

# Sop Cop Nature Reserve

## Alternative site name(s)

Sop Cop-Song Ma

## Province(s)

Son La

## Status

Decreed

## Management board established

Yes

## Latitude

20°57' - 21°07'N

## Longitude

103°29' - 103°42'E

## Bio-unit

10b - Northern Indochina



## Conservation status

Sop Cop was included on Decision No. 194/CT of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, dated 9 August 1986, which proposed establishing a 5,000 ha nature reserve (MARD 1997). In 1993, an investment plan was prepared by Son La Provincial FPD. Subsequently, this investment plan was approved by the provincial people's committee, although it has yet to be approved by MARD. Also in 1993, a management board was established by the provincial people's committee (Son La Provincial FPD 2000). Sop Cop is not included on the 2010 list (FPD 1998).

According to Son La Provincial FPD (2000), the total area of Sop Cop Nature Reserve is 27,886 ha, comprising a strict protection area of 12,784 ha and a forest rehabilitation area of 15,102 ha. The nature reserve is under the management of Son La Provincial DARD (Son La Provincial FPD 2000).

## Topography and hydrology

Sop Cop Nature Reserve is located in Song Ma district in the mountainous north-west of Vietnam. The topography of the nature reserve is steep and mountainous, and elevations range from c.450 to 1,940 m. The nature reserve is drained by tributaries of the Ma river.

## Biodiversity value

Remote sensing data indicate that the natural vegetation at Sop Cop Nature Reserve has been extensively cleared and replaced by scrub. However, it appears that areas of evergreen forest still remain at high elevations.

The fauna of Sop Cop Nature Reserve was previously very rich, and the site supported a high diversity and abundance of large mammal species, including, in the 1950s, a species of rhinoceros. However, faunal diversity at the site has decreased in recent years as a result of poor management (Cao Van Sung and Nguyen Xuan Dang 1995). For instance, while, in 1975, the site was reported to support about 77 Asian Elephants *Elephas maximus*, this figure had declined to 17 by 1986 and only three by 1997. A similar decline has been reported for Gaur *Bos gaurus* at the site (Duckworth and Hedges 1998).

## Conservation issues

The main threats to biodiversity at Sop Cop Nature Reserve are habitat loss, hunting and timber extraction. Hunting is a particular threat to animal populations. For example, during the first six months of 1992, it was estimated that about 1,000 kg of wild animals (mainly turtles and porcupines) were hunted by

residents of Dom Cang village, which lies just outside of the nature reserve (Cao Van Sung and Nguyen Xuan Dang 1995).

### Other documented values

Forest at Sop Cop Nature Reserve protects the watershed of streams that provide local communities with water for irrigation and domestic use.

### Related projects

No information.

### Literature sources

Anon. (undated) [List of animal species recorded at Sop Cop Nature Reserve]. Unpublished list of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians. In Vietnamese.

Cao Van Sung and Nguyen Xuan Dang (1995) The wildlife fauna in Sop Cop Nature Reserve (Son La province) and measures for conservation and restoration. Pp 479-485 in: Dang Huy Huynh, Nguyen Tien Ban, Vu Quang Con, Nguyen Thi Le, Pham Van Luc, Tran Dinh Ly, La Dinh Moi and Cao Van Sung eds. [Results of research by IEBR] Hanoi: Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources. In Vietnamese.

Duckworth, J. W. and Hedges, S. (1998) Tracking tigers: a review of the status of Tiger, Asian Elephant, Gaur and Banteng in Vietnam, Lao, Cambodia and Yunnan province (China) with recommendations for future conservation action. Hanoi: WWF Indochina Programme.

Son La Provincial FPD (2000) [FPD questionnaire]. Son La: Son La Provincial Forest Protection Department. In Vietnamese.