

Amphoe Lan Sak

Thung Yai Naresuan – Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary (เขตรักษาพันธุ์สัตว์ป่าทุ่งใหญ่นเรศวร-ห้วยขาแข้ง)

has begun to be known since it was registered as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in December 1991.

Huai Kha Khaeng has an area of 3,609,375 rais or 5,775 square kilometres, covering an area of 6 districts of 3 provinces: Amphoe Ban Rai, Amphoe Lan Sak, and Amphoe Huai Khot in Uthai Thani; Amphoe Sangkhla Buri and Amphoe Thong Pha Phum in Kanchanaburi; and Amphoe Umphang in Tak. It also includes the area of Thung Yai Naresuan Wildlife Sanctuary, so this is the largest connected conserved forest in Thailand and the South East Asia Region.

The weather is very hot in summer, and it rains heavily all day in the rainy season, while the winter lasts for a very short period.

Huai Kha Khaeng was announced to be a World Heritage Site because of its natural diversity, including 5 out of 7 kinds of tropical forests which are dry evergreen forest, montane forest, savanna, mixed deciduous forest, and deciduous dipterocarp forest. These forests are blessed with biodiversity. Some of the fauna are nearly extinct, such as wild water buffalo, serow, leopard, Asiatic wild dog, red junglefowl cock, green peafowl and many species of forest insects.

Normally, the wildlife sanctuary does not open for tourists because it is a conserved, high-sensitive area. A lot of people's visits may

destroy the ecological balance. However, after the sanctuary was announced to be a World Heritage Site and became well known to the public, it has permitted travelers to visit only 3 points of areas to learn about nature without staying overnight. Therefore, tourists have to follow the rules strictly. Those permitted areas are: 1. The Headquarters of Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary; 2. Cyber Ranger Station (see further details in the Cyber Waterfall); and 3. Huai Mae Di Ranger Station (in the area of Amphoe Ban Rai, on Highway No.3011, Huai Mae Di – Ban Mai Khlong Angwa. There is a nature study route)

In the area of the headquarters of the wildlife sanctuary, there is a statue of Seub Nakhasathien, facing southwest to see how the Western Forest changes through time. There is an 8-stepped stairway which represents the time of 8 months when Seub was in the position of the head of the sanctuary. The pattern on the stairs represents the obstacles in his work.

Seub Nakhasathien Memorial Building (อาคารอนุสรณ์สถานสืบ นาคะเสถียร)

is a multi-purpose building used as a place to arrange events and exhibitions concerning Seub Nakhasathien, the important person who played a major role in encouraging the announcement of Huai Kha Khaeng as a World Heritage Site. "I think, in my life I have done my best. I think, I have helped society well. I think, I have made it as good as I can. I am pleased and proud of what I have done," said Seub Nakhasathien.

Seub's Shelter (บ้านพักคุณสืบ)

still remains the same like when he was alive. In the bedroom, where Seub ended his life, there is a table with many pictures of his daughter,

labourers, and forest. Beside the table, a few pairs of shoes were put on the floor.

Patrol Labour Memorial (อนุสรณ์คนงานลาดตระเวน)

is another important place which reminds us of the labourers who were shot to death during their mission. It is located in front of the reception shelter. If visitors have a chance to visit Huai Kha Khaeng, Seub's Shelter and Patrol Labour Memorial, they may get something more than just the spirit of environmental conservation.

Khao Hin Daeng Nature Study Route (เส้นทางศึกษาธรรมชาติเขาหินแดง)

is approximately 6 km. long, taking about 4 hours to travel on foot. There are 18 points to interpret the meaning of the nature, including deciduous forest, deciduous dipterocarp forest, mixed deciduous forest, and dry evergreen forest, as well as a sight-seeing point, Pong Thian. After December, there are a lot of birds from various species, most of which are red-breasted parakeet and lineated barbet. Normally, tourists can travel on this route by themselves, using a manual provided at the headquarters of the sanctuary. For a guide, please contact Huai Kha Khaeng Forest Fire Prevention Unit in advance. However, this natural route is closed in April. For details, contact Tel: 08 5725 8433, 08 7840 0316 www.huaikhakhaeng.net.

To get there: take one of these 2 routes:

1. Enter at the headquarters of Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary, approximately 102 km. from the provincial city along Highway No. 333 (Uthai Thani – Nong Chang). Then take Highway 3438 from Nong Chang – Lan Sak. After turning left at Km. 53-54 and driving

along for about 15 km., arriving at the office of Khao Hin Daeng Checkpoint, located on the Huai Thap Salao creek side. From the sanctuary office, drive for 14 km. to the Kapuk Kapiang Ranger Station or 17 km. to the Khao Nang Ram Research Station.

2. Enter at the Khao Bandai Ranger Station, which is in the south of Huai Kha Khaeng, approximately 137 km. from the provincial city, along Highway 333, the Uthai Thani – Nong Chang route. Then, turn into Highway 3282, Nong Chang – Ban Rai route, taking about 80 km. Turn left to a laterite road, passing Ban Mai Khlong Aangwa for 30 km. until reaching the Khlong Rayang Border. Go along to Huai Maedi and the Khao Bandai Ranger Station. Visitors can choose forest trekking to the north or the south of the Huai Kha Khaeng Creek.

** In the rainy season, it is difficult to drive through the entrance due to flooding on the laterite road.*

Accommodation: To stay overnight, contact the Wildlife Sanctuary Management Subdivision in person at least 20 days in advance at the Wildlife Conservation Office, Department of National Park, Wildlife and Flora. For further information, please contact Tel: 0 2561 4292-3 ext. 765 or Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Sanctuary, P.O. Box 7, Amphoe Lan Sak, Uthai Thani 61160 or Tel: 0 5651 9654. There are 3 permitted points for staying overnight. The first point is in the area of the sanctuary office, including 3 houses with a capacity of 10-30 persons and the training building with a capacity of 80 persons. The second point is at the Cyber Ranger Station, and the third one is at the Huai Mae Di Ranger Station.