

Thang Hen Proposed Nature Reserve

Alternative site name(s)

Ho Thang Hen [Thang Hen lake]

Province(s)

Cao Bang

Status

Proposed

Management board established

No

Latitude

22°46'N

Longitude

106°19'E

Bio-unit

06a – Tropical South China



Conservation status

Thang Hen is located in Quoc Toan commune, Tra Linh district, Cao Bang province. There is no official proposal to establish a protected area at Thang Hen but the area has been suggested as a candidate site for nature reserve establishment on the basis of recent discoveries of new plant species at the site (Vu Van Dung and Nguyen Huy Thang 1999, Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

Topography and hydrology

Thang Hen is centred on a series of lakes, most of which are seasonal, within an area of limestone karst. The area is characterised by steep topography, and ranges in elevation from c.600 to 906 m (Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

Biodiversity value

Thang Hen supports around 1,000 ha of limestone forest. However, the remainder of the site has been denuded of natural vegetation and now supports a mix of agricultural land and scrub (Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

A number of plant species of conservation importance have been recorded at Thang Hen, including eight orchid species new to science

(Averyanov 1996, Averyanov 1997, Phan Ke Loc *et al.* 1999) and three globally threatened conifer species: *Pinus kwantungensis* var. *varifolia*, *Decussocarpus fleuryi* and *Pseudotsuga brevifolia* (Phan Ke Loc *et al.* 1999, Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

The forest at Thang Hen may support remnant populations of Black Gibbon *Hylobates concolor* and Chinese Forest Musk Deer *Moschus berezovskii*, although these populations are under high hunting pressure. Even if hunting pressure were removed, the site is too small to support viable populations of these species, and, consequently, is of little importance for their conservation (Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

Conservation issues

The importance of Thang Hen for conservation is compromised by high human pressure on the site. Almost all of the natural forest in Tra Linh district has already been cleared, and the remaining patches of forest are now the principal source of forest products for a large proportion of the district's inhabitants. Consequently, the small area of natural forest that remains at Thang Hen is being steadily eroded by unsustainable firewood collection and timber extraction. Due to a lack of alternative sources of forest products, it is unlikely that the forest at Thang Hen can be exploited in a sustainable manner, and the most probable scenario is that the remaining forest will be

cleared, or at least severely degraded, in the near future (Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

Hunting is reportedly causing declines in populations of large and medium-sized mammals at Thang Hen, and threatens to eradicate the remnant populations of Black Gibbon and Chinese Forest Musk Deer that may occur at the site. However, hunting pressure is not declining in response to decreasing animal populations but is, instead, shifting to birds and small mammals (Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

There is a forest guard station at Thang Hen but forest protection measures appear to be wholly ineffective. During a recent rapid field survey, hunting, timber extraction and firewood collection were frequently observed (Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

Other documented values

Thang Hen is an area of great scenic beauty and attracts small numbers of tourists. Cao Bang Provincial People's Committee plan to further develop tourism at the site: an unsurfaced road has already been built to the lakes, and a trail has been constructed. Presently, however, there is no tourism management at the site (Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

Related projects

No information.

Literature sources

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