

Technical Bulletin #46:

# Community Fish Refuge Pond/Sanctuary Management

## What are community fish refuge ponds and sanctuary protected areas?

There are several types of protected areas for conserving aquatic resources (aquatic animals and plants) and aquatic ecosystems, including: Ramsar sites, wetlands, national parks, community refuge ponds, and fish sanctuaries.

According to the Sub-Decree on Community Fisheries management, Chapter 3 Article 3, community fisheries have the duty and obligation to establish and manage a community protected area, protect and replant flooded forest, and rehabilitate shallow refuge ponds to improve ecosystems and fisheries environments.

According to the Fisheries Law, fisheries protected areas mainly focus on freshwater or marine domains that are geographically demarcated for aquatic species to live, spawn, and grow. Fisheries protected areas are a place for producing natural seeds and protecting fisheries resources. Aside from scientific research on fisheries, these areas do not allow fishing or other activities that can disturb or affect the aquatic environment.

Community fisheries protected areas are special sites such as refuge ponds or fish sanctuaries in streams, lakes, or ponds that communities have agreed to protect for fish habitat, brood fish spawning, and/or fingerling growing.

## Why develop community protected area by-laws?

Community regulations and by-laws are developed to coordinate and ensure effective management and protection of a given protected area. The protection aims to ban and/or manage all kinds of unsustainable fishing, motorized boat passage, and house settlement in or around the protected area. Why are boundary demarcation and signboard installations beneficial to the community fishery?

The refuge pond or fish sanctuary boundary is very important for effective protection and management of the site. With technical coordination and assistance from the Fisheries Administration, every community fishery, with support from NGOs/donors and relevant authorities, takes steps to delineate and advertise the boundaries of the refuge ponds or fish sanctuaries. Below are activities and steps for boundary establishment:

- Boundary demarcation based on the community fisheries map with agreement from the Fisheries Administration and community fishery committees and relevant authorities.
- Boundary pole installation to avoid confusion and conflict between community fisheries.
- Installation of signboards for awareness raising and education among people in communities. The signboards can have many messages, such as: "Community Fisheries Protected Area," "Fisheries Resources Conservation Zone," "No fishing in the protected area," etc.



Community members erect a sign to demarcate a refuge pond and raise awareness.



### How can community fish refuge ponds and sanctuaries be developed and managed?

Previous management practices include:

- Installing artificial reefs for fish and aquatic animal habitats. The reefs can be bundles of brush, bases of trees, concrete rings, broken boats, etc.
- Installing patrol guard watch towers and regularly patrolling of the site, particularly in the low-water season.
- Rehabilitating shallow parts of the refuge ponds to improve aquatic habitats. This requires adequate discussion and coordination with the relevant Fisheries Administration officers.
- Replanting flooded forests around refuge ponds.
- Releasing fingerlings of endangered fish species into community fish refuge ponds and sanctuaries as well as other native aquatic animals.
- Supplementing feeding with rice bran, homemade feed, and/or pelleted feed to fish and aquatic animals in refuge ponds and sanctuaries.
- Annual monitoring and evaluation to evaluate fish health and densities in refuge ponds and sanctuaries.



A concrete ring is sunk to provide artificial shelter for fish and other aquatic animals.



Replanting flooded forest areas is an important management practice that provides habitat for fish refuge ponds and sanctuaries.

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