

Ao Phang-nga National Park

The geological phenomenon of land subsidence has created numerous caves, bays, and towering limestone islands scattered across the province of Phangnga, Krabi, Trang and Satun.

By its prestige landscape and lush forest, Ao Phang-nga National Park was established in 1981, covering 400 square kilometres area of Amphoe Mueang, Takua Thung and Ko Yao-Phangnga which comprises mangrove forest and 42 islands such as Ko Khao Tao, Ko Hong, Ko Panyi and Khao Phing Kan.

Geography

In the park's boundary, pre-historical artifacts found around Khao Tao indicated that the caves and cliffs in Phang-nga and Krabi were occupied by human since 10,000 years ago.

The archeologists had found rock tools, broken ceramic in different patterns. Rough ceramics, parts of stone axe and sharpened fish bone were found at Ko Phra Art Thao. Cave paintings in Ao Phang-nga appear in different patterns and shapes such as man carrying fish, crab, langur, bird, elephant, alphabet-like shape arrow, fishing tool and boat.

Flora and fauna

Ao Phang-nga is one of the best and big mangrove forest in Thailand. The forest plays significant role in coastal ecosystem. It serves as natural storm



barrier, species bank of the plants, and nursery for aquatic animals. The major plants in the mangrove forest include *Rhizophora mucronata*, *R. apiculata*, *Bruguiera cylindrica*, *B.paviflora*, *Xylocarpus grana-*



Getting there

- From provincial town of Phangnga, motorist can head south via highway 4 for 8 kilometres and get on highway 4144 to the park, which is located 4 kilometres from the main road. It is only 20 minutes by bus.
- It takes 3 hours for boat trip from Ban Tha Dan or Kasom Pier to Ao Phang-nga.

tum, *X.moluccensis*, *Avicennia alba* and *A.officinalis*.

On land, tropical rain forest occupies plain and valley with deep rich soil where *Hopea ferrea*, *Parkia timoriana*, *Artocarpus lacucha*, *Acaeia catechu*, *Garcinia cowa*, *Morinda coreia*, *Calamus* sp., *Colocasia gigantea* and different kinds of orchids.

The tropical rain forest is found also on limestone island which is occupied by *Euphorbia* sp., *Pandanus monothecus*, *Cycas pectinata*, *Zingiber officinale*, terrestrial orchids and *Colocasia gigantea*.

The survey conducted in 1991 found that the park is home to 206 animal species, including 17 mammals, 88 birds, 18 reptiles, 3 amphibians, 24 fishes and 45 other aquatic animals.

Mammal species such as White-handed Gibbon and Serow are extinct from the national park by human disturbance and habitat invasion. Spectacled Langur, Smooth-coated Otter and Crab-eating Macaque are in treated status.

The birds found in the park include Pacific Reef-Egret, White-bellied Sea-eagle, Asian Dowitcher, Kingfisher, Southern Pied Hornbill, Brahminy Kite and Edible-nest Swiftlet.

The reptiles and amphibians include Mangrove Snake, Yellow-collared Snake, Tree Frog and Salt-water Frog.

In the sea, many species of fishes and marines life such as Ray, Mullet, Coral Rockcod, Damselfish, Bannerfish, Sea Crab, Brain Coral, Sea Cucumber, Sea Fan, Shark, Butterflyfish and Staghorn Coral are widely found.

Attractions

◆ **Ko Phanak.** The big island with plenty of cave is situated on the cruise line between Phuket and Phangnga. By kayak, tourists can explore its marine lake inside.

◆ **Ko Hong.** The limestone island houses many chamber connecting together.

◆ **Ko Thalu Nok.** The limestone island has a tunnel which small boat can get through.

◆ **Khao Tapu-Khao Phing Kan.** The famous landmark, where giant rock cliffs lean against each other, is a must for all tourists. The nail shape mountain, known as James Bond Island, is situated nearby.

◆ **Ko Panyi.** The fishery village which builds the whole community on elevated platform on stilt over the sea.

The park also features many attractions such as Ko Lawa Yai, Khao Machu, Ko Khai, many caves, and many ancient painting which can be dated back to over a thousand years.

