

South-west Lam Dong Proposed Nature Reserve

Alternative site name(s)

None

Province(s)

Lam Dong

Area

Undetermined

Coordinates

11°48'N, 107°37'E

Agro-ecological zone

South-eastern

Decreed by government

No

Management board established

No

Investment plan prepared

No

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

In 1999, following their analysis of the Special-use Forests system, BirdLife International and the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute (FIPI) proposed establishing a 27,700 ha nature reserve in south-western Lam Dong province (Wege *et al.* 1999). Because this recommendation was based upon an analysis of remote-sensing data, the precise location and boundary of the proposed nature reserve were not defined, and the two organisations recommended that a detailed field survey should be conducted in order to assess the feasibility of establishing a protected area in the area (Wege *et al.* 1999). Consequently, in March 2000, the two organisations conducted a rapid field survey of the area (Tordoff and Tran Quang Ngoc 2000). Based on the results of this survey, the site identified as being the most suitable for future protected area establishment was located in Bao Lam district, under the management of Loc Bac and Bao Lam Forest Enterprises. However, because this site was considered to be severely threatened by incompatible development projects, a feasibility study was not prepared.

Subsequently, in 2003, the *Cat Tien National Park Conservation Project* (CTNPCP) conducted biodiversity and socio-economic surveys of Bao Lam and Loc Bac Forest Enterprises. One of the considerations of these surveys was the feasibility of extending protected area coverage to contiguous

natural forest areas outside of Cat Tien National Park. Although the survey reports are yet to be finalised, both forest enterprises were found to support globally threatened and near-threatened species, as well as species of national conservation concern.

No official proposals to establish new protected areas in south-western Lam Dong province have been formulated, and none of the surveyed sites are 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

South-western Lam Dong province is situated in the southern Annamite mountains. The topography of the area is characterised by rolling hills at elevations between 600 and 700 m. To the north, the area is bordered by Dak Lak province. The provincial border is formed by the Dong Nai river, which passes through a steep-sided gorge. Most streams and rivers originating in south-western Lam Dong province flow into this river.

Biodiversity values

The vegetation of Loc Bac and Bao Lam Forest Enterprises is dominated by pure bamboo, a secondary vegetation type following logging. However, a significant area of evergreen forest is distributed along the southern bank of the Dong Nai river and along the

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boundary between the two forest enterprises. On the northern side of the Dong Nai River, in Dak Lak province, there is also a large area of natural forest. Therefore, the area supports a large stretch of intact riverine forest, a natural habitat type that has declined significantly in extent in Vietnam and is poorly represented within the national protected areas system (Tordoff and Tran Quang Ngoc 2000).

Of the almost one thousand species recorded at Bao Lam and Loc Bac during the CTNPCP surveys in 2003, at least 32 are globally threatened or near-threatened, and at least 46 are listed in the *Red Data Book of Vietnam* (Anon. 1992, 1996). At least four new species records for Vietnam were made, including one species apparently new to science.

South-western Lam Dong province has high conservation importance because it forms part of the corridor of natural forest that links the lowland habitats of Cat Tien National Park with the montane habitats of the Da Lat plateau. It is important to preserve forest cover along the length of this corridor, in order to conserve the entire ecosystem and maintain sufficient habitat to support viable populations of large mammal species (Tordoff and Tran Quang Ngoc 2000).

Conservation issues

Much of the forest in south-western Lam Dong province has been degraded by past commercial logging activities, and large areas have been converted into stands of bamboo containing few or no trees. Loc Bac and Bao Lam Forest Enterprises continue to extract both timber and bamboo from the area. By 2000, areas of forest along the Dong Nai River had already been exploited and were designated as watershed protection forest (Tordoff and Tran Quang Ngoc 2000).

Many of the inhabitants of the area belong to ethnic minorities, including the Chu Ru. However, some Kinh migrants have settled in the area and are cultivating tea and coffee, for which the topography and soils of the area are very suitable (Tordoff and Tran Quang Ngoc 2000).

The riverine forest habitats along the Dong Nai River are threatened by the Dong Nai 3 and Dong Nai 4 combined hydropower project. This project, which is

funded by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency, involves constructing two hydropower dams on the Dong Nai River in north-eastern Bao Lam district. If this project goes ahead, these dams can be expected to have significant negative environmental impacts on the area, including: inundation of an 18 km-stretch of riverine forest; increased access to forest areas; displacement of people, leading to increased population density elsewhere in the district; influx of construction workers; and disruption of the Dong Nai river ecosystem (Tordoff and Tran Quang Ngoc 2000).

Other documented values

Forest in the area has an important function in protecting the watershed of the Dong Nai river, which passes through a steep-sided gorge along the north of the area. Were forest along this stretch of the river to be cleared, soil erosion would likely be severe.

Related projects

WWF and MARD are implementing the *Cat Tien National Park Conservation Project*, with funding from the governments of the Netherlands and Vietnam. This project began implementation in May 1998 and will continue until June 2004. While Cat Tien National Park has been the main focus of project activities, one result area has included the undertaking of biodiversity surveys in nearby forest enterprises, including consideration of the feasibility of extending protected area status to contiguous natural forest areas outside of the national park, including in south-western Lam Dong province.

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.

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Eligibility against VCF criteria

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

Criterion	Eligibility
A _I	SA5 - Lowland Dong Nai Watershed
A _{II}	
B _I	Proposed Special-use Forest
B _{II}	Nature Reserve
B _{III}	Under provincial management
C _I	
C _{II}	

Social screening requirements

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

Criterion	Eligibility
A	
B	
C	
D	

Literature sources

JICA/MARD (1996) The master plan study on Dong Nai river and surrounding basins water resources development. Tokyo: Nippon Koei Co. Ltd.

Tordoff, A. W. and Tran Quang Ngoc (2000) Rapid field survey of south-east Gia Lai province and south-west Lam Dong province, Vietnam. Unpublished report to BirdLife International Vietnam Programme and the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute.