

Phou Louey

Criteria: A1, A2 & A3

Province(s): Houaphan and Louangphabang **Latitude:** 20°18'N
Protected area: Phou Louey NPA **Longitude:** 103°17'E
Area: 60,070 ha

General description

The IBA is centred on the Phou Louey massif, the most extensively forested part of Phou Louey National Protected Area, in northern Lao P.D.R. The vegetation of the IBA is dominated by mixed deciduous forest and dry evergreen forest, with upper montane forest above 1,800 m asl. There are also significant areas of secondary grassland within the IBA, where the forest has been cleared for cultivation. The IBA supports a rich and distinctive montane avifauna, including the globally threatened Beautiful Nuthatch *Sitta formosa*. The site was selected as an IBA primarily on the basis that it supports a large number of biome-restricted species known from few other sites in Lao P.D.R. In addition, Rufous-necked Hornbill *Aceros nipalensis* has been recorded, and, given the relatively large area of mature forest, the IBA may support a significant population of this species. Furthermore, the IBA also contains significant stretches of forested streams, which are important for Blyth's Kingfisher *Alcedo hercules* (Davidson 1998). Finally, Yellow-vented Warbler *Phylloscopus cantator*, a restricted-range species, is suspected to breed at the IBA. If this were confirmed, the IBA would qualify for inclusion within the Eastern Himalayas Endemic Bird Area.

Key bird species

Species	IBA criteria	Global threat status	Lao threat status	Notes
[Great Hornbill <i>Buceros bicornis</i>]	A1	NT	ARL	The occurrence of the species in Phou Louey National Protected Area was reported by local people in 1998; due to high levels of hunting, the species is believed to be very rare in the area, and may be on the brink of extinction (Davidson 1998). There is, therefore, no evidence that the IBA regularly supports a significant population of this species.
Rufous-necked Hornbill <i>Aceros nipalensis</i>	A1, A3	VU	ARL	Between one and four pairs were seen and heard on consecutive days in mature dry evergreen forest between 1,200 and 1,700 m asl on Phou Louey in May 1998 (Davidson 1998). Given that the population at the IBA is likely to be relatively small and not of the same magnitude as that in the Annamite mountains, it is probably of moderate to low national significance and low global significance.
Blyth's Kingfisher <i>Alcedo hercules</i>	A1, A3	NT	PARL	One bird was seen along the Nam Sa in March 1998, and at least three were seen along the Nam Poug and one was seen along the Nam Hang in May 1998 (Davidson 1998). As the species is probably widespread in northern Lao P.D.R., the population at the IBA is of low national and global significance.
Beautiful Nuthatch <i>Sitta formosa</i>	A1, A3	VU	PARL	Two birds (probably a pair) were seen in mature evergreen forest at 1,760 m asl on Phou Louey in May 1998 (Davidson 1998). The population at the IBA may be of relatively high national and global significance, although relatively little is known of the species's distribution and habitat requirements.
Yellow-vented Warbler <i>Phylloscopus cantator</i>	A2			During May 1998, the species was relatively common in dry evergreen forest and mixed deciduous forest between 960 and 1,000 m asl along the Nam Poug and Nam Hang, with a daily maximum of at least four birds; most birds were in song, indicating that the species may breed at the IBA (Davidson 1998). The significance of the population at the IBA is difficult to assess, given the paucity of surveys in northern Lao P.D.R. during the breeding season.

Note: [] = unconfirmed record.

Biome-restricted species: The site qualifies under criterion A3 because it supports nine species restricted to the Sino-Himalayan Temperate Forests (Biome 07), 50 species restricted to the Sino-Himalayan Subtropical Forests (Biome 08), nine species restricted to the Indochinese Tropical Moist Forests (Biome 09) and one species restricted to the Indo-Gangetic Plains (Biome 12) (Davidson 1998). See Appendix 3 for details.

Threats to biodiversity

The major threats to biodiversity at the IBA are clearance of forest and hunting. Forest is cleared for shifting cultivation or burnt to promote new growth for grazing livestock. However, the extent of forest clearance is lower within the IBA than in surrounding areas. Hunting pressure at the IBA is high, and takes place for subsistence, to supply the wildlife trade and to protect crops and domestic livestock from depredation. With the notable exception of hornbills, subsistence hunting is not considered to be a high threat to most species of conservation concern. Hunting for trade, however, is believed to be a severe threat to targeted species, such as turtles (Davidson 1998).

References

Davidson, P. ed. (1998) *A wildlife and habitat survey of Nam Et and Phou Louey National Biodiversity Conservation Areas, Houaphan province, Lao P.D.R.* Vientiane: CPAWM/WCS.