

Introducing the Gaur and Banteng



Gaur Bos gaurus

Conservation status: Globally Threatened: Vulnerable

This peculiar hump-backed bovid roams the forests and grasslands of Southeast Asia. A vegetarian with a huge body weight supported by incredibly slim white legs, this large dark-coloured mammal is distinct from the banteng in that it has no white rump patch.



Fast facts

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Height 1.7-1.8m; length 2.5-3m; weight 650-900kg.

Social or solitary?

Gaur usually appear in small herds. The largest herd recorded in recent years was about 30 animals in Cat Tien National Park in Vietnam.

The gaur's home

Gaur have been reported in the larger evergreen montane forest blocks of the Greater Annamite and Dry Forest Ecoregions. In Lao PDR, gaur are discontinuously distributed throughout the country with nationally significant populations reported in 9 of the country's National Protected Areas. The lowland forests of Cat Tien National Park harbour one of the most important gaur populations in Vietnam, with up to 5 herds recorded in 2004. Small gaur herds are distributed in the eastern to northeastern regions of Cambodia's dry forests, particularly in Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary and Forest Protection Areas.

Threats

Hunting for the wildlife trade is a serious problem. Gaur, like many other horned mammals are prized for their horns. As with other large mammals, loss of habitat along park



boundaries is restricting the range of this species, particularly in Vietnam. Disease transmission from untethered domestic cattle may threaten the gaur, however little research has been carried out as yet.

What we are doing

The Species Conservation Project has been working to protect viable populations of gaur and other large mammals in northeastern and eastern parts of Cambodia. In 2004, WWF-supported surveys alongside the Xuan Mai Forestry University which discovered new herds Quang Tri and Quang Binh provinces in Vietnam. In Cat Tien National Park, in Vietnam, an annual controlled burn to manage grassland will help to promote new grass growth – an essential component of the gaur’s diet. In Lao PDR, WWF is supporting large scale habitat and forest continuum management both in the Annamites and in the Dry Forests. This includes sustainable forest management and wildlife monitoring.

Banteng *Bos Javanicus* Conservation status: Globally Threatened: Endangered



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Looking suspiciously like domestic cattle, both in colour and build, the handsome banteng used to be widespread throughout Southeast Asia. These wild cattle are very shy and retiring, and due to their wariness they are hard to approach. The dorsal ridge seen in gaur is less pronounced in banteng with only the older bulls having a marked ridge. Banteng have white bands and patches on their bodies, including white stockings, and a distinct white rump.

Fast facts

Height 1.55-1.65m; length 1.9-2.25m; weight 600-800 kg.

Social or solitary?

Banteng are social creatures, spending most of their time in herds, usually led by an older cow. Herds are generally accompanied by a single mature male.

The banteng’s home

Banteng tend to avoid evergreen rainforest and prefer more open dry deciduous forest. In Cambodia, two main regions support banteng populations: the northeast and southwest. Bordering the northeast of Cambodia is Yok Don National Park, in Vietnam, which is probably one of the most important areas in the country. In Lao PDR, banteng are primarily found in the central and southern parts of the country. While the banteng may be active during the night or day, in areas with heavy human encroachment the herds have become nocturnal. Herds have been recorded feeding throughout the night, pausing to rest and ruminate at intervals. Feeding in open clearings, banteng depend on dense thickets in which to retire for shelter and safety.

Threats

The most important threats to banteng are hunting, and habitat degradation and loss. Extinction of banteng is imminent in Vietnam. In Cambodia and Lao PDR habitat fragmentation caused by human agriculture and new settlements is threatening the remaining populations. Interbreeding with domestic cattle threatens the genetic integrity of the remaining wild banteng in some areas. The number of trophies for sale in the region strongly suggest that the banteng population has been, and remains under considerable pressure from hunters. The next ten years are crucial to save the banteng from local extinction.

What we are doing

Extensive potential habitat remains in Cambodia and Lao PDR in particular around the border region, which provides hope for long-term conservation efforts. Banteng are benefiting from other species’ conservation initiatives, such as tiger and elephant conservation. After two years of increased enforcement activities in northeast Cambodia, WWF believes that hunting of banteng has decreased in this area.



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Find out more about gaur and banteng in the Greater Annamites and Dry Forest Ecoregions at:

www.wfindochina.org and

www.wfindochina.org/dry_forests/CIDF

and www.panda.org/asiapacific/annamites