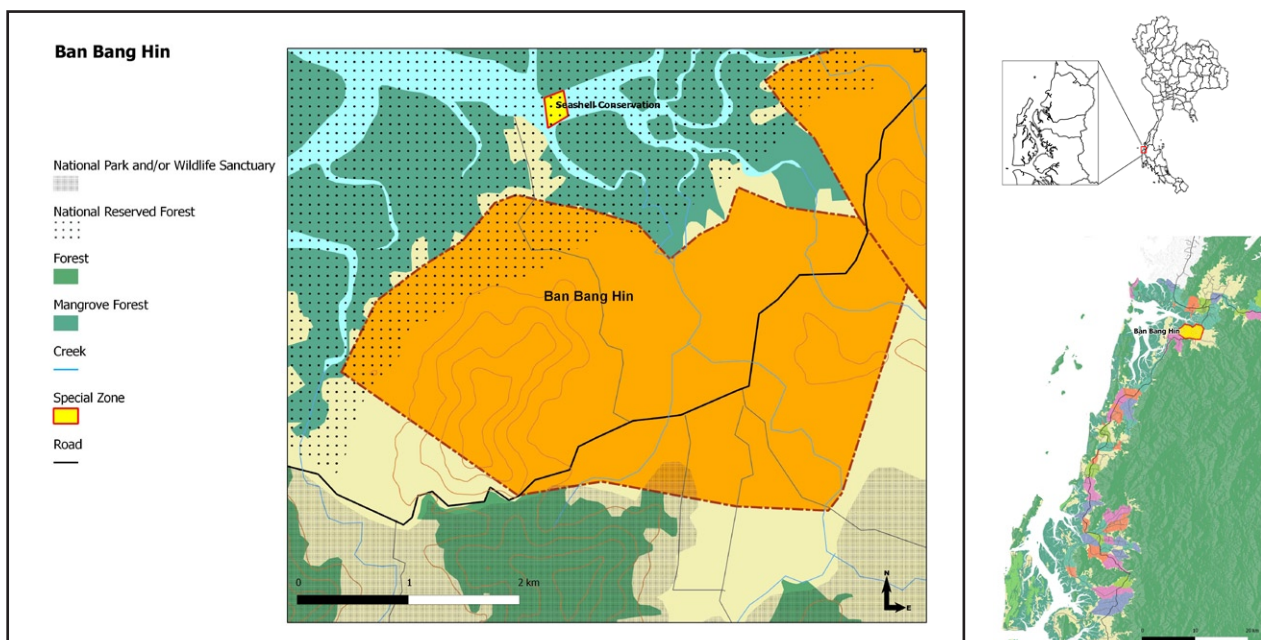


Ban Bang Hin

Conserving community seashells in the Kapoe estuary

March 2010



In early 2008 the villagers of Ban Bang Hin started to notice declining numbers of seashells in their area. In January 2009 they were getting 10 tonnes a day of seashells, but these catches declined very rapidly in the months February to May.

So in April 2009 Ban Bang Hin started a seashell conservation zone. The seashell conservation zone is an area of 5 rai, as shown on Map 1. It sits within a 1000 rai area of mangroves that the community also accesses and uses. There are about 500 households that use the 1000 rai area of mangroves, including people from Ban Chi Mee, Muong Kluong, Ban Bang Hin, Ban Bang Bom, Ban Bang Mun, and Ban Bang Na. About 100 of these households are from Ban Bang Hin.

Map 1. shows the seashell conservation zone, and protected areas under the National Park Act 1961, Wildlife Preservation and Protection Act 1992, and National Reserved Forest Act 1964.

The resources in the area that are unique to the Ban Bang Hin are seashells and oysters – in fact it is the biggest seashell resource in the area. There are two types of seashell: white shell and sweet shell (*Meretrix Venus* and *Tapes* sp.). Depending on the size and species, seashells sell for approximately 10 baht/kilo, usually to middlemen who then sell them on to restaurants in Phuket.

COMMUNITY CONSERVED AREAS IN RANONG AND PHANG NGA PROVINCES, SOUTHERN THAILAND



Seashell conservation zone. © IUCN

Community rules in Ban Bang Hin

The community have decided to apply rules to manage the new seashell conservation zone. The rules are:

- 1. No destructive equipment like drag nets or motorised dredgers can be used to collect shells in the Kapoe Gulf.**
- 2. No shells can be collected from the seashell conservation zone.**
- 3. If small shells are caught anywhere in the mangroves, they must be released into the conservation zone.**

These rules were developed by a special Seashell Working Group established in the Ban Bang Hin community. This group spent a year consulting with all the villages that use the larger mangrove area to jointly agree upon the area and rules of the seashell conservation zone. They held an opening day for the conservation zone, and placed signposts around it with the rules on them.

The seashell conservation zone is working well, and since April everyone has stopped collecting seashells from within the zone.

No one has been reported as breaking the rules yet, and it is the responsibility of all Ban Bang Hin villagers to report if they see anyone breaking the rules. If they see someone, they will tell the Village Head. If the offenders are from Ban Bang Hin, the Village Head will warn the offender. If they are from other villages, the Village Head will tell the Ban Bang Hin Seashell Conservation Committee.

This Committee was established in April 2009 and has ongoing responsibility over the seashell conservation zone. They have 25 members that meet once a month, drawn mostly from Ban Bang Hin, but with several representatives from the four other villages that use the mangroves.

Committee members are elected by villagers based on their leadership and interest in conservation. There is a Chair, Co-ordinator, and 23 regular Committee members.

If the community rules need to be changed in the future, the Committee will hold a meeting where at least 50 people from all five sub-villages of Ban Bang Hin should attend (approx 20% from each village).

Ban Bang Hin has a designated information officer whose responsibility is to attend all external meetings relating to environmental matters, and then report back to the Committee, and to the villagers of Ban Bang Hin.

With the help of IUCN, Ban Bang Hin has completed an assessment of the seashell resources. At the end of the monsoon season they plan to measure how much the seashells have reproduced, and if the population has expanded in area. If they have increased in area, they will propose that the seashell conservation zone be expanded to cover the new growth in population.



Marking out the seashell conservation zone. © IUCN



Seashell Conservation Committee.
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