

Dao Co To Proposed Marine Protected Area

Alternative site name(s)

Co To islands

Province(s)

Quang Ninh

Status

Proposed

Management board established

No

Latitude

20°56' - 21°04'N

Longitude

107°42' - 107°52'E

Bio-unit

06a - Tropical South China



Conservation status

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 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.* eds. 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 in Dao Co To proposed marine protected area contain many coral reefs.

Biodiversity value

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.* eds. 1998). The coral reefs at the site are large and old, and dominated by *Acropora* spp. 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).

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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 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).

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.

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

The ADB is currently supporting a regional technical assistance called *Coastal and Marine Environment Management in the South China Sea (East Sea)*, partly supported by a grant from the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency. This project aims to promote improved management of coastal and marine resources in the region, and is being implemented by MOSTE. Under this project, a draft coastal and marine protected area systems plan for Vietnam has been compiled, which reviews a number of candidate sites for inclusion within a revised national system of 30 marine and coastal protected areas. Dao Co To is included in this plan.

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.