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Ecosystems around the world are being put under increased ~~and~~ levels of pressure. While some ecosystems have been able to cope with this pressure, others have been less resilient and are now classified as "ecosystems at risk". This pressure on ecosystems stems from a large number of varying factors. These factors are both natural and man-made.

One ecosystem at risk is Intertidal Wetlands, and more specifically, the intertidal wetlands at Careel Bay, located in the Pittwater, North of Sydney. This is one of the last remaining healthy intertidal wetlands system in ~~the~~ the inner Sydney Region. It consists of saltmarsh and mangroves and is now managed and protected so as to try to ensure its survival. However this was not always the case. In the previous century, this intertidal wetland, along with many more in the Sydney region, was viewed as worthless, "smelly" and something of no consequence if lost. This misinformed view led to a variety of actions by the locals and council that ~~were~~ had extremely negative effects on the ecosystem.

These human created factors are the main reason Careel Bay is classified as an ecosystem at risk. The actions included use of the area as landfill. This had the effect of "reclaiming" some of the wetlands, which the council saw as positive. Another action was the use of the wetlands as bike tracks by the local kids. Due to the extremely fragile nature of the plants in the salt marsh such as *Sarcocornia*, this was detrimental to several areas of the marsh. Another ~~the~~ factor was the draining of excess effluent and stormwater into the bay via the intertidal wetlands. This provided excess silt and nutrients, once again upsetting the fragile equilibrium in place. One last human factor was the use ~~of~~ ^{by} domestic pets of the salt marsh and mangroves as hunting grounds and places to defecate.

All these factors combined to put the intertidal wetlands in a critical condition. Salt marsh, being the more fragile of the ecosystems present, took longer to recover and was therefore overtaken by mangroves in large parts. Just when it looked as if the wetlands might be on the way out, people began to realise

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value of these wetlands, specifically as breeding grounds for fish and other marine life. The council was the body that started management strategies in the 1990's. These strategies are still in place and include a boardwalk to minimise trampling, fencing to eliminate access by people and domestic animals and education to inform people and help them become aware of the issues. Also, a riparian buffer zone of plants and trees was planted around the edge of the old tip to minimise leeching of harmful chemicals and heavy metals.

These management strategies have helped to reduce the impact of most of the human factors, and although it is still an ecosystem at risk, the future is looking brighter for the Careel Bay Intertidal Wetlands.

Once again, most of the stress factors that cause the Cuc Phuong National Park to be an ecosystem at risk are human induced.

Unlike Careel Bay, there are currently minimal or poorly implemented management strategies in place to deal with, and minimise the impact of, these stress factors.

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Human presence, without formed paths has caused soil compaction and erosion, both of which negatively impact the ~~the~~ ecosystem by making it harder for plants to take root and easier for valuable nutrients to be washed away with the top soil. Rubbish is present and this is another example pointing to minimal management strategies being put in place. While the resettlement of inhabitants was one strategy attempting to reduce human impacts; it too has failed, with firewood and food still being collected from the National Park. Part of the reasons management strategies haven't been implemented could be that Vietnam is a poor country and therefore can't pour the same amount of money into conservation that Australia can.

~~These~~ ^[New paragraph.] ~~shows~~ These examples show the challenges of protecting ecosystems at risk throughout the world, and shows that most factors currently placing ecosystems at risk are human induced. While management strategies can be effective, sometimes it is difficult to do so. However if we are to continue to enjoy the benefits of these natural places, we must find some way of effectively reducing or eliminating these factors putting these ecosystems at risk.