

# Annual Report on SDG14 Life Below Water

#### 14.3 Supporting aquatic ecosystems through action

# 14.3.3 Direct University Actions to Maintain and Expand Threatened Ecosystems and Biodiversity

Ecosystems around the **Songkhla Lagoon Basin** and the **lower Gulf of Thailand** have been degraded by urban expansion, coastal aquaculture, and overexploitation of natural resources.

Threats such as habitat loss, declining biodiversity, and climate-induced changes require immediate research-based action to restore ecological balance and protect both aquatic and terrestrial species.

Thaksin University integrates **research**, **community participation**, and **policy innovation** to maintain and restore threatened ecosystems. The approach—"Science with Community and Local Wisdom"—combines ecological research, habitat restoration, biodiversity monitoring, and legal measures to conserve both plant and animal species within the watershed-to-coast continuum.

#### Activities / Innovations

#### 1. Ecosystem and Habitat Restoration in Songkhla Lagoon

- Restoration of degraded ecosystems such as fish sanctuaries, seagrass beds, and
   "Living Fish House" zones.
- Applied participatory research and biodiversity monitoring to assess ecosystem recovery.
- Communities co-manage and monitor fish abundance and aquatic vegetation using scientific data.





🔾 ๆและเครื่องและเปลี่ยงเพื่อเกล้าเหมือน 🖒 เปล่านากและสูงและเวลา 💍 (สรุนเกิดเคริมเกราะเกิน) เปล











Public evidence: <a href="https://shorturl.at/boyAh">https://shorturl.at/boyAh</a>



#### 2. Conservation of Aquatic Species and Habitats

- Established **community fisheries conservation zones** and **closed fishing seasons** to protect breeding grounds.
- Introduced water-quality and biodiversity monitoring systems to enable local management decisions.





Public evidence: https://shorturl.at/yXHnV

#### 3. Ecological Learning Networks

 Developed six ecological learning centers around the lagoon, integrating ecology, local wisdom, and the UNESCO Learning City concept.



• Students and community members participate in mangrove planting, fish surveys, and eDNA species monitoring.



สื่อการเรียนรู้ กิจกรรมการทำภาพพิมพ์ปลา (Gyotaku) ขอบคุณวีดีโอสวยๆ จากแตง ขอบคุณ อ.โอเล่และ อ.กัวย และน้องขนุนที่ไปช่วยทำกิจกรรม ขอบคุณเด็กๆ ที่มา่รวม...

...

Public evidence: https://www.facebook.com/tuantar/videos/2505605636438851?locale=th TH

#### 4. Watershed Restoration (Upper-Middle-Lower Basin)

- Extended research to the **Pak Phanang Basin**, focusing on adaptive water-gate management, riparian forest rehabilitation, and replanting native species such as *sago* palm, Barringtonia, and Trewia nudiflora.
- Promotes soil conservation and upstream biodiversity restoration.

#### 5. Endangered Species Conservation: "Khang Phra Ruang Fish"

Researchers developed community-based breeding systems for Oryzias minutillus, a
threatened endemic fish species in southern Thailand, to reduce pressure on wild
populations and support conservation aquaculture.



#### 6. Legal Research on Marine Environmental Impacts

• Faculty of Law conducted research on **legal measures to control environmental impacts from shrimp farming**, proposing stricter discharge standards and communitybased monitoring mechanisms to prevent coastal ecosystem damage.

#### **Ouantitative Results**

- 6 learning centers established around the lagoon and watershed areas.
- 20 conservation and restoration sites (fish sanctuaries, mangrove plots, and wetlands) rehabilitated between 2023–2025.
- Over 60 aquatic and terrestrial species recorded as part of biodiversity monitoring.
- 1 endangered species (Khang Phra Ruang fish) successfully bred in community hatcheries.
- >500 participants (researchers, students, and community members) engaged annually.

Thaksin University conducts research and community-engaged projects to maintain and restore ecosystems and biodiversity in the Songkhla Lagoon and coastal areas. Activities include habitat restoration, fish sanctuary development, watershed rehabilitation, and endangered species conservation. Over 20 conservation sites and 6 learning centers have been established, involving scientists and local communities in long-term monitoring. These integrated efforts strengthen both ecosystem resilience and local stewardship toward sustainable resource management.

#### 1. Ecosystem Restoration and Conservation Zones in the Songkhla Lake Basin

Thaksin University, through the Natural Resource Management Academic Service Unit, has implemented research and restoration projects in degraded aquatic ecosystems such as nofishing zones, seagrass areas, and "living fish home" conservation sites. The initiatives combine community participation with scientific data to design conservation areas and monitor biological indicators, enabling the assessment of species recovery and aquatic population growth.







#### 2. Aquatic Species Conservation and Habitat Restoration

The university's ecological research focuses on restoring the balance of aquatic species in Songkhla Lake by establishing fisheries conservation zones and seasonal closed fishing periods. These measures provide safe habitats for spawning and juvenile development, allowing natural population recovery without relying on artificial restocking. The initiatives also include the development of water-quality monitoring systems and biodiversity assessments, enabling local communities to use scientific data for effective resource management.

#### 3. Development of Learning Ecosystems for Biodiversity Conservation

Six ecological learning sites have been designed around the Songkhla Lake Basin, integrating scientific knowledge, local wisdom, and UNESCO's Learning City concepts to create a "nature-based learning ecosystem." Community members and students engage in hands-on conservation activities such as fish species surveys, mangrove planting, and the use of eDNA to



monitor species presence within the ecosystem. These learning spaces strengthen environmental awareness, promote citizen science, and support long-term biodiversity protection.

#### 4. Restoration of Upstream, Midstream, and Downstream Ecosystems

University research has expanded to other watershed areas, such as the Pak Phanang Basin, focusing on watergate opening–closing systems to restore aquatic ecosystems and strengthen community rights in water management. Restoration activities include reforestation along canals, headwater forests, and the planting of native species such as sago palm (Metroxylon spp.), Ceriops (Jik Nam), and Thespesia populnea (Thon). These efforts support plant biodiversity, prevent soil erosion, and revitalize ecological functions across the watershed.

#### 5. Conservation of the Endangered Pla Kang Phra Ruang

Researchers at Thaksin University have developed a breeding system for Pla Kang Phra Ruang, an endangered native fish species of Southern Thailand. The knowledge and techniques have been transferred to local communities in Phatthalung Province to support conservation-based aquaculture and reduce wild capture pressure on natural populations.

Public evidence: <a href="https://shorturl.at/pPdYs">https://shorturl.at/pPdYs</a>





Dhala" (Etlingera elatior), known for its striking beauty, features vibrant layered petals forming a torch-like shape, giving the flower a unique and elegant appearance. With its distinctive colors, forms, and ornamental value, Dhala is often used for decoration to create a relaxing and aesthetically pleasing atmosphere.

In Southern Thailand, Dhala flowers are not only ornamental but also edible. They have a spicy, tangy, slightly salty taste with a unique fragrance. Local communities traditionally incorporate them into regional dishes, most famously Southern Thai "Khao Yam" (spiced rice salad). The flower enhances both flavor and color, making the dish more aromatic and visually appealing.

Beyond culinary value, Dhala is also recognized in folk medicine for its health benefits, including relieving flatulence and soothing phlegm.



Public evidence: <a href="https://tsu.ac.th/home/details.php?id=4394">https://tsu.ac.th/home/details.php?id=4394</a>