

Bien Lac-Nui Ong Nature Reserve

Alternative site name(s)

Nui Ong, Tanh Linh

Province(s)

Binh Thuan

Status

Decreed

Management board established

Yes

Latitude

10°59' - 11°10'N

Longitude

107°33' - 107°53'E

Bio-unit

05b - South Annam



Conservation status

Bien Lac-Nui Ong was included on Decision No. 194/CT of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, dated 9 August 1986, which decreed the establishment of a 2,000 ha nature reserve under the name Tanh Linh (MARD 1997). On 6 October 1990, the former Ministry of Forestry sent Official Letter No. 1855/LN-KL to request the former Thuan Hai Provincial People's Committee to prepare an investment plan for a nature reserve with the name Bien Lac-Nui Ong (Anon. 1992). On 16 September 1991, the provincial people's committee established a management board for Bien Lac-Nui Ong (Binh Thuan Provincial FPD 2000). Following this, an investment plan was prepared by FIPI in 1992 (Anon. 1992). This investment plan was approved by Decision No. 14/TTg of the Prime Minister, dated 19 October 1992, and then by Decision No. 598/TT/UB-BT of the provincial people's committee, dated 30 November 1992 (Binh Thuan Provincial FPD 2000).

According to the investment plan, the total area of Bien Lac-Nui Ong Nature Reserve is 35,377 ha, comprising a strict protection area of 21,496 ha, a forest rehabilitation area of 5,614 ha, an administration and services area of 6,767 ha and a buffer zone of 1,500 ha (Anon. 1992). As buffer zones lie outside of Special-use Forests, the total area of the nature reserve

should be considered to be 33,877 ha. Bien Lac-Nui Ong is currently managed by the provincial FPD (Binh Thuan Provincial FPD 2000).

The strict protection area of Bien Lac-Nui Ong Nature Reserve is divided into two sub-areas: Bien Lac sub-area and Nui Ong sub-area. The 2010 list includes Bien Lac-Nui Ong as a 35,377 ha nature reserve (FPD 1998). However, because the Bien Lac sub-area has been extensively deforested during recent years, on the revised proposed list of Special-use Forests currently being prepared by FPD and FIPI, the site is included as a 21,371 ha nature reserve under the name Nui Ong (FPD and FIPI in prep.).

Topography and hydrology

Bien Lac-Nui Ong Nature Reserve is situated in the lowlands of south-central Vietnam. The Nui Ong sub-area is centred on Mount Ong, a 1,302 metre-high mountain in the east of the nature reserve. The Bien Lac sub-area is centred on Bien Lac lake in the west of the nature reserve.

Streams originating in the north of the nature reserve feed the La Nga river, into which Bien Lac lake also drains. The La Nga river is a tributary of the Dong Nai river. Streams originating in the south of the nature reserve feed the Phan and Cai rivers, which flow south, into the East Sea.

Biodiversity value

According to the investment plan (Anon. 1992), Bien Lac-Nui Ong Nature Reserve supports a range of vegetation types, including evergreen, semi-deciduous and deciduous forest. The most widespread forest type is lowland evergreen forest, although areas that have been heavily disturbed by logging support semi-deciduous forest dominated by species in the Dipterocarpaceae family. There is also a small area of primary lowland deciduous forest in the extreme south-east of the nature reserve. At higher altitudes, lower montane evergreen forest is found, with elfin forest at the highest elevations around the summit of Mount Ong. There are also areas of scrub, grassland and scrub with scattered trees at lower elevations.

A total of 332 species of vascular plants have been recorded at Bien Lac-Nui Ong Nature Reserve, including a number of species in the *Red Data Book of Vietnam*, such as *Azelia xylocarpa*, *Dalbergia bariensis* and *Pterocarpus macrocarpus*. With regard to the fauna of Bien Lac-Nui Ong, the investment plan lists the occurrence of 52 species of mammal, 96 species of bird, 21 species of reptile, seven species of amphibian and 22 species of fish. These include a number of globally threatened species, such as Siamese Fireback *Lophura diardi*, Black-shanked Douc Langur *Pygathrix nemaeus nigripes* and Buff-cheeked Gibbon *Hylobates gabriellae* (Anon. 1992). However, the current status of these species at the site requires clarification.

Conservation issues

A total of 15,239 people live within the boundary of Bien Lac-Nui Ong Nature Reserve, and a further 54,747 people live in the buffer zone. These people belong to the Kinh, K'ho, Cham and Ra-glai ethnic groups and practice a mixture of wet rice and shifting cultivation. Within the nature reserve, there are 1,229 ha of wet rice land, 212 ha of shifting cultivation and 310 ha of industrial crop land (Binh Thuan Province FPD 2000).

One of the main conservation issues at Bien Lac-Nui Ong Nature Reserve is the presence of a group of wild elephants. According to Binh Thuan Provincial FPD (2000), the population numbers six or seven

animals, while, according to Trinh Viet Cuong (1999), there are five animals currently living in Bien Lac-Nui Ong Nature Reserve and the adjacent Tanh Linh Forest Enterprise. In April 1999, these elephants moved to the area from Tan Phu Forest Enterprise, where they had been living previously (Trinh Viet Cuong 1999). Since 1995, this group of elephants has been responsible for the deaths of at least 15 people in the Tan Phu, Tanh Linh and Bien Lac-Nui Ong areas (J. Heffernan pers. comm.).

Other documented values

The area around Bien Lac lake has been zoned as an administration and services area. This area is particularly scenic, and the investment plan recommends developing it for tourism (Anon. 1992).

Related projects

With funding from the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Binh Thuan Provincial FPD are implementing a human-elephant conflict monitoring programme with technical assistance from the Fauna and Flora International-Indochina Programme. The objective of this programme is to provide early warnings of elephant movements as well as to identify patterns in human-elephant conflicts. It may also become the basis of an elephant relocation programme.

Literature sources

Anon. (1992) [Investment plan for Bien Lac-Nui Ong Nature Reserve]. Tuyen Hai: Tuyen Hai Forest Protection Department. In Vietnamese.

Binh Thuan Provincial FPD (2000) [FPD questionnaire]. Phan Thiet: Binh Thuan Provincial Forest Protection Department. In Vietnamese.

FFI Asian Elephant Conservation Programme (2000) Vietnam's elephant crisis: latest survey findings indicate Vietnamese elephants are on the brink of extinction. Press release by Fauna and Flora International Asian Elephant Conservation Programme, 3 April 2000.

FFI Asian Elephant Conservation Programme (2000) [Vietnam's elephant crisis: latest survey findings indicate Vietnamese elephants are on the brink

of extinction]. Press release by Fauna and Flora International Asian Elephant Conservation Programme, 3 April 2000. In Vietnamese.

Trinh Viet Cuong (1999) Status assessment of wild elephant populations in Tan Phu State Forest Enterprise, Dong Nai province and Tanh Linh State Forest Enterprise, Binh Thuan province. Hanoi: Fauna and Flora International-Indochina Programme.

Trinh Viet Cuong (in prep.) Population assesment of wild elephant population in Tan Phu State Forest Enterprise, Dong Nai province, and Tanh Linh State Forest Enterprise, Binh Thuan province. Draft chapter for Fauna and Flora International-Indochina Programme Asian Elephant Status Review.