

Dao Co To Proposed Marine Protected Area

Alternative site name(s)

Co To islands

Province(s)

Quang Ninh

Area

7,850 ha

Coordinates

20°56' - 21°04'N, 20°56' - 21°04'E

Agro-ecological zone

North-eastern

Decreed by government

No

Management board established

No

Investment plan prepared

No

VCF eligibility criteria met

None

Social screening criteria met

None

Conservation needs assessment prepared

No

Operational management plan prepared

No

Tracking tool completed

No

Map available

Yes

Management history

Dao Co To proposed marine protected area is centred on the Co To islands, which lie in the East Sea, about 40 km off the coast of Quang Ninh province. Administratively the islands belong to Co To district, an offshore district of Quang Ninh province. Dao Co To was proposed as a marine protected area by the Hai Phong Institute of Oceanography in 1995. In this proposal, the area of the proposed marine protected area was given as 3,850 ha, although this only comprised the terrestrial component (Nguyen Huy Yet and Vo Si Tuan 1995). Dao Co To was subsequently included on a list of 16 proposed marine protected areas compiled on behalf of the former MOSTE in 1998. On this list, the area of Dao Co To was given as 3,000 to 4,000 ha (Nguyen Chu Hoi *et al.* 1998).

The proposal to establish a marine protected area at Dao Co To was reiterated by the Asian Development Bank (ADB 1999) in their marine and coastal protected areas systems plan for Vietnam. In the ADB proposal, the area of the proposed marine protected area was given as 7,850 ha, comprising a marine component of 4,000 ha and a terrestrial component of 3,850 ha.

Topography and hydrology

The proposed marine protected area encompasses an archipelago of 25 islands, the three largest of which are Co To Lon, Thanh Lan and Co To Con. A semi-

enclosed sea bay lies between these three islands, with an area of 2,500 ha. The highest point on the islands is 200 m on Thanh Lan. The islands are surrounded by an area of shallow water, less than 20 m deep and about 21,500 ha in extent. The waters of Dao Co To proposed marine protected area contain many coral reefs.

Biodiversity values

To date, surveys of the marine biodiversity of Dao Co To proposed marine protected area have recorded 151 phytoplankton species, 69 zooplankton species, 90 seaweed species, 114 coral species, 165 zoobenthic species and 191 marine fish species (Nguyen Chu Hoi *et al.* 1998). The coral reefs at the site are large and old, and dominated by *Acropora* spp. (ADB 1999). In addition, local fishers report the occurrence of the globally vulnerable Dugong *Dugong dugon* in the proposed marine protected area's shallow seagrass beds (N. Cox *in litt.* 2003). The terrestrial flora of the Co To islands is relatively rich, with 248 species recorded to date, although the terrestrial fauna has been little studied (ADB 1999).

Conservation issues

The marine resources of Dao Co To proposed marine protected area are exploited by local people, as well as by fishers from other parts of northern Vietnam, Hong Kong, China and Taiwan. The

Dao Co To Proposed Marine Protected Area

activities of these people are largely uncontrolled by the district authorities, as a result of which destructive fishing practices, such as use of small-mesh nets and cyanide fishing, are widespread. A number of marine products, including squid, lobsters and certain marine fish, are being over-exploited (ADB 1999).

Other documented values

The marine ecosystem of Dao Co To proposed marine protected area supports a number of economically important species, including squid, cuttlefish, abalone, pearl oyster and lobsters. The area is also an important breeding and nursery ground for many fish species (ADB 1999). The proposed marine protected area also has potential for eco-tourism development.

Related projects

No information.

Conservation needs assessment

A conservation needs assessment has not been conducted for the site.

Operational management plan

An operational management plan has not been prepared for the site.

Eligibility against VCF criteria

The site is ineligible for VCF support because it is not a Special-use Forest.

Criterion	Eligibility
A _I	
A _{II}	
B _I	
B _{II}	
B _{III}	
C _I	
C _{II}	

Social screening requirements

A social screening report has not been prepared for the site.

Criterion	Eligibility
A	
B	
C	
D	

Literature sources

ADB (1999) Draft coastal and marine protected areas plan. Hanoi: Asian Development Bank.

Nguyen Chu Hoi, Nguyen Huy Yet and Dang Ngoc Thanh eds. (1998) [Scientific basis for marine protected areas planning]. Hai Phong: Hai Phong Institute of Oceanography. In Vietnamese.

Nguyen Huy Yet and Vo Si Tuan (1995) [Information on proposed marine protected areas on the coast of Vietnam]. Hai Phong: Hai Phong Institute of Oceanography. In Vietnamese.

Vietnam News (2002) Co To island: paradise refound. Vietnam News 15 September 2002.