

Tam Dao National Park

Alternative site name(s)

None

Province(s)

Vinh Phuc, Thai Nguyen and Tuyen Quang

Area

36,883 ha

Coordinates

21°21' - 21°42'N, 105°23' - 105°44'E

Agro-ecological zone

North-eastern

Decreed by government

Yes

Management board established

Yes

Investment plan prepared

Yes

VCF eligibility criteria met

A, B, C

Social screening criteria met

None

Conservation needs assessment prepared

No

Operational management plan prepared

No

Tracking tool completed

No

Map available

Yes

Management history

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, the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute (FIPI) prepared an investment plan, which proposed upgrading the nature reserve to national park status. The total area of the national park given in the 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, a national park management board was established by the former Ministry of Forestry on 15 May 1996 (Tam Dao National Park Management Board *in litt.* 2000). The management board currently has 90 members of staff, based at 15 guard stations, and is under the management of MARD (Tam Dao National Park Management Board *in litt.* 2003).

Tam Dao is included on a list of Special-use Forests to be established by the year 2010, prepared by the FPD of MARD, as a 36,883 ha national park (FPD 2003); this list has not yet been approved by the government. According to Tam Dao National Park Management Board (*in litt.* 2003), however, the total area of the national park is only 34,995 ha.

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 massif, which runs from north-west to south-east, and is isolated from other high-elevation areas by intervening areas of low elevation. There are several peaks over 1,300 m 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 within the catchment of two major rivers: the north-east face of the massif lies within the catchment of the Cong river, while the south-west face lies within 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 of around 2,800 mm is concentrated in the rainy 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 values

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, and is heavily degraded. The diversity of tree species in this forest type is high, with the Fabaceae, Dipterocarpaceae, Meliaceae, Burseraceae, Myrtaceae and Anacardiaceae families being well represented. 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).

Tam Dao National Park has been the focus of some of the highest levels of herpetological survey effort in Vietnam, and a large number of reptile and amphibian species have been recorded there. A number of the amphibian species recorded at Tam Dao were assessed as globally threatened during the Global Amphibian Assessment, including *Theloderma corticale*, *T. gordonii* and Vietnamese Salamander *Paramesotriton deloustali* (IUCN-SSC and CI-CABS 2003).

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

Tam Dao National Park qualifies as an Important Bird Area because of its importance for the conservation of biome-restricted bird species. In particular, the site supports a number of biome-restricted species that are known from few other sites in Vietnam, such as Blue-naped Pitta *Pitta nipalensis*, Purple Cochoa *Cochoa purpurea*, Chestnut-headed Tesia *Tesia castaneocoronata*, Pale-footed Bush Warbler *Cettia pallidipes* and Greater Rufous-headed Parrotbill *Paradoxornis ruficeps* (Tordoff 2002).

Conservation issues

Around 150,000 people live in the buffer zone of Tam Dao National Park, placing high pressure on its natural resources. This problem is compounded by weak enforcement of forest management regulations. Consequently, levels of timber and fuelwood extraction, hunting, and other illegal activities are high relative to certain other national parks in Vietnam.

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 led to the loss of 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 due to fires increased significantly after 1991. The seasonal climate at Tam Dao makes the forest particularly susceptible to this threat.

Over-exploitation is a particular threat to wildlife 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; certain groups of insects are collected on a relatively large scale by organised groups. 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 (the 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 within the national park.

The future management arrangements for Tam Dao National Park are currently under review. Vinh Phuc, Thai Nguyen and Tuyen Quang provinces have proposed that management responsibility for the national park be transferred to them from MARD.

However, there are concerns that transferring the national park to the three provinces may lead to accelerated degradation of its natural resources, and facilitate further incompatible infrastructure development within its boundaries (Vietnam News 2003).

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 20th century. In recent years, the town has been re-established as a site for tourism, and now receives thousands of domestic and foreign tourists each year. If well managed, 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 significant 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

Between 2000 and 2003, with support from the UNDP/GEF Small Grant Scheme, the Farmers' Association of Vinh Phuc province implemented a project entitled *Contributing to Biodiversity Conservation of Tam Dao*. The activities of this project included awareness raising, and strengthening cooperation between local authorities and the national park management board.

GTZ and MARD are currently formulating an integrated conservation and development project at Tam Dao National Park. This project, which will be funded by BMZ, aims to contribute to the conservation of natural resources and improve living conditions of local people. The project will seek to clarify and strengthen management regulations in collaboration with local stakeholders, and introduce co-management agreements addressing key conservation issues, such as

fuelwood extraction, hunting, insect collection and illegal mining. The project will also support and develop alternative livelihood initiatives for buffer zone communities, and implement education and awareness activities.

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

Tam Dao meets eligibility criteria A, B and C. However, as a centrally managed Special-use Forest, it will only be eligible for VCF support if the Investment Plan and Operational Management Plan demonstrate a high proportion of government support directed towards conservation activities.

Criterion	Eligibility
A _I	NH3 - Tam Dao
A _{II}	VN032 - Tam Dao
B _I	Decision No. 136/TTg, dated 06/03/96
B _{II}	National Park
B _{III}	Under central management
C _I	Management board established
C _{II}	

Social screening requirements

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

Criterion	Eligibility
A	
B	
C	
D	

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