

# **Nature Reserves of The Himalaya and the Mountains of Central Asia**

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## TAMANTHI GAME SANCTUARY

**IUCN Management Category** Unassigned.

**Biogeographical Province** 4.09.04 (Burma Monsoon Forest)

**Geographical Location** Located close to the east bank of the Chindwin River, in the Upper Chindwin/Myittha forest divisions, and approximately 1,000 km (by air) north of Rangoon. The nearest major town is Tamanthi, situated about 6 km west of the sanctuary and on the opposite bank of the Chindwin. The site is accessible by boat, up the Chindwin, or by air to Hkanti, some 30 km north of the boundary, and thence by road. The boundary partly comprises the Temein Hill range and one river course, and is identified by blazed trees and pillars for compass bearings (FAO, 1982; H.G. Hundley, pers. comm.). 25°05'–25°48'N, 95°18'–95°56'E

**Date and History of Establishment** 1974

**Area** 215,077 ha

**Land Tenure** Government

**Altitude** 141 m to 631 m.

**Physical Features** The sanctuary slopes down from the Temein Range in the east to the Chindwin Valley in the west. The Pilin, Nat-E-Su, Pagan, Yanyin, and Kwedaing rivers drain the sanctuary and flow westward into the Chindwin. Little information about the geology of the area is available, although it is likely to be similar to the Miocene shale and sandstone to the found east of the river. Saramanti (3,826 m), one of Burma's highest mountains, lies about 40 km to the west of the sanctuary (H.G. Hundley, pers. comm.).

**Climate** Homalin, about 50 km south of the sanctuary, receives a mean annual rainfall of 2,250 mm, but this is greatly exceeded in the sanctuary. Heavy fog is usual in the cold season and may occur as late as April. The area does not experience extremes of temperature (H.G. Hundley, pers. comm.).

**Vegetation** The area has not been heavily exploited and largely intact evergreen and semi-evergreen forest covers most of the sanctuary. Oak *Quercus* spp. and *Castanopsis* spp. occur along the higher hill ranges. Characteristic trees include kanyin *Dipterocarpus turbinatus*, *D. macrocarpus*, aukchinsa *Dysoxylum binectariferum*, yetama *Acrocarpus fraxinifolium*, taungtama *Cedrela* sp., thabye *Syzygium* spp., yinma *Chukrasia tabularis*, and *C. velutina*. Bamboo species include tinwa *Cephalostachyum* spp., wabomyetsangye *Dendrocalamus hamiltonii*, and wa-kha *Pseudostachyum polymorphum*. There is an abundance of evergreen climbers and canes (H.G. Hundley, pers. comm.). As there is no teak *Tectona* sp., the State Timber Corporation is not active in either the sanctuary or its environs (FAO, 1982).



**Fauna** During the last twenty years Sumatran rhinoceros *Dicerorhinus sumatraensis* (E) has been reported only in Tamanthi Wildlife Sanctuary and Shwe-U-Daung Wildlife Sanctuary (Blower, 1982), although it may also be present in the Arakan Yoma hills to the south (FAO, 1983). Other mammals include leopard *Panthera pardus* (T), tiger *Panthera tigris* (E), wild dog *Cuon alpinus* (V), gaur *Bos gaurus* (V), sambar *Cervus unicolor*, Indian muntjac *Muntiacus muntjak*, and wild boar *Sus scrofa*. Troops of monkeys are often seen on the river banks and Hoolock gibbon *Hylobates hoolock* occurs in the forest. Green peafowl *Pavo muticus* (V) and jungle fowl are fairly plentiful. Porpoise, teal, and duck are to be seen in the Chindwin, although the river is not included in the sanctuary (H.G. Hundley, pers. comm.).

**Local Human Population** There are no settlements within the sanctuary. Tamanthi is the largest of a number of population centres in the Chindwin Valley and Maungkan, Hkanti, and Mansein are all located within about 30 km of the boundary (FAO, 1982).

**Visitors and Visitor Facilities** The site is not developed for tourism, in part due to its remoteness and security considerations.

**Scientific Research and Facilities** The most recent survey of rhinoceros in the sanctuary was carried out in 1978 (H.G. Hundley, pers. comm.).

**Conservation Value** The sanctuary was constituted specifically for the protection of Sumatran rhinoceros *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis* (E), numbered at seven individuals in 1981 (U Tun Yin, pers. comm.). Rhinoceros receives nationwide protection under the 1936 Burma Wildlife Protection Act as well as protection under the Burma Game Rules 1917 (FAO, 1983). Whilst the primary interest of the sanctuary lies in the possible presence of the rhinoceros, the site is also valued for its large size, intact vegetation and protection of the Chindwin River watershed (FAO, 1982; H.G. Hundley, pers. comm., 1987).

**Conservation Management** The site is believed to have high potential as a national park and should be investigated as soon as circumstances permit (FAO, 1985).

**Management Constraints** The area lies in a military zone and the status of the sanctuary is difficult to assess (H.G. Hundley pers. comm., 1987). Rhinoceros horn, blood, urine, and other parts of the body have long been considered by the Chinese and the Burmese hill tribes to have medicinal qualities. This has led to widespread poaching of the species and its subsequent decline in numbers. A proposal exists to dam the Chindwin River at Minsin, close to the sanctuary, for hydroelectricity and to extend navigation.

**Staff** The District Forest Officer, Mawlaik, has executive responsibility and one range officer, with a game ranger and two forest guards as field staff are assigned to the sanctuary (H.G. Hundley, pers. comm., 1987).

**Budget** No information.

#### Local Addresses

District Forest Officer, Mawlaik.



References

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