

Truong Sa Proposed Marine Protected Area

Alternative site name(s)

Spratly archipelago, Truong Sa archipelago

Province(s)

Khanh Hoa

Status

Proposed

Management board established

No

Latitude

7°25' - 11°45'N

Longitude

111°00' - 116°00'E

Bio-unit

None



Conservation status

In 1998, Truong Sa was included on a list of 16 proposed marine protected areas prepared on behalf of MOSTE. In this proposal, the area of Truong Sa proposed marine protected area was given as 160,000 ha. The site is currently under the management of Khanh Hoa Provincial People's Committee (Nguyen Chu Hoi *et al.* eds. 1998).

Topography and hydrology

Truong Sa proposed marine protected area is centred on the Truong Sa (or Spratly) archipelago, a large archipelago of islands and reefs, situated in the East Sea, about 450 km south-east of Nha Trang city. The highest point in the archipelago is 6 m above sea level, while the surrounding marine waters reach depths of up to 3,000 m.

Biodiversity value

Truong Sa proposed marine protected area supports a high diversity and abundance of coral reefs. For example, a coral survey undertaken in 1996 around Thuyen Chai, one of the larger islands, documented 201 species of reef-building coral. The coral reef at

Thuyen Chai island is large in size and diverse in morphology (Nguyen Huy Yet 1997).

The waters of Truong Sa proposed marine protected area are the breeding ground of a wide variety of marine organisms, including marine mammals, and the islands are nesting sites for a range of birds and sea turtles (McManus 1994). According to Nguyen Quang Phach (1994), a number of seabirds that are rare elsewhere in Vietnam can be found at Truong Sa marine protected area, including Streaked Shearwater *Calonectris leucomelas*, Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster*, Red-footed Booby *S. sula*, Great Crested Tern *Sterna bergii* and White Tern *Gygis alba*.

Conservation issues

The major threats to biodiversity at Truong Sa proposed marine protected area are over-exploitation of marine resources, pollution, and disturbance to seabird colonies and turtle nesting beaches (McManus 1994).

Other documented values

The waters of the Truong Sa archipelago have great economic importance for offshore fisheries. The waters may be one of the most important stocking grounds for fish and other marine organisms in the East Sea, and

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may have increasing importance as stocks in other areas decrease as a result of over-exploitation.

Related projects

A number of scientific research projects have been conducted in the Truong Sa archipelago over the last 25 years, as part of the National Marine Programme of Vietnam. These projects were implemented by various research institutes of the National Centre for Natural Science and Technology, with funding from the government of Vietnam (Nguyen Cu pers. comm.).

Literature sources

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