

Song Thanh Proposed Nature Reserve

Alternative site name(s)

Song Thanh-Dak Pring

Province(s)

Quang Nam

Status

Proposed

Management board established

Yes

Latitude

15°13' - 15°41'N

Longitude

107°21' - 107°50'E

Bio-unit

05b - South Annam



Conservation status

Song Thanh is not listed on any government decree regarding the Special-use Forests system (MARD 1997). The original proposal to establish a nature reserve at the site was made following a biological and socio-economic survey of western Quang Nam province by WWF Indochina Programme, FIPI, the FPD of MARD, and Quang Nam Provincial FPD (Wikramanayake *et al.* 1997). Subsequently, the site was included on the 2010 list, under the name Song Thanh-Dakpring, as a 93,000 ha nature reserve (FPD 1998).

In 1999, an investment plan for Song Thanh was prepared by FIPI. This proposed establishing a nature reserve in Nam Giang and Phuoc Son districts. The total area of the proposed nature reserve was given as 93,249 ha, comprising a strict protection area of 75,737 ha, a forest rehabilitation area of 17,512 ha, and an administration and services area of 50 ha. In addition, a buffer zone of 108,398 ha was defined (Anon. 1999).

In June 1999, a management board for Song Thanh proposed nature reserve with 16 members of staff was established by Quang Nam Provincial FPD (Thai Truyen, Acting Director of Quang Nam Provincial FPD pers. comm.). In November 2000, the investment plan was approved by Quang Nam Provincial People's

Committee (Le Nho Nam 2001). However, the investment plan has not yet been approved by MARD, and, as a result, the management board does not have any funding for scientific research and wildlife protection activities (Thai Truyen, Acting Director of Quang Nam Provincial FPD pers. comm.).

Topography and hydrology

The topography of Song Thanh proposed nature reserve is mountainous, with numerous peaks over 1,000 m. The highest points are in the south of the proposed nature reserve, which rises in elevation towards the Kon Tum plateau. The west of the proposed nature reserve is drained by the Dak Pring and Tam Paete streams, tributaries of the Boung river, which flows from west to east to the north of the proposed nature reserve. The south and east of the proposed nature reserve is drained by the Giang river, a tributary of the Cai river, which flows in a northerly direction to the east of the proposed nature reserve. The Boung and Cai rivers come together to form the Vu Gia river, one of the major rivers in Quang Nam province.

Biodiversity value

The vegetation of the proposed nature reserve is dominated by evergreen forest: forest land covers

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88,879 ha or 95% of the nature reserve. The investment plan lists a total of 831 vascular plant species as occurring at Song Thanh, of which 23 are endemic to Vietnam and 49 are listed in either the *Red Data Book of Vietnam* or the 1997 IUCN *Red List of Threatened Plants* (Anon. 1999). One species recorded, *Parashorea buchmanii*, was a new record for Vietnam, and three species in the genera *Dinorchloa*, *Melocalamus* and *Cephalostachyum* may be new to science (Le Nho Nam 2001).

The investment plan lists 53 species of mammal, 183 species of bird, 44 species of reptile and 21 species of amphibian as occurring at Song Thanh proposed nature reserve (Anon. 1999). However, it seems that these figures may include some species expected to occur at the site based upon their known distributions, as opposed to having been recorded in the field. Therefore, these data must be treated with caution. Mammal taxa of particular conservation concern that are reported to occur at Song Thanh include four Indochinese endemics: Red-shanked Douc Langur *Pygathrix nemaeus nemaeus*, Grey-shanked Douc Langur *P. n. cinereus*, Giant Muntjac *Megamuntiacus vuquangensis* and Truong Son Muntjac *Muntiacus truongsongensis* (Anon. 1999). The latter species was only described in 1998, from specimens collected in Hien district, Quang Nam province, 40 km to the north of Song Thanh proposed nature reserve (Pham Mong Giao *et al.* 1998).

Song Thanh proposed nature reserve is contiguous with Ngoc Linh (Kon Tum) Nature Reserve to the south, and the Laotian border to the west. It is, therefore, part of one of the largest areas of contiguous conservation coverage in Vietnam (Le Nho Nam 2001). From a regional conservation perspective, Song Thanh is an important link in a chain of natural habitat between the Kon Tum plateau and the northern Annamite mountains.

Conservation issues

Although the population density in the buffer zone of Song Thanh proposed nature reserve is only 12 persons per square kilometre, it is one of the poorest areas in Quang Nam province. Local people, who are mainly members of the Co Tu, Gie-trieng and Mnong ethnic minorities, rely heavily on forest land and

resources for their livelihoods. Therefore, shifting cultivation, fuelwood collection, illegal logging and wildlife trapping are major threats to biodiversity (Le Nho Nam 2001).

Raising awareness of the importance of biodiversity conservation is a priority, not only for the local people but also for the forest protection staff, who have little knowledge or experience of conservation, having mostly graduated in silviculture. Additional obstacles to the effective functioning of the forest protection staff are poor living and working conditions, under-developed infrastructure, and lack of communications, office and technical equipment (Le Nho Nam 2001).

Other documented values

Song Thanh proposed nature reserve plays an important role in watershed protection for the Vu Gia rivers, one of the major rivers in Quang Nam province, which originates in the area. In addition, there exists the potential to develop Song Thanh as a site for scientific study or ecotourism (Le Nho Nam 2001).

Related projects

The WWF Indochina Programme are currently implementing a project entitled *Ecoregion Based Conservation in the Lower Mekong Subregion*. This project has identified the Central Annamite Mountain Range, which includes Song Thanh proposed nature reserve, as a priority landscape for biodiversity conservation. It is not yet known whether or not this project will implement any activities at Song Thanh in the future.

Literature sources

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