, Golden-winged Laughingthrush *Garrulax ngoclinhensis*, Chestnut-eared Laughingthrush *Garrulax konkakhinhensis* and Limestone Leaf Warbler *Phylloscopus calciatilis*) and 13 new sub-species, plus the re-discovery of several species about which almost nothing was previously known. BirdLife in Indochina is also the Regional Implementor for the [Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund](#) in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand which has provided civil society in the region with US \$ 8.5 million over the last two years. "The conservation challenges in the region are still huge. Protected areas and wildlife management laws need better enforcement in order to avoid encroachment and eradicate poaching of wildlife and trees", said Eames. OBEs are given for distinguished regional or county-wide roles in any field, through achievement or service to the community. The British honours system is one of the oldest in the world. It has evolved over 650 years as the country has found alternative means of recognising merit, gallantry and service. Honours lists are published twice a year at New Year and in mid-June on the date of The Queen's official birthday. Anyone can receive an award if they reach the required standard of merit or service, and honours lists contain a wide variety of people from different backgrounds.