

Dao Bach Long Vi Proposed Marine Protected Area

Alternative site name(s)

None

Province(s)

Hai Phong

Status

Proposed

Management board established

No

Latitude

20°08'N

Longitude

107°43'E

Bio-unit

None



Conservation status

Dao Bach Long Vi lies in the Gulf of Tonkin, about 95 km south-east of Cat Ba island and 130 km south-east of Hai Phong city. Administratively it is an offshore district of Hai Phong. Dao Bach Long Vi is not included on any government decrees, however, the island was proposed as a marine protected area by Hai Phong Institute of Oceanography in 1995. In this proposal, the total area of the proposed marine protected area was given as 550 ha, comprising a terrestrial component of 250 ha and a marine component of 300 ha (Nguyen Huy Yet and Vo Si Tuan 1995). This proposal was reiterated by MOSTE in 1998 (Nguyen Chu Hoi *et al.* eds. 1998).

Subsequently, the Asian Development Bank (ADB 1999) proposed that Dao Bach Long Vi Marine Protected Area cover 90,000 ha, to comprise a terrestrial component of 250 ha and a marine component of 89,750 ha.

Topography and hydrology

The proposed marine protected area is centred on Bach Long Vi island; there are no other significant exposed land masses within 75 km of this island. The marine component of the proposed marine protected area consists of the relatively level, shallow waters

surrounding Bach Long Vi island. The average depth of these waters is 30 m, although they do contain some topographic variations including submerged banks. The inter-tidal zone around Bach Long Vi island covers a large area, and tides range from 0.16 to 3.76 m. The highest point on the island is 62 m.

Biodiversity value

In 1995, Hai Phong Institute of Oceanography conducted a survey of the marine and terrestrial ecosystems of Dao Bach Long Vi proposed marine protected area. The survey recorded 126 terrestrial plant species and 17 mangrove species. In the marine ecosystem, the survey recorded 95 species of coral and 460 species of fish (Nguyen Huy Yet and Vo Si Tuan 1995). ADB (1999) consider that the biodiversity value of the marine component outweighs that of the terrestrial component and that it should be regarded as one of the “most critically important marine habitats in the Gulf of Tonkin”.

Conservation issues

Due to its location 10-12 hours from the mainland by boat, Bach Long Vi island is used as a base for offshore fishing. Numerous fishing boats harbour around the island. The marine resources in the immediate vicinity of the island are subject to over-

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harvesting and destructive fishing practices. For example, there has been an annual decrease in abalone *Haliotis diversicolor* production. Responsibility for controlling these activities is unclear. For example, whilst the military authorities manage the area, they do not have responsibility for managing and controlling fishing practices (ADB 1999).

One obstacle to management of the site is its remoteness: access by boat is slow and only possible when the sea is calm. Additionally, an exact boundary for the proposed marine protected area has yet to be defined. ADB (1999) recommend that this boundary should offer protection to the areas of greatest importance for coral reefs and fish nurseries around the island. For this reason, ADB (1998) propose a boundary based on a 40 m bathymetric contour.

Other documented values

Bach Long Vi means “tail of the white dragon”, a name which derives from a Vietnamese legend regarding the origins of Ha Long bay. Fishing is the mainstay of economic activity in the Gulf of Tonkin, and Dao Bach Long Vi is a major nursery for area this fishery. Fish eggs and larvae reach high densities in the monsoon seasons, and these are high concentrations of economically valuable species to the south-west of the island. More than 50 species of commercial fish are abundant in the area (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. Dao Bach Long Vi is included in this plan (ADB 1999).

Literature sources

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

Hai Phong City FPD (2000) [FPD questionnaire]. Hai Phong: Hai Phong City Forest Protection Department. In Vietnamese.

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.