

Ho Lak Cultural and Historical Site

Alternative site name(s)

Ho Lac

Province(s)

Dak Lak

Status

Decreed

Management board established

Yes

Latitude

12°21' - 12°28'N

Longitude

108°08' - 108°18'E

Bio-unit

Mb - Da Lat Plateau



Conservation status

Ho Lak is a natural freshwater lake in Lak district, Dak Lak province. Following reunification in 1975, the site was managed by Dak Lak Provincial Fisheries Department (Scott 1989). On 9 August 1986, Ho Lak was included on Decision No. 194/CT of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, which decreed the establishment a 10,000 ha cultural and historical site. The establishment of Ho Lak Cultural and Historical Site was approved by Dak Lak Provincial People's Committee in 1987, following Decision No. 261/QD-UB (MARD 1997).

An investment plan for the cultural and historical site was prepared by Dak Lak Provincial FPD, which gave the area of the cultural and historical site as 9,270 ha, comprising a strict protection area of 6,153 ha, a forest rehabilitation area of 1,826 ha and an administration and services area of 1,291 ha. In addition, the investment plan defined a buffer zone of 3,474 ha. The investment plan was approved by Dak Lak Provincial People's Committee on 10 September 1995, following Decision No. 1073/QD-UB, and a management board for the cultural and historical site was established (Dak Lak Provincial FPD 2000).

Ho Lak Cultural and Historical Site has 14 members of staff, based at the headquarters and four

guard stations. All activities of the management board, including conservation, forest rehabilitation and issuing forest protection contacts, are funded under the national 661 Programme, and, previously, the 327 Programme (Vice-director of Ho Lak Cultural and Historical Site, pers. comm.).

Ho Lak Cultural and Historical Site is included on the 2010 list (FPD 1998). However, the stated area of 12,744 ha includes the buffer zone of 3,474 ha. As buffer zones are not included within Special-use Forests, the figure for the total area should be amended to 9,270 ha.

Topography and hydrology

Ho Lak Cultural and Historical Site is centred on a natural freshwater lake, which covers 591 ha. The cultural and historical site also includes the surrounding mountains, which reach an elevation of 1,679 m, although average elevations are 500 to 600 m. The lake itself is situated an altitude of about 440 m.

The lake is fed by several small streams rising in the forested hills to the north, east and south. The lake drains to the west, into a large area of swamp along the Krong Ana river. The flat bed of the lake is covered with a layer of detritus 40 to 60 m deep (Scott 1989).

Biodiversity value

The lake supports an abundant growth of aquatic plants and is surrounded by reed-beds and swamp vegetation. The lake and the adjacent swamps are known to be important for waterfowl (Scott 1989). During a brief survey in 1998, Brickle *et al.* (1998) recorded 19 bird species including Lesser Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna javanica* and Cotton Pygmy-goose *Nettapus coromandelianus*. Siamese Crocodile *Crocodylus siamensis* formerly occurred in the area but has not been recorded in recent years (Scott 1989). It is very likely that this species is now extinct at the site.

Conservation issues

Dak Lak Provincial FPD (2000) consider the greatest threats to biodiversity at the site to be forest fire, uncontrolled in-migration, illegal exploitation of forest products and hunting. Clearance of forest on the steep slopes around the lake for agriculture has resulted in severe soil erosion and siltation of the lake (Scott 1989). Currently, significant areas of forest at Ho Lak Cultural and Historical Site have been cleared as a result of agricultural expansion, and remaining areas are degraded. In addition, the lake ecosystem is being disturbed due to fishing activities (Nguyen Cu pers. comm.).

Other documented values

Ho Lak is a famous tourism site in Dak Lak province, and was a holiday resort of Bao Dai, the last king of the Nguyen dynasty. The site is situated only 32 km from Buon Ma Thuot town, and is easily accessible. Visitors to Ho Lak Cultural and Historical Site are also able to visit a village of the M'ong ethnic minority people (Nguyen Cu pers. comm.).

The lake supports a small fishery, yielding 40 to 50 tonnes per year. The lake is also an important source of irrigation water for rice, coffee and other crops grown in the surrounding area (Scott 1989).

Related projects

No information.

Literature sources

Brickle, N. W., Nguyen Cu, Ha Quy Quynh, Nguyen Thai Tu Cuong and Hoang Van San (1998) [The status and distribution of Green Peafowl *Pavo muticus* in Dak Lak province, Vietnam](#). Hanoi: BirdLife International Vietnam Programme.

Dak Lak Provincial FPD (2000) [FPD questionnaire]. Buon Ma Thuot: Dak Lak Provincial Forest Protection Department. In Vietnamese.

Scott, D. A. (1989) A directory of Asian wetlands. Gland: IUCN.