

# Khao Luang National Park

In the southern peninsular of Thailand is lined by rugged mountain range. In Nakhon Si Thammarat Range, Khao Luang National Park is a significant natural heritage. Forest of Khao Luang, the highest peak of southern Thailand, is one of the wildest and most beautiful places in the region. Besides feeding many streams which are lifelines of the region, the park contains great biodiversity. Its outstanding plants such as *Cyathea podophylla* or tree fern, and remarkable waterfalls, and other natural beauties, all shape up it as an important tourist attraction. Established in 1974, Thailand's 8<sup>th</sup> national park acquires total area of 570 square kilometres, covered in Amphoe Lan Saka, Chawang, Mueang, Phipun, Phomma khiri, King Chang Klang and Nopphitam of Nakhon Si Thammarat.

## Geography

Rugged mountain range, which are part of Nakhon Si Thammarat Range. Khao Luang is the highest peak towering at 1,835 metres.

## Climate

In December, the lowest temperature is 15-17 degrees Celsius. In the hottest month, April, the temperature rises to 28-30 degrees Celsius.

## Flora and fauna

Monsoon from the both sides of peninsular blow the high mountain all the year round, soaking it with rain and moisture. Such condition suits tropical rain forest to prosper. The forest can be divided into two categories.

Hill evergreen forest occupies the land from 1,000 metres elevation to the mountain summit. Its major plants include *Styrax* sp., *Helicia* sp., *Mesua ferrea*, *Goniothalamus expansus*, *Dipteris conjugata*



and *Calamus housigonii*. Tropical evergreen forest Blankets most are of the park. Its major plants include *Dipterocarpus alatus* and *Hopea odorata*.

The park houses probably over 300 orchid species, some are endemic such as *Cirrhopetalum retusiusculum*, *Bulbophyllum smithinandii*, *B. congestum*, *Epipogium roseum* and *Didymoplexiopsis khiriwon-gensis*.

Besides, Khao Luang is habitat for over 327 animal species. Malayan Tapir, Serow, Pig-tailed Macaque, Bush-tailed Porcupine, Clouded Leopard, Common





Muntjak, Sambar Deer, Panther, Tiger, Malayan Sun Bear, Dusky Langur, Crested Fireback, Pigeon, Great Argus, Hornbill and Sunbird can be found.

There are many rare reptiles namely Tao Chak, Ngu Lam Pak Pet (*Python curtus*), Red-headed Krait.

## Attractions

◆ **Karom Waterfall.** The very beautiful waterfall cascades through 19 tiers, but it can be visit at the 7<sup>th</sup> tier namely “Nan Dat Fa”, which is the most beautiful part of the waterfall. The park’s headquarters is located in the waterfall compound.

◆ **Phrom Lok Waterfall.** The fall cascades through 50 tiers, but tourists can visit upto the 4<sup>th</sup> tier only. It is situated in Tambon Phrom Lok.

◆ **Ai-Khiao or Nai Khiao Waterfall.** The beautiful waterfall cascades through over 100 tiers. Tourist is allowed to visit upto the 9<sup>th</sup> tier only. It is situated on the same way to Phrom Lok Waterfall.

◆ **Krung Ching Waterfall.** Surrounded with rich biodiversity, the famous waterfall is quite beautiful. Around the waterfall, there are nature trails that suits plant study and bird watching. Its impressive tier,

## Getting there

- Nakhon Si Thammarat is 800 kilometres from Bangkok. Various modes of transport are available from Bangkok. From Nakhon Si Thammarat, motorist can use highway 4015 bound for Amphoe Lan Saka. The park is another 20 kilometres.
- Krung Ching Waterfall is 62 kilometres from Nakhon Si Thammarat. Motorist can use highway 4016, turn left at Na Reng Intersection, then get on highway 4188 at Ban Huai Phan. The forestry unit at the waterfall is another 8 kilometres.



“Fon Saen Ha” is so beautiful that it is printed in the 1,000 baht banknote. Area round the waterfall once was used as military base of the communist. Today, some evidences such as shelter cave, storage cave, basketball court, remain around the waterfall.

◆ **Tha Phae Waterfall.** The waterfall flows through 10 tiers. It is 6 kilometres from Karom Waterfall.

◆ **Suan Ai Waterfall.** The small fall cascades through 5 tier. It is situated in Amphoe Chawang, 60 kilometres from Nakhon Si Thammarat.

◆ **Kaeo Surakan Cave.** The 700 metres long cave is beautified by rock formation. It is in Tambon Khao Kaeo, 3 kilometres prior to the park.

◆ **Viewpoint** on Khao Luang Summit. Towering at 1,835 metres above sea level, the summit is an ideal place for those who wants to explore Hill Evergreen Forest or study about the plant species. As it is very sensitive area for biological aspect, it is not suit for most tourists.