

Nam Xam

Criteria: A1 & A3

Province(s): Houaphan
Protected area: Nam Xam NPA
Area: 69,000 ha

Latitude: 20°08'N
Longitude: 104°37'E

General description

The IBA is located inside Nam Xam National Protected Area, in northern Lao P.D.R. The topography of the IBA is dominated by hills and low mountains, with a few peaks over 1,600 m asl. The natural vegetation of the IBA comprises dry evergreen forest and mixed deciduous forest, with *Fokienia* forest at higher elevations, particularly in the west of the IBA. There are also some small areas of stunted, mossy upper montane forest at the highest elevations. During the 1990s, much of the *Fokienia* forest within the IBA was severely degraded by commercial logging. Within Nam Xam National Protected Area, there are also significant areas of agricultural land and secondary regrowth following shifting cultivation, although these are mainly excluded from the IBA. The IBA is thought to support populations of Beautiful Nuthatch *Sitta formosa*, and, possibly, Rufous-necked Hornbill *Aceros nipalensis*, although the population of the latter species may have been severely affected by hunting and may no longer be viable in the long term (Showler *et al.* 1998).

Key bird species

Species	IBA criteria	Global threat status	Lao threat status	Notes
Red-collared Woodpecker <i>Picus rabieri</i>	A1, A3	NT		A male was observed in old-growth forest along the Houay Pong at 1,050 m asl in January 1998 (Showler <i>et al.</i> 1998). The population at the IBA is of very low national and global significance.
Great Hornbill <i>Buceros bicornis</i>	A1	NT	ARL	A single bird was observed in <i>Fokienia</i> forest at 1,520 m asl on Phou Xang Khom, two birds were recorded in degraded mixed deciduous/dry evergreen forest along the Nam Pao, at least seven were recorded in old-growth evergreen forest at 1,100 m asl above the Houay Pong, and a skull of a bird shot in 1997 was seen in Ban Na-me in January 1998 (Showler <i>et al.</i> 1998). The paucity of records of this and other hornbill species indicates that they may be heavily hunted in the area (Showler <i>et al.</i> 1998). The population at the IBA is of low national and global significance.
[Brown Hornbill <i>Anorrhinus tickelli</i>]	A1, A3	NT	PARL	In January 1998, local people from Ban Na-me reported that a flock of 20-30 birds was present in the area (Showler <i>et al.</i> 1998). Even if the species does occur, the population at the IBA is of very low national and global significance.
[Rufous-necked Hornbill <i>Aceros nipalensis</i>]	A1, A3	VU	ARL	During a survey in 1998, the species was reported to occur in the Phou Xang Khom area and in hills above Ban Pao Dtai (Showler <i>et al.</i> 1998). Even if the species does occur, the population at the IBA is, at best, of moderate to low national significance and low global significance.
Blyth's Kingfisher <i>Alcedo hercules</i>	A1, A3	NT	PARL	A pair was observed along the Nam Niam, 2 km upstream of Ban Namon, in January 1998 (Showler <i>et al.</i> 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	During January 1998, two birds (probably a pair) were seen almost daily in <i>Fokienia</i> forest at 1,520 m asl (Showler <i>et al.</i> 1998). Although the significance of the population at the IBA is difficult to assess, it is potentially of at least moderate national and global significance.

Note: [] = unconfirmed record.

Biome-restricted species: The site qualifies under criterion A3 because it supports 46 species restricted to the Sino-Himalayan Subtropical Forests (Biome 08) and 12 species restricted to the Indochinese Tropical Moist Forests (Biome 09) (Showler *et al.* 1998). See Appendix 3 for details.

Threats to biodiversity

The major threats to biodiversity at the IBA are hunting, and habitat loss, as a result of shifting cultivation. Significant areas of mature forest are being cleared for shifting cultivation of hill rice and cassava. During the 1990s, commercial timber extraction, concentrated on *Fokienia*, was conducted in the western sector of Nam Xam National Protected Area; although this has now ceased. Hunting is conducted for both subsistence and trade, and is probably exacerbated by the presence of a thriving wildlife market around the international border with Vietnam, near the IBA. Hunting may result in the local extinction of several species of conservation concern, such as White-cheeked Crested Gibbon, in the near future (Showler *et al.* 1998).

References

Showler, D. A., Davidson, P., Khounboline, K. and Salivong, K. (1998) *A wildlife and habitat survey of Nam Xam National Biodiversity Conservation Area, Houaphanh Province, Lao P.D.R.* Vientiane: CPAWM/WCS.