

Hoang Lien Son-Lai Chau Proposed Nature Reserve

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Alternative site name(s)

None

Province(s)

Lai Chau

Area

19,739 ha

Coordinates

22⁰19'N, 103⁰43'E

Agro-ecological zone

North-western

Decreed by government

No

Management board established

No

Investment plan prepared

Yes

VCF eligibility criteria met

A, B

Social screening criteria met

None

Conservation needs assessment prepared

No

Operational management plan prepared

No

Tracking tool completed

No

Map available

Yes

Management history

Decision No. 194/CT of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, dated 9 August 1986, decreed the establishment of a 5,000 ha nature reserve called Nui Hoang Lien (see Hoang Lien National Park site card). According to this decision, however, the nature reserve was in the former Hoang Lien Son province (now Lao Cai and Yen Bai provinces) (MARD 1997). Consequently, the establishment of a nature reserve on the Lai Chau side of the Hoang Lien mountains has not been decreed by the government.

In October 2000, an investment plan prepared by North-western Sub-FIPI proposed establishing a nature reserve in Ho Thau, Binh Lu and Ban Bo communes, Phong Tho district, Lai Chau province. The total area of the nature reserve given in the investment plan is 19,739 ha, comprising a strict protection area of 13,921 ha, a forest rehabilitation area of 4,554 ha and an administration and services area of 1,264 ha (Anon. 2000). To date, however, this investment plan has not been approved, and a management board has not been established. In addition, the site is not included on a list of Special-use Forests to be established by the year 2010, prepared by the FPD of MARD (FPD 2003).

Topography and hydrology

Hoang Lien Son-Lai Chau proposed nature reserve is situated on the south-western flank of the Hoang

Lien mountains. The Hoang Lien mountains extend south from the Ailao Shan mountains in China, the south-easternmost extension of the Himalayan chain. The highest point in the proposed nature reserve is Mount Fansipan, which, at 3,143 m, is the highest mountain in Vietnam. Mount Fansipan is situated on the border between Lai Chau and Lao Cai provinces, and the north-eastern face of the mountain lies within Hoang Lien National Park. To the south-west of Mount Fansipan, elevations drop sharply to under 800 m at the foot of the mountain. Further north-west along the ridge of the Hoang Lien mountains, there are a number of other peaks above 2,800 m.

The south of the proposed nature reserve is in the catchment of the Nam Mu river, while the north is in the catchment of the Nam Na river. Both of these rivers are part of the Black River watershed.

Biodiversity values

There is little specific information available about the biodiversity value of Hoang Lien Son-Lai Chau proposed nature reserve. However, given that the proposed nature reserve is contiguous with and supports the same range of habitats as Hoang Lien National Park, it can be assumed that the biodiversity values of the two sites are similar (see Hoang Lien National Park site card). Given the lower human population density and more inaccessible nature of the forest at Hoang Lien Son-Lai Chau, it is possible that levels of human impact may be lower than at Hoang

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Lien National Park, and that certain mammal and bird species may occur at higher densities (A. Tordoff pers. obs.). However, detailed field surveys are required to accurately assess the biodiversity value of Hoang Lien Son-Lai Chau.

Hoang Lien Son-Lai Chau supports two main forest types: lower montane evergreen forest and upper montane evergreen forest. Both these forest types are dominated by species in the Fagaceae, Magnoliaceae and Lauraceae families, including *Lithocarpus* spp., *Castanopsis* spp., *Michelia* spp. and *Manglietia* spp. Ridges at high elevations support sub-alpine forest formations, characterised by trees with stunted growth forms, and the presence of *Rhododendron* spp. and several conifer species. At the highest elevations, there are stands of dwarf bamboo, cf. *Arundinaria* (A. Tordoff pers. obs.). The precise altitudinal ranges of each vegetation type are not currently known.

According to the investment plan, Hoang Lien Son-Lai Chau proposed nature reserve supports 10,871 ha of natural forest, equivalent to 55% of the proposed nature reserve. Most of the remaining area of the proposed nature reserve supports scrub, grassland and agricultural land (Anon. 2000).

Hoang Lien Son-Lai Chau proposed nature reserve is situated within the Fansipan and Northern Laos Secondary Area (Stattersfield *et al.* 1998), and probably supports populations of one or more of the four restricted-range bird species that occur in the secondary area. Together with the adjacent Hoang Lien National Park, the proposed nature reserve qualifies as an Important Bird Area (Tordoff 2002). In addition, it is probable that the proposed nature reserve supports a significant proportion of the plant species endemic to the Hoang Lien mountains.

Conservation issues

According to the investment plan, a total of 2,651 people in 14 villages live inside the nature reserve, while a further 4,040 people in 16 villages live in the buffer zone. Most of these people belong to the Kinh, Hmong, Thai, Giay and Dao ethnic groups. At 2.4% per year, the population growth rate in the proposed nature reserve and buffer zone is significantly higher than that of the country as a whole (Anon. 2000).

Threats to biodiversity at Hoang Lien Son-Lai Chau proposed nature reserve include hunting, and over-exploitation of timber and non-timber forest products. However, the biggest threat is probably fire. Fires are frequent during the dry season, and are usually associated with the clearance of vegetation from hill agricultural land. Large areas of the proposed nature reserve have been cleared of forest as a result of fire, even at elevations above 2,000 m (A. Tordoff pers. obs.).

Other documented values

Hoang Lien Son-Lai Chau proposed nature reserve has an important role in protecting the water resources of local communities and the watershed of the Black River.

Related projects

No information.

Conservation needs assessment

A conservation needs assessment has not been conducted for the site.

Operational management plan

An operational management plan has not been prepared for the site.

Eligibility against VCF criteria

The site is currently ineligible for VCF support because it is not under appropriate conservation management.

Criterion	Eligibility
A _I	NH1 - Hoang Lien Mountains
A _{II}	VN057 - Fan Si Pan
B _I	Proposed Special-use Forest
B _{II}	Nature reserve
B _{III}	Under provincial management
C _I	
C _{II}	

Hoang Lien Son-Lai Chau Proposed Nature Reserve

Social screening requirements

A social screening report has not been prepared for the site.

Criterion	Eligibility
A	
B	
C	
D	

Literature sources

Anon. (2000) [Investment plan for Hoang Lien Son Nature Reserve, Lai Chau province]. Hanoi: North-western Sub-FIPI. In Vietnamese.

Tordoff, A. W. ed. (2002) Directory of important bird areas in Vietnam: key sites for conservation. Hanoi: BirdLife International in Indochina and the Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources.