

Review

STATUS OF MARINE BIODIVERSITY OF CAMBODIA

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ABSTRACT

Cambodia ratified the Convention on Conservation of Biological Diversity in 1995, but until now the national understanding of the importance of biodiversity, especially marine biodiversity, is negligible, except for the fisheries. Only to a small extent have the resources been investigated. Yet, the available information should be used to improve the conservation management since the marine ecosystem is threatened by an aggressive exploitation. About 85,100 ha mangrove forest area (LANDSAT, 1994) harboured 34 species of plants and regenerated trees (not older than 60-70 years). Approximately 1,000 ha has been claimed for shrimp culture and saltworks. The important red mangrove (*Rhizophora*) has been much reduced due to logging and charcoal production. One habitat for water bird still exists in the remote coastal wetland Tanun/Pralean, northern Kompong Som Bay where 65 bird species have been sighted. Rich seagrass beds are found in Kompot Bay and rarely in Kompong Som and Koh Kong Bays. Most of the coral reefs around non-estuary islands are still in a good condition but these resources are now exposed to destructive activities (poison and dynamite fishing). Two species of sea turtle nest on remote sandy beaches.