

Xe Sap

Criteria: A1 & A2

Province(s): Salavan and Xekong
Protected area: Xe Sap NPA
Area: 137,120 ha

Latitude: 16°07'N
Longitude: 107°00'E

General description

The IBA is located inside Xe Sap National Protected Area, in southern Lao P.D.R. The topography of the IBA is steep and mountainous, and there are a number of peaks above 1,800 m asl. The IBA is extensively forested, and the vegetation is dominated by dry evergreen forest, with smaller areas of pine forest and, at lower elevations, semi-evergreen forest (Steinmetz *et al.* 1999). Elevations above 1,800 m asl may support upper montane forest. There are also some areas of grassland, where the forest has been cleared for shifting cultivation or sprayed with defoliants during the Second Indochina War (Steinmetz *et al.* 1999). Much of the IBA remains unsurveyed ornithologically, particularly areas in the east, and no conclusions should be drawn from the relatively low number of key species recorded at the IBA to date. Based on the information currently available, however, the forested mountains within the IBA are important for a number of key bird species, and the large number of permanent streams are important for Blyth's Kingfisher *Alcedo hercules*. Notably, the IBA is one of only three sites in Lao P.D.R. known to support Yellow-billed Nuthatch *Sitta solangiae*. In addition, Crested Argus *Rheinardia ocellata* is reported by local people to occur at the IBA (Steinmetz *et al.* 1999). In addition to Yellow-billed Nuthatch and Crested Argus, it is possible that the IBA supports a number of other restricted-range species, which are most likely to occur on wetter, east-facing slopes, in the east of the IBA, close to the international border with Vietnam.

Key bird species

Species	IBA criteria	Global threat status	Lao threat status	Notes
[Crested Argus <i>Rheinardia ocellata</i>]	A1, A2	VU	ARL	Unconfirmed reports of the species's occurrence in the Phou Glem and Phou Abourl areas were received during a survey in 1999 (Steinmetz <i>et al.</i> 1999). If the species does occur, the population at the IBA may be of moderate to high national significance but moderate to low global significance.
Blyth's Kingfisher <i>Alcedo hercules</i>	A1, A3	NT	PARL	A pair (presumably the same birds each time) was seen on two occasions on the Houay Beehai in February 1999 and two singles and a pair were seen on the Houay Abourl in March 1999 (Steinmetz <i>et al.</i> 1999). The population at the IBA is of moderate national significance and, probably, moderate to low global significance.
Yellow-billed Nuthatch <i>Sitta solangiae</i>	A1, A2	NT	PARL	A pair was seen in dry evergreen forest at 1,500 m asl on Phou Glem in March 1999 (Steinmetz <i>et al.</i> 1999). The population at the IBA is of moderate to low national significance and low global significance.

Note: [] = unconfirmed record.

Biome-restricted species: Based on information currently available, the site does not qualify under criterion A3 (Steinmetz *et al.* 1999), although, with more comprehensive ornithological survey coverage, it probably would do. See Appendix 3 for details.

Threats to biodiversity

Relatively few villages near Xe Sap National Protected Area maintain large resource-use areas within the national protected area, and natural resource exploitation is concentrated close to villages. As a result, human use of natural resources within the interior of the IBA is relatively low. The major threat to biodiversity at the IBA is hunting, particularly commercial hunting by outsiders or by local people to supply the wildlife trade. An illegal cross-border wildlife trade in the area is significant factor contributing to high hunting pressure on a range of wildlife species (Steinmetz *et al.* 1999).

References

Steinmetz, R., Stones, T. and Chan-Ard, T. (1999) *An ecological survey of habitats, wildlife and people in Xe Sap NBCA, Salavan province, Lao P.D.R.* Bangkok: WWF Thailand Programme Office.