

## Ke Bang

Criteria: A1, A2 &amp; A3

**Province(s):** Quang Binh  
**PA Status:** National Park  
**Latitude:** 17°35'N  
**Longitude:** 106°01'E  
**Area:** 106,813 ha  
**Altitude Range:** 500-1,174 masl

**EBA / SA:**

Annamese Low lands EBA

**Priority Landscape:**

NA 6 - Central Indochina Limestone

**General Description**

The IBA comprises the Ke Bang limestone area, which forms part of the largest area of contiguous limestone forest in Indochina. The topography of the IBA is characterised by limestone karst formations, interspersed by narrow valleys. The IBA is almost entirely covered by forest, which, due to the inaccessible terrain is largely in a good condition. Although limestone forest is the dominant habitat type, covering around 90% of the IBA, lowland evergreen forest, which is distributed in low elevation valleys, is also of high conservation significance<sup>1</sup>. Together with the adjacent Phong Nha IBA, Ke Bang IBA is one of the most important sites for the conservation of globally threatened primates in Vietnam. Around 40% of the IBA is included within the recently decreed Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park. To the south-east, Ke Bang IBA is contiguous with Phong Nha IBA, while, to the south-west, it is contiguous with Phou Chuang and Central Hin Namno IBAs in Laos.

**Bird Fauna: Key Features**

The avifauna of Ke Bang IBA is very similar to that of Phong Nha IBA, which can be explained by the proximity of the two sites and the similar habitats at each. Ke Bang supports three of the nine restricted-range species that define the Annamese Lowlands Endemic Bird Area, including Sooty Babbler *Stachyris herbeti*, a species restricted to limestone forest habitats in central Vietnam and Laos. At Ke Bang IBA, Sooty Babbler is relatively common in areas of primary limestone forest. As well as restricted-range species, Ke Bang IBA also supports a number of globally near-threatened species, including Great Hornbill *Buceros bicornis* and Brown Hornbill *Anorrhinus tickelli*. Given the inaccessible terrain and the large area of primary forest, Ke Bang IBA is an important site for the conservation of these two hornbill species, which have declined severely in Vietnam in recent decades as a result of habitat loss and hunting.

Species	IBA Criteria	Global Threat Status	Other IBAs	Notes
Crested Argus <i>Rheinardia ocellata</i>	A1, A2	VU	15	The species was heard on four days in October 1998 <sup>1</sup> . A single individual was recorded and feathers were found with local hunters in March 1999 <sup>2</sup> .
Chestnut-necklaced Partridge <i>Arborophila charltonii</i>	A1	NT	7	The species was recorded on numerous occasions between July and October 1998 <sup>1</sup> .
Red-collared Woodpecker <i>Picus rabieri</i>	A1, A3	NT	11	Single individuals were observed on four occasions between September and October 1998 <sup>1</sup> . The species was recorded regularly at four localities between March and April 1999 <sup>2</sup> .
Great Hornbill <i>Buceros bicornis</i>	A1	NT	13	The species was occasionally recorded between July and October 1998 <sup>1</sup> . The species was also recorded between March and April 1999 <sup>2</sup> .
Brown Hornbill <i>Anorrhinus tickelli</i>	A1, A3	NT	16	Observations of flocks were made on several occasions in September 1998, which were thought to refer to one or two groups in total <sup>1</sup> . The species was also recorded on numerous occasions in March and April 1999 <sup>2</sup> .
[Japanese Paradise-flycatcher <i>Terpsiphone atrocaudata</i> ]	A1	NT	2	A single unconfirmed record was made in October 1998 <sup>1</sup> .
Short-tailed Scimitar Babbler <i>Jabouilleia danjoui</i>	A1, A2	NT	16	Between July and October 1998, one or two groups were observed on a near daily basis <sup>1</sup> .

Species	IBA Criteria	Global Threat Status	Other IBAs	Notes
Sooty Babbler <i>Stachyris herbeti</i>	A1, A2	NT	1	Between July and October 1998, one or two groups were observed on a near daily basis <sup>1</sup> . A pair with fledglings was observed north of Yen Hop village in April 1999 <sup>2</sup> .

Notes: [ ] = unconfirmed record.

**Biome Restricted Species:** The site qualifies under criterion A3 because it supports 15 species restricted to the Indochinese Tropical Moist Forests (Biome 09). See Appendix 4 for details.

### Secondary Criteria

Species	Status	Species	Status
[Northern Slow Loris <i>Nycticebus bengalensis</i> ] <sup>3</sup>	DD	Red-shanked Douc <i>Pygathrix nemaeus nemaeus</i> <sup>3</sup>	EN
[Pygmy Loris <i>Nycticebus pygmaeus</i> ] <sup>3</sup>	VU	White-cheeked / Buff-cheeked Gibbon	
Northern Pigtail Macaque <i>Macaca leonina</i> <sup>1,3</sup>	VU	<i>Nomascus leucogenys / gabriellae</i> <sup>1,3</sup>	DD/VU
[Assamese Macaque <i>Macaca assamensis</i> ] <sup>1,3</sup>	VU	Keeled Box Turtle <i>Pyxidea mouhotii</i> <sup>1</sup>	EN
Rhesus Macaque <i>Macaca mulatta</i> <sup>3</sup>	NT	*[Gaur <i>Bos gaurus</i> ] <sup>3</sup>	VU
Stump-tailed Macaque <i>Macaca arctoides</i> <sup>1,3</sup>	VU	Southern Serow <i>Naemorhedus sumatraensis</i> <sup>1,2</sup>	VU
Hatinh Langur		*Saola <i>Pseudoryx nghetinhensis</i> <sup>1,3</sup>	EN
<i>Trachypithecus francoisi hatinhensis</i> <sup>1,3</sup>	EN		

Notes: [ ] = unconfirmed record; \* = possibly locally extinct.

### Threats to Biodiversity

Due to the unsuitability of the limestone karst terrain, conversion of forest to agriculture is not currently a major threat to biodiversity at Ke Bang IBA, although it is a potential threat to lowland evergreen forest, which is a habitat type of high conservation concern<sup>1</sup>. Another potential cause of habitat degradation and loss is selective timber extraction. However, the results of a recent survey indicated that this is currently taking place at low levels<sup>1</sup>.

Currently, the biggest threat to biodiversity at Ke Bang IBA is hunting. Although hunting takes place throughout the site, it is concentrated in areas within a day's walk of villages<sup>1</sup>. Widespread snaring is a particular concern as it is indiscriminate and threatens populations of ground-dwelling birds, such as Crested Argus *Rheinardia ocellata*.

Hunting with guns is also of concern, as it threatens populations of globally threatened primates. The ongoing construction of National Highway 2, the route of which runs close to the IBA, may lead to increased human pressure on natural resources, if it increases access to outside markets and facilitates human settlement in surrounding areas.

Threat	Severity
Agricultural intensification / expansion	•
Commercial timber extraction	•
Hunting	• • •
Infrastructure development	•
Selective logging / cutting	• •

### Conservation Actions

- In 1998, with funding from the UK Department for International Development, WWF initiated a transboundary conservation project at Phong Nha, entitled *Linking Hin Namno and Phong Nha through Parallel Conservation*<sup>4</sup>.
- In 1998, Fauna & Flora International initiated a conservation project at Phong Nha-Ke Bang, comprising capacity building and field survey components<sup>4</sup>.
- In December 2001, the government of Vietnam decreed the establishment of Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park, comprising Phong Nha Nature Reserve and part of the Ke Bang limestone area.

### Recommendations

- National park management regulations, particularly controls on hunting and timber extraction should be effectively enforced.
- Strict controls on human settlement along the route of National Highway 2 should be introduced in order to minimise increased pressures on the natural resources of the IBA following construction of this road.
- All proposed infrastructure developments at the national park, particularly those involving road construction, should be subjected to careful environmental impact assessment, and appropriate mitigation measures should be implemented.

- Those parts of the Ke Bang limestone area outside of Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park should be designated as special-use forest or protection forest, or, if designated as production forest, placed under sustainable forest management. In addition, controls on hunting should be introduced throughout these areas and effectively enforced.

### **References**

1. Timmins, R. J., Do Tuoc, Trinh Viet Cuong and Hendrichsen, D. K. (1999) *A preliminary assessment of the conservation importance and conservation priorities of the Phong Nha-Ke Bang proposed national park, Quang Binh province, Vietnam*. Hanoi: Fauna & Flora International Indochina Programme.
2. Vietnam-Russia Tropical Centre (1999) *Results of the complex zoological-botanical expedition to the Ke Bang area*. Unpublished report to the Vietnam-Russia Tropical Centre, Hanoi.
3. Nguyen Xuan Dang, Pham Nhat, Pham Trong Anh and Hendrichsen, D. K. (1998) *Results of surveys on mammal fauna in Phong Nha-Ke Bang area, Quang Binh, Vietnam: July 1-August 21, 1998*. Unpublished report to the Fauna & Flora International Indochina Programme, Hanoi.
4. BirdLife International and the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute (2001) *Sourcebook of existing and proposed protected areas in Vietnam*. Hanoi: BirdLife International Vietnam Programme and the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute.



Brown Hornbill *Anorrhinus tickelli*