

# BAI TU LONG NATIONAL PARK

## Law Enforcement Workshop for Bai Tu Long National Park Staff

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*This newsletter is the second of a series that will be produced quarterly for distribution both in the National Park and surrounding buffer-zone communes.*

*The aim of this newsletter is to enable the National Park Authority to provide regular information to the people of Bai Tu Long Bay.*



*Dr. Nguyen Cu giving a presentation at the workshop*

Significant breakthroughs have been made towards improving law enforcement efforts in Bai Tu Long Bay National Park, Quang Ninh Province, in a workshop organised by the Frontier-Vietnam Biodiversity Awareness Project.

Over three days of presentations and discussions, participants from the National Park Authority and various District and Commune organisations explored ways to more effectively manage the valuable resources of one of Vietnam's newest and most beautiful national parks.

Bai Tu Long's forest and marine wildlife is currently under threat from a number of illegal logging, fishing and hunting practices which must be controlled if the park is to be protected. The workshop concluded that in order to improve enforcement efforts, the park authority would expand its patrols and target the park's surrounding communes with an intensive aware-

ness campaign.

Several national experts were among those who presented at the workshop. The opening presenter, Dr. Nguyen Cu, from the Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources, expressed his satisfaction with the workshop saying, 'it will be very helpful to the National Park in their efforts to protect the biodiversity of Bai Tu Long'.

The workshop was the first session of an ongoing park staff training programme with the Frontier-Vietnam Biodiversity Awareness Project. Future planned workshops will cover a broad range of topics from ecosystem surveying and monitoring to boat handling and environmental education. Other project activities include park newsletters, field guides and posters of Bai Tu Long's wildlife, environmental education, and the construction of a nature centre.

# Marine Biodiversity in Bai Tu Long Bay

*Phạm Tuấn Hùng*

*Vice-Director*

*Bai Tu Long National Park*

**B**ai Tu Long National Park's marine biodiversity is situated in the area of Bai Tu Long Bay in the North East of Vietnam. The Marine area makes up 2/3 of the Park's total areas. Marine conservation work has been undertaken since 2001 with the issuing of the decision to establish Ba Mun Nature Reserve. The result of research indicates that the National Park marine areas are plentiful and diverse with 391 different species. Among those, most of the animals have high economic value and great scientific significance. The appearances of plankton reflect a whole life cycle marine species. This co-existence remains thanks to the marine ecosystem of the National Park, the area of distribution and preservation of livelihoods:

These include::

Plankton	: 51 species
Seabed species	: 132 species
Fish	: 19 species
Coral	: 79 species

The species recorded in the Vietnamese Red Book of endangered species totals 17.

Thanks to specific living conditions, the marine animal population of the National Park consists of many precious species like: Haliotis sea worms, pearl oysters, Turtles... especially Dugong or Sirenia which have been recognized as precious animals that need to be protected throughout the world. According to the local community and fishermen here, in October every year, Du



***Bai dai beach, Halong commune, Van Don district***

gongs appear in the area of the National Park to feed because there are many sea grasses and other species which are their main source of food.

The above research records tell us about the high potentiality of biodiversity in the marine area of the National Park.

**“The result of research indicates that the National Park marine areas are plentiful and diverse with 391 different species.”**

Therefore, Bai Tu Long National Park was chosen as one of the typical areas for marine protection in Vietnam. As soon as the decision of the Prime Minister to establish Bai Tu Long National Park was made, the park's staff have attached special importance to management and have set up a specialized and responsible cadre

for controlling and protecting natural resources. The Park also set up a Forest Protection Department (directly responsible to the park) including 3 posts and 1 reserve force in the important sites for regularly observing and preventing all negative activities. Besides this, the Park also combine with the authorities of different levels in the 5 buffer zone communes, the border police, the military, and the department of fisheries resources and environment conservation in the works of awareness raising and law enforcement. Since then, illegal exploration has stopped. Bai Tu Long National Park has coordinated with Frontier - Vietnam to implement 2 projects: Forest biodiversity research and Community awareness raising. The marine biodiversity research has yet to begin.

The marine biodiversity and its value in the National Park have drawn attention from not only local organizations and individuals **(continued on page 3)**

*(continued from page 2)*

but also International organizations for its research value. The method of exploration for sustainable maintenance of the marine ecosystem is very important and scientifically significant. However, the domains of biodiversity of Bai Tu Long have only been researched singly, and

should be researched synthetically and systematically to enable thorough evaluation of natural resources here. Thus, the strategic question is to set up a plan for sustainable development and build up a long-term programme for activities of marine biodiversity conservation in Bai Tu Long

National Park. In order to be able to carry out this work, it is essential to have participation from all levels, institutions and individuals, scientists, and international organizations in the work of biodiversity conservation and protection of the National Park - our common heritage.

## The Meaning and Importance of Coastal biodiversity in Vietnam

*Forest Protection  
Department  
Ministry of Agriculture and  
Rural development*

Vietnam has the advantage of being a coastal nation on the sea. More than 3000km of coastline with 1 million km<sup>2</sup> of exclusive sea area (three times larger than the land territory) has a high economic value including priceless marine resources. Two thirds of the national protein is provided from the sea, mainly from shallow coastal areas (with the area of 200,000 km<sup>2</sup>). A large amount of Vietnam's foreign exchange earnings are derived from sea product exports.

Recent statistics (certainly insufficient) reveal that coastal fauna and flora of Vietnam comprise about 11,000 species: 537 phytoplankton species, 657 zooplankton, 6,377 large seabed species (e.g. 2,500 mollusc species), 1,500 shellfish species...), 2,038 fish species (particularly 455 coral reef species), 21 reptile species, 12 mammal species (whale), many species of birds including more than 200 winter-migrating bird species to Vietnam. These figures above show the importance of Vietnam's coastal biodiversity, a very significant genetic resource.



***A starfish species of Bai Tu Long bay***

Coastal habitats including mangrove forests, estuaries and coral reef are the ideal habitats for marine organisms. These are also the breeding ground for many of the benthic species and fish, so they are "seedbeds", maintaining natural reproduction of many important species, and serving as a source of "seed" for aquaculture. Estuaries are an important part of coastal areas. Vietnam has about 300,000 hectares of estuaries, of which 70% (210,000 hectares) is covered by mangrove forest with nearly 100 species of trees and many species of sea grass. However, overharvesting, estuary destruction, indiscriminate land use and planning, especially with re-

spect to mangrove forests, are threatening regional biodiversity (e.g. dike building in estuaries, dam construction or mangrove destruction for shrimp farming).

At present, very few wetlands and mangrove forests are included in the national protected area system. Thus, it is urgent and essential to rapidly determine and establish a preliminary document for marine protected areas with the goal of adding them to the national protected areas system. It is vitally important to conserve the biodiversity of coastal and marine areas in Vietnam, especially the important ecosystems such as mangrove forests, estuaries, lagoons and coral reefs.

# Conservation of Bai Tu Long National Park

*Mr. Pham Van Sy*  
*Forest Protection*  
*Department Manager*

On the 1st June, 2001 the Prime Minister decided to transform Ba Mun Nature Reserve into Bai Tu Long National Park with a total area of 15,783 hectares, of which 6,125 hectares is made up of islands, and marine and tidal areas making up 9,658 hectares. This is the invaluable property of Van Don historical area in particular, and of the entire nation in general. At the same time, with its particularly beautiful natural scenery and the plentifulness of its biodiversity, Bai Tu Long National Park is also an interesting place for local and foreign visitors and scientists. Bai Tu Long National Park's purpose is natural conservation, standardization of national marine and forest ecosystems, genes of rare animals, scientific research, preservation of historical interest and landscapes, tour services, conservation and sustainable development.

Understanding this, the work of protection and conservation must be brought up to the primary mission and it is not the responsibility of any one person but for all people, and all authority levels in society, especially for the Forest Protection Department of the National Park.



**National Park staff working in the field**

In order to achieve the aims of conservation of the National Park, the Forest Protection Department has advised the Park management to issue a regulation forbidding activities affecting ecosystems and landscapes, strengthening the legal basis

for the work of natural protection by the Forest Protection Department with the main points listed in the box below.

Implementing the above aims will help to rehabilitate the primary ecosystem of the National Park.

- ♦ All activities affecting the natural lives of wild terrestrial and marine animals and plants.
- ♦ Fishing or activities causing negative impacts on animals and plants in the areas of the National Park.
- ♦ Anchoring of boats in the marine areas within 1 km of the National Park except in emergency situations caused by acts of God.
- ♦ Using forest land or marine areas in the Park for business that cause changes to their natural structure.

# National Park Activities Update



**Forest protection staff discussing activity plans**

Since the official opening more than 6 months ago, Bai Tu Long National Park has expanded its main activities in the area. In 2002, the Park management and staff have determined that the most important responsibility is to undertake effective management, prevent damage and disturbance affecting the natural landscape and resources of the Park and then gradually expand investment and development projects in the Park. To fulfill those important duties, the management has defined the Park boundary both in the field and on maps, and set up the landmarks of the Park with the standard signposts stipulated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. Up to now the signposts have been basically completed and brought into play for their positiveness for protection. Besides that, the Park management has also enhanced the importance of community educa-

tion awareness program of significance and value for natural resource protection, especially in the buffer zones.

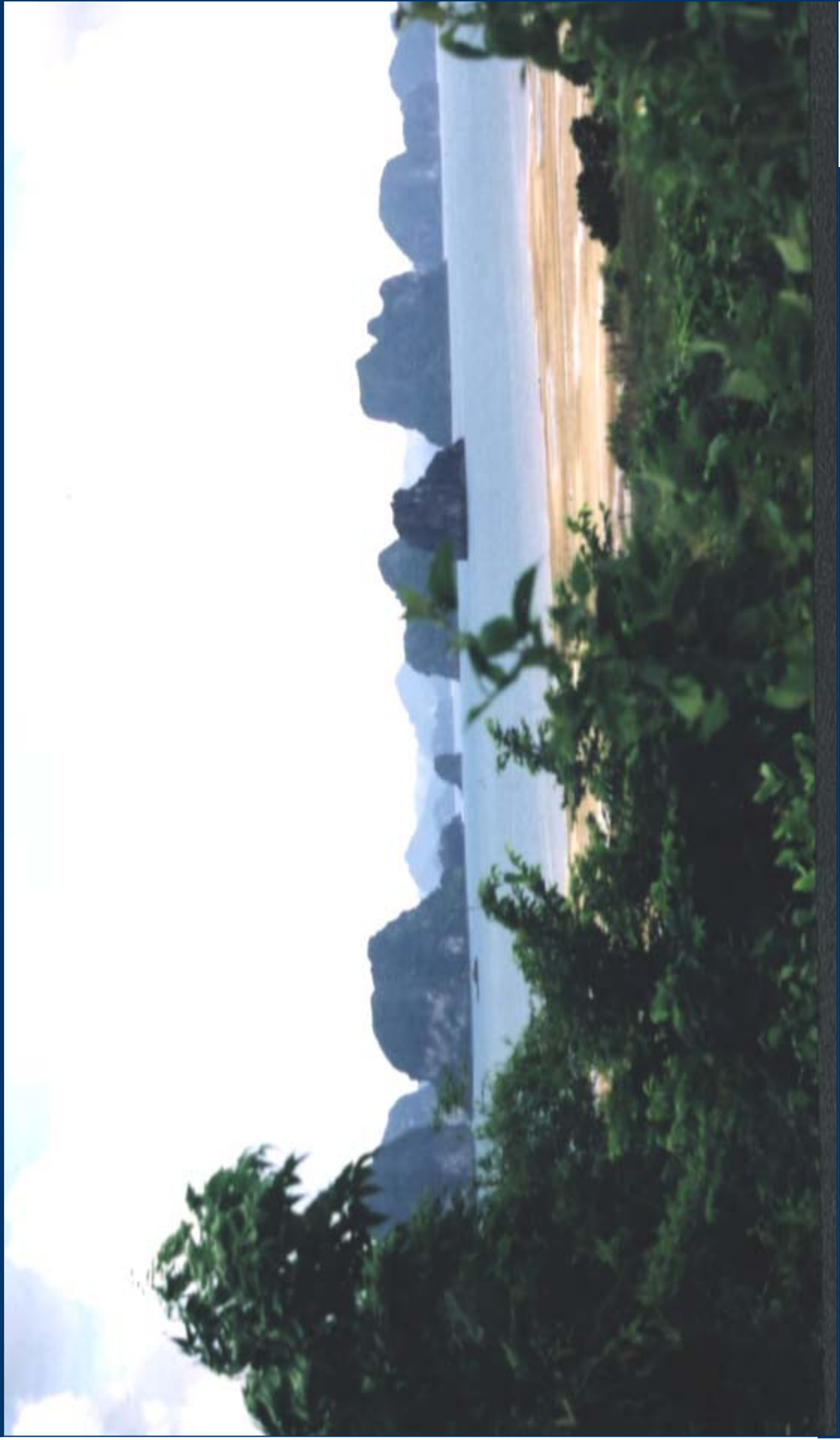
**“the Park management has also enhanced the importance of community education”**

The science research and conservation activities have also been much considered. The Park has been working with Frontier - Vietnam on a Biodiversity Awareness Project in the area. With the participation of British research volunteers and officers, Professors from the National University, IEBR and scientists from the Park, the programme has gained satisfactory results such as evaluation of the biology of the typical animals and plants within the Park.

In addition, the Park is planing to

set out a draft for researching the disposition and generation cycle, and evaluating the reciprocal influence of marine animals in the areas of the Park, having further research in high economic value species such as Haliotis, Dugong and others like turtles, coral, and marine plants. However, being newly established, the Park has faced difficulties, therefore the Park management and staff need to have the support of other organizations from different levels in promoting their activities, especially material support for structural work of the Park such as: means of transportation and communications, main office and forestry office development. Furthermore, we are very much looking forward to receiving support and cooperation from People's Committees in the District and buffer zone communes and local law protection agencies for conservation work of the Park and progress of buffer zone projects.

# Vườn Quốc Gia Bái Tử Long



# Chúc Mừng Năm Mới 2003!



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# Frontier Forest Research Project Update

*Ted Bodsworth  
Research Co-ordinator  
Frontier-Vietnam*

The main aim of the Frontier-Vietnam Forest Research Project is to conduct a detailed biological evaluation of Bai Tu Long Bay National Park and its buffer zone, so as to enable future environmental monitoring, management and protection. This work provides essential scientific information for integration into the Biodiversity Awareness Project. In addition to the purely scientific surveying, socio-economic work is conducted through interviews with local residents, village leaders, hunters, loggers and fishermen, to try and determine how conservation and development may be integrated within the new National Park.

The main majority of fieldwork undertaken by the Frontier-Vietnam Forest Research Project is conducted by volunteer research assistants, who come to Vietnam for a 10-week period. These volunteers work alongside Frontier-Vietnam staff and scientists from the Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources (IEBR) in Hanoi, who bring with them invaluable knowledge of the local flora and fauna. In addition, members of the National Park Forest Protection Department join the research team to learn and exchange survey techniques and knowledge.

A study of the forest flora provides the basis of the ecological work. Vegetation plots are situated in areas of forest characteristic of the ecosystems of Bai Tu



**Staff from the Institute of Ecological and biological Resources and the National park working in the field**

Long Bay, and aim to cover a range of habitat types, from pristine areas of limestone forest to heavily logged areas of secondary forest. Within each vegetation plot, all trees and ground flora are identified by Vietnamese experts, and the trees measured in terms of their position, height and trunk diameter, to give a detailed description of the structure of the forest and the extent of human disturbance.

**“In addition to the purely scientific surveying, socio-economic work is conducted through interviews with local residents”**

Plant diversity yields animal diversity, and in addition to botanical surveying, Frontier-Vietnam Forest Research Project also studies specific animal groups, namely birds,

butterflies, bats, hawk-moths and frogs. These groups are relatively well-studied in Vietnam and neighbouring South East Asian countries, and are good indicators of the overall biodiversity of a region. In the future, the project hopes to extend its animal and plant surveying to include various marine and intertidal habitats, such as mangroves, estuaries and mudflats. These habitats are of potential ecological and economical interest since they support a diversity of juvenile fish and invertebrates that support the local fishing industry.

The Frontier-Vietnam Forest Research Project has now conducted research on all the major islands in Bai Tu Long Bay National Park and its buffer zone. We hope to continue our work until the completion of the Biodiversity Awareness Project and to leave fully trained local staff to carry on the surveying and monitoring work that has been initiated.



# National Park Holds Community Meeting for Residents of the Five Buffer Zone Communes

The reasoning behind organising regular meetings with members of the five buffer zone communes is to ensure that Park management provide clear information concerning their activities, are aware of the impact of those activities on local people, and to enable the Park to adjust strategies based on local realities.

The objective of this second meeting was to provide the people's committee chairmen and secretaries of the five buffer zone communes with an update on Park activities and to solicit feedback.

The meeting was held at the National Park offices on October 4<sup>th</sup> 2002, was funded and organised solely by the National Park, and attended by the National Park management board, representatives from the five buffer zone communes, and Frontier-Vietnam Project staff.

The meeting began with short presentations by members of the Park management on overall Park activities, and the current situation regarding Park protection and conservation. Frontier-Vietnam then provided an update of both BTLBBAP and VNF projects and their respective activities. Participants from the buffer-zone communes then provided input and opinions on various issues.



**Residents of Minh Chau commune at the meeting**

Below is a summary of the information that the people's committees' representatives provided.

- ◆ Improvement of the local economy is essential
- ◆ Local people need more information from the Park
- ◆ Environmental awareness of local people needs to be strengthened
- ◆ Local people need to use the Park's resources
- ◆ An effort should be made to attract private investment into the area
- ◆ Many animals are now very rare – rarely seen, if at all
- ◆ Hunting and logging by local

people is on a subsistence level

- ◆ Fishing activities are impacting on coral

All participants agreed that the meeting had been useful for them and that they would disseminate the information at consequent commune meetings. The meeting ended with the chairman of Minh Chau commune, Mr. Luong, offering to host the next meeting at the beginning of December.

Overall, the objectives of the meeting were met in that the Park and leaders of the local communes shared information on the current situation from their own perspectives.

# Initial Assessment of Ant Species in Bai Tu Long National Park



***Dr. Bùi Tuấn Việt***  
***Institute of Ecological and  
Biological Resources***

**A**nts are one of the insects known popularly in our life. They are recognized in all areas of life: from the North pole to the tropical equatorial area, from the fens to exhausted deserts, from Duyen Hai to the high mountains, from the entrails of the earth to the top of the trees. Science has determined about 15,000 species of Ants living on the earth. Among those, there are 9,000 - 10,000 that have been described (Bolton, B., 1997). Many kinds of ants are very sensitive to climate and form of habitat, therefore they can have

timely reactions to environmental change (Anderson, 1990). In a wide range of invertebrates proposed as biological indicators in Australia, Ants have the most remarkable advantages compared with other groups based on the standards of their environmental evaluation system (Anderson, 1990). Ants are used in many researches of environmental control and inventory appraisal programs.

**“Ants in Bai Tu Long  
are plentiful with specific  
characteristics of  
the islands.”**

In the programme of biodiversity research and conservation in Bai Tu Long National Park of SEE, UK coordinating with IEBR, Vietnam and the National Center for Natural Sciences and Technology, we have researched the biodiversity of Ant species in January, June and October in the areas of Ba Mun, Minh Chau, and Tra Ngo, and reported more than 70 species of Ant including the sub-families: Ponerinae with 6 genders ( Amblyopone, Discothyrea, Gnamptogenys, Pachycondyla, Diacamma, Odontoponera); Myrmicinae with 6 genders (Cataulacus, Monomorium, Rhyssotromyrmex, Crematogaster, Pheidole, Pheidologenton); Formicidae with 4 Genders  
***(continued on page 11)***

*(continued from page 10)*

(Camponotus, Paratrechina, Pseudolasius, Polyrhachis).

The above result tells us that the Ants in Bai Tu Long are plentiful with specific characteristics of the islands. Among more than 70 of the above mentioned Ant species, there are some that can be used

for high nutrient value foods and medicine for people.

The natural conditions in Bai Tu Long consist of potentialities of protection and development of valuable animals and plants including Ants, which facilitate the development of the economy and tourism here in Bai Tu Long Bay.



# Bai Tu Long National Park's Awareness-Raising programme

*Nguyen Dinh Ung*  
**Conservation Department**  
**Manager**  
**VQG Bai Tu Long**

In our life, each one of us needs pure air, and a clean environment around us to ensure a healthy life. Besides that, we have a close connection with not only the natural environment, but also the social environment.

Therefore, a workshop entitled "Biodiversity Awareness Raising for People in five buffer zone communes of the Park" was held on 04/10/2002 by the management of Bai Tu Long National Park with the attendance and enthusiasm of authorities from the 5 buffer zone communes: Minh Chau, Quang Lan, Ban Sen, Van Yen and Ha Long. The workshop discussed the methods of raising awareness by training the authorities from communes and extending this to village level via meetings, propaganda, bringing up good examples of local environmental conservation activities.

At the same time, Frontier-Vietnam and the Department of



**Mr. Nguyen Van Luong Minh Chau People's committee chairman speaking at a community meeting**

Education and Training (DET) of Van Don district have been coordinating to establish an EE program for schools in the five buffer zone communes.

**"Bai Tu Long National Park is not only the property of Vietnam but also the common property of humanity."**

According to the proposal of the DET, the course will be taught in existing lesson time and considered

as an official subject.

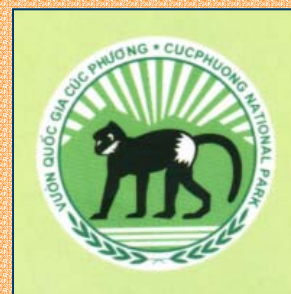
The course will be taught to grade 6 pupils in the five buffer zone communes. The DET has selected a number of good and experienced teachers from district schools to develop lessons for this program.

Bai Tu Long National Park is not only the property of Vietnam but also the common property of humanity. For this reason, the management of the Park has been working day and night with the authorities at different levels and local communities as well as other local and international organizations to conserve and preserve the Park.

# LOGO COMPETITION

## DESIGN THE OFFICIAL BAI TU LONG NATIONAL PARK LOGO AND WIN AN ARTISTS DRAWING SET

Bai Tu Long National Park is announcing a competition to find a design for the National Park logo. The logo will go on all National Park publications and promotions including this newsletter as well as the Bai Tu Long website, helping to promote the park and its conservation to people all over Vietnam and the world. We are looking for an original design that clearly symbolises the unique beauty and conservation value of Bai Tu Long. Any materials can be used to make the logo such as colour pens, pencils, ink, or computer graphics. The most important thing is quality and clarity of the design, not how well it is drawn. The winner will receive an exclusive artist drawing set and 2 runners-up will receive a set of watercolour pencils. To give you some ideas, here are some logos from other National Parks that should give an idea of what we are looking for. Please remember these are just examples and should not be copied. We want a unique and original logo for Bai Tu Long National Park..



All logo designs submitted must follow the following simple guidelines:

- All logo designs should have some clear relevance to Bai Tu Long National Park. (ie, they should depict natural elements of the park such as its island and sea environment and/or an animal that lives in Bai Tu Long, such as a dugong, dolphin, or an asiatic black bear)
- The logo must clearly say 'Vườn Quốc Gia Bai Tu Long' and 'Quang Ninh' somewhere on or in the design.
- All logo designs must be submitted in colour and in black and white
- A brief explanation of your logo should also be included

**The deadline for all submissions is April 1st, 2003.** Send all entries to PO BOX ... GPO Van Don, Quang Ninh. With your logo design, please include your name, address and telephone number (if you have one) so we can contact you if you win. Sorry, but we will be unable to return unsuccessful entries. The winner will be announced in the next edition of the Bai Tu Long newsletter. Good luck!

*This newsletter was produced by the Bai Tu Long Bay Biodiversity Awareness Project run by Frontier-Vietnam and funded by the Darwin Initiative, UK.*

*Frontier-Vietnam projects are a collaboration between the Society for Environmental Exploration (SEE), London and the Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources, Hanoi and a collaboration of SEE and the Institute of Oceanography, Hanoi.*

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