

South-west Lam Dong Proposed Nature Reserve

Alternative site name(s)

None

Province(s)

Lam Dong

Status

Proposed

Management board established

No

Latitude

11°36' - 11°49'N

Longitude

107°38' - 107°49'E

Bio-unit

05b - South Annam



Conservation status

In 1999, following their analysis of the Special-use Forests system, BirdLife and FIPI proposed establishing a 27,700 ha nature reserve in south-western Lam Dong province, in order to increase the proportion of natural forest in the Da Lat Montane Forests Ecoregion with protected area status (Wege *et al.* 1999). Because this recommendation was based upon an analysis of remote-sensing data, the precise location and boundary of the proposed nature reserve were never defined, and BirdLife and FIPI recommended that a detailed field survey should be conducted in order to assess the feasibility of establishing a protected area at the site (Wege *et al.* 1999). Consequently, in March 2000, the two organisations conducted a rapid field survey of the area (Tordoff and Tran Quang Ngoc 2000). The area identified as being the most suitable is located in Bao Lam district and is currently under the management of two forest enterprises: Loc Bac in the west and Bao Loc in the east. However, because of a number of conflicting pressures on the site, it was decided that a feasibility study would not be prepared. There are currently no other plans to establish a nature reserve at South-west Lam Dong.

Topography and hydrology

South-west Lam Dong proposed nature reserve is situated in the western part of the Di Linh plateau, in the Central Highlands. The topography of the site is characterised by rolling hills at elevations between 600 and 700 m. To the north, the site borders Dak Lak province. The provincial border is formed by the Dong Nai river, which passes through a steep-sided gorge. Streams and rivers originating at the site flow into this river.

Biodiversity value

The vegetation of Loc Bac and Bao Loc Forest Enterprises is dominated by pure bamboo, a secondary vegetation type following logging. However, a significant area of evergreen forest is distributed along the southern bank of the Dong Nai river and along the boundary between the two forest enterprises. On the northern side of the Dong Nai River, in Dak Lak province, there is also a large area of natural forest. Therefore, the area supports a large stretch of intact riverine forest, a natural habitat type that has declined significantly in extent in Vietnam and is poorly represented within the national protected areas system (Tordoff and Tran Quang Ngoc 2000).

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During the BirdLife/FIPI survey, the occurrence of Green Peafowl *Pavo muticus*, Sambar *Cervus unicolor*, mouse-deer *Tragulus* sp. and bear *Ursus* sp. in the area was reported. In addition, a specimen of Black-shanked Douc Langur *Pygathrix nemaeus nigripes*, which was hunted in Loc Bac Forest Enterprise in 1997, was seen at the headquarters of the district FPD (Tordoff and Tran Quang Ngoc 2000).

South-west Lam Dong proposed nature reserve has high conservation importance because it forms part of the corridor of natural forest that links the lowland habitats of Cat Tien National Park with the montane habitats of the Da Lat plateau. It is vital to preserve forest cover along the length of this corridor, in order to conserve the entire ecosystem and to maintain sufficient habitat to support viable populations of large mammal species (Tordoff and Tran Quang Ngoc 2000).

Conservation issues

Most of the forest at the site has been severely degraded by past commercial logging activities, and large areas have been converted into stands of bamboo containing few or no trees. Loc Bac and Bao Loc Forest Enterprises continue to extract both timber and bamboo from the area: Bao Loc Forest Enterprise planned to extract 4,115 m³ of timber during 2000, while Loc Bac Forest Enterprise planned to extract 2,751 m³ during the same period. At the present time, most extraction takes place in the south of the forest enterprises; forest areas along the Dong Nai River have already been exploited and are now designated as watershed protection forest (Tordoff and Tran Quang Ngoc 2000).

Most of the inhabitants of the area belong to the Chu Ru ethnic minority. However, some Kinh migrants have settled in Loc Bac Forest Enterprise and are cultivating tea and coffee. The topography and soils of the area are very suitable for tea and coffee cultivation. In 2000, the road between the centre of Bao Lam district and the centre of Loc Bac Forest Enterprise was upgraded. This may lead to an increase in migration into the area, with associated problems of forest clearance for agriculture and over-exploitation of forest products (Tordoff and Tran Quang Ngoc 2000).

The riverine forest habitats along the Dong Nai River are threatened by the Dong Nai 3 and Dong Nai 4 combined hydropower project. This project, which is funded by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), involves constructing two hydropower dams on the Dong Nai River in north-eastern Bao Lam district. If this project goes ahead, these dams can be expected to have significant negative environmental impacts on the area, including: inundation of an 18 km-stretch of riverine forest; increased access to forest areas; displacement of people, leading to increased population density elsewhere in the district; influx of construction workers; and disruption of the downstream ecosystem (Tordoff and Tran Quang Ngoc 2000).

Other documented values

Forest in the area has an important function in protecting the watershed of the Dong Nai river, which passes through a steep-sided gorge along the north of the area. Were forest along this stretch of the river to be cleared, soil erosion would likely be severe.

Related projects

The western end of Loc Bac Forest Enterprise is situated within the buffer zone of the Cat Loc sector of Cat Tien National Park, where, with funding from the governments of the Netherlands and Vietnam, WWF are currently implementing the *Cat Tien National Park Conservation Project*. There exist potential linkages between this project and any future activities to establish a protected area at South-west Lam Dong.

Literature sources

JICA/MARD (1996) The master plan study on Dong Nai river and surrounding basins water resources development.. Tokyo: Nippon Koei Co. Ltd.

Tordoff, A. W. and Tran Quang Ngoc (2000) [Rapid field survey of south-east Gia Lai province and south-west Lam Dong province, Vietnam](#). Unpublished report to BirdLife International Vietnam Programme and the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute.