

Economic Value and Utilization of Biodiversity in Local Communities at Nam Nao National Park, Phetchabun Province

Suppanit Jarernsuk¹, Kecha Dadookain², and Touchkanin Jongjitvimol^{1*}

¹ Faculty of Science and Technology, Pibulsongkram Rajabhat University, Phitsanulok 65000, Thailand.

² Faculty of Management Sciences, Pibulsongkram Rajabhat University, Phitsanulok 65000, Thailand.

*Corresponding author, E-mail: touchkanin@psru.ac.th

ABSTRACT

Nam Nao National Park, Phetchabun Province is home to thousands of wildlife, flora and fauna, and indigenous people for a long period of time. It is also known as one of the most visited national parks during the tourist season from October to February every year. However, not until recently has the knowledge about the Park's non-timber forest products (NTFPs) been examined and revealed. This paper, therefore, aims at studying the biodiversity and assessing the economic value of the forest products utilized in Nam Nao National Park between 2012 and 2014. Using interviews and questionnaires, the study showed that 8 categories of NTFPs were prominently used by a large number of residents. The mean gross annual value was THB 23,196.49 per household. Moreover, herbs and spices were recorded as the most popularly used either for commercial or medicinal purposes. The results also showed that the transfer of local wisdom and the sharing of knowledge for herbal treatment play an important role in conserving the NTFPs in this area.

Key words: economic value, utilization, biodiversity resources

INTRODUCTION

It can be seen that forest is a significant source of biodiversity. People who live in and around the forest use both timber and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) for their subsistence. They benefit significantly from the consumption of edible fruits, mushrooms, and bamboo shoots (Choopan, 2007). People use forest products as building materials, medicines, and clothing. They also use these products in their religious ceremonies and traditional rituals (Bookaew *et al.*, 2009). Nowadays, as population growth and technological advancement have been increasing, it is more convenient for local people to exploit their natural resources for personal purposes (Petchsri and Jongjitvimol, 2013), which leads to deforestation as well as forest encroachment for farming and agricultural land.

Nam Nao National Park, Phetchabun Province is located in the lower northern part of Thailand. It is known for its richness in biodiversity and natural beauty. It attracts thousands of tourists both Thais and foreigners each year, generating a favorable income to its residents (DNP, 2010).