

# Phu Quoc Nature Reserve

## Alternative site name(s)

Bac Dao Phu Quoc [northern Phu Quoc island], Dao Phu Quoc [Phu Quoc island]

## Province(s)

Kien Giang

## Status

Decreed

## Management board established

Yes

## Latitude

10°17' - 10°27'N

## Longitude

103°58' - 104°05'E

## Bio-unit

05d - Cardamom Mountains



## Conservation status

Phu Quoc was included on Decision No. 194/CT of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, dated 9 August 1986 (MARD 1997), which decreed the establishment of a 5,000 ha nature reserve, called Dao Phu Quoc, for the conservation of "island forest abundant with valuable woody species, such as *Hopea* sp." (Cao Van Sung 1995). The nature reserve was established and developed over the period from 1986 to 1992 (Anon. 1998). On 10 March 1989, a nature reserve management board was established by Kien Giang Provincial People's Committee (Kien Giang Provincial FPD 2000), and, on 2 October 1992, investment funding for the nature reserve, now named Bac Dao Phu Quoc, was approved by the former Ministry of Forestry, following Decision No. 444/KL/QD (Anon. 1998, Kien Giang Provincial FPD 2000).

In 1993, the former Ministry of Forestry and Kien Giang Provincial People's Committee approved an investment plan for Phu Quoc Watershed Protection Forest (WPF), a separate but contiguous area to the south and west of Phu Quoc Nature Reserve. On 3 April 1996, Decision No. 360/UB-QD of Kien Giang Provincial People's Committee merged the management of the WPF and the nature reserve. In 1998, Ho Chi Minh City Sub-FIPI prepared a joint

investment plan for Phu Quoc Nature Reserve and WPF. In this investment plan, the area of Phu Quoc Nature Reserve was given as 14,957 ha and that of Phu Quoc WPF was given as 35,873 ha (Anon. 1998).

According to Kien Giang Provincial FPD (2000), the total area of Phu Quoc Nature Reserve is 14,400 ha, including a strict protection area of 7,266 ha, a forest rehabilitation area of 5,995 ha and an administration and services area of 620 ha. Phu Quoc Nature Reserve is currently under the management of Kien Giang Provincial DARD (Kien Giang Provincial FPD 2000). Phu Quoc is included on the 2010 list as a 13,911 ha nature reserve, including 12,794 ha of forest (FPD 1998).

## Topography and hydrology

Covering 56,200 ha, Phu Quoc is the largest island in an archipelago of 14 islands. Phu Quoc island lies in the Gulf of Thailand, about 40 km due west of the Vietnamese mainland. Phu Quoc Nature Reserve covers the north-eastern corner of Phu Quoc island, and the northern and eastern boundaries of the nature reserve follow the coastline. The topography of the nature reserve is hilly, although not particularly steep. The highest point in the nature reserve is Mount Chua at 603 m. The nature reserve is drained by numerous, mainly seasonal, streams. The only sizeable river on the island is the Rach Cua Can river, which drains the

southern part of the nature reserve, and flows into the sea on the west coast of the island.

## Biodiversity value

Little information on the flora and fauna of Phu Quoc Nature Reserve is available. The natural vegetation of Phu Quoc island is lowland evergreen forest, and, according to the investment plan (Anon. 1998), the nature reserve supports 12,794 ha of forest, equivalent to 86% of the total area. The forest appears to be in good condition, particularly at higher elevations, although forest at lower elevation is degraded. The forest is characterised by members of the Fabaceae. To date, 929 plant species have been recorded on Phu Quoc island (ADB 1999).

Numerous publications report the occurrence of Pileated Gibbon *Hylobates pileatus* (formerly considered a subspecies of White-handed Gibbon *H. lar*) on Phu Quoc island (Fooden 1996). The original source of these reports is Kloss (1929), who speculated that some Pileated Gibbon specimens collected by Mouhot may have originated from Phu Quoc island. As Mouhot explicitly states that he did not visit Phu Quoc island, however, this speculation is refuted (Fooden 1996). There is, therefore, no evidence for the occurrence of Pileated Gibbon on Phu Quoc island.

## Conservation issues

Migrants from other parts of Vietnam have settled on Phu Quoc island and now account for a significant proportion of the population growth on the island (ADB 1999). However, the most important economic activity on the island is fishing not agriculture (Dodd and Lewis 1996). However, Kien Giang Provincial FPD (2000) identify shifting cultivation as a major threat to biodiversity in the buffer zone of the nature reserve.

The pace of tourism development on the island is rapid, and may have negative environmental impacts in the future, particularly if there is pressure to develop the coastal zone of the nature reserve. Conversely, Phu Quoc Nature Reserve has high potential for ecotourism development, which could make a positive contribution to management of the site.

## Other documented values

Phu Quoc island already attracts a number of tourists, because of its beautiful scenery and unspoilt beaches. However, the tourism potential of the nature reserve and the surrounding marine area have yet to be fully realised.

## Related projects

Phu Quoc island is also the location of a proposed marine protected area, which may incorporate the present nature reserve (see Phu Quoc Proposed Marine Protected Area site card).

## Literature sources

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