

WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION - IUCN SUMMARY

638: HUANGLONG SCENIC AND HISTORIC INTEREST AREA (CHINA)

Summary prepared by WCMC/IUCN (April 1992) based on the original nomination submitted by the Ministry of Construction of the People's Republic of China. This original and all documents presented in support of this nomination will be available for consultation at the meetings of the Bureau and the Committee.

1. LOCATION

Lies in Songpan County, North-West Sichuan Province. The Huanglong subdivision is 60,000ha, 58,000ha of which is protection zone. The Mouni Gully subdivision is 10,000ha, 6,000ha of which is protection zone.

2. JURIDICAL DATA

Listed as a state scenic district in 1982. The site overlaps, or completely includes, Huanglongsi Nature Reserve which was established in 1983. Legal protection measures are provided under the national constitution; the Forestry Act; the Environment Law; and the Provisional Regulations Concerning the Places of Scenic and Historical Interest. Further protection was given to the site when the Sichuan Provincial Government approved measures for the legal protection of the site, and clearly defined its boundaries in 1987.

3. IDENTIFICATION

The site lies in the southern part of the Min Shan. The relief is predominantly precipitous, a particularly spectacular example being where the Fujiang River flows through the Danyun Gorge. Xuebaoding, or Snow Mountain Peak, is permanently snow-covered and features the easternmost glacier in China. Of greatest interest, geologically, is the extensive calcite deposition that has taken place, notably along the 3.6km Huanglonggou (Yellow Dragon Gully) where there are several extensive areas of travertine pools. Algae and bacteria proliferate in a number of these pools, giving a wide range of colours from orange and yellow to green and blue. Other karst features include long limestone shoals, notably Liujinshan (Glazed Golden Fan) and Jinshatan (Golden Sand Beach), in Huanglonggou. These are extensive slopes of active limestone deposition, covered entirely by a thin layer of flowing water. There are a number of low-temperature hot springs rising from deep groundwater.

The vegetation consists of mixed forest below 2,300m, coniferous and subalpine forest between 2,300m and 3,600m, and alpine meadows above 3,600m, giving way to permanent snow and ice above 4,800m. There are a number of higher plant species of interest for their rarity, endemism, and ornamental and medicinal value. Vertebrates recorded from the site include 59 mammals, 155 birds, five reptiles, five amphibians, and two fish species. A number of these species are threatened at the national and international level, including giant panda (E), Sichuan golden snub-nosed monkey (V). Parts of the site have long been important in local religion, culture and folklore.

4. STATE OF PRESERVATION / CONSERVATION

The Sichuan Provincial Commission for Construction assumes overall responsibility for the supervision and guidance of the preservation, development and management of the district, although on-the-ground administration and management falls more directly to the Bureau for the Administration of the Huanglong Scenic District. This Administration has five divisions covering general administration, public relations and scenery protection, finance and construction, staff education and training, and the management of the scenic district. A general plan for Huanglong Scenic District has been drawn up, based on a principle of "Preservation First", with restrictions laid down on the nature and extent of construction, conversion of forest to agriculture and mining. Other proposals include measures to control tourist and pilgrim numbers during peak times, to improve staff training, and take on better qualified personnel. A protection zone covers the majority of the area in both subdivisions, where stricter regulations are enforced.

Potential problems include fire, pollution, and forest clearance for agriculture and for firewood. As tourist numbers increase, threats from pollution, possibly erosion and the development of infrastructural facilities will increase. The management plan does include provisions to cater for these problems.

5. JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST

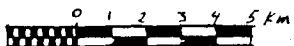
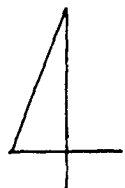
The Huanglong Valley nomination, as presented by the Ministry of Construction of the People's Republic of China, provides the following justification for designation as a World Heritage property:

Natural property

- (iii) **Contain unique, rare or superlative natural phenomena, formations or features.** Huanglong is renowned for its mountainous scenery, with

relatively undisturbed and highly diverse forest ecosystems, combined with the more spectacular localised karst formations, such as travertine pools, waterfalls and limestone shoals.

- iv) **Contain the most important and significant habitats for threatened species of plants and animals.** Huanglong contains a number of plant and animal species which are globally threatened with extinction.



Gani Temple

Chicunsha Temple

Entrance

Peak of Snow Mountain

Huanglong Valley

Snow Treasure Peak

Wangjiang River

Pujiang River

to Pingyu

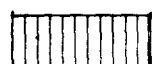
Johai Hot Spring

Songshan County

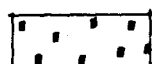
Magu's Great Waterfall



Central Zone



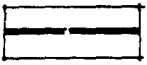
Second-class Zone



Buffer Zone



River Valley



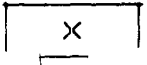
Highway



Horse Riding Path



Peak



Peak of Snow Mountain



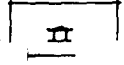
County



Villages



Hot Spring



Temple

WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION - IUCN TECHNICAL EVALUATION

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1. DOCUMENTATION

- i) IUCN/WCMC Data Sheet (8 references)
- ii) Additional Literature Consulted: none
- iii) Consultations: MoC, Sichuan, and Songpan County Government officials, Xia Yimin, Zhao Shidong, Wang Xianpu
- iv) Field Visit: June, 1992, J. Thorsell, P.H.C. Lucas

2. COMPARISON WITH OTHER AREAS

The distinguishing feature of Huanglong is its extensive network of travertine pools. With high mountains and luxuriant vegetation as a backdrop, these pools are scenically equivalent to those found in the existing World Heritage sites at Yellowstone and Nahanni National Parks. They are more impressive too than those found in the World Heritage site at Plitvice and much more natural and significant than those that occur in the Hierapolis-Pamukkale site.

Huanglong is near to two other nominated World Heritage sites in the Min Shan range with which it shares many natural values. Its travertine terraces and lakes, however, are certainly unique in all of Asia and rate among the most outstanding three such sites in the world.

3. INTEGRITY

The Huanglong valley is relatively compact and surrounded on three sides by precipitous peaks. An entrance station at the mouth of the valley controls access. Some removal of timber has taken place but no roads were built and forestry impacts are fast disappearing. In the second class zone there is seasonal stock grazing by nomadic Tibetan pastoralists but impacts are limited.

The main management issue, as in many natural areas in China, is the growing number of tourists. These have increased rapidly to 160,000 in 1991 from 50,000 in 1989. Some steps in the management plan have been outlined to control this

use but improved road and air access in the region will bring even greater numbers and increased attention to visitor management will be needed in future.

4. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

A map was procured during the field visit which outlines the zoning of the site. There is much human activity in the buffer zone and only the central and second class zone should be considered as part of the nomination. The detached Mouni Gully subdivision is also seen as a separate unit and its inclusion is not seen as necessary for the integrity of the property.

The area has a cooperative agreement with the USNPS Western Regional Office and a friendship charter with the Yellowstone World Heritage site. Both the Sichuan and US authorities are urged to activate this agreement to mutual benefit.

5. EVALUATION

The Huanglong valley with its series of travertine lakes, waterfalls, forests and mountain scenery is a superlative natural property and meets natural criterion (iii).

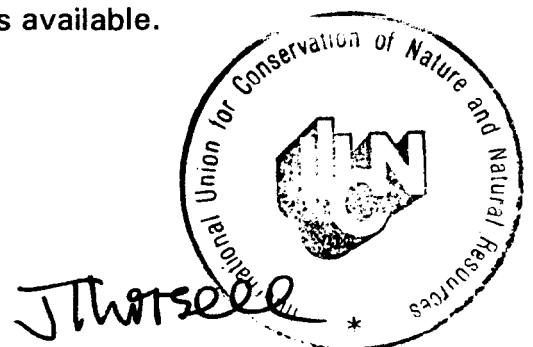
Huanglong is also proposed for listing under criterion (iv) but because of the lack of data on the conservation status of wildlife species an assessment cannot now be made of the applicability of this criterion. When a census and further surveys are carried out, the use of this additional criterion may be considered.

6. RECOMMENDATION

The central and second class conservation zone of Huanglong meet criterion (iii) and the area should be added to the World Heritage List. The separate Mouni Gully subdivision to the west should not be part of the site until its condition and natural values can be investigated further.

The Committee should relate Huanglong to the current sister nomination of Jiuzhaigou and the previously deferred site at Wanglang. It should propose that Huanglong and Jiuzhaigou be inscribed as one site now and invite the Chinese authorities to formulate a Phase II which would comprise a unified site in the Min Shan (approximately based on the attached map from the Conservation Plan For the Giant Panda).

Finally, the Committee should recommend the preparation of a species conservation status report and leave open the prospect of also inscribing the site on the basis of criterion (iv) when the data becomes available.



Map 3.1 Proposed Reserve System in N. Minshan

