

Tho Chu Proposed Marine Protected Area

Alternative site name(s)

Cac Dao Tay Nam Bo

Province(s)

Kien Giang

Area

22,400 ha

Coordinates

9°17'N, 103°28'E

Agro-ecological zone

Mekong Delta

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

Tho Chu was first proposed as a marine protected area by Nguyen Huy Yet and Vo Si Tuan (1995), who listed it together with Nam Du and Phu Quoc islands as Cac Dao Tay Nam Bo [islands off south-western Vietnam] proposed marine protected area. Subsequently, the Asian Development Bank (ADB 1999) proposed establishing a marine protected area at Tho Chu, with a total area of 22,400 ha, comprising a terrestrial component of 1,190 ha and a marine component of 21,210 ha. The area is currently under the management of the armed forces (ADB 1999).

Guttiferae, Fabaceae and Sapotaceae families. Coral reefs are common at the site, and are characterised by a high abundance but low diversity of coral species. A total of 99 coral species have been identified, and the dominant genera are *Acropora* and *Montipora* (ADB 1999). ADB (1999) report that the coastal beaches in the proposed marine protected area are favourable nesting sites for the globally threatened Hawksbill Turtle *Eretmochelys imbricata* and Green Turtle *Chelonia mydas*. In addition, the seagrass beds at the site are important for foraging marine turtles. In recent years, however, the incidence of nesting has reduced greatly, and very few nesting turtles have been recorded (N. Cox *in litt.* 2003).

Topography and hydrology

The Tho Chu archipelago comprises a group of five islands and the surrounding marine waters. The largest island, Tho Chu, has a total area of 1,190 ha and a highest point of 167 m (Nguyen Huy Yet and Vo Si Tuan 1995). ADB (1999) propose that the marine protected area should also include the Cao Cat islands, two small islands located about 15 km to the north-east of the Tho Chu archipelago.

Conservation issues

The islands and the surrounding marine ecosystem are reportedly well protected by military personnel stationed there (ADB 1999).

Biodiversity values

The forest on the islands is in a good condition, without any degradation. The terrestrial flora comprises at least 200 species, and is dominated by the

Other documented values

The islands have an important role in fisheries production. Economically important species recorded at the site include Pearl Oyster *Pinctada margaritifera* and the sea cucumbers *Actinopyga echinites* and *Bohadschia graeffei* (ADB 1999).

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Related projects

The WWF Indochina Programme has supported monitoring of turtle nesting beaches by local communities since 2002.

the coast of Vietnam]. Hai Phong: Hai Phong Institute of Oceanography. In Vietnamese.

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 Huy Yet and Vo Si Tuan (1995) [Information on proposed marine protected areas on