

Nui Pia Oac Nature Reserve

Alternative site name(s)

Pia Oac, Pia Bioc

Province(s)

Cao Bang

Status

Decreed

Management board established

No

Latitude

22°32' - 22°40'N

Longitude

105°49' - 105°57'E

Bio-unit

06a - Tropical South China



Conservation status

Nui Pia Oac Nature Reserve is located in Tinh Tuc town and Quang Thanh, Thanh Cong, Phan Thanh, Mai Long, Ca Thanh, Vu Nong and Hung Dao communes, Nguyen Binh district, Cao Bang province (Tordoff *et al.* 2000). Nui Pia Oac was included on Decision 194/CT of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, dated 9 August 1986 (MARD 1997), which decreed the establishment of a 10,000 ha nature reserve for the protection of "subtropical mountain forests" (Cao Van Sung 1995). The site is not, however, included on the 2010 list (FPD 1998). An investment plan for Nui Pia Oac was prepared by Xuan Mai Forestry College in 1994. This investment plan was approved by Cao Bang Provincial People's Committee in the same year but has not yet been approved by MARD. The investment plan proposed establishing a 13,312 ha nature reserve, comprising a 5,244 ha strict protection area, a 8,053 ha forest rehabilitation area, and a 15 ha administration and services area (Anon. 1999).

Topography and hydrology

The nature reserve is centred on Mount Pia Oac (1,931 m) and characterised by steep topography. In

the west of the nature reserve, there are patches of limestone karst (Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

Biodiversity value

According to the investment plan (Anon. 1999), Nui Pia Oac Nature Reserve contains 11,839 ha of natural forest. However, 1998 land-use data provided by Cao Bang Provincial FDD and ground-truthed during a recent rapid field survey indicate that the nature reserve supports only 3,174 ha of natural forest, which is mainly distributed above 1,000 m. The forest has been subjected to high levels of disturbance in the past and is secondary in places. Natural regeneration does, however, appear to be taking place. Below 700 m, the vegetation is dominated by scrub and grassland. In the west of the nature reserve, there are areas of limestone karst without forest, and, at lower elevations in the south, there are *Pinus massoniana* plantations (Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

Mammal diversity at Nui Pia Oac has been severely reduced by hunting, and it would appear that the site supports few viable populations of species of global conservation importance. However, the nature reserve supports a number of bird species restricted to broadleaf evergreen forest above 800 m, and may support one of the few remaining areas of suitable habitat for such species in northern Vietnam (Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

Conservation issues

Below 1,000 m, most of the natural forest in the nature reserve has been cleared for cultivation. Above, 1,000 m, however, the natural forest is distributed on steep hillsides at high elevations, which are unsuitable for cultivation. Consequently, clearance for agriculture is not a major threat to biodiversity at Nui Pia Oac (Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

Mount Pia Oac and the surrounding area are rich in minerals, particularly zinc. Mining activities during the French colonial era resulted in clearance of large areas of forest and high levels of disturbance to remaining areas. Although these activities have largely ceased now, the forest is under continued pressure from local people, who extract bamboo, bamboo shoots, medicinal plants and firewood from the nature reserve. Uncontrolled exploitation of forest products threatens to impede the process of forest regeneration in the nature reserve. Nguyen Binh District FPD has, however, allocated almost all of the forest land in the nature reserve to individual households for protection (Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

Another threat to biodiversity at Nui Pia Oac Nature Reserve is hunting, as a result of which population sizes of large and medium-sized mammal species have reportedly declined dramatically (Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

The proposed boundary defined in the investment plan for Nui Pia Oac Nature Reserve (Anon. 1999) includes 10,073 ha of non-forest land, a town, a zinc mine and several thousand people. Consequently, both Wege *et al.* (1999) and Tordoff *et al.* (2000) recommended revising the boundary to exclude all areas of scrub, grassland, agricultural land and habitation. Furthermore, Tordoff *et al.* (2000) recommended that, contrary to the recommendation made by FPD (1998), Nui Pia Oac Nature Reserve should be retained within Vietnam's system of Special-use Forests.

Other documented values

Cao Bang Provincial People's Committee are considering developing the area around Mount Pia Oac as a site for tourism. The potential for the development of tourism in the area is high for several reasons: the

area is easily accessible from Cao Bang town by surfaced road; there are several ruined French villas that could be renovated; there is a colourful ethnic minority market in the area; and the summit of Mount Pia Oac is easily accessible on foot (Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

Related projects

No information.

Literature sources

Anon. (1999) [Investment plan for Pia Oac Nature Reserve, Cao Bang province]. Xuan Mai: Xuan Mai Forestry College. In Vietnamese.

Tordoff, A. W., Vu Van Dung, Le Van Cham, Tran Quang Ngoc and Dang Thang Long (2000) [A rapid field survey of five sites in Bac Kan, Cao Bang and Quang Ninh provinces: a review of the Northern Indochina Subtropical Forests Ecoregion](#). Hanoi: BirdLife International Vietnam Programme and the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute. In English and Vietnamese.

Tran Hong Viet and Le Van Chien (1999) [Contribution to the establishment of Pia Oac Nature Reserve, Cao Bang province]. Unpublished report to Hanoi National University. In Vietnamese.

Tran Hong Viet and Le Van Chien (2000) A hand to help protect animals in the Pia Oac Natural Reserve area, Cao Bang province. Tap Chi Sinh Hoc [Journal of Biology]: 22(15)CD: 164-172. In Vietnamese.