

Houay Kok-Houay Phalaphang

Criteria: A1, A2 & A3

Province(s): Champasak and Salavan
Protected area: Phou Xiang Thong NPA
Area: 36,650 ha

Latitude: 16°34'N
Longitude: 106°39'E

General description

The IBA is located inside Phou Xiang Thong National Protected Area, in southern Lao P.D.R. The topography of the IBA slopes from east to west, as the landscape changes from low hills to lowlands along the eastern bank of the Mekong River. The vegetation of the IBA is characterised by a complex mosaic of semi-evergreen forest interspersed with patches of mixed deciduous forest, dry dipterocarp forest and open rocky savanna. The IBA is drained by a number of seasonal streams, which flow into the Mekong River (Evans *et al.* 2000). Phou Xiang Thong is considered to be one of the few protected areas in Lao P.D.R. with potential support a viable population of Green Peafowl *Pavo muticus* (Evans and Timmins 1997); the main concentrations of this species within the national protected area are included within the IBA. The semi-evergreen forest at the IBA supports a moderately high density of Siamese Fireback *Lophura diardi*, although densities of two other key species, Red-collared Woodpecker *Picus rabieri* and Grey-faced Tit Babbler *Macronous kelleyi*, are much lower (Evans *et al.* 2000).

Key bird species

Species	IBA criteria	Global threat status	Lao threat status	Notes
Siamese Fireback <i>Lophura diardi</i>	A1, A3	NT	PARL	During March 1996, there were three confirmed sightings in semi-evergreen forest in the Houay Phalaphang catchment in the space of a few days, suggesting high densities (Evans <i>et al.</i> 1996, Thewlis <i>et al.</i> 1998). The population at the IBA is of moderate to low national significance and low global significance.
Green Peafowl <i>Pavo muticus</i>	A1, A3	VU	ARL	During March 1997, a minimum of seven calling males were heard and a single male was seen in the Houay Kok catchment, two males were heard and a male and female were reportedly seen in the Houay Phalaphang catchment, and one male was heard in the Houay Tat catchment (Evans <i>et al.</i> 1996, Thewlis <i>et al.</i> 1998). The species was reported from a number of other localities, and large areas of suitable habitat within the IBA remain unsurveyed (Evans <i>et al.</i> 1996, Thewlis <i>et al.</i> 1998). Although the population at the IBA is of high national significance, given the vastly larger numbers of this species in parts of Cambodia, it is of moderate to low global significance.
Red-collared Woodpecker <i>Picus rabieri</i>	A1, A3	NT		One male was seen in semi-evergreen forest at 450 m asl on Phou Alang in March 1996 (Thewlis <i>et al.</i> 1998). The population at the IBA is of low national and global significance.
Grey-faced Tit Babbler <i>Macronous kelleyi</i>	A2			A single bird was heard in semi-evergreen forest near Ban Donkoum in March 1996 (Thewlis <i>et al.</i> 1998). The population at the IBA is of low national significance and very low global significance.

Biome-restricted species: The site qualifies under criterion A3 because it supports 11 species restricted to the Indochinese Tropical Moist Forests (Biome 09) and eight species restricted to the Indo-Malayan Tropical Dry Zone (Biome 11) (Evans *et al.* 2000). See Appendix 3 for details.

Threats to biodiversity

The major threat to biodiversity at the IBA is hunting, which is exacerbated by the presence of several permanent villages within the IBA, and the existence of a number of roads through it. Hunting is a particular threat to key wildlife species, including Green Peafowl. An additional threat to biodiversity is selective tree cutting by local people. Clearance of forest for agriculture has taken place within the IBA, although its impacts have been limited.

References

- Evans, T. D., Stones, A. J. and Thewlis, R.C.M. (1996) *A wildlife and habitat survey of the Phou Xiang Thong National Biodiversity Conservation Area*. Pakse: IUCN.
- Evans, T. D. and Timmins, R. (1997) Green Peafowl in Laos. *Tragopan* 6: 9-10.
- Evans, T. D., Towll, H. C., Timmins, R. J., Thewlis, R. M., Stones, A. J., Robichaud, W. G. and Barzen, J. (2000) Ornithological records from the lowlands of southern Laos during December 1995-September 1996, including areas on the Thai and Cambodian borders. *Forktail* 16: 29-52.
- Thewlis, R. M., Timmins, R. J., Evans, T. D. and Duckworth, J. W. (1998) The conservation status of birds in Laos: a review of key species. *Bird Conserv. Internat.* 8(suppl.): 1-159.