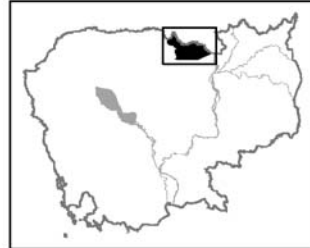


Chhep

Criteria A1, A3 & A4i

Province(s):	Preah Vihear
District(s):	Chhep and Chom Khsan
Area (ha):	243,661
Altitude (m asl):	35 to 767
Central coordinates:	14°04'N 105°30'E

**General description**

The IBA is located in the northern plains of Cambodia, and is centred on the recently decreed Forest Reserve for Conservation of Genetic Diversity, Vegetation and Wildlife Resources in Chhep and Chom Khsan districts. The vegetation of the IBA is characterised by a complex mosaic of habitats, determined by soil quality, proximity to water and topography. Poorer, sandy soils, support a variety of open deciduous dipterocarp forest types, often dominated by only a few species. Richer, alluvial soils, often near watercourses, support more species-rich forest, dominated by tall, mature dipterocarps, with multiple canopy layers shading a complex herbaceous understorey. Extensive grasslands and seasonal meadows form a patchwork within the open deciduous dipterocarp forest, which is arguably one of the richest remaining grasslands in the whole of Asia. To the north, the IBA is contiguous with areas of similar natural habitat in Laos.

The IBA supports one of the most intact remaining examples of the bird community of the dry forests of central Indochina. The IBA supports a large number of globally threatened and near-threatened bird species, including Green Peafowl *Pavo muticus*, White-winged Duck *Cairina scutulata*, Sarus Crane *Grus antigone*, White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis*, Long-billed Vulture *G. indicus*, Red-headed Vulture *Sarcogyps calvus*, Greater Adjutant *Leptoptilos dubius*, Lesser Adjutant *Leptoptilos javanicus* and Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*. Most notably, the IBA supports one of the largest remaining populations of Giant Ibis *Pseudibis gigantea* in the world. In addition, it supports small numbers of wintering Manchurian Reed Warblers *Acrocephalus tangorum*.

Key bird species

Common name	Scientific name	IBA criteria	
Green Peafowl	<i>Pavo muticus</i>	A1	
White-winged Duck	<i>Cairina scutulata</i>	A1	
Great Hornbill	<i>Buceros bicornis</i>	A1	
Sarus Crane	<i>Grus antigone</i>	A1	
Grey-headed Fish Eagle	<i>Ichthyophaga ichhyaetus</i>	A1	
White-rumped Vulture	<i>Gyps bengalensis</i>	A1	
Long-billed Vulture	<i>G. indicus</i>	A1	
Red-headed Vulture	<i>Sarcogyps calvus</i>	A1	
Greater Spotted Eagle	<i>Aquila clanga</i>	A1	
White-rumped Falcon	<i>Polihierax insignis</i>	A1	
Giant Ibis	<i>Pseudibis gigantea</i>	A1	A4i
Black-necked Stork	<i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>	A1	A4i
Lesser Adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i>	A1	A4i
Greater Adjutant	<i>L. dubius</i>	A1	
Manchurian Reed Warbler	<i>Acrocephalus tangorum</i>	A1	
Asian Golden Weaver	<i>Ploceus hypoxanthus</i>	A1	

Biome restricted species

One species is restricted to the Sino-Himalayan Subtropical Forests, five to the Indochinese Tropical Moist Forests and 14 to the Indo-Malayan Tropical Dry Zone (see Appendix 4).

Globally threatened primate species

Slow Loris *Nycticebus coucang*, Pig-tailed Macaque *Macaca nemestrina* and Long-tailed Macaque *M. fascicularis*.

Globally threatened elephant and ungulate species

Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus*, Eld's Deer *Cervus eldii*, Gaur *Bos gaurus* and Banteng *B. javanicus*.

Globally threatened turtle and crocodile species

Asian Box Turtle *Cuora amboinensis*, Giant Asian Pond Turtle *Heosemys grandis*, Yellow-headed Temple Turtle *Hieremys annandalii*, Elongated Tortoise *Indotestudo elongata* and Asiatic Softshell Turtle *Amyda cartilaginea*.

Threats to biodiversity

Hunting is only occurring at low levels, primarily for subsistence, and, although it is thought to be potentially increasing, this activity is not currently a severe threat to populations of large waterbirds. Perhaps the greatest threat to these populations is opportunistic collection of eggs and chicks from the nest, particularly in the case of Sarus Crane. Local people close to the international border with Laos report that poison, which is used to catch fish in permanent pools and streams, can also kill waterbirds. Dynamite fishing is also reported to be an increasing problem at seasonal pools. Another significant threat to biodiversity at the IBA is illegal logging in areas of semi-evergreen forest, particularly along watercourses. Major potential future threats to biodiversity at the IBA include human in-migration, provincial road development plans, and associated agricultural expansion and increase in hunting pressure.

Recommendations

- Measures to counter hunting and trade of wildlife must be put in place throughout the IBA. This should start with setting up patrolling systems in the Forest Reserve for Conservation of Genetic Diversity, Vegetation and Wildlife Resources.
- A mapping of key wetlands, breeding areas of key species and human presence within the forest reserve should be carried out. This will require further surveys and should be used to inform conservation planning.
- Key wetlands and breeding areas of key species should be incorporated into provincial and national development plans.
- Large waterbird conservation should be incorporated into current initiatives to work with local communities to conserve Eld's Deer.
- Community agreements on the use of key wetlands, hunting dogs, egg collection and the practice of poison fishing should be established. The potential for livelihood security programmes to promote such controls and secure support for site-based conservation in key villages should be investigated.
- Immigration into and illegal settlement and land encroachment within the most important and critical areas of the forest reserve should be prevented.

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