

Western Siem Pang Forest: natural wonder of the Kingdom of Cambodia

Title

BirdLife International Cambodia Programme has just published a lavishly illustrated report revealing the global conservation importance of the proposed Western Siem Pang Protected Forest located in a remote area of northern Cambodia near the border with Laos.

The Biodiversity of the Proposed Western Siem Pang Protected Forest, Stung Treng Province, Cambodia collates for the first time all the biodiversity information gathered by BirdLife and partners over the last decade.

Covering expanses of deciduous and semi-evergreen forests along the Sekong River, Western Siem Pang is one of only a handful of sites worldwide that supports populations of an astonishing total of five Critically Endangered bird species: White-shouldered Ibis *Pseudibis davisoni* and Giant Ibis *Thaumatibis gigantea*, White-rumped *Gyps bengalensis*, Slender-billed *G. tenuirostris*, and Red-headed Vultures *Sarcogyps calvus*. The local populations of both ibis species amount to 25% of the global population. In the case of the White-shouldered Ibis Western Siem Pang holds the single largest sub-population in the world.

“The MacArthur Foundation believes Western Siem Pang is too important for the conservation of too many species to risk losing this site: but without action, loss is a serious risk and that is why we are working with BirdLife to support efforts to conserve this globally irreplaceable site”, said Jörgen Thomsen, Director of Conservation and Sustainable Development Department of MacArthur Foundation.

Western Siem Pang is currently unprotected and much of it is threatened by an economic land concession, which would destroy the forest and its wildlife. BirdLife and the Forestry Administration with support from the MacArthur Foundation and the Fondation Prince Albert II de Monaco are working towards a solution to ensure the long term sustainable management of the site.

“The Forestry Administration considers this report as a supporting document for the proposal to establish the site as a Protected Forest for sustainable forest and wildlife resource management and conservation in accordance with the National

Forest Programme and meeting Cambodia's Millennium Developments Goals", said H. E. Chheng Kimsun, Delegate of the Royal Government, Chief of Forest Administration.

Hard copies of the report are available at BirdLife Cambodia Office. For electronic copies, [WSP Biodiversity report 2012](#) (PDF 6MB) Find out more about our work On tropical forests through the [BirdLife Forests of Hope Programme](#).