

# Hon Cau-Vinh Hao Proposed Marine Protected Area

## Alternative site name(s)

Cu Lao Cau-Vinh Hao

## Province(s)

Binh Thuan

## Status

Proposed

## Management board established

No

## Latitude

11°13' - 11°19'N

## Longitude

108°44' - 108°51'E

## Bio-unit

05b - South Annam



## Conservation status

Hon Cau-Vinh Hao 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 150 ha, although this only comprised the terrestrial component (Nguyen Huy Yet and Vo Si Tuan 1995). Hon Cau-Vinh Hao was subsequently included on a list of 16 proposed marine protected areas compiled on behalf of MOSTE in 1998 (Nguyen Chu Hoi *et al.* eds. 1998).

The proposal to establish a marine protected area at Hon Cau-Vinh Hao 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 12,500 ha, comprising a marine component of 12,390 ha and a terrestrial component of 110 ha.

## Topography and hydrology

Hon Cau-Vinh Hao proposed marine protected area is centred on Cu Lao Hon island (also known as Cu Lao Cau island), a low, granite island, c.150 ha in area, situated in Ca Na bay, c.10 km off the coast of Binh Thuan province. The topography of Cu Lao Cao island is characterised by rocky outcrops, with sandy beaches

on the north and south sides. The highest point on the island is 27 m, while the deepest point of the marine component is 17 m below sea level. The marine component of the proposed marine protected area includes fringing coral reefs around Cu Lao Hon island and platform reefs on submerged banks.

## Biodiversity value

Hon Cau-Vinh Hao proposed marine protected area is an important site for coral reef conservation. The reefs are in a pristine condition, with an average cover of 43%. The site supports the highest diversity of hermatypic corals known in Vietnam, with more than 65 genera, including *Acropora*, *Montipora*, *Porites*, *Favia* and *Goniopora*. There is also a small area of seagrass beds at the site (ADB 1999).

Sea currents from the north and south meet near Hon Cau-Vinh Hao, with the result that the proposed marine protected area is located in an area of strong upwelling (ADB 1999). This phenomenon has a great influence on the marine ecosystem, leading to high marine productivity. To date, 175 phytoplankton species, 163 seaweed species, 147 coral species, 80 mollusc species, 46 crustacean species, 26 echinoderm species and 211 fish species have been recorded at Hon Cau-Vinh Hao proposed marine protected area (Nguyen Chu Hoi eds. *et al.* 1998).

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## Conservation issues

The major threat to marine biodiversity at Hon Cau-Vinh Hao is unsustainable exploitation of marine resources. In particular, destructive fishing practices, such as dynamite fishing and trawling, are having serious negative impacts on the coral reef ecosystem. This problem is compounded by the low living standards of and low levels of conservation awareness among local people. Furthermore, many of the people exploiting the marine resources of the site come from neighbouring Ninh Thuan province, and their activities are very difficult for the fisheries protection staff to control.

Binh Thuan Provincial People's Committee have introduced regulations for controlling fishing activities at Hon Cau-Vinh Hao during the spawning season from April until June. These regulations are enforced by a fisheries guard station on Cu Lao Hon island, which is under the management of the provincial fisheries department. Three reef-check sites for coral reef monitoring were established in 1998 (ADB 1999).

## Other documented values

The waters around Cu Lao Hon island are an important fishing ground for fishers from Binh Thuan and Ninh Thuan provinces. The area is a breeding ground for anchovy *Stolephorus* sp. and a nursery site for other marine species of economic importance. The site also has high potential tourism value, due to its scenic landscape and coral reefs. Indeed, international tourism is already being developed in the area (ADB 1999).

## Related projects

ADB are 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. Hon Cau-Vinh Hao 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.

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.