

Tam Tao Proposed Nature Reserve

Alternative site name(s)

None

Province(s)

Bac Can

Status

Proposed

Management board established

No

Latitude

22°15' - 22°22'N

Longitude

105°32' - 105°38'E

Bio-unit

06a - Tropical South China



Conservation status

Tam Tao is not listed on any government decision or official set of proposals regarding the Special-use Forests network (MARD 1997). The establishment of a 9,000 ha nature reserve at Tam Tao has been proposed by Cho Don District People's Committee, by Official Letter No. 102/CV-UB, dated 20 April 1999. To date, an investment plan has not been prepared for the site, which is currently under the management of the provincial FPD (Bac Can Provincial FPD 2000).

Topography and hydrology

Tam Tao proposed nature reserve is located in Dong Lac commune, Cho Don district. The proposed nature reserve is centred on Mount Tam Tao, a 1,172 m metre-high mountain. Rivers and streams originating on the north-eastern face of this mountain drain north, and feed Ba Be lake. Rivers and streams originating on the south-western face drain south, and feed the Gam river in Tuyen Quang province. In the east of the proposed nature reserve, there are some areas of limestone karst, although the majority of the topography is of a non-karst nature.

Biodiversity value

Remote sensing data indicate that Tam Tao proposed nature reserve supports a significant area of natural forest. In the west of the proposed nature reserve, the forest appears to be relatively contiguous, while, in the east of the proposed nature reserve, the forest appears to be more fragmented, and interspersed with areas of agricultural land. There is a need, however, for a detailed botanical survey of the area before accurate information about the composition, condition and extent of the forest can be obtained.

In the official letter that proposed establishing a nature reserve at Tam Tao, Cho Don District People's Committee reported that the site supports a number of mammal species of conservation importance, the most significant of which is the globally critically endangered, endemic primate, Tonkin Snub-nosed Monkey *Pygathrix avunculus* (Bac Can Provincial FPD 2000). While the source of this data cannot be verified, this species was recorded close to Tam Tao proposed nature reserve by Dang Ngoc Can and Nguyen Truong Son (1999): during a field survey for Tonkin Snub-nosed Monkey in 1999, the authors received reports of a group of Tonkin Snub-nosed Monkey with 18 to 20 individuals in forest close to Xuan Lac village, Cho Don district. Further surveys

are required to confirm the status of this species at Tam Tao.

Conservation issues

The precise boundary of Tam Tao proposed nature reserve has not been defined. However, it would appear that the site may be either contiguous with the Ban Bung sector of Na Hang proposed nature reserve or, at least, linked by intervening forest areas. The same applies to the linkages between Tam Tao and Ba Be National Park. Indeed, the proposed nature reserve appears to overlap with the proposed extension to this national park (see Ba Be National Park site card). Consequently, there exists the possibility to protect or maintain habitat corridors between the three protected areas, in order to increase the viability of wildlife populations. This has particular significance in the case of Tonkin Snub-nosed Monkey, because it is possible that none of the sites where this species is known to occur will, on their own, be able to support a viable population in the long term.

Bac Can Provincial FPD (2000) consider the biggest threats to biodiversity at Tam Tao proposed nature reserve to be illegal exploitation of forest products and clearance of forest for shifting cultivation. Presumably, hunting is a threat to any Tonkin Snub-nosed Monkey population that may occur at the site.

Other documented values

The forest at Tam Tao proposed nature reserve has an important role in protecting the watersheds of the Ga river and Ba Be lake.

Related projects

A full-scale Global Environment Facility (GEF) project, entitled *Creating Protected Areas for Resource Conservation Using Landscape Ecology (PARC)*, is currently being implemented in two protected areas close to Tam Tao: Na Hang proposed nature reserve and Ba Be National Park. This project aims to employ a landscape ecology approach to conservation in the area. Tam Tao, therefore, has a potential role in this project as part of a habitat corridor between the two sites.

Literature sources

Bac Can Provincial FPD (2000) [FPD questionnaire]. Bac Can: Bac Can Provincial People's Committee. In Vietnamese.

Dang Ngoc Can and Nguyen Truong Son (1999) Field report of survey on Tonkin Snub-nosed Monkey *Rhinopithecus avunculus* in Bac Can, Thai Nguyen and Tuyen Quang provinces (October and November 1999). Unpublished report to the Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources and the Fauna and Flora International-Indochina Programme.