

Nakai Plateau

Criteria: A1, A3 & A4i

Province(s): Khammouan
Protected area: Nakai-Nam Theun NPA
Area: 136,550 ha

Latitude: 17°49'N
Longitude: 105°11'E

General description

The IBA is located on the Nakai plateau, in central Lao P.D.R., and is partly included within Nakai-Nam Theun National Protected Area. The topography of the IBA is largely flat, at elevations between 500 to 600 m asl. The vegetation of the IBA is dominated by a mosaic of old-growth pine forest and semi-evergreen forest (Evans and Timmins 1998). The IBA is drained by the Nam Theun and its many tributaries, which support riverine dry evergreen forest (Thewlis *et al.* 1998). Pools and marshes are numerous in the centre of the IBA, although many have been the focus of human settlement and are degraded (Thewlis *et al.* 1998). The rivers within the IBA are important for the conservation of a number of species, including White-winged Duck *Cairina scutulata*, Blyth's Kingfisher *Alcedo hercules*, River Lapwing *Vanellus duvaucelii* and Lesser Fish Eagle *Ichthyophaga humilis* (Evans *et al.* 1997, Duckworth *et al.* 1998a, Evans and Timmins 1998). Of these, the population of White-winged Duck is the most significant, as it is one of the largest known populations of this globally endangered species in Lao P.D.R. (Evans *et al.* 1997, Thewlis *et al.* 1998). The IBA, together with contiguous forested lower mountain slopes, supports an important population of Brown Hornbill *Anorrhinus tickelli* (Evans and Timmins 1998), although the forests of the IBA do not, by themselves, have an exceptional bird fauna (R. J. Timmins *in litt.* 2002). In addition, the IBA is the only site in Lao P.D.R. from where there are recent confirmed records of Wood Snipe *Gallinago nemoricola* and Grey-sided Thrush *Turdus feae*, although, at least in the case of the latter species, which is known to be irregular in non-breeding occurrence, the IBA may not be of great importance for their conservation. Finally, the IBA supports part of one of the two largest populations of Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus* remaining in Lao P.D.R. (Duckworth *et al.* 1999).

Key bird species

Species	IBA criteria	Global threat status	Lao threat status	Notes
Siamese Fireback <i>Lophura diardi</i>	A1, A3	NT	PARL	In 1994, two females were seen in bamboo forest continuous with semi-evergreen forest about 2 km north-east of Ban Sop On, and the species was reported from several other areas on the plateau (Thewlis <i>et al.</i> 1998). One bird was recorded in bamboo near the mouth of the Houay Kanik in 1995 (Thewlis <i>et al.</i> 1998). The population at the IBA is of low national and global significance.
[Green Peafowl <i>Pavo muticus</i>]	A1, A3	VU	ARL	Unconfirmed reports of the species's former occurrence were received from several areas during a survey in 1994. In most cases, however, the species was suspected to have disappeared (Thewlis <i>et al.</i> 1998). Even if the species still occurs at the IBA, the population is unlikely to be of anything other than low national and global significance.
White-winged Duck <i>Cairina scutulata</i>	A1, A4i	EN	ARL	The species was observed at several locations during surveys in 1994 and 1995. Based on the results of these surveys, the plateau, together with the adjacent Nam On catchment, was estimated to support 6 to 12 pairs (Thewlis <i>et al.</i> 1998). The population at the IBA is of high national significance and moderate to high global significance.
Red-collared Woodpecker <i>Picus rabieri</i>	A1, A3	NT		The species was occasionally recorded in broadleaf forest throughout the IBA in 1994, 1995 and 1996 (Thewlis <i>et al.</i> 1998). The population at the IBA is of low national and global significance.
Blyth's Kingfisher <i>Alcedo hercules</i>	A1, A3	NT	PARL	A single bird was seen on the Nam Mon in March 1994 (Evans and Timmins 1998). Based on the results of a survey in 1995, the plateau probably supports at least 12 pairs (Thewlis <i>et al.</i> 1998). Given the length of suitable streams at the IBA, the population is of moderate to high national significance and 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	In 1994 and 1995, the species was locally common in the least disturbed areas of pine forest/semi-evergreen forest mosaic, with one to three flocks seen daily (Thewlis <i>et al.</i> 1998). The population at the IBA is of moderate to high national significance and moderate to low global significance.
Wood Snipe <i>Gallinago nemoricola</i>	A1	VU	LKL	Three single birds were seen along the Nam Xot and a single bird was seen by the Nam On in February 1995 (Thewlis <i>et al.</i> 1998). It is very difficult to assess the significance of the population at the IBA.
River Lapwing <i>Vanellus duvaucelii</i>	A4i		ARL	The species was found on all major rivers on the plateau during surveys in 1994 and 1995, with a total counts of 80 birds in 1994 and 94 birds (perhaps representing 40 breeding pairs) in 1995 (Thewlis <i>et al.</i> 1998). The population at the IBA is of high national significance and moderate to low global significance.
Lesser Fish Eagle <i>Ichthyophaga humilis</i>	A1	NT	ARL	Records from surveys in 1994 and 1995, each involving one or two adults and up to one juvenile, indicate four occupied territories in the IBA (Thewlis <i>et al.</i> 1998). The population at the IBA is of high national significance and moderate global significance
[Grey-headed Fish Eagle <i>I. ichthyaetus</i>]	A1	NT	ARL	A single bird, provisionally identified as this species, was seen over the Nam Theun in February 1990 (Salter 1993 cited in Thewlis <i>et al.</i> 1998). Single birds, provisionally identified as this species, were observed at the confluence of the Nam On and Nam Yang in April 1994, and over the middle Nam Theun in March 1995 (Thewlis <i>et al.</i> 1998). The population of this species at the IBA, if it occurs, is probably of moderate to high national significance but low global significance
[Greater-spotted Eagle <i>Aquila clanga</i>]	A1	VU	LKL	A single bird was provisionally recorded in February 1990 (Salter 1993 cited in Thewlis <i>et al.</i> 1998). A single bird, provisionally identified as this species, was observed in April 1994 (Evans and Timmins 1998). The significance of the population at the IBA is very difficult to assess.
[Imperial Eagle <i>A. heliaca</i>]	A1	VU	LKL	An unidentified <i>Aquila</i> eagle seen in March 1995 showed features of this species (Thewlis <i>et al.</i> 1998). The significance of the population at the IBA is very difficult to assess.
†Grey-sided Thrush <i>Turdus feae</i>	A1	VU	LKL	Two single birds were recorded along the Nam Mon in February 1995 (Duckworth <i>et al.</i> 1998). These are the only recent records from Lao P.D.R. However, the species is known to be irregular in non-breeding occurrence, and there is no evidence that the IBA regularly supports a significant population.
*Yellow-vented Warbler <i>Phylloscopus cantator</i>	A2			The species was frequently recorded in semi-evergreen forest between 520 and 550 m asl around Ban Namxot in 1994 (Evans and Timmins 1998). As there is no evidence that the species breeds at the IBA, the site does not qualify for inclusion within an EBA.

Notes: [] = unconfirmed record; † = not confirmed to regularly occur in significant numbers; * = does not qualify under criterion A2.

Biome-restricted species: The site qualifies under criterion A3 because it supports 19 species restricted to the Indochinese Tropical Moist Forests (Biome 09) (Duckworth *et al.* 1998b, Evans and Timmins 1998). See Appendix 3 for details.

Threats to biodiversity

The biggest threat to biodiversity within the IBA is natural habitat disturbance that may impact severely on riverine species including White-winged Duck and River Lapwing.

References

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