

SPECIAL REPORT

Transboundary Fisheries and Habitat Management – Joint activities on data collection on transboundary fisheries in coastal waters of Thailand-Cambodia-Viet Nam

By

Dr. Worawit Wanchana, Ms. Chutima Pokhun, Ms. Chin Leakhena, and Mr. Nguyen Van Phuc
SEAFDEC Secretariat

Working towards sustainability, attempts are being made by fisheries and environment agencies to improve fisheries and habitat management. The most important steps in this direction is to effectively control active fishing efforts, both commercial and small-scale fishing, and reduce illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing as well as reduce the use of destructive fishing gear and practices. The very nature of fishing, migration of fish, mobility of people and vessels involved in fishing, imply that there is a need to have regional or sub-regional dialogues on measures to improve fisheries management and to conserve important coastal and marine habitats.



The First Bilateral Working Group Meeting between Viet Nam and Cambodia on Transboundary Species in Gulf of Thailand

To address critical issues related to fishing capacity as well as IUU and destructive fishing, the integration of fisheries and habitat management has become essential especially in the Southeast Asian region. Along this premise, SEAFDEC and Sweden agreed to renew the collaborative arrangement completed in 2012 (SEAFDEC-Sida Program), for another five years from 2013 to 2017 to carry out the project on Fisheries and Habitat Management, Climate Change and Social Well-being in Southeast Asia (SEAFDEC-Sweden Project).

The collaborative arrangement takes up the concept of a sub-regional approach that aim to appropriately address relevant transboundary issues at sub-regional level through the cooperative efforts among countries concerned. The arrangement focuses on four important sub-regions in Southeast Asia, namely: Gulf of Thailand, Andaman Sea, Sulu-Sulawesi Seas, and Mekong River Basin. In the Gulf of Thailand sub-region, the countries involved are Thailand, Cambodia, Viet Nam, and Malaysia.

Among its initial steps to promote sub-regional cooperation, SEAFDEC in collaboration with Thailand and Cambodia organized the First Sub-regional Meeting on the Gulf of Thailand in Bangkok in March 2008, the Second Sub-regional Meeting on the Gulf of Thailand in Bangkok in February 2009, and the Third Sub-regional Meeting on the Gulf of Thailand in Siem Reap, Cambodia in September 2011. The common objective of the three events focused on reviewing the

background and compiling baseline information on common issues and concerns. The meetings also provided platform for the countries to discuss and come up with recommendations on matters relevant to fisheries and habitat management in the context of the Gulf of Thailand sub-region.

The discussions and decisions on key aspects made during those earlier meetings, paved the way for the possibility of conducting parallel consultations as and when requested by the countries to facilitate transboundary dialogues between or among neighboring countries. So far, the previous meetings have highlighted on the elements of transboundary issues and opportunities as specific to the Gulf of Thailand sub-region, including landing of catches across boundaries, *i.e.* Cambodia-Viet Nam; Thailand-Cambodia; and Malaysia-Thailand.



National Workshop on Data Collection for Transboundary Fisheries and Habitat Management in the Gulf of Thailand

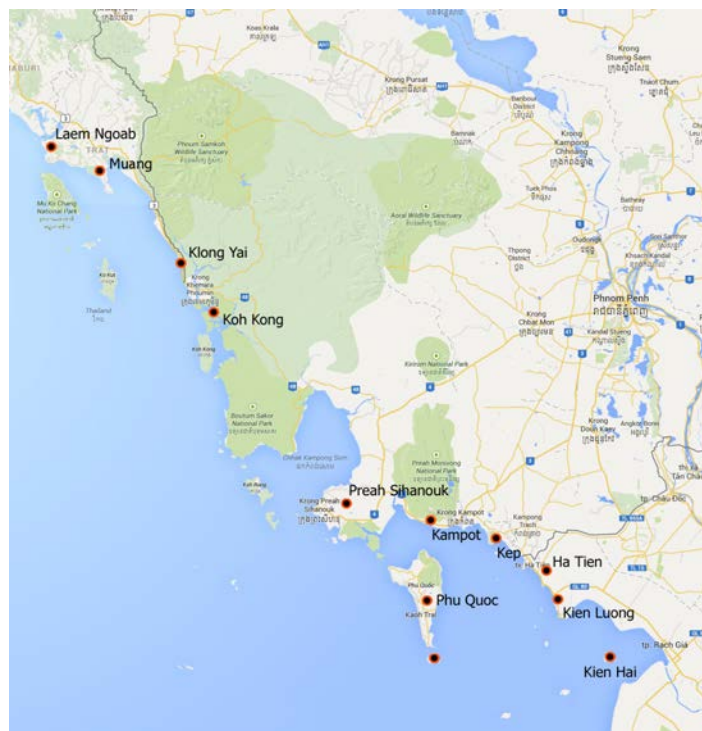
During the January 2015 Sub-regional Technical Meeting on Effective Fisheries Management between Cambodia and Thailand, the 2015 work plan for implementing joint activities concerning management and utilization of transboundary stocks was established, including: 1) data collection on catch landing; 2) research survey on habitat and environment; 3) food and livelihood security of small-scale fishers; and 4) promote and strengthen capacity of coastal community for transboundary coastal fisheries and resources sustainability. Based on such work plan, the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for data collection were established while the 2015 work plan for Cambodia and Viet Nam was revised during the subsequent First Bilateral Meeting in February 2015.

For the collaborative effort on data collection of catch landings, the study areas in the three concerned countries had been identified. These are:

Participating countries and study areas
1. Cambodia (in the coastal areas of Cambodia, totally 7 sampling sites) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Koh Kong Province b. Preah Sihanouk Province c. Kampot Province, and d. Kep Province
2. Thailand (Trat Province, totally 14 landing sites, including 8 for small-scale and 6 for large-scale fishing): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Leam Ngoab b. Muang c. Klong Yai
3. Viet Nam (Kien Giang, totally 4 landing sites): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ha Tien b. Phu Quoc: Duong Dong and Hon Thom c. Kien Long d. Kien Hai
Target species of the data collection by the participating countries
1. Short-head anchovy (<i>Encrasicholina heteroloba</i>) 2. Short mackerel (<i>Rastrelliger brachysoma</i>) 3. Blue swimming crab (<i>Portunus pelagicus</i>)

This pilot data collection activity aims to compile a harmonized data on catch landing and other necessary information for the development of a joint management plan for transboundary target species in the Gulf of Thailand.

Thus, a set of data for catch and landing of the three transboundary target species could be gathered over a twelve-month data collection period. As expected, this joint



Landing sites in Thailand, Cambodia, and Viet Nam that are selected as study areas



Short-head anchovy
(*Encrasicholina heteroloba*)



Short mackerel
(*Rastrelliger brachysoma*)



Blue swimming crab
(*Portunus pelagicus*)

Target species of the data collection

collaborative activity would provide the necessary information on fishing activities, total catch of the target species landed in the selected landing sites, including biological information of short mackerel, short-head anchovy, and blue swimming crab. Eventually, this activity could facilitate better understanding of transboundary species in the Gulf of Thailand.

