

Nui Chua National Park

Alternative site name(s)

Rung Kho Han Nui Chua, Rung Kho Ninh Hai, Rung Kho Phan Rang

Province(s)

Ninh Thuan

Area

29,865 ha

Coordinates

11°35' - 11°48'N, 109°03' - 109°14'E

Agro-ecological zone

South-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

The site was included on Decision No. 194/CT of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, dated 9 August 1986, which decreed the establishment of a 1,000 ha nature reserve in An Phuoc (now Ninh Phuoc) district, under the name Rung Kho Phan Rang (MARD 1997). However, the deciduous forest at this site was largely destroyed during the mid 1990s. Consequently, Ninh Thuan Provincial DARD selected a coastal area further north, centred on Nui Chua mountain, as a more suitable site for nature reserve establishment (Le Trong Trai pers. comm.).

In 1997 Ho Chi Minh City Forest Inventory and Planning Sub-Institute prepared an investment plan for the renamed Rung Kho Han Nui Chua Nature Reserve (Anon. 1997). This investment plan was approved by MARD on 12 January 1998, by Decision No. 243/BNN-PTLN, and by Ninh Thuan Provincial People's Committee on 1 April 1998, by Decision No. 659/QD-UBND. Also in April 1998, the provincial people's committee established a nature reserve management board with 30 members of staff, including 18 forest guards, based at the headquarters and four guard stations (Ninh Thuan Provincial FPD *in litt.* 2000).

The total area of the nature reserve given in the investment plan was 29,673 ha. However, when approving the investment plan, MARD decided to transfer an area of 5,320 ha into the buffer zone, thus reducing the total area of the nature reserve to 24,353 ha, comprising a strict protection area of 16,087 ha, a forest rehabilitation area of 8,261 ha, and an administration and services area of 5 ha. In addition, a buffer zone of 11,200 ha was defined (Anon. 1997).

On 9 July 2003, the Special-use Forest category of the site was revised from nature reserve to national park, following Decision No. 134/TTg of the Prime Minister. According to the Prime Minister's decision, the name of the national park is Nui Chua. Nui Chua is included on a list of Special-use Forests to be established by the year 2010, prepared by the FPD of MARD, as a 29,865 ha national park (FPD 2003); this list has not yet been approved by the government.

Topography and hydrology

Nui Chua National Park is situated in Khanh Hiep and Khanh Hai communes, Ninh Hai district, in the coastal zone of south-central Vietnam. The national park is situated on a wide, mountainous promontory, which projects into the East Sea between Cam Ranh and Phan Rang bays. The topography of the national park is mountainous, with elevations ranging from sea

level to 1,040 m at the summit of Nui Chua. The hydrological systems within the national park are comprised of short streams that drain steep slopes. Most of the streams cease to flow during the dry season, since the national park is situated in an area that receives the lowest rainfall in south-central Vietnam; the national park receives an average of only 650 mm of rain per year.

Biodiversity values

The original vegetation of Nui Chua National Park was a mixture of evergreen forest, semi-evergreen forest and deciduous forest. However, most of the natural forest at the site was destroyed at the beginning of the 1990s, as a result of forest over-exploitation. Currently, the only relatively undisturbed primary forest remaining is lower montane evergreen forest, distributed in the north of the national park, at elevations above 800 m. At lower elevations, there are extensive areas of degraded and secondary forest. The southern parts of the national park, at elevations between 150 and 800 m support scrub dominated by thorny trees. This habitat type is only found at sites with hot and dry climates, and is under-represented within Vietnam's protected areas network.

During 1994, the fauna of Nui Chua National Park was surveyed by Xuan Mai Forestry College. According to Pham Nat (1994), a number of mammal and bird species of global conservation concern were recorded during this survey, including Black-shanked Douc *Pygathrix nigripes*, Pygmy Loris *Nycticebus pygmaeus*, Asian Black Bear *Ursus thibetanus*, Sun Bear *U. malayanus*, Large-antlered Muntjac *Muntiacus vuquangensis* and Siamese Fireback *Lophura diardi*. However, given the high human population within the site, and the potentially high levels of hunting, the current status of these species at the site is uncertain.

Over recent years, Nui Chua has been the focus of a number of surveys by the WWF Indochina Programme. These surveys have revealed that, as well as being important for the conservation of terrestrial biodiversity, the national park is important for the conservation of marine biodiversity. For instance, several of the beaches within the national park are nesting grounds for small numbers of marine turtles. In addition, the fringing coral reefs are particularly rich,

with 307 species recorded, and are generally in good to excellent condition (WWF 2003). The most recent survey identified 46 species with new distribution records for Vietnam, and a distinctly different coral community structure to other reefs in Vietnam (WWF 2003).

Conservation issues

A total of 28,863 people live inside Nui Chua National Park, and a further 24,546 people live in the buffer zone. The majority of these people belong to the Kinh, Cham and Ra-glai ethnic groups. The socio-economic level of many of these people is quite low, especially the inhabitants of the national park, who experience an average of six months of food shortages per year. Forest clearance for agriculture is a particular problem at the national park: there are over 600 ha of wet rice land, over 2,500 ha of shifting cultivation and over 750 ha of industrial crop land inside the national park boundary (Ninh Thuan Provincial FPD *in litt.* 2000). Another problem identified by Ninh Thuan Provincial FPD (*in litt.* 2000) is the harsh climate, which makes the forest susceptible to fire.

Since 2001, the WWF Indochina Programme has supported monitoring of marine turtle nesting beaches by local communities.

Other documented values

No information.

Related projects

Currently, the main source of funding for forestry activities at Nui Chua National Park comes from the national 661 Programme. Between 1994 and 1998, the main source of funding was the national 327 Programme (Ninh Thuan Provincial FPD *in litt.* 2000).

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.

WWF (2003) Reef-building corals and coral communities of Nui Chua National Park, Ninh Thuan, Vietnam. Hanoi: WWF Indochina Programme.

Eligibility against VCF criteria

The site is eligible for VCF support because it meets criteria A, B and C.

Criterion	Eligibility
A _I	SA4 - Cam Ranh Dry Coastal Lowlands
A _{II}	
B _I	Decision No. 134/TTg, dated 09/07/03
B _{II}	National Park
B _{III}	Under provincial 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	

Literature sources

Anon. (1997) [Investment plan for Rung Kho Han Nui Chua Nature Reserve, Ninh Hai district, Ninh Thuan province]. Ho Chi Minh City: Ho Chi Minh City Sub-FIPI. In Vietnamese.

Pham Nhat (1994) [Faunal resources of Rung Kho Ninh Hai Nature Reserve, Ninh Thuan province]. Unpublished report to Xuan Mai Forestry College. In Vietnamese.

Vietnam News (2002) Forest and marine national park to open. Vietnam News 7 December 2002.

Vietnam News (2002) Nui Chua houses rare critters. Vietnam News 12 October 2002.