

WHAT WE DO

Research & Study

WWF conducts research to inform conservation action. In the CarBi programme, scientific expertise and advanced information management techniques are used to monitor timber trade and biodiversity significance. In Nam Pouy NPA, camera trapping is utilised to monitor populations of elephant. Freshwater studies seek to monitor the health of riverine ecosystems in our Siphandone and Community Fisheries projects, protecting fish from over-exploitation and ensuring communities can maintain sustainable fish stocks.

Protected Area Management

Four national protected areas (NPAs) – Xe Sap, Dong Amphan, Xe Pian, and Dong Houa Sao – fall within our Mekong Flooded Forests and Central Annamites landscapes. One more – Nam Pouy NPA – is a priority site for elephant conservation activities. WWF works with government, provincial and district authorities, and communities to improve or develop protected area management plans, support law enforcement activities and conduct biological surveys.

Education & Awareness

Since WWF's inception, education has been integral to our mission and the programmes carried out to meet it. Today, it's as important – if not more so – than ever. From our Green Schools programme in Siphandone, to community awareness raising about sustainable fisheries in central Laos, and CarBi's community leadership mentoring programme, WWF works to ensure knowledge and awareness is funneled into action on the ground.

Livelihoods

WWF is committed to integrating communities into the workings of our projects, for it is only with their support that successful conservation actions can be achieved. Both the Community Fisheries and Rattan projects seek to support people in the management of their natural resources, so long-term benefits can be gained from them without detrimental impacts to the environment.

Wildlife Crime

Every year, hundreds of millions of plants and animals are caught or harvested from the wild to be sold as food, pets, medicine, ornamental items, and for many other reasons.

In Laos, WWF works with the government to improve and implement laws that protect important ecosystems and species. Through FLEGT and GFTN, WWF aims to make timber trade legal and sustainable. In other projects, WWF helps to bolster law enforcement for the protection of species such as the Asian elephant and Eld's deer.



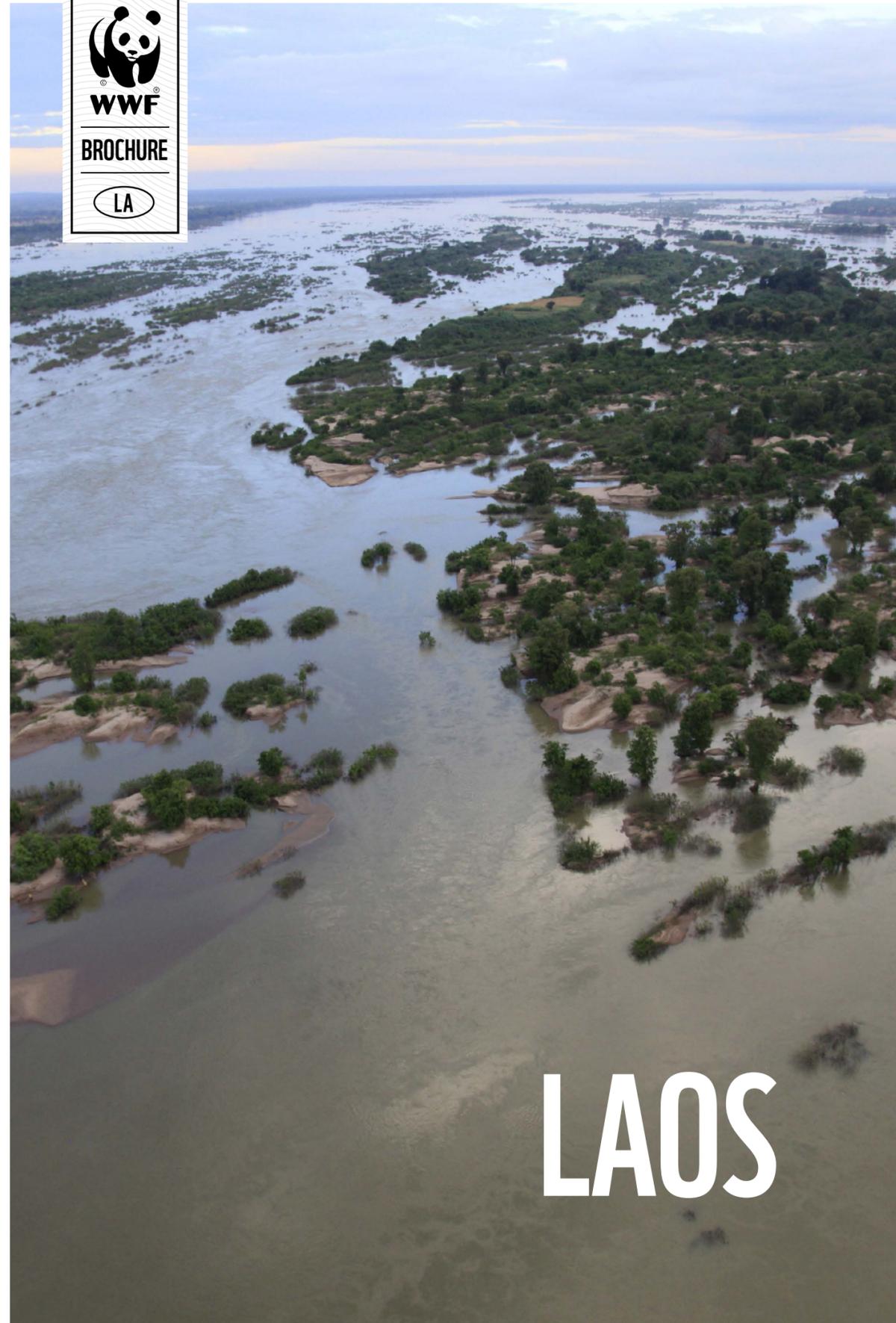
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Why we are here
To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.
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WWF · LAOS



LAOS

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WHY IMPORTANT?

Laos is a country replete with incredible biodiversity. From the banks of the Mekong River to the forests of the misted Annamite Range, a living palette of natural wonder runs the length and breadth of this landlocked nation.

Around 49 ethnic groups speaking four different languages live in Laos. 80 per cent of the country's 6.5 million people, over half of which is under 20 years of age, are located in rural areas making a living from natural resources mainly in the form of fisheries, agriculture, wildlife hunting and the harvest of non-timber forest products, such as honey or rattan.

Unprecedented economic development is underway in Laos and across the Greater Mekong region. The building of major roads, other construction projects and growing natural resource extraction are just some of the activities that need to be planned and managed in a sustainable way if biodiversity and socio-economic development are to exist in a balanced manner.

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ABOUT WWF-LAOS

WWF-Laos is the local office of the WWF Network, the world's largest and most experienced independent conservation organisation. It has more than 5 million supporters and offices active in over 100 countries.

WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

Our Laos programme officially began in 2001 and since then our work has focused on research, advocacy and building partnerships aimed at protecting Laos' most precious habitats and species, enhancing local and national capacity to conserve them, and improving the livelihoods of the communities who depend on them most.

OUR STRATEGIES

- Protect landscape integrity through the promotion of integrated spatial planning and the diversification of people's livelihoods.
- Combat illegal wildlife and timber trade, as well as poaching.
- Influence policy, consumption and commodities' production to switch to sustainable use of land and water resources.



Rattan weavers in Bolikhamxay Province.

PRIORITY PLACES



Elephants in the rainy season in Nam Pouy NPA.

SAVANNAKHET PRIORITY SITE

The Lower Mekong Dry Forests, spanning eastern Thailand, southern Laos, northern Cambodia and western Vietnam, form the largest continuous tract of dry forest remaining in mainland Southeast Asia. The only known population of Eld's deer in Laos occurs within the dry forest of Savannakhet Eld's deer sanctuary, founded in 2005 in a partnership with the provincial government and NGOs. Threats to the ecological integrity of the landscape in which the Eld's deer live include rapid habitat conversion of the dry forest to make way for a high-intensity agriculture.

Current activities include:

- Promoting integrated spatial land use plans to reduce pressure on the dry forest
- Villager-led patrolling of the sanctuary to collect scientific data on the deer population and deter or intercept illegal activities
- Developing alternative livelihood opportunities to reduce negative impacts on the deer's habitat



Eld's deer in the 93,000 ha Savannakhet Eld's deer sanctuary.

NAM POUY PRIORITY SITE

Nam Pouy National Protected Area (NPA) is located in Xayabouly Province in northwest Laos. This 1,912-km² site was identified as a top priority for elephant conservation by the government at a national elephant conservation meeting in 2008. In 2010, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs signed the MoU with WWF for the project, with the overall goal of integrating elephant issues into provincial planning.

Current activities include:

- Monitoring and data collection on wild elephants within Nam Pouy NPA
- Development of guidelines for effective land use plans that mitigate human-elephant conflict
- Training forest guards to lead effective patrols using the most modern technology to track and identify illegal activity

MEKONG FLOODED FORESTS LANDSCAPE

Siphandone (Four Thousand Islands) in southern Laos represents a hugely important ecological area of the Mekong River. The braided channel languidly winds its way through a region that provides the highest number of fish consumed in the country and is home to the globally vulnerable Irrawaddy river dolphin, Mekong giant catfish and giant stingray.

Current activities include:

- Securing the integrity of this region by diversifying local livelihoods and building environmental awareness
- Creating Fish Conservation Zones to safeguard aquatic resources
- Improving a system of river-related monitoring activities
- Developing management plans to guide sustainable long-term planning in the area
- Implementing the Green Schools Programme to educate and inspire the next generation



Irrawaddy dolphin in Siphandone.

CENTRAL LAOS PRIORITY SITE

Our Central Laos Priority Site includes Bolikhamxay, Khammouane and Savannakhet provinces. Here there is a concentration on partnering with district and provincial authorities, as well as villages, to sustainably manage natural resources in a manner that brings benefits for the environment and the people that depend on it most. Active in the area are the Community Fisheries and Sustainable Rattan projects.

Current activities include:

- Establishing community-managed Fish Conservation Zones to protect fish stocks and improve the overall health of river ecosystems
- Improving the participation of women in the decision making process related to aquatic resources management
- Working with communities and the private sector to sustainably harvest rattan
- Promoting Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Fair Trade certification of forests and forest products

CENTRAL ANNAMITES LANDSCAPE

The forests of Attapeu, Xekong and Saravan hold incredible biodiversity. Here, WWF is working with key stakeholders to make sure sustainable forest and watershed areas provide food and livelihood practices to local communities, whilst safeguarding forest cover for the benefit of all Lao people. Active projects in this area include the Carbon and Biodiversity (CarBi) programme, the Global Forest and Trade Network (GFTN) and Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) project, which also runs in Central Laos.

Current activities include:

- Rehabilitating, restoring and protecting forest in four protected areas with two connecting corridors that will allow biodiversity to flow between them
- Conserving rare and threatened species such as saola and duoc through camera trap research and patrol activities
- Promoting alternative livelihood practices such as the creation of rice banks, fish aquaculture and dry season crop cultivation
- Facilitating the Chain of Custody (CoC) process for timber trade

Xe Sap National Protected Area in Salavan and Xekong provinces.



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