

## Tay Con Linh Proposed Nature Reserve

### Alternative site name(s)

Tay Con Linh I, Tay Con Linh II

### Province(s)

Ha Giang

### Area

40,344 ha

### Coordinates

22°39' - 22°50'N, 104°39' - 104°59'E

### Agro-ecological zone

North-eastern

### Decreed by government

No

### 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

Tay Con Linh is not included on any government decree relating to Special-use Forests (MARD 1997). However, two investment plans were published by FIPI in July 1994, which proposed establishing two contiguous nature reserves: Tay Con Linh I and Tay Con Linh II (Anon. 1994a,b). Tay Con Linh I covered 18,790 ha on the northern face of Tay Con Linh mountain, while Tay Con Linh II covered 21,554 ha on the southern face (Anon. 1994a,b). These investment plans were approved by Ha Giang Provincial People's Committee on 21 September 1994, and also by MARD (Ha Giang Provincial FPD *in litt.* 2000). Following the approval of the investment plans, management boards were established for each site on 24 November 1994, following Decision No. 646/QD-UB of Ha Giang Provincial People's Committee (Ha Giang Provincial FPD *in litt.* 2000).

In 2000, MARD assigned FIPI with the task of preparing an investment plan for a single nature reserve, combining Tay Con Linh I and Tay Con Linh II proposed nature reserves. The combined nature reserve is currently under the management of Ha Giang Provincial FPD (Phan Quoc Toan, Director of Tay Con Linh Nature Reserve *in litt.* 2003).

Tay Con Linh is included on a list of Special-use Forests to be established by the year 2010, prepared by the FPD of MARD, as a 40,344 ha nature reserve (FPD

2003); this list has not yet been approved by the government. According to Phan Quoc Toan, Director of Tay Con Linh Nature Reserve (*in litt.* 2003), however, the area of the site is 28,268 ha, while the area of the buffer zone has not yet been determined.

## Topography and hydrology

Tay Con Linh proposed nature reserve is located in Vi Xuyen district, Ha Giang province, immediately to the west of Ha Giang town. The north-western boundary of the proposed nature reserve follows the international border between Vietnam and China.

The proposed nature reserve is centred on Tay Con Linh, the highest mountain in Ha Giang province, and the highest point in Vietnam east of the Red River. The topography of the proposed nature reserve is steep and mountainous. Elevations range from 2,616 m at the summit of Tay Con Linh to under 100 m in the south-east of the proposed nature reserve. The geology of the proposed nature reserve is characterised by a mixture of substrates, including limestone and granite.

Tay Con Linh lies on the watershed between two catchments. Streams and rivers originating in the west of the proposed nature reserve flow west, into the Chay river, which feeds the Thac Ba reservoir. Streams and rivers originating in the east of the proposed nature reserve flow east, into the Lo river, which joins the Red River in Phu Tho province.

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## Biodiversity values

Tay Con Linh I proposed nature reserve supports 17,689 ha of forest, equivalent to 44% of the total area of the proposed nature reserve (Anon. 1994a,b). Most of the remaining area supports grassland and scrub, although there is also a significant area of agricultural land. The main forest types are lower montane evergreen forest and upper montane evergreen forest. The tree flora is dominated by members of the Fagaceae, Euphorbiaceae, Lauraceae and Moraceae families. According to the investment plans (Anon. 1994a,b), 236 species of vascular plants have been recorded at the proposed nature reserve. Notably, Tay Con Linh supports a high diversity of conifers, including *Podocarpus brevifolius*, *Decussocarpus wallichianus*, *Cupressus torulosa* and *Fokienia hodginsii* (Anon. 1994a,b).

According to the investment plans (Anon. 1994a,b), Tay Con Linh supports 46 species of mammal, 114 species of bird, 18 species of reptile and 11 species of amphibian. However, the source of this data is not clear, and these lists may include figures expected to occur on the basis of known distributions.

During April and May 2000, the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) and the Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources (IEBR) carried out a biodiversity survey of Mount Tay Con Linh. This survey focussed particularly on reptiles, amphibians, small mammals and birds. During the survey, a total of six reptile and 38 amphibian species were recorded. Most of the species had been previously recorded in Lao Cai or Cao Bang provinces. However, two of the amphibian species recorded were new records for Vietnam (R. Bain and C. Vogel *in litt.* 2000). In addition, 17 species of small mammal were recorded, including a new species of shrew to science: *Chodsigoa caovansunga* (Lunde *et al.* 2003).

During the AMNH/IEBR survey, a total of 105 species of bird were recorded at Tay Con Linh. These included the globally threatened Beautiful Nuthatch *Sitta formosa* and an undescribed taxon of Short-tailed Scimitar Babbler *Jabouilleia danjoui* (Vogel *et al.* 2003). Consequently, Tay Con Linh qualifies as an Important Bird Area (Tordoff 2002).

## Conservation issues

Ha Giang Provincial FPD (*in litt.* 2000) identify clearance of forest for agriculture, forest fire and timber extraction as the major threats to biodiversity at Tay Con Linh. Nearly 12,000 people, belonging to the Dao, Co Lao, Hmong, Hoa and Tay ethnic groups, live within the boundaries of the proposed nature reserve, and already a significant area of forest inside the proposed nature reserve has been cleared for wet rice, shifting cultivation and cash crops (Ha Giang Provincial FPD *in litt.* 2000, Phan Quoc Toan, Director of Tay Con Linh Nature Reserve *in litt.* 2003).

R. Bain and C. Vogel (*in litt.* 2000) consider exploitation of the forest by local people to be the most obvious threat to biodiversity in the area. Members of the Dao ethnic group cultivate land up to 1,200 m and utilise the forest above for hunting and harvesting of other forest products. Anecdotal information obtained via interviews with local inhabitants indicates that there have been severe declines in megafaunal populations and diversity in the last 30 years. Furthermore, birds seem to be under strong hunting pressure. Species that are particularly sensitive to hunting pressure, such as hornbills, raptors, parakeets and pheasants, were conspicuously absent or rare during the recent AMNH/IEBR survey (Vogel *et al.* 2003).

Tay Con Linh is one of three decreed and proposed protected areas that lie along or close to the Chinese border in western Ha Giang province. The other two protected areas are Phong Quang and Bat Dai Son (see relevant site cards). Together, these three areas protect some of the last significant areas of montane forest in northern Vietnam. Through a programme of reforestation, it may be possible, in the future, to establish habitat corridors between these sites, thus creating a contiguous area of conservation coverage.

## Other documented values

Tay Con Linh has an important role in watershed protection for the local population. Members of the Dao ethnic group utilise streams originating in the proposed nature reserve to irrigate their wet rice fields (R. Bain and C. Vogel *in litt.* 2000). Because of the

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site's proximity to Ha Giang town, it can be considered to have potential amenity and recreational values.

## 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

Tay Con Linh is eligible for VCF support because it meets criteria A, B and C.

Criterion	Eligibility
A <sub>I</sub>	NH2 - Northern Highlands Limestone
A <sub>II</sub>	VN054 - Tay Con Linh
B <sub>I</sub>	Proposed Special-use Forest
B <sub>II</sub>	Nature Reserve
B <sub>III</sub>	Under provincial management
C <sub>I</sub>	Management board established
C <sub>II</sub>	

## Social screening requirements

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

Criterion	Eligibility
A	
B	
C	
D	

## Literature sources

Anon. (1994a) [Investment plan for Tay Con Linh I Nature Reserve]. Hanoi: Forest Inventory and Planning Institute. In Vietnamese.

Anon. (1994b) [Investment plan for Tay Con Linh II Nature Reserve]. Hanoi: Forest Inventory and Planning Institute. In Vietnamese.

Lunde, D. P., Musser, G. G. and Nguyen Truong Son (2003) A survey of small mammals from Mt. Tay Con Linh II, Vietnam, with the description of a new species of *Chodsigoa* (Insectivora: Soricidae). Mammal Study 28: 31-46.

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.

Vogel, C. J., Sweet, P. R., Le Manh Hung and Hurley, M. M. (2003) Ornithological records from Ha Giang province, north-east Vietnam, during March-June 2000. Forktail 19: 21-30.