

# Tam Dao National Park

## Alternative site name(s)

None

## Province(s)

Vinh Phuc, Thai Nguyen and Tuyen Quang

## Status

Decreed

## Management board established

Yes

## Latitude

21°21' - 21°42'N

## Longitude

105°23' - 105°44'E

## Bio-unit

06a - Tropical South China



## Conservation status

Tam Dao was included on Decision No. 41/TTg of the Prime Minister, dated 24 January 1977, which decreed the establishment of a 19,000 ha nature reserve (MARD 1997). In 1993, FIPI prepared an investment plan for Tam Dao, which proposed upgrading the nature reserve to national park status. The total area of the national park given in this investment plan was 36,883 ha, comprising a strict protection area of 17,295 ha, a forest rehabilitation area of 17,286 ha, and an administration and services area of 2,302 ha (Anon. 1993). On 6 March 1996, the investment plan was approved by Prime Ministerial Decision No. 136/TTg. Subsequently, on 15 May 1996, a national park management board was established by the former Ministry of Forestry (Tam Dao National Park Management Board 2000).

Tam Dao is included on the 2010 list as a 36,883 ha national park, including 23,333 ha of forest (FPD 1998).

## Topography and hydrology

Tam Dao National Park is located in Son Duong district, Tuyen Quang province, Dai Tu district, Thai Nguyen province, and Lap Thach, Tam Dao and Me Linh districts, Vinh Yen province. The national park

lies along a mountainous massif, which runs from north-west to south-east. This massif is isolated from high-elevation areas to the north and west by intervening areas of low elevation. There are several peaks over 1,300 m in elevation in the national park, the highest of which is Mount Tam Dao Bac at 1,592 m. The lowest point in the national park is c.100 m.

Tam Dao National Park lies in the catchment of two main rivers: the north-east face of the massif lies in the catchment of the Cong river, while the south-west face lies in the catchment of the Day river. Most of the streams and rivers in the national park are steep, and fast flowing. Tam Dao experiences a tropical monsoon climate. The mean annual rainfall is around 2,800 mm and concentrated in the rain season from April to October, when 90% of the total rainfall occurs. During the dry season, rainfall and humidity at higher elevations can be very low, making these areas susceptible to forest fire.

## Biodiversity value

According to the investment plan, Tam Dao supports 21,982 ha of natural forest and 1,351 ha of plantation forest. The natural forest is of two main types: lowland evergreen forest and lower montane evergreen forest. Lowland evergreen forest is distributed at elevations between 700 and 800 m. The diversity of tree species in this forest type is high, with

the Fabaceae, Dipterocarpaceae, Meliaceae, Burseraceae, Myrtaceae and Anacardiaceae families being well represented. This forest type is heavily degraded. Lower montane evergreen forest is distributed above 800 m. Members of the Dipterocarpaceae family are almost entirely absent from this forest type, which is dominated by species in the Fagaceae, Lauraceae, Magnoliaceae, Aceraceae, Theaceae, Hamamelidaceae, Sapotaceae and Ericaceae families. Also in this forest type, a number of conifer species are present, such as *Decussocarpus fleuryi*, *Amentotaxus argotaenia*, *Podocarpus imbricatus* and *Fokienia hodginsii*. In addition to the two main forest types, Tam Dao National Park supports 669 ha of elfin forest, dominated by species in the Ericaceae and Theaceae families (Anon. 1993).

During field surveys conducted by FIPI in preparation of the investment plan, 490 species of vascular plant, 58 species of mammal, 158 species of bird, 46 species of reptile and 19 species of amphibian were recorded. Many of these species are listed in the *Red Data Book of Vietnam*. One of the most notable species to occur at Tam Dao National Park is Vietnamese Salamander *Paramesotriton deloustali*, a globally threatened species, endemic to northern Vietnam (Anon. 1993).

Tam Dao National Park supports some of the highest levels of recorded insect diversity in Vietnam (Anon. 1991). Although this may partly reflect the high levels of survey effort at Tam Dao compared with other sites.

## Conservation issues

The major causes of forest loss and degradation at Tam Dao are logging and fire. The forest at Tam Dao National Park has been selectively logged for many years. Prior to 1985, this activity took place only at low levels, as local authorities punished illegal woodcutters. After 1991, however, the intensity of selective logging increased, in response to increased demand for timber. All logging activities were conducted on a small scale by local people, and no private or state forest enterprises were involved (Anon. 1991).

Forest fires have cleared large areas of forest at all elevations. Some forest fires may have been set deliberately to clear land for tea plantations. According

to Anon. (1991), the rate of forest loss as a result of fire increased significantly after 1991. The seasonal climate at Tam Dao makes the forest particularly susceptible to this threat.

In 1996, the national park management board was established. The management board currently has 78 members of staff, including 46 forest guards, based at the headquarters and 16 guard stations (Tam Dao National Park Management Board 2000). However, enforcement of forest management regulations is weak, and the levels of timber and fuelwood extraction, hunting, and other illegal activities are still rather high.

Hunting is a particular threat to the mammal populations of Tam Dao National Park. Wildlife is freely sold in the restaurants of Tam Dao town. Populations of certain insect species are threatened by over-collection by local people, who sell the insects to collectors and tourists. Medicinal plants and orchids are also over-exploited for sale to tourists. The Vietnamese Salamander population is threatened by habitat loss, collection for the pet trade (this species can be found on sale at Dong Xuan market in Hanoi) and pollution of the streams in which the species lives. Many of these threats are directly associated with the development of tourism in the national park.

## Other documented values

Tam Dao town, which lies within the boundaries of Tam Dao National Park, was originally developed as a hill station by the French colonialists in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In recent years, the town has been re-established as a site for tourism, and now receives thousands of tourists, both domestic and foreign, each year. If well planned, tourism could be an important source of revenue for the national park, and make a positive contribution to the conservation of its biodiversity. However, with the existence of a number of wildlife restaurants, the sale of insects, orchids and other forest products, and the increased demand for fuelwood, the development of tourism is currently having a number of negative environmental impacts.

In addition to the value of the site for tourism, the forest at Tam Dao has an important role in protecting the water resources of communities in the surrounding area.

## Related projects

GTZ are currently formulating an integrated conservation and development project, which will focus on buffer zone management. This will seek to clarify and strengthen management regulations in collaboration with local stakeholders. This work will form part of the formulation process for the national park management plan. Based on the management plan, the project will seek to introduce co-management agreements with local stakeholders, addressing key conservation issues, such as fuelwood extraction, hunting, insect collection and illegal mining. The project will also seek to support and develop alternative livelihood initiatives as well as education and awareness activities.

## Literature sources

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