

Cu Lao Cham Proposed Marine Protected Area

Alternative site name(s)

None

Province(s)

Quang Nam

Status

Proposed

Management board established

No

Latitude

15°52' - 16°00'N

Longitude

108°22' - 108°44'E

Bio-unit

05b - South Annam



Conservation status

Cu Lao Cham was included on Decision No. 194/CT of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, dated 9 August 1986, as a 1,535 ha nature reserve (MARD 1997). An investment plan was prepared by Hoi An Town People's Committee in 1994. This investment plan defined a 1,544 ha nature reserve, comprising a strict protection area of 799 ha and a forest rehabilitation area of 745 ha. On 11 July 1994, the investment plan was approved by the then Quang Nam-Da Nang Provincial People's Committee, by Decision No. 1272/QD-UB (Quang Nam Provincial FPD 2000).

In 1995, Hai Phong Institute of Oceanography proposed establishing a marine protected area at Cu Lao Cham, comprising the nature reserve (Nguyen Huy Yet and Vo Si Tuan 1995). Consequently, Cu Lao Cham was included on a list of 16 proposed marine protected areas compiled on behalf of MOSTE (Nguyen Chu Hoi *et al.* eds. 1998). The proposed area given in this proposal was only 1,544 ha, the area of the nature reserve; the area of the marine component was not defined.

The proposal to establish a marine protected area at Cu Lao Cham 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 site is given as 6,719 ha, comprising a marine component of 5,175 ha and a terrestrial component of 1,544 ha. The nature reserve is under the management of Quang Nam Provincial FPD (Quang Nam Provincial FPD 2000).

Topography and hydrology

Cu Lao Cham proposed marine protected area is centred on Cu Lao Cham archipelago, which consists of one large island and several smaller ones. The largest island, Cu Lao Cham, covers an area of 1,317 ha and reaches an elevation of 517 m. The marine protected area proposed by ADB (1999) does not include the whole archipelago, only Cu Lao Cham island and the waters and islands off its western end. A large proportion of the proposed marine component is deeper than 20 m, although the waters around the islands are shallower.

Biodiversity value

The terrestrial biodiversity of the site is reviewed in the Cu Lao Cham Nature Reserve site card. The most important habitat of the proposed marine protected area, from a marine biodiversity perspective, are the coral reefs that occur off the western and south-western shores of Cu Lao Cham island and most of the smaller

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islands. These reefs have an average coral cover of 34%, and have similar characteristics to the reefs in the Tonkin Gulf. The dominant coral species are members of the following genera: *Acropora*, *Montipora* and *Goniopora*. To date, 131 hard coral species, 187 reef fish species, 84 mollusc species, and 12 echinoderm species have been reported from the area (ADB 1999).

Conservation issues

The major threats to marine biodiversity at the site are over-exploitation of marine resources and the prevalence of destructive fishing methods, such as dynamite fishing and use of small-mesh nets. These threats are believed to arise from the poor economic situation of the local people. Potential future threats include pollution from industry and agriculture, and unsustainable tourism development (ADB 1999).

Other documented values

In 1993, there were 2,725 inhabitants of Cu Lao Cham island. The main economic activity on the island is subsistence fishing, and the waters of the Cu Lao Cham archipelago are an important fishing ground for local people and others from the mainland. However, the archipelago's inshore waters have already been heavily over-exploited (ADB 1999).

In addition to the value of the site for fisheries production, ADB (1999) believe that the islands and the surrounding marine area have high potential for eco-tourism development. The islands are situated close to Da Nang city and Hoi An town, and are already designated for tourism development in the National Tourism Master Plan (ADB 1999).

Related projects

ADB are currently supporting a regional technical assistance entitled *Coastal and Marine Environment Management in the South China Sea (East Sea)*. This is partly supported by a technical assistance grant from the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency. The project aims to promote improved management of coastal and marine resources in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Hainan and Guangxi Provinces of the People's Republic of China (ADB 1999).

MOSTE is the executing agency for this project in Vietnam. To date, a draft coastal and marine protected area plan has been compiled, which discusses a number of candidate sites for inclusion within a revised national system of 30 marine and coastal protected areas, 10 of which will be new. Cu Lao Cham is included in this plan (ADB 1999).

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.

Quang Nam Provincial FPD (2000) [FPD questionnaire]. Tam Ky: Quang Nam Provincial Forest Protection Department. In Vietnamese.