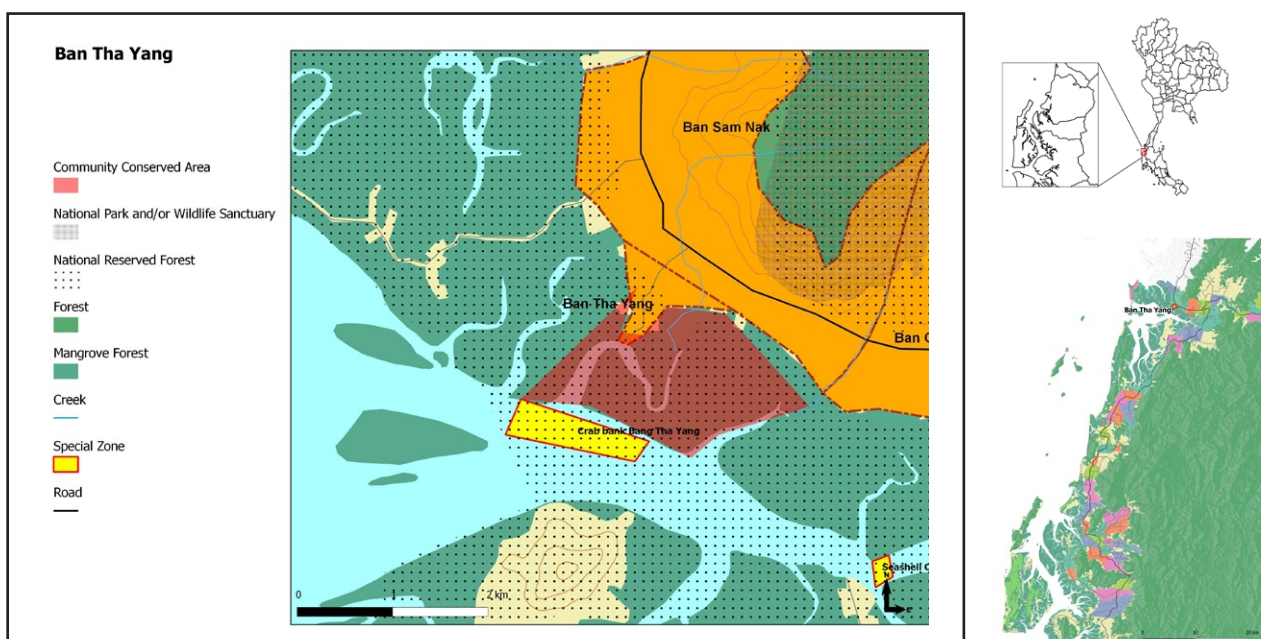


Ban Tha Yang

Conserving community crabs in the Kapoe estuary

March 2010



Ban Tha Yang is a sub-village of Ban Sam Nak village. There are 80 households in Ban Tha Yang, and they access and use 3800 rai of mangroves (see Map 1). Their main source of livelihoods is catching crabs or fish from the mangroves.

In 2005 villagers of Ban Tha Yang started to notice reduced numbers of crabs in the area, and because of this many villagers were forced to look for alternative sources of income other than catching and selling crabs.

In 2006 Ban Tha Yang decided to take action and they started a crab bank. In 2007 they established a crab conservation zone, and put signposts up around the zone so everyone, including villagers and people from outside the village, would know that special rules apply to this area.

There are two groups in Ban Tha Yang with responsibility over crab conservation: the Ban Tha Yang Village Committee and the Ban Tha Yang Crab Conservation Group.

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

The Village Committee deliberates on all community issues and its 24 members are elected by villagers. It decides on the border of the conservation zone, and is responsible for sharing information about crab management with the community.

The Village Committee meets once a month. In practice, about 40-50% of villagers come to Village Committee meetings. When important decisions are made about the crab conservation, that information is shared with all villagers by word of mouth.

The Ban Tha Yang Crab Conservation Group does management activities specific to the crab bank. There are 7 active members in the Group, and their job is to set up the deposit point to accept crabs brought by villagers for putting in the conservation zone.

There are also other environmental initiatives and groups in Ban Tha Yang, including: Garbage Sorting Group; Grass cutting Group; and a Local Fishery Group that rents out fishing gear to fishermen.

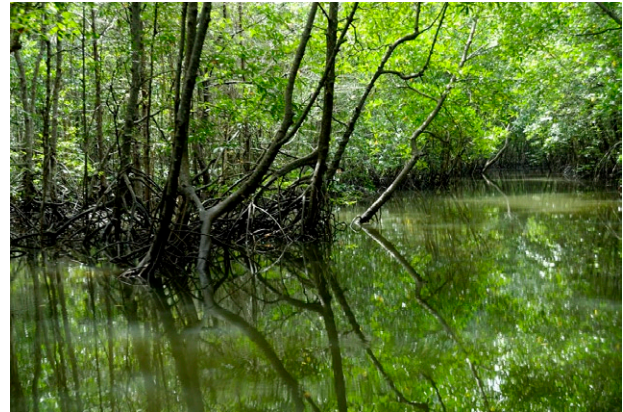
Community Rules

The community of Ban Tha Yang have established, and documented, community rules over the crab resource. The rules apply especially to the crab conservation area, but are also intended to apply to the greater mangrove area and to all those who use it. The rules are:

- 1. No crabs can be taken from the crab conservation zone**
- 2. No push or trawl nets can be used in the crab conservation zone (except to catch a particular type of fish – the ‘Krabok’)**
- 3. If villagers go on patrol to check that no one is breaking the rules, they can get reimbursed for one litre of boat fuel.**
- 4. Crab Bank – when villagers catch pregnant crabs they should bring them to the crab bank, where a member of the Crab Bank Conservation Group determines the price - usually around 5baht for 100g weight. The deposited crabs are raised in the conservation zone until they lay their eggs. The female crab is then sold, and the money is given to the villager who brought her to the crab bank.**

It is everyone’s responsibility to ensure that these rules are not broken. If villagers notice that someone is taking crabs from the conservation area, they will tell a member of the Crab Conservation Group or Village Committee straight away. The first time someone breaks the rules they will get a warning. The second time, their equipment will be confiscated and they will have to pay a 300 baht fine to get their equipment back. Since the crab conservation zone was established, no one has broken the rules.

Villagers know what the crab population levels are by watching for baby crabs on the beach, which are normally present every few days. They also ask all fishermen



Mangroved in BAN Tha Yang.
© IUCN/Sayan CHENUDOMSAVAD



Crab conservation zone sign . © IUCN/ Katie MILLER



Crab conservation group. © IUCN/ Katie MILLER