

PATTANI BAY; A PERSPECTIVE OF RESOURCES EXPLOITATION AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

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This paper is aimed at presenting an overview of ecological status of a 74 km² bay, an exploitation of fisheries resources, local management, threats and challenges. The income of more than 25,000 fisher folks, 3,5000 households around the bay depend entirely or almost entirely on an exploitation of resources and relevant activities from this geographically and ecologically unique ecosystem. A common belief of local people in treating the bay as a common property has helped the bay to survive for years, before an integration of other development projects which brought along severe impacts. It has heavily received threats from various development activities such as industrialization, coastal aquaculture and domestic discharges. Fishermen from different village expertise in different types of fishing gears based mainly on the geographical location of the respective villages within the bay. However, they share the typical problems of poverty, low education and labour migration. Many of them work together to form a group or network with the help of NGOs or education institution to protect natural resources from various sorts of threats. This paper also presents challenges of different parties involved including the bay itself, small scale fishermen, researchers and coastal managers. An application of integrated coastal management (ICM) to this particular semi-enclosed habitat is therefore needed to sustain a healthy status of this ecosystem before it goes too far beyond control.