

Study Trip Report

Hanoi and Nha Trang Bay, Vietnam

February 25-29, 2012

Participants

Master's program students (JDS fellows) at the Graduate School of Life and Environment Sciences, the University of Tsukuba

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Schedule

Date	Time	Activities	Purposes/Contents	Organization	Contact person
26/2 (Sun)	9:30 - 12:00	Visit some places/islands around Nha Trang Bay			
	14:00-16:00	Interview some local people/tourism operators	To understand the tourism development in Nha Trang Bay MPA		
27/2 (Mon)	8:30-12:00	Visit some islands under the management of the Nha Trang Bay MPA	To explore the real situation and conservation measures in the MPA		Mr. Nguyen Thanh Tai, Nha Trang Bay MPA staff
	14:00 -16:00	Meeting with management board of Nha Trang Bay MPA Authority	To find information about the activities of the MPA and the role of MPA in protection of aquatic habitats, livelihood improvements for fishermen and tourism development in NT	Nha Trang Bay MPA Authority	Mr. Truong Kinh (Director)
	16:00 -17:00	Visit Oceanographic museum	To discover marine species	Oceanographic museum	
28/2 (Tue)	08:30 - 9:30	Have meeting with Institute of Oceanography	To understand the status of marine resource conservation in NT Bay	Institute of Oceanography	Mr. Nguyen Van Long, Head of the Department of Marine Living Resources
	11:45 -13:30	Flight to Hanoi			
	15:30-16:15	Have a meeting with the former Director General of the Directorate of Fisheries	To discuss Marine conservation in Vietnam	Agriculture Project Management Unit	Mr. Chu Tien Vinh
29/2 (Wed)	0:10	Flight to Japan			

Nha Trang Bay Marine Protected Area (MPA) Authority

Date: February 27 (14:00-16:00)

Interviewee: Mr. Truong Kinh, Director of the Nha Trang Bay MPA Authority

Over the past 10 years, the Nha Trang Bay Marine Protected Area (MPA) has faced many difficulties. First, the MPA concept is still new in Vietnam in spite of 10 years of development. Therefore, the understanding of the local authorities and other relevant stakeholders are limited. The budgets for some activities proposed by the MPA have not been approved such as that for the maintenance of the Nha Trang Bay MPA website. In fact, the MPA in Nha Trang is not well supported by the local authority.

Second, a comprehensive legal framework for the management of the MPA in Vietnam has not been established. Up to now, there are a number of legal documents including:

- Decree No. 57/2008/NĐ-CP on issuing regulations for management of Vietnam's MPAs of national and international importance,
- Decision No. 742 QĐ-TTg dated 26/05/2010 on approving the system of Vietnam's MPAs towards 2020, and
- Decision No. 188/QĐ-TTg on approving the fisheries resources protection and development program towards 2020.

However, there are some overlaps among the legal documents and among the Law on Biodiversity, and the Fisheries Law in terms of MPA management. Moreover, the policies on conservation have not been clear enough, and special benefit policies for people working in the marine protected areas have not been issued. Additionally, there are no colleges or universities teaching specialties regarding marine protected areas in Vietnam. Thus, it is not easy to find qualified candidates to work in the marine protected areas.

Third, there are conflicts between conservation and development, which could be clearly observed in Nha Trang Bay. Tourism has developed quickly and is the core pillar of the Nha Trang economy. Tourism operators

are not much interested in marine resource conservation in Nha Trang Bay and they take the resource exploitation for granted. At present, there exist three major conflicts between the Nha Trang Bay MPA authority with local fishermen, management agencies, and enterprises (mainly in tourism).

Every year, Nha Trang, as one of the 29 most beautiful bays in the world, attracts a great number of both domestic and international tourists. However, only the tourism operators get benefits. The local people living in Nha Trang Bay have received no benefits.

As of 2002, there were 1,100 households (5,300 people) living in and around Nha Trang Bay, whose livelihoods depended on the Bay. 80% of the people were fishermen and 79% of the women have no employment.

According to Mr. Truong Kinh, finance is not a big problem in Nha Trang Bay at the moment because, in 2012, they are still allocated 4 billion VND for expenses in administration and conservation activities except for maintaining the MPA's website and community development activities.

[Dang Nguyet Anh]



Photo 1: Interview and discussion with the director of the Nha Trang Bay MPA



Photo 2: Sightseeing fee collection at Hon Mon Island

Bich Dam fishing village in Hon Tre Island

Date: February 27 (10:00-11:00)

Interviewee: Mr. Hoa, the head of Bich Dam fishing village, Hon Tre Island

The population size of Bich Dam village is around 865 people (192 households). Its main livelihood is the fisheries and it has not been approved for tourism development due to military bases strategically located on this island.

Mr. Hoa mentioned that, in general, villagers in Bich Dam were aware of the importance of marine conservation for future generations and the role of the MPA to their livelihood. However, according to Mr. Hoa, fishermen saw a decreasing trend in fishery production just after the establishment of the Hon Mun MPA (now Nha Trang Bay MPA), which has caused many difficulties for their living, because they were not allowed to enter into the core and protected zones for fishing. Moreover, fishing vessels from the village are mainly of a small scale, and therefore, they cannot go offshore beyond the MPA boundary to fish. Consequently, their production is poor and has been increasingly reducing. The decline in the total catch is partly explained by the general trend of resource depletion throughout the country.

With the support from the Sustainable Livelihoods in and around the Marine Protected Areas (LMPA) component, the local people can borrow money from microcredits – one program implemented by the LMPA component for their production creating an alternative income. Additionally, the LMPA component also supported Bich Dam to build toilets and 48 filtering tanks. They are a practical support to improve the quality of life for the Bich Dam villagers.

Waste on the island has been collected by the Khanh Hoa Urban Environmental Hygiene Company. In fact, the village is being subsidized by the Khanh Hoa Authority for waste collection because the cost is much higher than the total monthly fee paid by villagers.

It seems that local people evaluate the role of marine conservation based on how they are supported through LMPA component and Nha Trang Bay MPA rather than the function of MPA towards resources protection and recovery.

In the interview, we learnt that the local people expect to get more microcredit to develop small production (livestock and husbandry) and upgrade their vessels for offshore fishing.

[Dang Nguyet Anh]



Photo 3: Interview with Mr. Hoa, the head of Bich Dam village



Photo 4: Villagers making a seashell curtain (learned from the completed MPA pilot project)



Photo 5: MPA zoning signboard

Institute of Oceanography

Date: February 28 (8:30-10:00)

Interviewees:

Dr. Vo Si Tuan, Vice-Director of the Institute of Oceanography

Dr. Nguyen Van Long, Head of the Department of Marine Living Resources, the Institute of Oceanography

Dr. Vo Si Tuan spoke about the MPAs (Marine Protected Areas) in Vietnam and showed several publications from many projects which he has participated in related to the monitoring of MPA in Vietnam. MPA projects in Vietnam were supported by IUCN-the World Conservation Union, the World Bank, and DANIDA (Danish International Development Agency). All publications are available on the website of UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) at <http://www.unep.org>.

We interviewed Dr. Nguyen Van Long, who is a head of the Department of Marine Living Resources. Dr. Long stated that the Nha Trang Bay MPA is the first MPA in Vietnam and established the Hon Mun MPA pilot project in 2001. This is an integrated conservation and development project. The objectives of the Hon Mun MPA pilot project are to protect the marine biodiversity environment and to enable local island communities to improve their local livelihoods and, in partnerships with other stakeholders, to effectively protect and manage the marine biodiversity in Nha Trang Bay. However, there is a limitation of the Nha Trang Bay MPA project at Hon Mun Island. Hon Mun is just a small island located in the Nha Trang Bay area, and therefore, the Hon Mun pilot project was not large enough for the whole scale management of Nha Trang Bay. According to Dr. Long, dividing the Hon Mun pilot project in Nha Trang Bay MPA into three zones namely; Sanctuary, Habitat Restoration, and Multiple-use Zones, is not accurate since the definition of the ocean bay is completely different from that applied for forests. Thus, we need to take into consideration the significant differences between bays and forests in order to monitor both effectively.

In terms of the effectiveness of the MPAs management, Dr. Long told of his idea that there is a limitation due to a low capacity for marine conservation. He also compared two case studies between the Cu Lao Cham

MPA and the Hon Mun pilot project. The former case seems to be better managed than the latter case thanks to the positive awareness and responsibilities of the local government, including the People's Council and the People's Committee. In Nha Trang Bay, on the other hand, tourism dominantly contributes to the city's economy, thanks to the tourism activities mainly operated by the corporations such as Vinpearl Company. These corporations have received much interest and support from the local government to establish resorts or hotel groups. There is a lack of a legal framework to convince the central government and local authorities to focus on the roles of the MPA and how to balance tourism activities and marine conservation in the future.

Regarding the economic valuation of the MPAs, according to Dr. Long, up to now there are only a few scientific studies on the economic valuation of the MPA in general and in Nha Trang Bay MPA in particular. Therefore, there is room for conducting such kinds of research. The research should concentrate not only the economic valuation of the MPAs but also environmental policies towards sustainable marine conservation and management.

[Pham Tien Dat]



Photo 6: Interview and discussion with Dr. Nguyen Van Long, Institute of Oceanography

Former Director General of the Directorate of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

Date: February 28 (16:00-17:00)

Interviewee: Dr. Chu Tien Vinh, Former Director General of the Directorate of Fisheries (currently engaged in Agricultural Projects of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development as a supervising consultant)

*Dr. Chu used to be in charge of MPA during serving for the Ministry.

According to Dr. Vinh, Vietnam will have 16 MPAs by 2020. On the other hand, the Vietnamese government has officially issued 47 programs which apply GPS (global positioning system) and RS (remote sensing) for monitoring and control of the fisheries ground and other relevant activities.

Currently Vietnam has the following MPAs:

- Dao Tran (Quang Ninh)
- Co To (Quang Ninh)
- Bach Long Vi (Hai Phong)
- Cat Ba (Hai Phong)
- Hon Me (Thanh Hoa)
- Con Co (Quang Tri)
- Hai Van Son Cha (Thua Thien Hue, Da Nang)
- Nam Yet (Khanh Hoa)
- NhaTrang bay (Khanh Hoa)
- Nui Chua (Ninh Thuan)
- PhuQuy (Binh Thuan)
- Hon Cau (Binh Thuan)
- Con Dao (Ba Ria-Vung Tau)
- Phu Quoc (Kien Giang)

Dr. Vinh affirms the important role of all the MPAs in conserving genetics and protecting the specific habitats in the sea. MPAs strengthen the fishermen's awareness, and limit and prohibit the use of the aquatic resources such as sea-grass, coral, fish and mangroves.

In the context of the Nha Trang MPA, there have been several challenges for us, Dr. Vinh said. Firstly, tourism has been in conflict with the conservation programs. We have to sacrifice numerous benefits for the purpose of conservation. The tourism operators, however, rarely think of these things. We are attempting to improve the consensus among the members to achieve the best results for the MPA.

Major problems in Nha Trang MPA:

- The confusion in the finance mechanism. Currently, the investment for the MPAs is not clarified clearly. The budget for the Nha Trang MPA, therefore, is not stable.
- The complexity of the administrative system has caused a lacking in the annual budget for the MPA.
- The idea that the government wants the MPA to manage all expenses by itself would not be realistic. This is not a vital feature of the MPA. For that reason, the government needs to collaborate between tourism and conservation activities within a clear and effective mechanism.
- The management team is not always functioning the best based on consensus. Sometimes the manager has difficulties in getting sufficient support from other staff and stakeholders.
- The staff are concurrent in many positions, and not trained as MPA management majors.
- The Nha Trang MPA is quite close to hotels, restaurants, and other tourism activities. They have significant impacts on the aquatic environment and the ecosystem of the MPA.
- The Nha Trang MPA has been classified into three zones, namely; the Core Zone, the Buffer Zone, and the Restoration Zone. These areas, however, are not so far from the fishing grounds of the fishermen as well as the tourist areas. This zoning problem is the biggest challenge to the Nha Trang MPA at the moment.

[Ha Nam Thang]



Photo 7: Interview and discussion with Dr.Chu Tien Vinh