

## Upper Xe Khaman

Criteria: A1, A2 &amp; A3

**Province(s):** Attapu  
**Protected area:** Dong Ampham NPA and Phou Khathong PNPA  
**Area:** 34,780 ha  
**Latitude:** 15°05'N  
**Longitude:** 107°17'E

**General description**

The IBA is situated in southern Lao P.D.R., and comprises the upper Xe Khaman, its major tributaries and adjacent areas of natural habitat on both sides of the river. The section of the Xe Khaman within the IBA forms the north-western boundary of Dong Ampham National Protected Area, and parts of the IBA to the south-east of the river are included within this national protected area. In addition, part of IBA to the north-west of the river lies within Phou Khathong proposed nature reserve. The topography of the IBA is predominantly flat or gently sloping. Large tracts of relatively undisturbed old-growth semi-evergreen forest remain north of the Xe Khaman and in the valley of the Nam Kamah. However, small patches of secondary regrowth following shifting cultivation can be found in the Nam Kamah floodplain (Davidson *et al.* 1997). The relatively intact riverine habitats within the IBA are important for Lesser Fish Eagle *Ichthyophaga humilis* and, most significantly, Masked Finfoot *Heliopais personata*. The IBA also supports populations of Siamese Fireback *Lophura diardi*, Red-collared Woodpecker *Picus rabieri*, Great Hornbill *Buceros bicornis*, Brown Hornbill *Anorrhinus tickelli* and Grey-faced Tit Babbler *Macronous kelleyi*. For some of these species, maintenance of contiguous areas of natural habitat, including within Dong Ampham IBA (LA012), may be essential to their long-term conservation in this IBA. In addition, White-winged Duck *Cairina scutulata* is reported to occur at the IBA, although, given the availability of suitable habitat, it is unlikely that the IBA supports a significant population. Furthermore, the IBA is believed to support a significant population of a gibbon species *Hylobates* sp., and Siamese Crocodile *Crocodylus siamensis* is reported to occur along the Xe Khaman (Davidson *et al.* 1997).

**Key bird species**

Species	IBA criteria	Global threat status	Lao threat status	Notes
Siamese Fireback <i>Lophura diardi</i>	A1, A3	NT	PARL	The species was commonly recorded in semi-evergreen forest and secondary growth along the Xe Khaman during January 1997, with a maximum daily count of 15 birds (Davidson <i>et al.</i> 1997). The species was also recorded in semi-evergreen forest in the Nam Kamah valley and on lower hill slopes, up to 400 m asl, during January and May 1997 (Davidson <i>et al.</i> 1997). The population at the IBA is of moderate national significance but low global significance.
[White-winged Duck <i>Cairina scutulata</i> ]	A1	EN	ARL	During surveys in 1997, a single informant reported the occurrence of the species along the Nam Kamah; however, this report was not confirmed by field survey, despite the presence of apparently suitable habitat (Davidson <i>et al.</i> 1997). Most of the riverine habitat in the IBA seems unsuitable for the species, and it is unlikely that the IBA regularly supports a significant population.
Red-collared Woodpecker <i>Picus rabieri</i>	A1, A3	NT		The species was relatively commonly recorded in mature semi-evergreen forest habitats during January and May 1997, although it was not recorded in heavily degraded habitats (Davidson <i>et al.</i> 1997). The population at the IBA is of moderate national significance and moderate to low global significance.
Great Hornbill <i>Buceros bicornis</i>	A1	NT	ARL	The species was assessed as uncommon to relatively common during surveys in January and May 1997, with one or more birds being seen or heard almost daily in semi-evergreen forest between 150 and 200 m asl (Davidson <i>et al.</i> 1997). The population at the IBA is of moderate to high national significance but moderate to low global significance.

Species	IBA criteria	Global threat status	Lao threat status	Notes
Brown Hornbill <i>Anorrhinus tickelli</i>	A1, A3	NT	PARL	Two birds were seen and at least two birds were heard in semi-evergreen forest in May 1997; however, there were no records during a survey in January 1997 (Davidson <i>et al.</i> 1997). The birds in the IBA may belong to a larger population, centred on Dong Ampham IBA (LA012). The population at the IBA is probably of moderate national significance but low global significance.
Masked Finfoot <i>Heliopais personata</i>	A1, A3	VU	ARL	An adult male in breeding plumage was observed along the Xe Khaman in May 1997; and local people reported the presence of the species (Davidson <i>et al.</i> 1997). Potentially suitable breeding habitat exists along a c.40 km stretch of the Xe Khaman (Davidson <i>et al.</i> 1997). The population at the IBA is of high national and global significance.
Lesser Fish Eagle <i>Ichthyophaga humilis</i>	A1	NT	ARL	At least 11 widely separated individuals, representing as many as seven different nesting territories, were observed along a c.40 km stretch of the Xe Khaman in January and May 1997 (Davidson <i>et al.</i> 1997). The population at the IBA is of high national significance but moderate to low global significance.
Grey-faced Tit Babbler <i>Macronous kelleyi</i>	A2			The species was commonly recorded in mature semi-evergreen forest during January and May 1997 (Davidson <i>et al.</i> 1997). The population at the IBA is of low national significance and very low global significance.

Note: [ ] = unconfirmed record.

**Biome-restricted species:** The site qualifies under criterion A3 because it supports 20 species restricted to the Indochinese Tropical Moist Forests (Biome 09) (Davidson *et al.* 1997). See Appendix 3 for details.

### Threats to biodiversity

Currently, the main threats to biodiversity at the IBA are habitat loss through shifting agriculture, and hunting to supply the wildlife trade. Another conservation issue is that the Xe Khaman forms the boundary of Dong Ampham National Protected Area, and only habitats on the south-eastern side of the river are afforded protection by this national protected area. It is important to protect habitat on both sides of the river in order to conserve populations of key riverine species, such as Masked Finfoot and Lesser Fish Eagle (Davidson *et al.* 1997).

### References

Davidson, P., Robichaud, W. G., Tizard, R. J., Vongkhamheng, C. and Wolstencroft, J. (1997) *A wildlife and habitat survey of Dong Ampham NBCA and Phou Khathong proposed NBCA, Attapeu province, Lao P.D.R.* Vientiane: CPAWM/WCS.