



**Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of
Fisheries *Refugia* in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand**

REPORT

**WAY FORWARD FISHERIES REFUGIA PROJECT
IN SOUTH CHINA SEA AND THE GULF OF THAILAND**

**ONLINE MEETING
10 FEBRUARY 2021**

Prepared by
DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES, MALAYSIA

**SOUTHEAST ASIAN FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT CENTER
TRAINING DEPARTMENT**



First published in Phrasamutchedi, Samut Prakan, Thailand in June 2021 by the SEAFDEC-UNEP-GEF Fisheries Refugia Project, Training Department of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center

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For citation purposes this document may be cited as:

DOF/Malaysia. 2021. Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries Refugia in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand, Report of the Way Forward Fisheries Refugia Project In South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand. Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center, Training Department, Samut Prakan, Thailand; FR/REP/MY29, 10 p.

DISCUSSION SESSION

WAY FORWARD FISHERIES REFUGIA PROJECT IN SOUTH CHINA SEA WATERS AND THE GULF OF SIAM UNDER SEAFDEC/UNEP/GEF

Date : 10th Feb 2021(Wednesday)
Time : 2.30pm
Link : <https://meet.google.com/hgx-gsrv-atj>

OPENING SPEECH

The Senior Director, Marine Parks and Resource Management Division expressed his appreciation for the attendance of all officers to this session as in **Appendix 1**.

The Chairman also reminded about the annual financial audit related to this project which will be implemented by SEAFDEC in the near future. He reminded that all planning and expenditure related to this allocation must be in line with the details contained in the original project document prepared by SEAFDEC.

Members were also reminded that the main purpose of this session was to obtain views and mutual agreement on the direction of the Fisheries Refugia project in the South China Sea and Gulf of Siam, especially in the aspect of the involvement of experts from the University. The Chairman also suggested that data and expertise be shared with University Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) and the Department of Fisheries Malaysia (DOF) to obtain the best study results to be reported.

OBJECTIVE AND BACKGROUND

Madam Nurashiqin binti Sallih Udin was requested by the Senior Director to present the mini agenda of this session as in **Appendix 2**.

In addition, the Secretariat also presented the results of *The 4th Project Steering Committee Ad-hoc Meeting for the SEAFDEC/UNEP/GEF Project on Establishment and Operation of a Regional System of Fisheries Refugia in the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand* which was organized by the Project Coordination Unit (PCU) on 6th October 2020 as follows:

- The Committee has agreed to extend this project for another 2 years, which is expected to end on 31st June 2022 (budget) and 31st December 2023 (project).
- The budget has been reviewed and adjusted in accordance with the work plan by UNEP. Till date, the revised budget application is yet to be approved by UNEP.

- All expenditure planning for this project must obtain the approval from the SEAFDEC Secretary-General SEAFDEC, Ms. Malinee Smithrithee.
- The allocation that has been reserved for this project will be used for the formation of management plans, consultant fees, consultations, documentations, and expert involvement.
- Ms. Isabelle Vanderbeck, the Project Task Manager from UNEP reminded everyone of the mid-term review that will begin in the near future; to ensure the project implementation and management are on the right track.

Apart from the allocation under the GEF for this project, a total of RM80,000.00 from the 2021 development allocation will be used for the same purpose.

The secretariat also presented the list of studies that have been implemented by FRI to support the establishment of refugia as per **Appendix 3**. The cooperation of all researchers is requested to inform the secretariat if the list of projects that have been implemented is not listed.

The Chairman informed that all the results of this project study will be presented and evaluated together with a panel of experts from the Public University for the final purpose of establishing a lobster and tiger prawn refugia area. Biological aspects of the species, socioeconomics and oceanography information will be taken into account to ensure the accuracy and effectiveness of the management of the species in the long run.

The Senior Director of the Fisheries Research Institute expressed agreement on the proposed research collaboration and data sharing in supporting the establishment of fisheries refugia for lobster and tiger prawn species.

DISCUSSION

Study on the Proposed Establishment of a Lobster Refugia in the Waters of East Johor and South Pahang

- Mr. Ryon Siow from FRI Kg. Acheh informed that the data for the Study on Lobster Landing Using Trawl in Endau, Johor was unsatisfactory due to staff constraints. Therefore, he suggested that suppose the researchers from University Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) have the data that can be shared with the department to complete the landing information in Tanjung Leman area.
- Endau Jetty, Johor recorded the highest number of lobster gravid compared to Sedili jetty, Johor and Tanjung Leman, Johor. From the total data obtained, it is found that the number of lobsters that lay eggs recorded the highest number landed in July 2018 and March 2020.
- Based on the preliminary research, researchers have identified suitable areas for the purpose of establishing lobster refugia. Researchers also suggested the implementation of closure of the area in July each year for the purpose of

lobster refugia management. However, Mr. Ryon Siow informed that this proposal is subject to approval upon further discussion with the experts and the top management team of the Department of Fisheries Malaysia (DOF).

- The Chairman proposed that a program be organized as a platform for discussion of the research results of the study between the research group of the Fisheries Department and a group of experts from University Malaysia Terengganu (UMT).

Socio-economic Study of Pre-Establishment of Refugia in South Pahang to East Johor

- A total of 165 artisanal fishermen were interviewed for the purpose of this study.
- The Chairman recommended that data related to the catch be completed with the month the catch was made.
- The results of this study found that the majority of respondents agreed and supported the establishment of lobster refugia in the waters of South Pahang to East Johor.
- Researchers are recommended to make a perspective study for trawler or commercial fishermen as the proposed area for the establishment of lobster refugia is located in the second fishing area category for the fishermen.
- The Chairman recommended that a socio-economic study and perspective on the proposed establishment of the lobster refugia be implemented by involving respondents from both the trawler and commercial fishermen.
- The management of the refugia area will be detailed in the next meeting.

Study on the Proposed Establishment of Tiger Prawn Refugia in Kuala Baram, Miri, Sarawak

- Mr. Jamil Musel (Director of FRI Bintawa) mentioned that SEAFDEC had been informed about the establishment of a lobster refugia in Tanjung Leman, Johor and tiger prawns in Kuala Baram, Miri, Sarawak.
- FRI Bintawa in collaboration with the Sarawak Fisheries Department have identified and finalized the area for the purpose of establishing a tiger prawn refugia involving waters up to 12 nautical miles from the coast.
- Based on the existing fishery regulations in Sarawak, the proposed tiger prawn refugia area is a trawl-free area.
- Researchers also suggested the implementation of a closed season for the purpose of tiger prawn refugia management from August to October each year. This recommendation was made based on the study data that showed

the highest level of gonad maturity for tiger prawns in Kuala Baram is in August.

- Most of the fishermen in the Kuala Baram area consist of coastal fishermen while for trawl fishermen most of them are from Miri area.
- A representative of JPLS informed that a meeting with a consultant appointed by the Sarawak State Government was held for the project to deepen the estuary in Kuala Baram for the purpose of expanding the port and other developments. However, the JPLS have informed about the plans by the Department of Fisheries Malaysia for the purpose of protecting the original habitat of tiger prawns in the same waters. The management of JPLS has amended the operating area limit of trawlers to an area of 7 nm (nautical miles) and above.

Socio-economic Study of Pre-Establishment of Refugia in Kuala Baram, Miri, Sarawak

- A total of 112 respondents were surveyed for this study.
- Most of the respondents informed that the tiger prawns are not the targeted species for these waters.
- 92% of respondents agreed with the establishment of a tiger prawn refugia in Kuala Baram, Miri, Sarawak.

CLOSING

The meeting agreed to implement cooperation with external experts, especially from the university for the purpose of review and validation of research data. A seminar session on the area determination will be held in the near future.

The Chairman also requested that all those involved to thorough the outcome targets that have been listed in the National Project Document.

Appendix 1

Haji Mohd Sufian bin Sulaiman
Senior Director
Marine Parks and Resource Management Division
Federal Territory of Putrajaya

Dr. Zainoddin Bin Jamari
Director
Fisheries Research Institute, Batu Maung
Pulau Pinang

Bohari bin Haji Leng
Director
Sarawak Marine Fisheries Department

Mr. Sallehudin Bin Jamon
Director
Fisheries Research Institute, Kampung Aceh
Perak

Mdm. Noraishah Binti Hashim
Director
Johor State Fisheries Office

Mr. Abdullah Bin Jaafar
Director
Pahang State Fisheries Office

Mr. Jamil bin Musel
Bintawa Fisheries Research Institute,
Sarawak

Liza binti Long
Deputy Director (Management)
Sarawak Marine Fisheries Department

Mdm. Norhanida Binti Daud
Research Officer
Fisheries Research Institute, Batu Maung
Pulau Pinang

Mdm. Nurridan binti Abd Han
Bintawa Fisheries Research Institute
Sarawak

Mr. Ryon Siow
Research Officer
Fisheries Research Institute, Kampung Acheh
Perak

Miss Nur Hidayah binti Asgnari
Research Officer
Fisheries Research Institute, Kampung Acheh
Perak

Mr. Rizwan bin Nordin
Regional Fisheries Office III, Sarawak

Mdm. Halina binti Hashim
Head of Marine Parks and Resource Management Branch,
Pahang State Fisheries Office

Miss Bahrinah binti Bahrin
Head of Marine Parks and Resource Management Branch
Johor State Fisheries Office

SECRETARIAT

Mdm. Shamila binti Zainol
Mdm. Noor Hasmayana binti Yahaya
Mdm. Aishah binti Hj. Yusoff
Mdm. Nurashiqin Sallih Udin

Appendix 2

AGENDA

DISCUSSION SESSION

WAY FORWARD FISHERIES REFUGIA PROJECT IN SOUTH CHINA SEA WATERS AND THE GULF OF SIAM UNDER SEAFDEC/UNEP/GEF

1. Opening Speech
2. Objective and Background
3. Discussion
 - a. Study on the Proposed Establishment of a Lobster Refugia in the Waters of East Johor and South Pahang
 - b. Socio-economic Study of Pre-Establishment of Refugia in South Pahang to East Johor
 - c. Study on the Proposed Establishment of Tiger Prawn Refugia in Kuala Baram, Miri, Sarawak
 - d. Socio-economic Study of Pre-Establishment of Refugia in Kuala Baram, Miri, Sarawak
4. Closing

Appendix 3

LIST OF STUDIES CARRIED OUT TO SUPPORT THE PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF LOBSTER AND TIGER PRAWN REFUGIAS IN MALAYSIA

ITEM	TOPIC OF RESEARCH
1	Research on lobster resources in East Johor Waters
2	Research on lobster resources in the waters of South Pahang and East Johor
3	Research on lobster resources in the waters of South Pahang and East Johor on Fishing Boats
4	Research on lobster larvae in the waters of South Pahang and East Johor
5	Research on lobster landing and biology in fishermen jetty in East Johor Timur
6	Research on lobster larvae in the waters of Zone A of East Johor
7	Research on pre-project impact of the establishment of lobster refugia area on the fishermen socio-economy of South Pahang - East Johor
8	Research on pre-project impact of the establishment of tiger prawn refugia area on the fishermen socio-economy in Kuala Baram, Miri, Sarawak
9	Research on juvenile tiger prawns
10	Research on landing of tiger prawns