

Hoa Lu Proposed Cultural and Historical Site

Alternative site name(s)

None

Province(s)

Ninh Binh

Area

5,624 ha

Coordinates

20°12' - 20°19'N, 105°52' - 105°57'E

Agro-ecological zone

Red River Delta

Decreed by government

No

Management board established

Yes

Investment plan prepared

Yes

VCF eligibility criteria met

A, C

Social screening criteria met

None

Conservation needs assessment prepared

No

Operational management plan prepared

No

Tracking tool completed

No

Map available

Yes

Management history

Hoa Lu is not listed on any government decision regarding the Special-use Forests system. However, on 19 May 1995, the former Ministry of Forestry instructed the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute (FIPI) to prepare an investment plan for Hoa Lu. This investment plan was published in October 1995 (Anon. 1995). The investment plan was approved by Decision No. 126/NN-KHCV of MARD, dated 15 January 1996, and by Decision No. 432/QD-UB of Ninh Binh Provincial People's Committee, dated 29 March 1996 (Ninh Binh Provincial FPD *in litt.* 2000).

Following the approval of the investment plan, a cultural and historical site management board was established on 29 March 1996, following Decision No. 432/QD-UB of Ninh Binh Provincial People's Committee. Upon the establishment of a nature reserve at Van Long in 2001 (see separate site card), a single management board was established, covering both sites. Currently, there are three members of staff responsible for Hoa Lu (Dang Xuan Tai, Director of Van Long Nature Reserve *in litt.* 2003).

Hoa Lu is included on a list of Special-use Forests to be established by the year 2010, prepared by the FPD of MARD, as a 5,624 ha cultural and historical site (FPD 2003); this list has not yet been approved by the government.

Topography and hydrology

Hoa Lu proposed cultural and historical site is located in Ninh Hai, Truong Yen, Ninh Xuan, Ninh Hoa and Ninh Nhat communes, Hoa Lu district. The topography of the proposed cultural and historical site is characterised by limestone karst outcrops, which rise abruptly from the flat coastal plain of northern Vietnam. The karst outcrops are interwoven with a number of permanent streams and seasonally inundated valleys. Elevations at the site range from 10 to 281 m.

Biodiversity values

The original vegetation at Hoa Lu was limestone forest on the karst and lowland evergreen forest in the intervening valleys. However, the vegetation at Hoa Lu has been heavily affected by human activities over a long period, as a result of which, all the land suitable for agriculture in the valley bottoms has long since been cleared of forest, and the limestone karst supports only scattered shrubs, grass and climbers, with no big trees. There no longer exists any primary forest at the site (Anon. 2000).

During surveys by FIPI and Ninh Binh Provincial Forest Protection Department in 1999-2000, a total of 577 species of vascular plants were recorded at the site. The floral diversity at Hoa Lu is much lower than that at nearby Cuc Phuong National Park because of the smaller size of Hoa Lu, the lower elevation range and

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the heavily degraded state of the habitat. However, 10 plant species listed in the *Red Data Book of Vietnam* were recorded during the survey, including *Cycas balansae* and *Stemona saxorum* (Anon. 2000).

There is little information available about the fauna of Hoa Lu. Because of the small size of the site, the heavily degraded habitat and the high human density at the site, mammal and bird diversity is presumably quite low. However, the site may support populations of some species of conservation concern, most notably Delacour's Leaf Monkey *Trachypithecus delacouri*. Nadler (1996) reported the occurrence of 10 to 15 individuals of this globally critically endangered, endemic primate at the site. Further information is required, however, about the current status and distribution of Delacour's Leaf Monkey at the site.

Conservation issues

Around 20,000 people live inside the proposed cultural and historical site, all of whom belong to the Kinh ethnic group (Dang Xuan Tai, Director of Van Long Nature Reserve *in litt.* 2003). The main economic activity of these people is wet rice agriculture, and there are 2,042 ha of agricultural land inside the proposed cultural and historical site, equivalent to 36% of the total area (Anon. 1995).

According to Ninh Binh Provincial FPD (*in litt.* 2000), the major threats to biodiversity at the site are quarrying of the limestone karst for building materials, illegal firewood collection, hunting, forest fire and grazing of livestock.

Other documented values

Hoa Lu proposed cultural and historical site has a range of historical, cultural and tourism values. Under the Dinh Dynasty in the tenth century, Hoa Lu served as the capital of Vietnam, and the site also enjoyed prominence under the later Le Dynasty. There are a number of temples and pagodas at the site, which commemorate Vietnam's kings. There are also a number of caves at the site, including Bich Dong or Emerald cave, and Tam Coc or Three caves. A river flows through this later series of caves, allowing them to be visited by boat. Indeed, Tam Coc and the other historical vestiges are a popular tourist attraction, and

Hoa Lu proposed cultural and historical site attracts tens of thousands of domestic and foreign tourists each year.

Related projects

Between December 1999 and May 2000, FIPI and Ninh Binh Provincial FPD implemented a project to inventory and assess the flora of Hoa Lu proposed cultural and historical site. The aim of this project was to provide a scientific basis for sustainable management of the site. The project was funded by the Finnish Embassy (Anon. 2000).

The national 661 Programme is currently funding forestry activities at the site.

Conservation needs assessment

A conservation needs assessment has not been conducted for the site.

Operational management plan

An operational management plan has not been prepared for the site.

Eligibility against VCF criteria

Hoa Lu is ineligible for VCF support because it is a cultural and historical site.

Criterion	Eligibility
A _I	NA1 - Northern Indochina Limestone
A _{II}	
B _I	Proposed Special-use Forest
B _{II}	
B _{III}	Under provincial management
C _I	Management board established
C _{II}	

Social screening requirements

A social screening report has not been prepared for the site.

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Criterion	Eligibility
A	
B	
C	
D	

Literature sources

Anon. (1995) [Investment plan for Hoa Lu Cultural and Historical Site, Ninh Binh province]. Hanoi: North-western Sub-FIPI. In Vietnamese.

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